

**Between Institutional Talk and Everyday Conversation:  
The Language Use of Television**

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## NOTATION CONVENTIONS

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,	'Continuing' intonation
.	Falling intonation
?	Rising intonation
(.)	Short pause
(..)	Longer pause (> 2 sec.)
<i>Italics</i>	Emphatic stress
<u>Underlining</u>	Affective stress
Loud▲	Increased loudness
/	Interruption (no transition relevance place)
[	Simultaneous talk (start)
[	Simultaneous talk (start)
]	Simultaneous talk (end)
]	Simultaneous talk (end)
=	Contiguous utterances
(( ))	Transcriber's notes
[ ]	Text type definition in television formats and their duration
[ [ ] ]	Speaker-dependent specific pronunciation feature
-	Utterance break-off
` or '	Reduction of words in connected speech
:	Elongation
...	Omission

## INTRODUCTION

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The focus of the present work lies on the language use of television as a mass medium and (social) institution. Soon after its beginnings television became the center of scientific interest. After a period of scientific investigation that was initially limited to the impact of the mass media on their audiences within media effects research followed by an emphasis of the role of the audience in the mass communication process within a uses and gratifications approach, mass media began to be studied from a linguistic point of view, that is with a special focus on media *talk*: the characteristic features of (broadcast) media language and how the (broadcast) media use language in order to communicate with their audiences (cf. Hutchby, 2006: 5ff.). Especially the past two decades have resulted in a considerable body of literature within media analysis concerned with how language is used by and within the traditional print and electronic media (i.e. press, radio, television).

The study of print media classically involves the language of newspapers – both conservative and tabloid in character – and the language of magazines including the ways in which linguistic and visual information in the form of additional graphic and photographic images are organized in order to create meaning in a text (see e.g. Reah, 1998 or Conboy, 2010 for general linguistic aspects of newspapers; Jucker, 1992 concentrates on the syntax of British newspapers; Fowler, 1991 and Conboy, 2007 pay attention to the presentation of news in the press; Bell, 1991 and 1998 focuses on the structure of news stories; for print magazines see McLoughlin, 2000).

So far the study of language use by and within the broadcast media has involved investigations of radio and television language. An early important account of broadcast language is Paddy Scannell's (1991) *Broadcast Talk*, a collection of articles covering (the structure of) talk on radio and television; Goffman, 1981 devotes a chapter to radio talk; more recent analyses of media talk covering radio and television are Hutchby, 2006 and Tolson, 2006. Marshall and Werndly, 2002 and Lorenzo-Dus, 2009 are exclusively concerned with television language. Especially the structure of the news interview (e.g. Jucker, 1986; Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Greatbatch 1998) and the talk show format – including the sub-type of the daytime talk show – (e.g. Munson, 1993; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Penz, 1996; Semeria, 1999) have received particular attention in research on broadcast media language. Investigations of the latter are typically concerned with the communicative roles and behavior of, as well as the relations between, the interactants – audience, host(s), guest(s) – in the studio setting. Tolson (2006: 4) points out that more recently “the study of broadcast talk has been rather disparate, with much of it confined to specialist academic journals.”

Studies of media language have also dealt with the persuasive function of language considering advertising both within print and electronic media (e.g. Myers, 1994; Vestergaard and Schrøder, 1995; Goddard, 1998; Cook, 2001 and Cook, 2008 (a several volume work)).

With the emergence of the so-called ‘new media’ research interest, more recently, has been extended to the language of the Internet (see e.g. Runkehl/Schlobinski/Siever, 1998; Crystal, 2001; Siever/Schlobinski/Runkehl, 2005 or Boardman, 2005; for language and the new media in general see Manovich, 2001; Aitchison and Lewis, 2003 or Rowe and Wyss, 2009).

In contrast to the ‘old media’, as constituted by the traditional print media and analog radio and television broadcasting, the ‘new media’ are digital media concerned with the transmission and storage of digital information (e.g. DVD, CD-ROM, the Internet, digital television). With its electronic mail, weblogs (blogs),<sup>1</sup> or instant messaging services such as *icq*,<sup>2</sup> the Internet has broadened and accelerated the possibilities of human communication and performs a significant influence on the communicative behaviour of its users worldwide. The media institutions have long since realized the power of the Internet as digital form of communication with potentially unlimited access and the traditional print and electronic media make additional use of the new medium Internet as a powerful tool for communicating their contents. It is not surprising then that the ways in which language is used within the Internet have aroused the interest of the language researcher. Meanwhile, media linguistics – the study of the language of the media – has become a separate field of linguistics in its own right.

In view of the existing stock of literature on media language it seems reasonable and justified to ask why there should be another investigation of media language and of television language in particular. In the present work the language use of television is studied with the main intention of illustrating the overall (linguistic) nature of television as a mass medium and, what is even more important, as an institution. Accordingly, the institutional character of television is in the foreground here and language is investigated in light of its occurrence within the institutional settings of television. The central question in this connection is then how language is applied within the ‘institution’ television and what we can consequently say about the character of television as an institution. In fact, language use on television has not yet been studied from this perspective which emphasizes the existence of an institutional frame for interaction (with a possible and expectable impact on the ways in which language is applied within this frame).

The starting point for an analysis of television language here are the two recent phenomena of *tabloidization* and *conversationalization* which significantly shape the face not only of contemporary television but also of the traditional print and electronic mass media in general. As the expression of a general shift towards entertainment characterizing contemporary media

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. the popular microblog *Twitter* (<http://twitter.com>)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.icq.com>

production, *tabloidization* denotes (a change in) the stylistic means applied in contemporary mass media in order to increase the entertaining value of produced media contents. As for television, *tabloidization* concerns the actual choice of topics to be broadcast and their visual and linguistic realization for a (target) audience. *Conversationalization* constitutes one facet of the general tendency towards *tabloidization* characterizing contemporary media practices. The term *conversationalization*, accordingly, describes the linguistic process whereby contemporary media language tends to include with increasing frequency (features characteristic of) informal everyday conversation thus becoming more and more conversationalized in character. Due to market pressures *tabloidization* meanwhile more or less pervades all television formats including the classical informative ones such as the news.

Underlying the investigation of the language used within the institutional frame of television is a structural and conceptual paradox here that arises in connection with *conversationalization* and results from the actual institutional character of television. That is, the fact that television per se is not only a mass medium but also an institution – as are radio and press – implies particular requirements from the language used within the institutional frame. The institutional frame is characteristically determined by institution-specific regulations that can also influence the ways in which language is applied by present interlocutors within this frame. As a consequence, communication within institutions is, as a rule, fundamentally different from the workings of everyday conversation, and institutional talk and private talk, accordingly, constitute two separate ‘speech exchange systems’ (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) differing in their conversational contents and how these contents are negotiated linguistically, i.e. how turn-taking is performed. We are familiar with this via the institutions of law or education, for example. Thus, agent-client interaction in court cases and school lessons characteristically reveals significant differences from everyday conversation which consist in the topics that are talked about – these are exclusively institution-specific – and in the ways in which speaker turns at talk are managed. Thus, where everyday conversation allows the local management of conversational turns, communication within institutions is characterized by differential degrees of pre-allocation of speaker turns. (See chapter 4 and 5 for a detailed discussion of the characteristics of everyday conversation and institutional communication). As a rule, communicatively competent native speakers of a language are equally socialized into the workings both of everyday conversation and institutional communication within the societies they live in and their knowledge about appropriate forms of interaction in everyday and institutionally framed contexts is activated respectively whenever they find themselves in the one or the other type of context.

As television is not only a mass medium but also an institution, the institutional frame of television then per definition also requires a form of language institutional in character and therefore different from (the workings of) conversation in everyday, non-institutional contexts of speech. As a consequence, the trend towards conversationalization within the institutional settings of television is in conflict with the actual demands of the institutional frame for a

respective language that is institutional and thus more formal in character than everyday conversation. It is the institutional character of television that calls for institutional talk within the institutional frame and that, consequently, by definition excludes a development towards conversationalization, i.e. everyday conversation. This is the case also because everyday conversation as such is traditionally reserved for the private sphere and, therefore, not regarded as suited for the occurrence in the public sphere of institutional communication including television production.

Yet there are market pressures affecting contemporary mass media which obviously work against the demands of the institutional frame for a respective type of institutional language. These market pressures involve an increased development towards entertaining the audience as a strategy for successfully marketing produced contents. This audience orientation is then expressed via linguistic means of conversationalization which imitate the audience's own informal ways of speaking thereby creating a seemingly social and emotional closeness between the public sphere of media production and the private sphere of everyday matters that aims to tie the viewer to a particular channel and broadcast program. Viewed in light of the fight for viewer ratings on an (international) market of media production, the trend towards conversationalization thus should be understood as a production strategy by contemporary media – in this case television – with the underlying intention of establishing possible reference points for identification on the part of the audience in order to achieve the best possible viewer ratings.

Based on this structural and conceptual paradox the concrete language use within the institutional frame of television is studied to illustrate the nature of the 'institution' television. The central question in this connection is where we can find conversationalization, i.e. informal everyday conversation, and where we can find more formal, i.e. institutional, talk on television. To answer this question the characteristics of everyday conversation on the one hand and of institutional talk on the other hand are focused on. These are shown by means of specific factors which are in a next step applied to different selected broadcast formats and featured format-specific text types in order to demonstrate the language use of these formats in particular and to illustrate the language use of the institution television in general. The linguistic analysis will finally allow a determination of the overall institutional character of television.

As the overall intention here is to give an insight into the nature of television as a mass medium and institution, this discussion of television language is naturally interdisciplinary in character covering both linguistics and media studies and, doing so, it is to constitute a current contribution to contemporary media linguistics as such. Part I (*The nature of television*) discusses the characteristics of television within the realms of media studies. Chapter 1 (*The mass medium television*), accordingly, is concerned firstly with the differences between interpersonal communication and mass communication as the typical form of communication by means of which the mass media transmit their contents to a present (target) audience

(chapter 1.1). Secondly, this chapter also focuses on the (political) functions that are traditionally ascribed to the mass media in democratic societies and that underlie the communicative processes of the media (chapter 1.2). Chapter 2 (*The institution television*) shifts the perspective from the ‘mass medium’ television to the ‘institution’ television and discusses the characteristic features of the institutional frame of television (chapter 2.1). In chapter 3 the two recent media phenomena of *tabloidization* and *conversationalization* are at the center of attention and will be explained in greater detail. However, the aim here is not so much to provide a precise and universally valid definition of the term *tabloidization* as such. Apart from illustrating general tendencies such an attempt turns out to be difficult in practice, for *tabloidization* is not an ad-hoc phenomenon but a long-term process that takes place within liberal democracies characterized by distinct media markets that (can) fundamentally differ in their internal, market-specific historical development and organization of media institutions. *Tabloidization*, consequently, is also a culture-dependent phenomenon and hence a proper scientific account of the process necessarily needs to take into consideration existing intercultural differences in media market structures and culture-specific historical media developments. Such differences may well affect the concrete pace and extent of *tabloidization* in a particular media market and *tabloidization* thus is far from being an interculturally uniform process. As a consequence, the term understandably resists easy definition. Chapter 3 also draws on this aspect including those characteristics of the otherwise complex process of *tabloidization* that can be determined to show general validity across different media markets. First and foremost, though, it will be argued that the particular linguistic processes which Fairclough (1994, 1995, 1998) has termed *conversationalization* are distinctive concomitant features of *tabloidization*.

Part II (*Everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation*) and part III (*The language use of television between institutional talk and private talk*) leave the level of actual media studies and concentrate on a description of the ‘institution’ television within the realms of linguistics. In order to illuminate the specific characteristics of the language used within the institutional frame of television, chapters 4 (*verbal interaction in non-institutional contexts*) and 5 (*verbal interaction in institutionally framed contexts*) take into consideration the determinants of everyday conversation (chapter 4) on the one hand and those of institutional talk (chapter 5) on the other hand. It is argued that the fundamental difference between verbal interaction in non-institutional contexts and in institutionally framed contexts is to be found in the extent to which communicative actions are regulated in concrete communicative encounters with respect to topic choice, speech style and overall organization of conversation, that is, turn-taking. While everyday conversation characteristically shows a relative freedom of communicative actions in this respect, communication within institutional frames is generally characterized by a restriction of this freedom which is typically based on the grade to which a respective institution is formalized. Depending on its grade of formalization an institution can regulate actions especially via pre-specifying communicative

acts and their order in institutional discourse. The resulting limits that are posed to communicative actions in this way establish the institutional frame of interaction, i.e. the actual institutional speech situation. Institutions and their determining features are discussed in detail in chapter 5.2. To present a detailed description of institutions and institutional talk, chapter 5 also includes an explanation of the notion ‘institution’ as such.

Chapter 6 (*A characterization of institutional talk and private talk*), finally, draws on the results of chapters 4 and 5 and presents an approach to a definition of everyday conversation (private talk) and institutional talk by means of their constitutive factors as introduced in the two preceding chapters. One of these factors is the use of a formal or informal speech style (chapter 6.2). Major emphasis in the discussion of this factor also lies on the classification of possible structural components of formal and informal styles of speech which is yet missing in respective (sociolinguistic) literature on linguistic variation in different situational contexts (chapter 6.2.2.3). The terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ (as well as ‘formality’/‘informality’) are frequently used here but, interestingly, knowledge of what they may imply (structurally and conceptually) is generally presupposed so that, as a rule, they are left unexplained in this respect. Thus, the central question is whether we can determine possible components of a formal and informal speech style and by means of this present a definition of what is actually meant by linguistic formality and informality. The main aim here, therefore, is to give an insight into the wider implications of the two terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’. Accordingly, chapter 6.2 constitutes an excursion into the (structural and conceptual) dimensions of linguistic formality and informality discussing the possible determinants of formal and informal speech styles. This leads to a final representation of the characteristics of institutional talk and private talk (chapter 6.2.3). On the basis of their previously determined characteristic features, institutional talk and private talk can subsequently be used to illustrate two discrete conceptions of language opposing each other within a conceptual continuum of language possibilities (chapter 6.3).

Using the conceptual continuum as analytical matrix, the characteristic features of institutional talk and private talk described in chapter 6 are instructive for the concrete analysis of television language in part III (*The language use of television between institutional talk and private talk*). The linguistic analysis performed in chapter 7 covers a range of television formats in order to illustrate the bandwidth of verbal possibilities featured in the institutional frame as granted (and desired) by the institution television. The scientific interest in this connection is on demonstrating where we can find institutional talk on television – and how this institutional talk looks like – and where we can detect typical instances of (informal) everyday conversation, i.e. the mentioned conversationalization of contemporary media language. The choice of television formats for a respective illustration of the specific language use within the institutional frame of television is correspondingly based on general assumptions about which type of language – institutional talk or degrees of conversationalization – is likely to appear in a format. In order to investigate the occurrence

and form of institutional talk on television, the news format is focused on in chapter 7.1. This choice is based on the information function that is classically ascribed to the news and (ideally) governs any broadcast of news contents. A restriction to the information function implies linguistic objectivity, that is, the pure transmission of facts unbiased in character – the actual ultimate goal of any news production. This then can be determined to constitute the ideal form of institutional talk as featured on television: talk with an emphasis on objective information and underlying associations of ‘formality’ resulting from this emphasis.

The linguistic investigation of conversationalization concentrates on the talk show format and in particular on its sub-type of the daytime talk show (chapter 7.2). Via the occurrence of informal everyday conversation within the institutional frame, especially the daytime talk show significantly contributes to an increasing intimate character of talk applied on television (that is in contrast with the demands of the actual institutional character of television). The presence of conversationalization within the institutional settings of television shows that the freedom of communicative actions characteristically assumed for everyday conversation but restricted in institutional communication regains validity when verbal interaction within the institution television is considered. The actual significance of conversationalization in this connection consists in the blurring of traditionally assumed boundaries between the public sphere (of institutional processes) – in this case television production – and the private sphere (of private matters), i.e. of television consumption.

News and talk shows reflect the two extreme forms of linguistic formality (institutional talk) and informality (conversationalization) on television. It is justified to ask whether we can find forms of talk on television that range between these two linguistic extremes. A proper candidate for linguistic investigation in this respect turns out to be the magazine format which shows extreme versatility in its structural conception with regard to featured contents and text types. This may be the reason why we find so many broadcast contents categorized under the label ‘magazine’. Accordingly, we find a range of magazine types where the use of language can be objective or ultimately subjective in character. The magazine types studied here are the news magazine, the political magazine and the tabloid magazine which promise the full range from linguistic objectivity to linguistic subjectivity (chapter 7.3). The investigation of magazine language includes the concept of the presenter whose communicative functions in the broadcast of magazine contents constitute an important influence on the general ways in which language is applied within the magazine format.

Finally, part IV (*Summary and conclusion*) in a first step summarizes the main results of this work in general and, in a second step, considers the results of the linguistic analysis performed in chapter 7 and illuminates these in regard to the institutional character of television.

Such an investigation of institutional communication is in two ways significant and innovative: Firstly, *tabloidization* is a contemporary media phenomenon publicly

acknowledged among media critics and it has been – and still is – a topic of lively discussion (cf. chapter 3). Its linguistic consequences in the form of *conversationalization*, however, have not yet gained adequate and comparable attention. It is Fairclough (1994, 1995, 1998) who introduces the notion of *conversationalization* and focuses on the *conversationalization* of public affairs media (news, documentary, magazine programs) within the field of media linguistics but, though he gives a few examples of broadcast talk, Fairclough, in fact, has not empirically systematized his hypothesis about recent developments in media language. His assumption of a *conversationalization* in progress therefore keeps its hypothetical nature. He does not present a detailed description of how this conversationalized media language actually looks like and its concrete linguistic characteristics hence remain largely unspecified. The intention in this work is thus also to elaborate on Fairclough's hypothesis of a conversationalized media language in order to give a more precise account of (the features of) *conversationalization* via linguistic analyses of particular examples within selected television formats. This specification of the linguistic elements of *conversationalization* is of scientific interest in so far as it can give an insight into the ultimate scope of *conversationalization* within contemporary television language and hence also into the ultimate nature of television as an institution and its particular ways of communication.

Secondly, institutional discourse has been studied in elaborate detail within German linguistics but has not been investigated yet in similar extent for the English language within Anglo-American linguistics.

## Part I The nature of television

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### CHAPTER 1 The mass medium television

Among the traditional mass media press, radio and television, it is television that is the youngest mass medium for obvious reasons of required technology. As its technological processes involve the transport of audio-visual information encoded in the television signal, its development is based on technological advances that allow the (successful) transmission and mass distribution not simply of the printed word – as in the case of the press – or acoustic signal alone – as in the case of radio – but of both the audio *and* visual signal from a (technical) sender to a (technical) receiver able to decode both types of signals simultaneously.

In accordance with the press and radio, the history of television is necessarily twofold in character: On the one hand, it is a technological one in the sense mentioned above; on the other hand, it is an institutional one since the development of television has involved the establishment of medium-specific facilities – editorial offices and television studios – that are required and responsible for the production of television contents and their transmission to an audience. Each television station has its own editorial offices and studios. The totality of these media institutions forms the local television industry.<sup>3</sup>

Though ‘mass media’ or simply ‘media’ are commonly used to refer to the media industry in general,<sup>4</sup> the term ‘mass medium’ as such actually denotes a technological apparatus that is of fundamental importance within the mass communication process.<sup>5</sup> In mass communication, i.e. the way in which the mass media (in the former sense) communicate with their audiences, the ‘medium’ is a technological means of transporting – in the case of television – (analog or digital) audio-visual information from the communicator<sup>6</sup> to the audience. A ‘medium’ thus is a technological transmitter of information within mass communication. This transmitter is constructed in such a way that it allows the mass distribution of produced media contents. Hence we speak of a ‘mass medium’. In other words, ‘mass’ denotes the accessibility of the

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<sup>3</sup> For the technological history of television see, for example, Burns (1998) and Abramson (2002). For the institutional history of German television see Hackett (1998). For the institutional history of American television see, for example, Baran (2004), chapter 8 and 9, Turow (2009), chapter 13, or Hanson (2005), chapter 9.

<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, we speak of ‘the depiction of women in the media’ or ‘the role of the media for political election campaigns’ and political science and the science of the media are concerned with the ‘political functions of the (mass) media’ (e.g. Delhaes, 2002; Meyn, 2001). Turow’s (2009) introduction to mass communication is titled ‘media today’. In a similar fashion, Hanson (2005) and Baran (2004) call their works ‘living in a media world’ and ‘media literacy and culture’ respectively. Finally, prominent media theories such as McQuail (1969) focus on the workings and role of the mass media in society.

<sup>5</sup> See in this connection also Maletzke (1963: 76).

<sup>6</sup> In mass communication theory ‘communicator’ typically refers to all the representatives of media institutions involved in the production (and transmission) of media contents (cf. also Maletzke, 1963: 43). For the term ‘communicator’ and the characteristics of the communicator in the process of mass communication see Maletzke (1963: 35f. and especially 43ff.). See also, less detailed, Maletzke (1964).

medium, e.g. television, for a large number of people – the mass. ‘Mass medium’ then describes an information carrier with public, i.e. mass, accessibility. Simply put, it is a medium potentially accessible for everybody carrying information potentially accessible for everybody.<sup>7</sup> Hence we speak of ‘mass communication’. It is the separation of communicator and addressee(s) by the medium and its function in the mass communication process that contributes significantly to the structural differences between mass communication and interpersonal communication. The characteristics of both types of communication are presented in chapter 1.1 below.

### 1.1 Interpersonal communication and mass communication

One of the outstanding features of the institutional frame of television is the occurrence both of interpersonal and mass communication (cf. chapter 2.1). Mass communication – the mass distribution of media contents to a large number of addressees by means of technical transmitters – is fundamentally different from interpersonal communication. This difference is grounded in the concrete and allowed directional flow of messages in both types of communication and thus in either presence or absence of interaction.

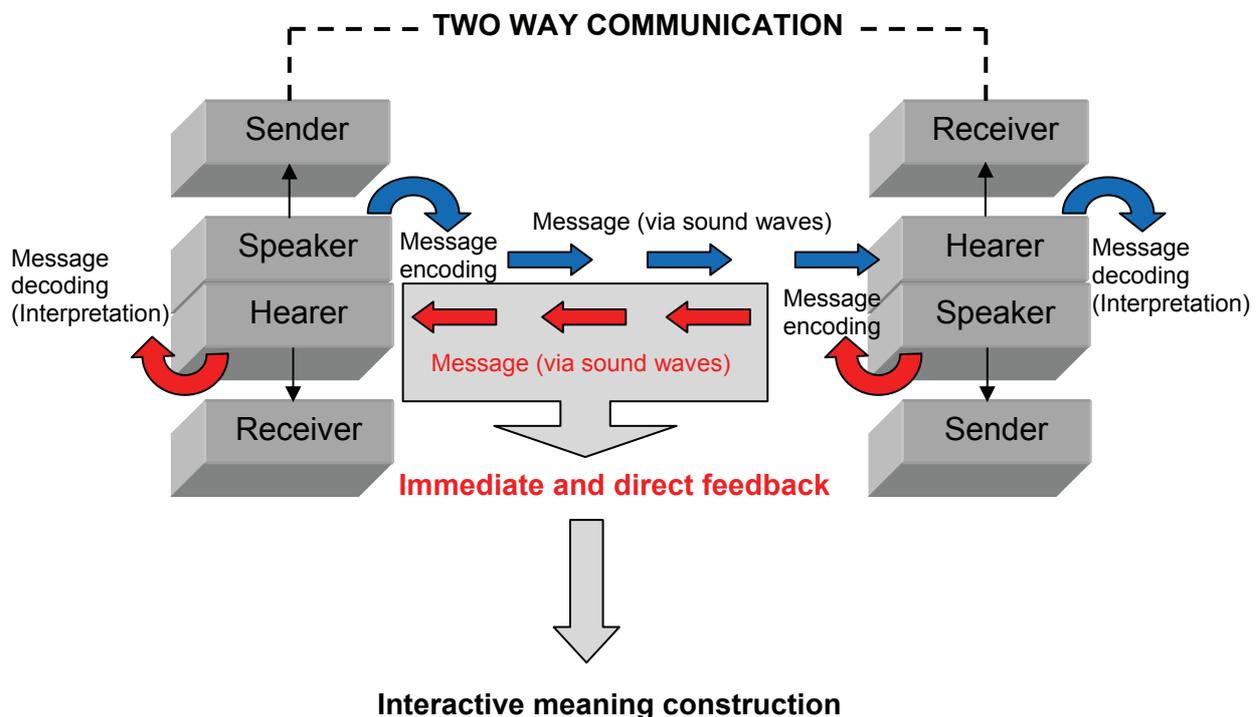


Figure 1: A model of interpersonal communication

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the terms ‘medium’ and ‘mass’ within mass communication theory see Maletzke (1963: 76/77 and 24ff.). Alternatively, see Maletzke (1964). See also Smith (1995: 133ff.) with a focus on the discussion of ‘mass’. For a discussion of the terminological history and the various meanings applied to ‘medium’ in different scientific approaches see Roesler and Stiegler (2005) as well as Faulstich (2000: 21f.).

Figure 1 is a schematic illustration of the communicative processes involved in interpersonal communication.<sup>8</sup> The basic characteristic of (successful) interpersonal, i.e. face-to-face, communication is the presence of interaction (cf. chapter 4.1.2). As can be seen, interaction as such is expressed via the mutual employment of communicative acts by interlocutors, i. e. by action-reaction processes by means of which meaning is interactively created. That is, the speaker – who is also hearer – performs a communicative action (encodes and transmits a message) whereby (s)he conveys his/her personal intention to the hearer. Doing so, provided that communicative competence is given, (s)he designs his/her conversational contribution according to the communicative needs of the hearer.<sup>9</sup> Then the hearer – who is also speaker – decodes, i.e. interprets, the received message and reacts in giving linguistic feedback to the input (s)he receives from the speaker consequently signaling his/her understanding (or non-understanding) of what (s)he has received. Interpersonal communication thus can be defined as a two-way form of communication in so far as it is characterized by the reciprocity of speaker actions. This reciprocity implies a constant role change of involved interlocutors from speaker to hearer (or: from sender to receiver) in the course of the communicative process.

Such action-reaction processes basic to the interactive construction of meaning in interpersonal communication are not to be found in mass communication where the feedback possibility that is present in human face-to-face communication is characteristically missing. Mass communication, therefore, typically features the absence of interaction and can be described as an example of indirect communication because it lacks the immediate and direct<sup>10</sup> feedback that is so central in interpersonal communication. This is the reason why mass communication is also prominently referred to as *one-way communication* – a term which accounts for the unidirectionality of conveyed messages in the mass communication process.<sup>11</sup>

The resulting delayed and indirect nature of the feedback in mass communication is grounded in the existence of the technological transmitter that is located between communicator and addressees and that effectively functions to separate both types of interlocutors in the communicative process (cf. figure 2 below, which is a schematic

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<sup>8</sup> Unless explicitly indicated otherwise all figures and tables used in this work were created by the author.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. in this connection Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 727) speaking of ‘recipient design’ in connection with the workings of turn-taking in everyday conversation: “By ‘recipient design’ we refer to a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants.”

For communicative competence and its constituent elements see also chapter 4.

<sup>10</sup> In this connection ‘immediate’ and ‘direct’ describe two different dimensions of the same phenomenon. That is, while ‘immediate’ denotes the temporal dimension of linguistic feedback, ‘direct’ refers to its spatial dimension. Accordingly, the former indicates that linguistic feedback is provided instantly without any temporal delay; the latter, on the other hand, emphasizes the shared physical location, i.e. the direct contact, between senders and receivers in a communicative process. Consequently, while provided feedback in interpersonal communication is immediate and direct in character, it is generally the opposite in mass communication, namely delayed and indirect. See in this connection also Maletzke (1963: 21ff.) on direct and indirect communication.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Maletzke (1963: 24): “Alle Massenkommunikation verläuft einseitig.“ Cf. also Hanson (2005: 4): “Traditionally, mass communication has allowed only limited opportunities for feedback because the channels of communication are largely one-way [...]”

illustration of the processes involved in mass communication). As a consequence, the transmission of messages (media contents) does not happen directly from communicator to addressees but always indirectly via a technological device which allows the multiple distribution of media contents to an equally multiple number of addressees. (In an attempt to overcome the notion of an undefined ‘mass audience’ within mass communication and its negative connotations within a theory of a ‘mass society’, Maletzke (1963) coined the term of a (socially) ‘disperse audience’ (“disperses Publikum”) in order to account for the social characteristics of a heterogeneous audience, i.e. one that is characterized by socially largely mixed individuals that are furthermore generally not known to the communicator and mostly not known to each other).<sup>12</sup>

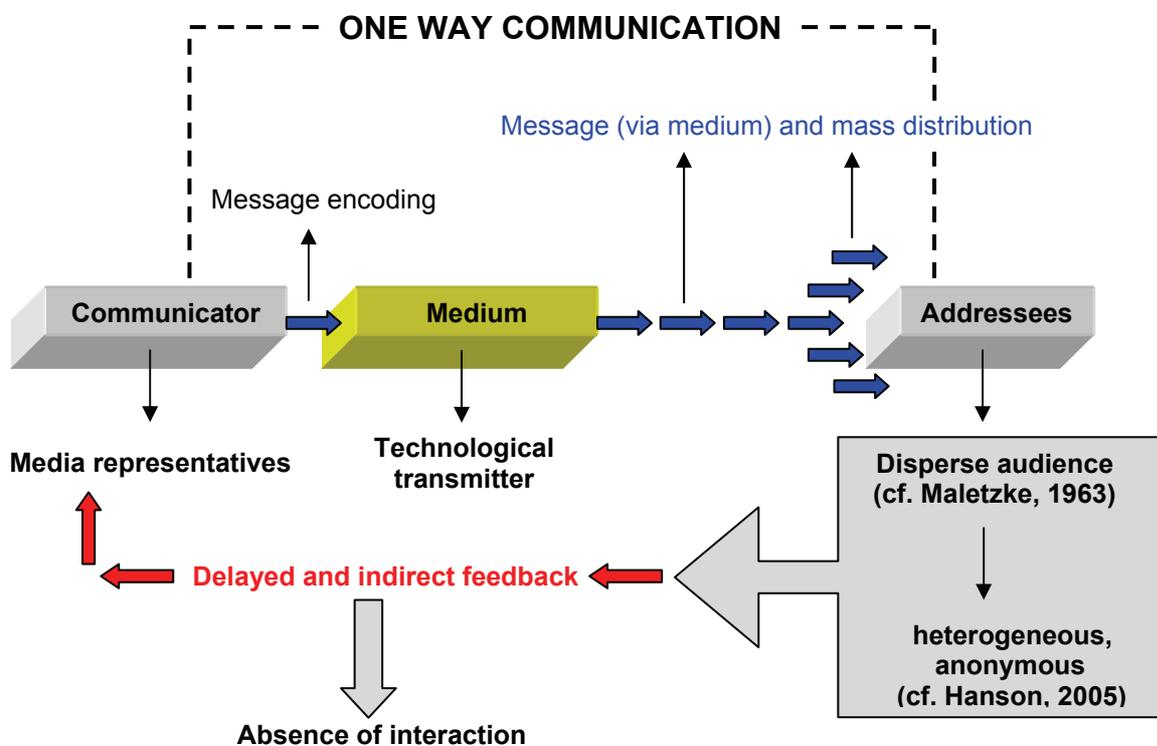


Figure 2: A model of mass communication

The indirectness of the mass communication process achieved in this manner makes the speech situation of mass communication significantly different from that of interpersonal communication. While the latter is characterized by the interlocutors sharing the same place and time of interaction, the former characteristically deviates from interpersonal communication in this respect. That is, the speech situation of mass communication characteristically shows a temporal and spatial distance between the communicator and the

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Maletzke (1963: 24ff., especially 28-30). For the social characteristics of the addressees in mass communication see also Hanson (2005: 12/13).

audience. The resulting non-correspondence of time and place of production and reception of media contents is a typical feature of mass communication.<sup>13</sup> In contrast to this, speaker and hearer sharing the same time and place of communication is a pre-requisite for direct communicative processes such as everyday conversation. Only simultaneity of time and place guarantee immediate and direct feedback to received linguistic input. For this reason, feedback in mass communication is indirect and delayed only, i.e. spatially and temporally shifted.<sup>14</sup>

The indirectness of mass communication complicates successful communication. That is, missing or delayed and indirect feedback in processes of mass communication is significant for the success of communication in so far as it constitutes a problem for the communicator with respect to recipient design. The communicator, correspondingly, can never be sure whether conversational contributions are currently designed according to the communicative needs of the addressees. Thus, the risk that communication may be unsuccessful is generally higher than in direct communicative processes, that is, interpersonal communication. As Baran (2004: 9) points out, in mass communication “[f]eedback comes too late to enable corrections or alterations in communication that fails.” In direct communicative processes the speaker receives constant feedback produced on-line, i.e. in the course of the ongoing

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<sup>13</sup> An exception concerns media contents of radio and television that are not pre-produced but broadcast live to the audience. In such cases, though a spatial distance between communicator and audience is present, production and reception, nevertheless, happen simultaneously. (See also Maletzke, 1963: 23 in this connection).

<sup>14</sup> The traditional print and electronic media try to overcome these limited feedback possibilities. Accordingly, in order to bridge the spatial distance between communicator and audience and to enable (a sense of) participation in the studio discourse, television, for example, makes use of a studio audience representing the audience in front of the television set since the early years of broadcasting. The latter is frequently given the chance to enter the speech situation via phone-ins to enable feedback. (See also Burger, 2005: 13/14). More recently, the traditional media also have an online presence since they have realized the communicative possibilities of the Internet not only as an information device but also as a powerful communicative platform that allows feedback denied or limited via their traditional channels of communication. Thus, television makes use not only of phone-ins but also of e-mails which are sent and received during an ongoing conversation in the studio setting or reach the various editorial offices. Additionally, we may find an Internet forum – an online platform for discussion, often with an expert, – that accompanies a broadcast program and allows feedback and participation even after the actual broadcasting time is over. It is because of such communicative possibilities that the Internet is frequently referred to as an interactive medium offering interactive communication (e.g. Hanson, 2005) by means of which it seems to approach interpersonal communication. As a consequence, the discussion arises whether it is appropriate to speak of the Internet as an actual ‘mass medium’ which is traditionally determined by mass communication, i.e. by the absence of interaction. (See in this connection Burger (2005), chapter 14.1 about the forms of communication present in the Internet and their status as instances of mass communication or interpersonal communication, as well as the general relation of the new media and their communicative processes to the traditional mass media).

Although phone-ins and e-mails are attempts at drawing mass communication near to interpersonal communication, it can be argued that the latter is much more flexible in providing feedback that is yet more immediate and that, for the sake of successful communication, can also be immediately reacted to by the addressee. The feedback provided through phone-ins and e-mails, on the other hand, is still subject to time delays grounded in the use of a technology necessary for respective feedback. Thus, in spite of the speed of the e-mail, the feedback given in this way is nevertheless less spontaneous than in interpersonal communication and therefore always delayed in character.

conversation. This immediate reaction by the addressee may then initiate conversational repair on the part of the initial speaker which can prevent the breakdown of conversation.

Successful communication within processes of mass communication is all the more problematic considering the fact that the addressee, as aforementioned, is not simply a single and in the ideal case a clearly defined, i.e. known, person but, in fact, a heterogeneous, anonymous audience where single viewers have principally different communicative needs that are ideally to be taken care of by those producing media contents. It is obvious that the consideration of all these needs is difficult, if not impossible, to realize in practice.

Furthermore, the two types of interlocutor – media representatives and audience – participating in mass communication are characteristically part of different social spheres: on the one hand, the public sphere of institutional processes, that is, as it is of relevance here, television production, and, on the other hand, the private sphere of private matters. These social spheres – ideally – feature different communicative styles, namely public/institutional talk versus everyday conversation (as a form of interpersonal communication). In fact, this constitutes another serious factor to be considered in the production of successful (mass) communication. Fairclough (1995: 10) refers to this as “the tension between public and private” emphasizing that television contents are produced within the public sphere of the institution television but “are received and consumed overwhelmingly in private contexts” (1995: 8). Contemporary television tries to overcome this communicative tension by deliberately blurring the traditionally acknowledged boundaries between the public and the private sphere. One means of doing this is the conversationalization of public language that is in accordance with a general development towards entertainment and that involves convergence towards the audience’s own ways of speaking.

Conversationalization is in two ways significant. Firstly, in mass communication processes where successful communication, as has been argued, cannot be guaranteed, entertainment (and therefore conversationalization) is regarded as an appropriate element to bring about the success of communication which is then revealed in viewer ratings. This is based on the assumption that the audience shows an obvious social need for entertainment.<sup>15</sup> Secondly, also a linguistic need can be stated for the audience. That is, from the viewpoint of recipient design, the blurring of traditional boundaries may be regarded as a logical consequence simply of a process of linguistic adaptation, i.e. conversationalization, to the communicative needs of an audience characterized by the use of (informal) everyday conversation.

Apart from hypothesized possible social and linguistic needs, the blurring of these boundaries is additionally the natural result of the simple contact between the public and the private sphere as created by television via technically transmitting communication within the

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<sup>15</sup> The need to be entertained finds its expression in a uses and gratifications approach within media studies. Accordingly, entertainment can be viewed as a kind of gratification, that is, the result of audience members’ active participation in the selection of media contents that fit their particular interests and needs – such as entertainment - at the time of media consumption. On uses and gratifications see, for example, Smith (1995: 148f.).

institutional frame to the private homes. That is, a lively and frequent contact between the two classically separated spheres through the mass medium television is likely to encourage an approach between the two.

Speaking of transmission, as has been argued, the indirectness of mass communication is based on a technological device – the actual mass medium – that is located between communicator and audience in the communicative process (cf. figure 2). With regard to television, this device includes both transmitter, i.e. sender, *and* receiver. That is, television characteristically requires the use of a technology both for the transmission and reception of media contents (cf. figure 3 below, which is a schematic illustration of mass communication specified for television). In televised mass communication transmitter and receiver are located between the communicator – the representatives of television – as information source and the audience as information destination. The transmitter transports the message to the private homes encoded as audio-visual signal where it is decoded in the receiver (television set) and thereby reaches a disperse audience. This process of message transfer is highly different from interpersonal communication in so far as sender and receiver here are characteristically part of the technology that is located between the actual communicator and the actual addressees thus turning communication into an indirect process. In interpersonal communication the directness of the communicative process involves the correspondence between ‘sender’ and ‘speaker’ as well as ‘receiver’ and ‘hearer’ (cf. figure 1).

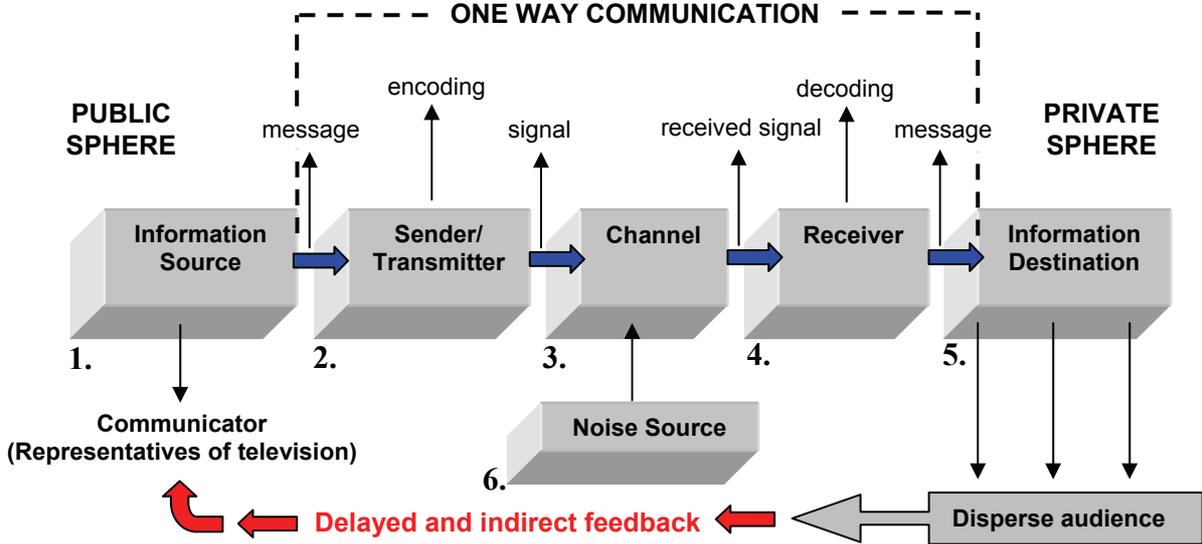


Figure 3: The way of the audio-visual television signal in mass communication

It should be noted that figure 3 is a simplified model of mass communication reduced to pure signal transfer. (The same is valid for figure 2). Accordingly, it is not considered here that mass communication actually involves more complex processes (as does interpersonal

communication). That is, it includes among other things decisions not only on *what* to communicate but also on *how* to communicate – in this case – television contents structurally, i.e. with regard to linguistic and, additionally, visual style. (As an audio-visual medium, television communicates through the spoken and visual channel). In practice, those decisions are based on how to appeal best to the audience thus providing for the success of communication in tying viewers to a program. In short, the economic side of mass communication is left out, i.e. all those considerations included in the communicative process with regard to successful communication of contents.<sup>16</sup>

Stylistically, figure 3 is based on the model of communication that was established within a mathematical theory of communication by Shannon and Weaver (1949) and is supplemented by the elements characteristic of mass communication with special reference to television.<sup>17</sup>

The way of the television signal is from the information source (1.) located in the public sphere and constituted by the communicator – the representatives of television – to the information destination (5.) situated in the private sphere and represented by the (numerous viewers constituting the) audience. The stages the signal passes and the processes of change it undergoes during transmission from point 1. to point 5. can be described as follows: The communicator (1.) selects among a greater complex of possible information that piece (s)he wants to communicate and transforms it into a message. The selection and transformation process is a characteristic part of editorial work within the institutional settings of television. The final articulation of the message happens in the studio where it is televised. Televising is performed via the sender/transmitter (2.) encoding the original message into an audio-visual signal. Encoding takes place within the television station transforming the message and further transporting the signal via satellite or television tower functioning as sender. The way of the signal from sender to receiver is through the channel, for example, cable (3.). On its way from sender to receiver the signal may be disturbed by a noise source (6.), visible at home in a bad quality of the television image. The receiver of the incoming signal (4.) is, for example, the television aerial or the satellite dish. The actual decoding of the audio-visual signal into the original message happens in the television set. The message then reaches its information destination: the audience (5.).<sup>18</sup>

The social characteristics of this audience significantly contribute to the distinction between mass communication and interpersonal communication, which is characterized by

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<sup>16</sup> For the processes involved in mass communication on the part of the communicator (and the audience) see, for example, Maletzke (1963: 37ff.) and Kübler (1994) for relevant criticism of Maletzke's model and discussion of alternative models of the processes involved in mass communication.

<sup>17</sup> Shannon, Claude E. and Weaver, W. 1949. *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. (Published in German as *Mathematische Grundlagen der Informationstheorie* in 1976 by Oldenbourg, München). Illustrations of their model can be found, for example, in Kübler (1994) or Auer (1999). Reduced to the technical side of communication, i.e. the transmission of electric signals only, the model is insufficient for an explanation of interpersonal communication but regains validity for the features of mass communication.

<sup>18</sup> A similar model of mass communication via the example of television is illustrated in Turow (2009: 19).

clearly defined interlocutors differing in their degree of familiarity. The particular constellation of the participants in both types of communication defines the potential access to the ongoing communicative process, which is either nearly unlimited in the case of mass communication where messages are directed towards an enormously large number of audience members, or which is restricted in the case of interpersonal communication where messages are directed exclusively towards a clearly defined group of speaker/hearers determining the speech situation. The overall character of communication is therefore either public (for mass communication) or private (for interpersonal communication, e.g. everyday conversation). Accordingly, Maletzke (1963: 24) speaks of public communication (“öffentliche Kommunikation”) versus private communication (“private Kommunikation”).

Among the many approaches to mass communication that have been given, finally Maletzke’s (1963) classical and frequently quoted definition of it shall function here to summarize what has been said so far on the nature of mass communication. Mass communication, correspondingly, denotes that special form of communication in which

Aussagen öffentlich (also ohne begrenzte und personell definierte Empfängerschaft) durch technische Verbreitungsmittel (Medien) indirekt (also bei räumlicher oder zeitlicher oder raumzeitlicher Distanz zwischen den Kommunikationspartnern) und einseitig (also ohne Rollenwechsel zwischen Aussagenden und Aufnehmenden) an ein disperses Publikum [...] vermittelt werden (Maletzke, 1963: 32).

The specific characteristics of interpersonal communication and mass communication that have been discussed in the course of this chapter are listed again in table 1 below.

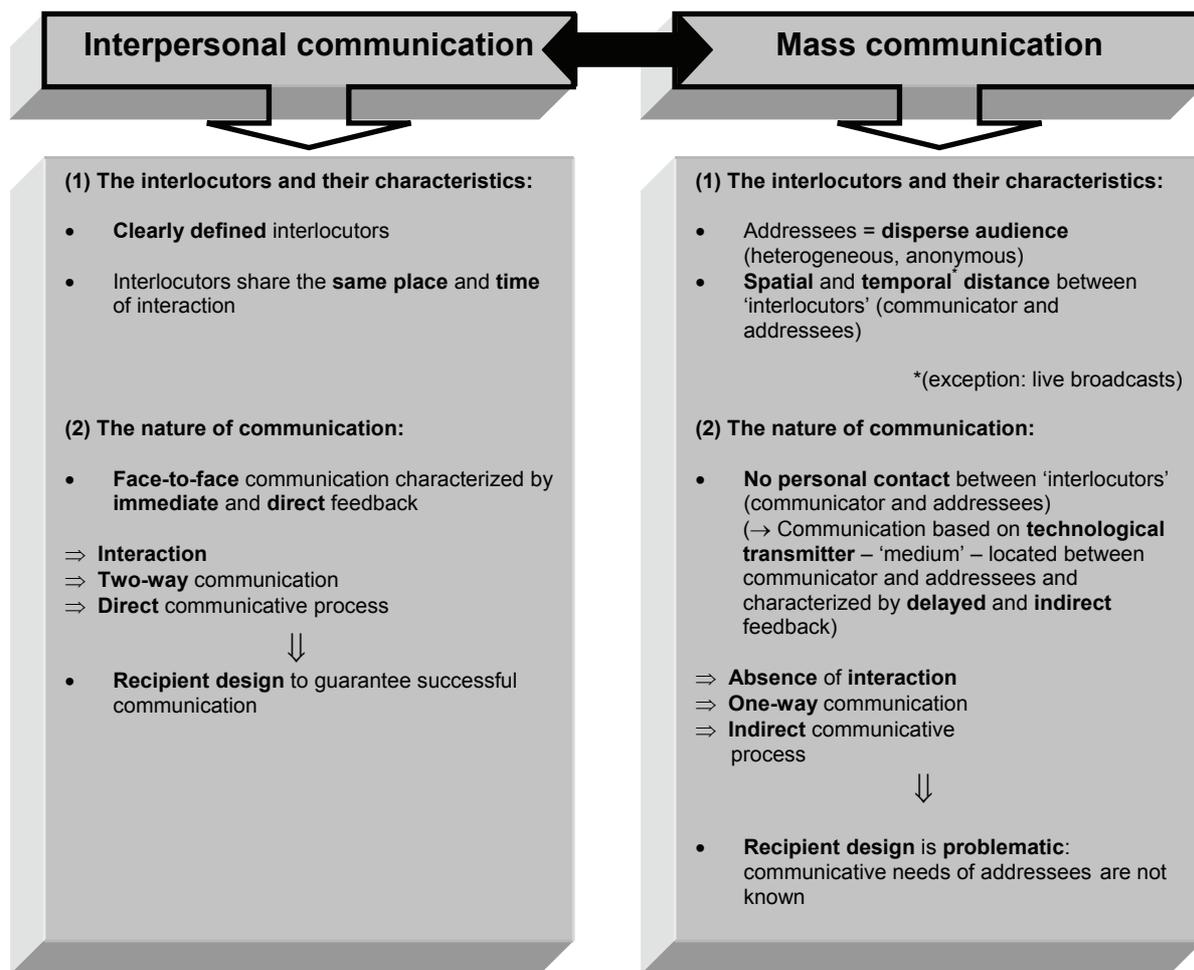


Table 1: The characteristics of interpersonal communication and mass communication compared

## 1.2 The functions of the mass media in society

It is discussed in chapter 1.1 that the form of communication characterizing the mass media may be determined as 'public communication' (cf. Maletzke, 1963) resulting from the potentially unlimited access that is granted to produced media contents by the media via their technology-based multiple distribution to large, heterogeneous audiences. The omnipresent status that the mass media seem to have worldwide in societies based on different political systems is evident in the fact that every member of these societies makes use of one or the other mass medium, usually even several mass media, everyday. (Thus, we may read the newspaper in the morning, listen to the radio on our way to work and watch the evening news on television). It is all the more evident that their status in society and their ability to reach large audiences supply the media with a potential influence and general communicative power of enormous social significance. Evidence for the communicative power of the media seems to be found in the media's frequently discussed capacity for agenda setting: the media

determine the topics that are of central social importance. That is, they ‘set the agenda’ for what is important and should be talked about in society.<sup>19</sup>

It seems justified then to demand a social responsibility of the media that results from their powerful status in society and, determining this responsibility, to ask for respective functions they should fulfil in communicating their contents to the members of society. Such functions are twofold in character: On the one hand, they pertain to social functions, i.e. functions of the media within society as a whole. Demands for social responsibility on the part of the mass media in this respect are reflected in the three classical political functions that are explicitly ascribed to the media especially within German political science: information, articulation (involvement into the formation of opinion), as well as control and critique.<sup>20</sup>

The functions are viewed as normative and democratic tasks of the mass media (cf. Delhaes, 2002: 52) in order to produce educated and informed, i.e. emancipated, citizens of society. Their fulfilment provides for a correct functioning of the political system (cf. Meyn, 2001: 309). Accordingly, while executing their function of information, the mass media create a public forum for various social matters that concern the different interests and opinions of the citizens in society. Information should happen in an objective, complete and comprehensible way so as to allow the citizen’s critical discussion and judgement of public events/affairs that are portrayed within the media (cf. Meyn, 2001: 34).<sup>21</sup>

The media’s active contribution to the formation of opinion in the society in which they exist happens via public discussion, i.e. articulation, of social matters/questions within the mass media that are of general public interest (cf. Meyn, 2001: 35).

Finally, the mass media are ideally supposed to perform constant control and critique of political processes and social matters by means of which they stabilize and watch over (the functioning of) the political and social system in which they exist (cf. Meyn, 2001: 37 f.).

In practice, the political functions generally overlap. Central to their fulfilment is that the mass media address all social matters/questions that are of general public interest within society. They do this via informing, by means of which they simultaneously perform control and critique and in this way also contribute to the formation of opinion.

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<sup>19</sup> On agenda setting see, for example, McCombs (2004) or Maurer (2010) who provides a detailed introduction into the basics and history of the theory.

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Wildenmann and Kaltefleiter (1965) for an early and detailed discussion. With reference to Wildenmann and Kaltefleiter (1965) see Delhaes (2002). For a short overview of the functions you may also consider, for example, Maaßen (1996) or Meyn (2001).

<sup>21</sup> On the demands for objectivity, completeness and comprehensibility see Wildenmann and Kaltefleiter (1965: 16ff.). The concrete demand for objective information – the transmission of facts unbiased in character – has obvious consequences for the language that should ideally be used to carry out this function. That is, objective information implies a form of language that expresses this objectivity, i.e. one that is ideally characterized by the absence of speaker perspective and that consequently reflects linguistic neutrality thus allowing the members of society the formation of their own, individually different, opinions and perspectives. It is assumed then that there is, in fact, a kind of function-specific language, that is, a type of language (style) that is adapted to (the requirements of) a particular communicative function such as information. (See in this connection the introduction to part III (p. 198ff.) on the assumption of function-specific talk with reference to information and entertainment on television).

In fact, those explicitly stated and clearly defined ideal-typical political functions of the media in society as they have been described for German mass media within classical political science are in general not determined with the same explicitness elsewhere.<sup>22</sup> (Blumler and Gurevitch (1995) may be regarded as an exception here, providing a comparable account of the – social and political – functions of the mass media in democratic societies).<sup>23</sup>

Yet, in the USA for example, the demanded social responsibility of the mass media finds its expression in the existence of *The Social Responsibility Theory of the Press* (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956) which is regarded now as the standard for media in the United States (cf. Baran, 2004: 477). It is a normative theory in that it describes “how media should *ideally* operate in a given system of social values” (Baran, 2004: 477).<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, any concrete communicative process performed by the media fundamentally entails that the “[m]edia should accept and fulfill certain obligations to society,” (Baran, 2004: 477 with reference to McQuail, 1987). Determining both rights and obligations of the media, social responsibility theory postulates ethical guidelines which shall govern journalistic practice within the United States. As a means of self-regulation, relevant guidelines have been normatively formulated by the media industry for the work of different media organizations as “formal codes or standards of ethical behavior” (Baran, 2004: 486) involving the stylistic presentation of media contents as a matter of moral reasoning (offensive content, privacy of persons).<sup>25</sup> Next to the classical political functions ascribed to the media within political science, such media self-regulating codes of ethics for journalistic modes of operation also exist in Germany in the form of a press codex formulated by the German Press Council (*Deutscher Presserat*) – an institution established by media professionals for the rights and obligations of German media practice.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> The German explicitness is probably connected to the direct derivation of the media functions from article 5 of the German Constitution, i.e. general freedom of opinion, information and the press. Cf. in this connection Delhaes (2002: 52): “Neben ihrer verfassungsrechtlichen Stellung in Deutschland haben Medien darüber hinausgehende Funktionen, die zwar nicht gesetzlich verankert sind, aber aus der Rechtsstellung und dem politischen System heraus allgemein angenommen werden.“

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Blumler and Gurevitch (1995: 97): The socio-political tasks of the media consist in the “[s]urveillance of the sociopolitical environment, reporting developments likely to impinge, positively or negatively, on the welfare of citizens. Meaningful agenda setting, identifying the key issues of the day, [...]. [...]. Dialogue across a diverse range of views, as well as between power holders [...] and mass publics. Mechanisms for holding officials to account for how they have exercised power. Incentives for citizens to learn, choose and become involved, rather than merely to follow and kibitz over the political process. [...]. A sense of respect for the audience member, as potentially concerned and able to make sense of his or her political environment.”

<sup>24</sup> Italics are taken over from the author.

<sup>25</sup> E.g. for television (electronic media): the *Code of Broadcast News Ethics* (by the Radio-Television News Directors Association); for the press: the *Statement of Principles* (by the American Society of Newspaper Editors); Also, more generally: the *Code of Ethics* (by the Society of Professional Journalists). Relevant codes of ethics also exist for advertising and public relations (see Baran, 2004: 486).

The mentioned codes of ethics can be viewed online via: <http://www.spj.org/> (Society of Professional Journalists); <http://asne.org/> (American Society of Newspaper Editors); <http://www.rtnda.org/> (Radio-Television News Directors Association; now: Radio Television Digital News Association). (Last access: 09.03.2011).

For more information on media industry ethics see Baran (2004: 478ff.) or, for example, Hanson (2005), chapter 15, as well as Turow (2009), chapter 3.

<sup>26</sup> The German press codex can be viewed online via: <http://www.presserat.info/> (last access: 09.03.2011).

As concerns media functions in Great Britain, Fairclough (1995) mentions the democratic functions of journalism. Journalistic work correspondingly includes “the production of descriptions which can be seen as impartial and objective, but also entertainment, [and] social control [...]” (1995: 86).

The (normative) functions of the mass media in society – either outlined as political functions within political science and/or as self-regulating codes of ethics governing journalistic work – reflect a similar role of the media in Germany, Great Britain and the United States. Baran (2004: 512) explains this with the existence of the western concept of mass media which guides western media systems. The similar character of western mass media and thus their functions in society are based on similar political systems.

In 1948 already, Lasswell had determined three functions of communication in society which influenced a functional approach to mass communication within (early) mass communications research (cf. McQuail, 1969: 85): (1) surveillance of the environment, (2) correlation of the parts of society in responding to the environment, and (3) transmission of the social heritage from one generation to the next (Lasswell, 1948: 38). Transferred to the social functions of mass communication, surveillance involves the transmission of media contents and refers to the process whereby media consumers use the media in order to get informed about what is going on in the world. That is, the media effectively function as a ‘window to the world’ by means of which media users survey the world beyond their direct experiences (cf. Hanson, 2005: 27). It should be noted, however, that it is not the media users alone who are engaged in an active process of surveillance. Rather the media serve as effective observers of the social environment themselves (cf. the political functions of control and critique) and it is their correlation of events – the selection and interpretation of events in the social environment in various editorial processes – that guides the (actual form of) media coverage of these events (cf. Hanson, 2005: 27). Finally, transmission denotes the role of the media in the transmission of culture-specific norms and values as performed via socialization – the integration of individuals into the society they live in (cf. Hanson, 2005: 28).

Lasswell’s (1948) three functions of communication were taken up again later by Wright (1964 [1960]) who supplemented them with the additional function of entertainment in an attempt to set up an inventory of mass communication functions and to formulate the significance of mass communication processes for both society and its individual members (cf. McQuail, 1969: 87).

Apart from the functions of the mass media for the sake of society as a whole – such as the classical political functions that have been determined for German mass media – respective functions can then, in fact, also be classified from the perspective of the individual addressee of mass communication (cf. surveillance which focuses on the media user). Accordingly, mass media functions can also refer to those functions that are ascribed to the media based on

the needs and interests of their individual users. Such individual social functions of the mass media are a matter of study within media uses and effects research and include, for example, entertainment as a possible function of mass communication within a uses and gratifications approach.<sup>27</sup>

In chapter two, concerned with the institutional nature of the mass medium television, it will be shown that the mentioned social responsibility expected from the media, which is a consequence of their omnipresent status and enormous communicative range in society, in fact, does not only refer to respective communicative functions to be ideally fulfilled in the transmission of media contents to large audiences but rather also involves particular linguistic demands. These demands are the concrete result of the public character of mass communication (cf. chapter 1.1) and consist in a particular type of language/a particular way of using language that is suited for the public and consequently suited to be broadcast to large numbers of addressees. In the course of the linguistic analysis of television language by means of selected television formats it will be illustrated that the mass medium and institution television often substantially deviates from its social responsibility in this respect featuring highly conversationalized language that stands in sharp contrast to the stated linguistic demands.

Important in this connection are the two classically defined media functions of information and entertainment which can be determined as the central communicative functions underlying the conception of the television formats that are chosen for analysis here. It is argued correspondingly that a particular format is characterized conceptually by a particular communicative function which is then realized linguistically by the presence of function-specific language (see the introduction to part III). In the case of the news format, for example, the communicative function is (objective) information which is performed via a type of language that executes this function in the best possible way. Such function-specific language then should be ideally characterized by its linguistic objectivity, i.e. the absence of subjective speaker perspective.

## **CHAPTER 2 The institution television**

Though we tend to think of television mainly as a mass medium, it is also an institution that is part of the public sphere and that is correspondingly characterized by particular institutional processes, that is, the production of television contents and their broadcast to an audience. Nevertheless, there is, however, a fundamental difference between the institution ‘television’ and the traditional institutions of law, health or education that results from the ultimate nature

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<sup>27</sup> Cf. page 14 for additional information and respective literature in this connection.

For a short overview of the social functions that have been determined for mass communication see also, for example, McQuail (1969) or Kunczik (1977), who considers both German and Anglo-American approaches.

of television as a mass medium. That is, while communication taking place within the mentioned traditional institutions characteristically stays within the institutional frame, communication produced in the institutional settings of television – the studio – is specifically designed to be broadcast to a heterogeneous audience. Thus, as has been indicated in chapter 1.1, the institution television typically features both interpersonal communication in the studio and mass communication as soon as interaction in the studio is televised. This has consequences for the nature of the institutional frame of television which, as is illustrated in chapter 2.1, is then actually split up into multiple levels.

## **2.1 The characteristics of the institutional frame of television**

Figure 4 below shows the multi-level nature of the institutional frame of television that is based on the occurrence of both interpersonal communication and mass communication. The institutional frame of television thus is established by two types of communicative processes which, as we have seen, significantly differ from each other, and which ultimately lead to the division of the actual frame into multiple levels with each level entailing one type of communicative process, i.e. either interpersonal or mass communication. Accordingly, figure 4 illustrates that the actual institutional frame characterizing television is consequently constructed from a number of individual frames of interaction and it would seem indeed more appropriate then to speak of the institutional *frames* of television with interpersonal communication within the television studio constituting the institutional speech situation which establishes the first frame of interaction. The second frame of interaction is defined by the process of mass communication whereby the communicative activities taking place within the first frame of interaction are televised, i.e. broadcast to an audience.<sup>28</sup>

Finally, there is also a third frame of interaction that arises in connection with mass communication. That is, television contents, as a rule, are not received uncommented by the audience. Rather they are the trigger for further discussion of what has been received among certain audience groups. Such discussions may be twofold: on the one hand, truly content-based, i.e. focussing on the exchange of information and, on the other hand, directed towards pure relationship management in the form of gossip. Whatever the actual character of audience discussion, by means of transmitting produced contents to large audiences, television has the capacity to create an additional frame of interaction via stimulating face-to-

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<sup>28</sup> See in this connection also Burger (2005: 19ff.) who speaks of the existence of characteristic ‘circles of communication’ (“Kommunikationskreise”): a first, or inner, circle which corresponds to the first frame of interaction, comprising interpersonal communication in the studio, and a second, or outer, circle which involves the mass communication process, referring to the dual directedness of communication taking place in the inner circle which is also always performed in view of an existing television audience. The communicative situation is even more complex as soon as a studio audience is present. In such cases, the directedness of inner circle communication will be threefold in character acknowledging both the studio *and* the television audience and it will consequently lead to the formation of three circles of communication. (See also chapter 5.2.2.1 on the institutional speech situation of television).

face communication among audience members. Considering the limited feedback possibilities in the traditional mass communication process, it may be argued then that feedback is – in some way or another – always given but mainly stays within the audience and thus within the private sphere as the outmost frame of interaction.<sup>29</sup>

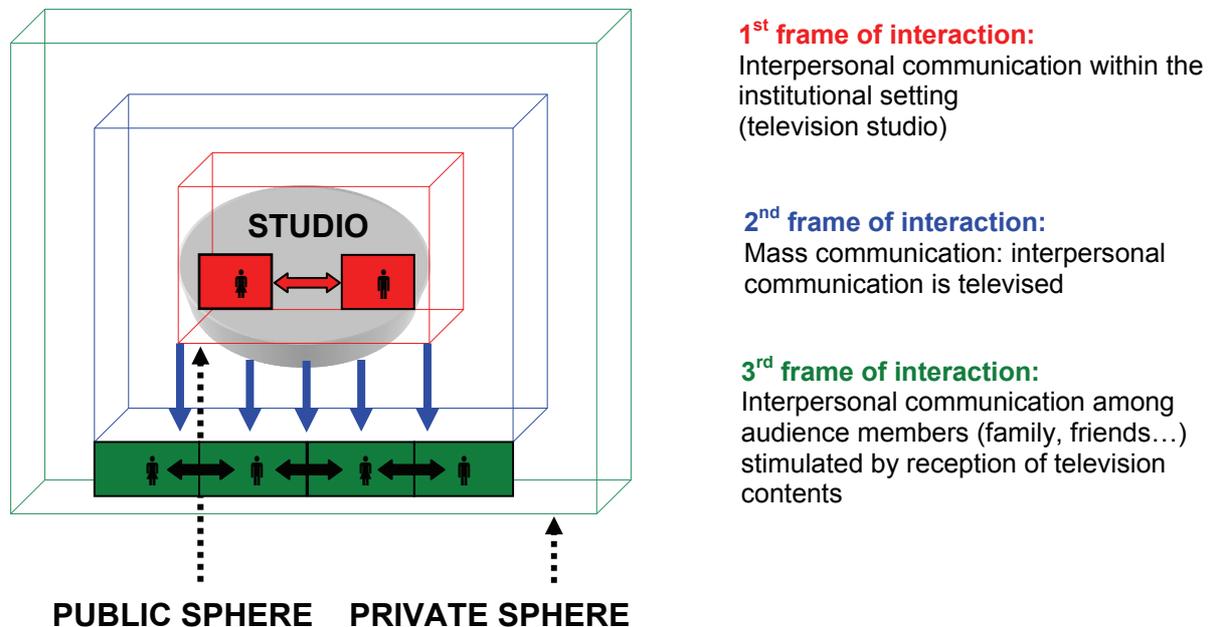


Figure 4: The multi-level institutional frame of television

For a description of the linguistic character of the institution television, the first and second frame of interaction are of interest here. Regarding the former, it is exclusively communication that takes place and is produced *immediately* in the institutional setting of the television studio – either live, live-on-tape, or non-live, i.e. pre-produced – which is of importance for the current purpose of illustrating possible institutional talk and conversationalization of television language within the institutional frame. Accordingly, this refers to news programs, different talk show formats and diverse types of magazines all produced in the studio, but it excludes TV-series of any kind as well as movies featured on television as these do not constitute concrete ways in which the institution *as such*, i.e. via their representatives, ‘talks’ to its audience.

It should be noted in this connection that it would be misleading to claim the exclusive occurrence of face-to-face communication within the first frame of interaction where two or

<sup>29</sup> The multi-faceted audience reactions are a matter of research into the uses and effects of the media. See in this connection, for example, Smith (1995: 141ff.) for a general historical overview of media effects research. For more detailed information on ‘uses’ and ‘effects’ see also Kübler (2000), chapter 3 and 4. Alternatively see Kübler (2003), chapter 9 and 10.

more interlocutors are present. When we consider the news format, for example, we find that especially German public-service broadcasting makes use of the classical news reader who is situated alone in the studio reading out the news to an audience. Interaction between interlocutors within the first frame of interaction does accordingly not take place; instead language use in this case has exclusive monolog character.

The second frame of interaction – the actual process of mass communication – is of concrete interest here insofar as the character of television as an institution places particular demands on the form of language to be ideally applied on television when broadcast to a mass audience. These demands are ultimately connected to the public character of mass communication (cf. chapter 1.1), which has consequences for the language used within the first frame of interaction in the form that conversationalization (of this language) stands in sharp contrast to the demands of the institutional nature of television. To explain this in more detail, figure 2 and figure 3 both illustrate that public interaction is communicated to a large and heterogeneous audience whereby the institution television creates a contact between the public sphere of television production and the private sphere of television consumption (content reception) and by means of this establishes a special kind of public access and public communication. As television provides this potentially unlimited access to communication taking place within the institutional setting (of the television studio), the public speech situation it creates when compared to the traditional institutions of law, health and education is thus extraordinary in being (nearly) unrestricted. Its overall status among other institutions in the public sphere may therefore be regarded as a special one. This is the case because, in contrast to television, more traditional physical representations of institutions such as school or university can restrict access to a certain degree, although they are generally public settings. Accordingly, school can limit its access to pupils while university can limit its access to students only.

Its particular status in the public sphere as resulting from the extreme public character of the speech situation then consequently leads to a special responsibility on the part of the institution television within the public sphere for a type of language that is suited for the general public, i.e. the enormous number of people it reaches. The type of language it uses to communicate with the masses should thus ideally be public/institutional in character in accordance with the special kind of public access it provides. This demand then theoretically leads to the maintenance of different communicative styles characterizing the public and the private sphere and thus it stands against a blurring of the traditionally drawn boundaries between the two social spheres through conversationalization of public language as referred to above. Clearly then, the extreme public created by television via unlimited access to its speech situation – in theory – requires the use of public/institutional talk by means of which the institution television expresses its responsibility towards the general public. Nevertheless, contemporary television often deviates from this theoretical demand in heavily using everyday conversation (see especially chapter 7.2.1 on talk show talk).

The following chapter takes up the occurrence of everyday conversation within the institutional settings of television in a discussion of tabloidization as a structural phenomenon characterizing contemporary mass media practices.

### **CHAPTER 3 Tabloidization and conversationalization**

The term ‘tabloidization’ (German: ‘Boulevardisierung’)<sup>30</sup> is used to denote relatively recent structural changes in the production of contemporary media contents by the traditional print and electronic media, that is press and television, as triggered by increasing commercialization and a resultant shift towards entertainment.<sup>31</sup> These structural changes in order to raise the entertaining value of produced media contents most generally amount to actual content choice and stylistic – i.e. visual and linguistic – presentation of chosen contents that is deemed an appropriate means of content realization. Media production techniques thus typically involve communicators’ decisions about *what* to present and *how* to present it and tabloidization in this respect, at least concerning recent developments within television, describes a process affecting contemporary media practice in such a way as to move media outputs characteristically in the direction of becoming more ‘tabloid’ (and hence more entertaining) in overall structure on both the content and stylistic level. That is, in reference to the tabloid press, tabloidized media outputs are the result of an adoption by media practitioners of narrative techniques characteristic of the tabloid press – a development which has been devalued in similar manner by media practitioners and media critics as constituting a decline in journalistic standards, especially with respect to news production, which reflects a movement in focus away from information towards entertainment of (target) audiences. A central aspect of this criticism relates to the potential subversion of the political functions ideally ascribed to the mass media within democratic societies that is assumed to underlie such a shift in production focus. As Gripsrud (2008: 34) points out, tabloidization is seen as “[connoting] a decay, a lowering of journalistic standards that ultimately undermines the ideal functions of mass media in liberal democracies.” Brants (1998: 316) addresses the crisis for political communication that is often assumed to result from such a deviation from journalistic standards asking “whether [infotainment] has changed systematically the content of television’s portrayal of politics and whether, as many claim, this has resulted in and, at the same time, is proof of a crisis in political communication’s role in democracy.” Implying a decay of serious journalism, tabloidization, therefore, has been prominently regarded as ultimate threat to democracy and democratic values as it effectively undermines the tasks of objective information and education of citizens associated with the mass media in liberal

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Esser (1999), Holly (2008).

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Esser (1999: 291): “‘Tabloidization’ is the direct result of commercialized media, most often promoted by the pressures of advertisers to reach large audiences.”

democracies (cf. Sparks, 2000; Glynn, 2000; Esser, 1999).<sup>32</sup> This threat also finds its characteristic expression in the catch phrase ‘infotainment scare’ (cf. Brants, 1998: 315). ‘Infotainment’ – a blend of ‘information’ and ‘entertainment’ – is often used synonymously with ‘tabloidization’ to denote a movement by contemporary commercialized media towards entertainment as foremost aim of media content production. Wittwen (1995) points out that the term is highly imprecise with respect to the relation between information and entertainment it actually denotes: does it indicate entertaining information, informative entertainment or a mixture of both information and entertainment?<sup>33</sup> Brants (1998: 327) argues in a similar yet more precise manner clearly focusing on the relation, i.e. proportion, of the term’s components in a media format as addressed by Wittwen’s (1995) notions of ‘informative entertainment’ and ‘entertaining information’: “Infotainment is situated between the two poles [information and entertainment] and mixes political informative elements in entertainment programmes or entertainment characteristics in traditionally informative programmes.”

In fact, an attempt at a precise definition of the term ‘tabloidization’ turns out to be equally difficult in practice, let alone of one that is applicable and valid universally within the liberal democracies for which it has been determined. Indeed, it has been repeatedly pointed out that tabloidization is a rather fuzzy concept that is hard to grasp in its full entirety. Accordingly, Esser (1999: 291), for example, speaks of ‘tabloidization’ as a “diffuse [and] multidimensional concept.” This can be explained by the fact that tabloidization is anything else than a uniform process across the societies in which it occurs. Not only does it proceed gradually as a long-term phenomenon rather than a sudden one, but also is it a feature occurring in liberal democracies with media markets differing in both their internal organization of media institutions and in the historical development of these institutions (e.g. the relationship between public-service and private, commercial broadcasters in the case of television history). Tabloidization hence understandably resists easy definition as a precise scientific account of the concept would necessarily have to consider concretely existing differences in the overall structure of studied media markets and market-specific historical developments of the mass media. There can be no accurate definition of tabloidization without looking at the particular media system in which this process is situated. Structural and historical differences are significant in so far as they may have an impact on the actual pace and extent of tabloidization in a particular media market. Accordingly, while it may be appropriate to speak of tabloidization in a particular case, it may not be justified in another

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Glynn’s (2000: 7, 17) notions of a “mission of public edification and “enlightenment”” and “the *ideal* of rationalistic critical publicity” (italics are taken over from the author).

<sup>33</sup> “Meint also Infotainment unterhaltende Information, informierende Unterhaltung oder eine Mischung von Information und Unterhaltung?” (Wittwen, 1995: 16). Wittwen (1995) provides an elaborate introduction to history, use and constituent features of ‘infotainment’.

one. The concept of tabloidization, therefore, shows an inherent complexity that complicates its proper interculturally valid definition.<sup>34</sup>

Nevertheless, it is possible to name features of tabloidization that characterize the process in general and hence also apply across media markets. Since the term ‘tabloidization’ draws on the term ‘tabloid’, the latter is the appropriate starting point for a closer inspection of the former. A term originally used within print journalism, ‘tabloid’ (or: half-broadsheet) denotes, firstly, a particular newspaper format that differs in overall size from the ‘broadsheet’ as a second newspaper format in being smaller and hence more compact and easier to handle. In this respect, ‘tabloid’ is a term that is characteristically used within the printing industry, i.e. technical newspaper production. Secondly, among press journalists ‘tabloid’ and ‘broadsheet’ each refer to a particular type of newspaper (associated) with a particular type of content and stylistic forms of presentation that is typically described – and often devalued – as either ‘sensationalist’ in character in the case of the tabloid or as ‘more serious’ and ‘quality-oriented’ in the case of the broadsheet. Both the stated sensationalism of the tabloid, on the one hand, and the acclaimed seriousness of the broadsheet, on the other hand, are immediately connected to characteristically featured and favored topics and their preferred visual<sup>35</sup> and linguistic realization. Accordingly, while the broadsheet is fundamentally associated with hard news reporting, i.e. coverage of ‘hard’ facts – events and states of affairs – concerning a society’s political, economic and social system, the tabloid has been defined to predominantly focus on the content level on soft news – ‘light’ human interest stories involving ‘light’ entertainment including sports – and spot news of a scandalous nature concerned with crime and catastrophes, while typically neglecting hard news. This also generally applies to

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<sup>34</sup> Cf. Esser (1999: 293/294): “‘Tabloidization’ is a process, i.e. something which takes place over time. It has therefore to be examined from a long-term perspective. [...] ‘Tabloidization’ is no internationally uniform process. It is likely that studies of different environments will reveal that there are circumstances in which ‘tabloidization’ proceeds rapidly, and others in which there seems to be no substantial change. ‘Tabloidization’ has therefore to be examined with reference to cultural and historical differences between countries. [...] [T]abloidization can only be studied adequately with a long-term, cross-national study of quality media outlets using a broad range of empirical measures and analytical tools.” As an example of internationally differing processes of tabloidization Esser (1999) refers to the press in Great Britain and Germany. In Great Britain the national (conservative) broadsheet papers are generally much more affected by tabloidization tendencies due to market pressures than are those in Germany. E.g. while in London we find several daily broadsheets that compete for a readership on the market, a similar ‘conglomeration’ of broadsheets in one and the same urban area, i.e. city, is characteristically absent in Germany. This has obvious consequences for degrees of tabloidization to be found in the traditional broadsheets internationally (cf. Esser, 1999: 296ff.).

Furthermore, there is a significant difference between what is referred to as ‘tabloid’ in Great Britain, on the one hand, and in the United States on the other hand. Thus, while ‘tabloid’ in Britain denotes the daily newsstand tabloid newspapers, ‘tabloid’ in the USA typically designates the weekly published magazines referred to as ‘supermarket tabloids’ (ibid.: 295). The reason for this central difference in terminological specification is connected to the fact that in the history of the national press in the United States the daily tabloid could not succeed to the same extent as it did in Great Britain because of an increasing influence of the radio as a recently developing new mass medium in the 1920s (ibid.). See in this connection also Sparks (2000: 5ff.) who argues in a similar manner on the basis of a comparison between U.S.-American tabloids and their European counterparts: “Different countries have different media systems, each with their own distinctive features and histories, so we cannot expect to map the experience of one directly on to another” (ibid.: 5).

<sup>35</sup> This includes relevant considerations of page layout such as font size of headlines and visual support via additional photographic images.

tabloidized news coverage by the ‘serious’ print (= broadsheets) and broadcast media that “are moving toward the news values of the tabloids” (cf. Sparks, 2000: 3 and 10). Hence, the concept of tabloidization “implies that there is a process of change going on that is making formerly serious news media “go tabloid”” (Sparks, 2000: 17). In concrete terms this process of change according to Sparks (2000: 7) pertains to greater use of visual material, a shortening of articles and a “[shift in] the balance of editorial copy away from hard news reporting toward soft news, features, and columns.” (It is worth noting that a general equation of tabloid format with tabloid content is not appropriate. Not only the classical ‘tabloids’ are published in the tabloid format. Meanwhile the ‘broadsheets’ have also, in some instances, adopted the compact and handy tabloid newspaper format. Broadsheets hence can well ‘go tabloid’ in two senses: in terms of layout as well as content).<sup>36</sup> Prototypical examples of the tabloid in the press are the German *Bild*, the British *Sun* and *Daily Mirror*. Weekly published supermarket tabloids in the United States include the *National Enquirer*.

The negative evaluation of the tabloid and the positive image of the broadsheet find their expression in popular terminological dichotomies alluding to the seeming quality of journalistic practice that is ascribed to the newspaper types. Thus, we find ‘tabloid press’ contrasted with ‘quality’ or ‘serious press’ (e.g. Sparks and Tulloch, 2000), ‘tabloid’ or ‘popular journalism’ opposed to investigative ‘quality’ journalism or ‘official journalism’ (cf. Sparks and Tulloch, 2000; Glynn, 2000; Renger, 2000), and ‘popular journalism’ standing against ‘legitimate journalism’ (e.g. Glynn, 2000). The prescriptivism underlying the use of these terms is obvious: ‘tabloid’, on the one hand, versus ‘quality’, ‘official’ and ‘legitimate’, on the other hand, all reveal existing views both on the part of media practitioners and media critics about the appropriate type of journalism in a democracy in order to provide for educated citizens able to actively participate in all matters pertaining to the social and political system. That is, the use of these terms indicates which type of journalistic practice it is in a democracy that is prominently regarded as a suitable means for an execution of the political functions associated with the mass media in democratic systems.

In a similar manner, other terminological dichotomies reflect the threat to democracy that arises in connection with a movement towards tabloidization and its stated accompanying decay in serious – i.e. quality/official/legitimate – journalism. Accordingly, we find ‘passive’ in contrast to ‘active’ or ‘educated’ denoting the ‘consumer’ as ‘uncritical [mass]’ utilizing

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<sup>36</sup> For example, in Germany the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, formerly in broadsheet format, is published in tabloid format since 30. May 2007. At that time it was the first German national daily newspaper that changed its layout completely to the tabloid format. (Cf. Reimers, Sönke. *Frankfurter Rundschau startet Tabloid am 30. Mai 2007*. *Frankfurter Rundschau: Druck- und Verlagshaus Frankfurt am Main GmbH*. 05 Apr. 2007. Web. Last access: 19. Apr. 2010. <[http://www.fr-online.de/verlagsservice/ueber\\_die\\_fr/in\\_eigener\\_sache/1110388\\_Frankfurter-Rundschau-startet-Tabloid-am-30.-Mai-2007.html](http://www.fr-online.de/verlagsservice/ueber_die_fr/in_eigener_sache/1110388_Frankfurter-Rundschau-startet-Tabloid-am-30.-Mai-2007.html)>).

media as ‘tranquilizing substitute for action’ (Habermas quoted in Glynn, 2000: 17)<sup>37</sup> in opposition to the ‘citizen’ of the state as an active participant in the political process.

There are, however, others who argue against a devaluation of tabloid journalism treating it instead more positively as an expression of popular culture in which tabloid television has its adequate status that appeals to the “tastes and knowledge practices of the [less] privileged and empowered formations in modern Western societies” (Glynn, 2000: 9),<sup>38</sup> thus opposing the powerful educated elite and its form of elite ‘quality’ journalism that appears to effectively deny access to the (less powerful) mass. In this respect, there is a social significance inherent to tabloidization that consists in the contribution of the process to a democratization of journalistic practices of knowledge transmission by the media in so far as it reflects a general orientation in programming towards *all* audiences in an equal manner thus providing for an equal and balanced acquisition of knowledge by all audiences types.

When we talk about tabloidization tendencies within the broadcast media – in this case television – it is important that we distinguish between two structural phenomena: On the one hand, there is the well-established news format marked by changes in news coverage that have led to the introduction of tabloidized news formats (e.g. in the United States *Eyewitness News*, *Action News*) including the so-called ‘happy talk’ format that features two presenters.<sup>39</sup> In Germany, which has a long tradition of public-service broadcasting, traditional, non-tabloidized public-service news formats (e.g. the speaker-based program *Tagesschau*, the news magazine *Tagesthemen*) exist side by side with more tabloid news formats (e.g. RTL II News, RTL Aktuell). On the other hand, there is the more recent introduction of distinct tabloid television formats such as the daytime talk show (cf. chapter 7.2) that are the reason for why we speak of ‘tabloid TV’.<sup>40</sup> Although the main scientific interest here lies in illustrating the language use of different types of magazines, the linguistic analysis in chapter 7 also covers both the news format and the daytime talk show format in order to enable a comprehensive insight into the nature of tabloidization within television.

Similar to the press, it is possible to determine structural elements of tabloidization with respect to television that characterize the process in general and show cross-cultural validity despite its concrete dependency on individual media market structures. Accordingly, when television ‘goes tabloid’ structurally in an ultimate attempt at increased entertainment this

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<sup>37</sup> The original statement is to be found in Habermas (1989). The view is also prominent in the account of infotainment by the American sociologist and media critic Neil Postman (e.g. in Kloock and Spahr, 2007).

<sup>38</sup> Used here in reference to Glynn’s (2000: 9) definition of ‘legitimate journalism’ – the counterpart of ‘tabloid journalism’ – as a form of journalism corresponding to the “tastes and knowledge practices of the most privileged and empowered formations in modern Western societies.” See Glynn (2000) for a discussion of tabloid television as a form of popular culture. See Sparks (2000: 24ff.) for a review of critics and defenders of tabloid journalism.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Wittwen’s (1995: 33ff.) discussion of the *news show*.

<sup>40</sup> For ‘tabloid TV’ see, for example, Glynn (2000) providing a (historical) overview of the programs and structural components of tabloid television in the United States.

concerns the concrete choice of contents for broadcast (i.e. soft and spot news versus hard news) as well as their visual and linguistic realization for potential audiences. Respective strategies for an increase in the entertaining value of television contents in this respect typically include news presentation via:

- **emotionalization.** This involves **linguistic emotionalization** via affective language that expresses subjective speaker perspective and the involvement of the speaker into the topic at talk;
- **narrativization.** This indicates a movement towards storytelling in news reporting. Glynn (2000: 21) speaks of “emotionally intense narrative styles that emphasize high-impact images at the expense of official commentary and fact-based objectivism.” This also includes reporting on a general event or state of affairs by means of focussing on (= ‘telling the story of’) a single person (**personalization**). This turns objective reporting on an event/state of affairs into the presentation of a subjective viewpoint and fate of a single person;
- **dynamization.** This relates to dramatization via overall camera work (e.g. close-ups versus distancing shots). Especially in reality TV formats dramatization is also achieved via re-enactment of events (cf. Bird, 2000: 221).<sup>41</sup>

These strategies imply a deviation from objective news coverage.

More important, however, for the current purpose here of illustrating the ways in which the institution television applies language within its institutional settings is a central aspect of tabloidization that pertains to language use and that is, in fact, not covered by respective definitions of the process as illustrated above. That is, tabloidization, as it is argued here, is characteristically accompanied by particular linguistic processes of *conversationalization* as determined by Fairclough (1994, 1995, 1998). Structural processes of tabloidization affecting general programming practices hence also typically involve a linguistic (form of) tabloidization, which we can refer to as *conversationalization*. With *conversationalization* Fairclough denotes a specific linguistic process whereby contemporary media talk within what he calls ‘public affairs media’ such as news, documentary and magazines (cf. Fairclough, 1995: 3) tends to entail with growing frequency features that typically characterize informal everyday conversation hence becoming “increasingly conversationalized” in nature (cf. Fairclough, 1995: 10).

It is important to note in this connection that the relation between a structural process of tabloidization and conversationalization as one of its central linguistic concomitants that is

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<sup>41</sup> The English terms provided here are modelled on the German terms “Emotionalisierung,” “Narrativisierung” (or: Narrativierung) / “Personalisierung” and “Dynamisierung” as used, e.g., by Wirth (2000: 63) and Roesler/Stiegler (2005: 107). Wirth (2000: 63) refers to these strategies as infotainment strategies (“Strategien zur Infotainmentisierung”).

explicitly stated here is, in fact, not made by Fairclough (1995) himself who does not use the term ‘tabloidization’. Yet, what he does is also stating a tendency within public affairs media towards increasing ‘marketization’ of produced contents that is grounded in growing market pressures for entertainment affecting the media: “[B]ecause of increasing commercial pressures and competition, media are being more fully drawn into operating on a market basis within the ‘leisure’ industry, and one part of that is greater pressure to entertain even within public affairs output” (Fairclough, 1995: 10/11).<sup>42</sup> Tabloidization is the concrete structural expression of a conceptual shift by the media (from information) towards intensified entertainment. Hence Fairclough’s (1995: 10) two tendencies, the “tendency to move increasingly in the direction of entertainment – to become more ‘marketized’” and “the tendency of public affairs media to become increasingly conversationalized” can be seen as (partly implicit) accounts of tabloidization and conversationalization. Furthermore, although Fairclough (1995) treats the two tendencies as separate phenomena, he nevertheless acknowledges a connection between them:<sup>43</sup> Accordingly, “[w]e might also see a link between conversationalization and marketization” (Fairclough, 1995: 12).

In his description of conversationalization, Fairclough (1995) restricts himself to the illustration of lexical particularities in the language of media representatives that contribute to an ‘informalization’ of their talk with the effect of becoming more similar in character to the discourse practices of their audiences. Although, Fairclough has indeed to be acknowledged for the introduction of the term ‘conversationalization’ as an important specification of an otherwise more or less visible, yet unspecified, linguistic phenomenon within contemporary media language, his restriction to an explanation of lexical elements must be seen as one of the central flaws of his work on conversationalization. As Matheson (2005: 132) points out,

Fairclough (1995) focuses on vocabulary rather than on the sequential structures that conversation analysts discuss. As a result, his claim is more about the broadcaster’s style than the social action happening there. In an analysis of an interview on the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme in 1992, he finds colloquial lexis (such as ‘mate’, ‘fancy’, ‘bloke’, ‘fed up to back teeth’), colloquial use of pronouns (‘an awful lot of people when *you* ask them’) and the colloquial use of the present tense in telling a narrative (‘he *comes* back to you and *says*’).<sup>44</sup>

Matheson (2005) aptly illustrates the point of critique that is made here: In his discussion of conversationalization Fairclough (1995) does not integrate an investigation of the characteristics of the actual conversational structure of media talk that go beyond instances of vocabulary. Beginning in the early 1970s, work within conversation analysis has shown that

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<sup>42</sup> Fairclough (1995: 10) relates to this as “the tension between information and entertainment” that has an impact on contemporary media language.

<sup>43</sup> “While I certainly do see a connection between [...] the two tendencies, I shall treat them here as distinct, if overlapping” (Fairclough, 1995: 12).

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Fairclough (1995: 142ff.).

everyday conversation is a particular type of “speech exchange system” (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) that displays its own distinct ways of turn-taking and in this way fundamentally differs in its overall sequential structure from public, institutional discourse.<sup>45</sup> Vocabulary, in fact, is just one constituent of everyday conversation (and of other speech exchange systems) that is embedded within a system-specific sequential organization of speaker turns. Consequently, when we take a look at the ways in which media formats and media talk can ‘go tabloid’ and become ‘increasingly conversationalized’ in Fairclough’s (1995) terms, a comprehensive discussion of conversationalization should include both the lexical *and* the structural level of discourse organization in this respect. This is a point that Fairclough’s (1995) own account of conversationalization falls short of.<sup>46</sup> In the linguistic analysis of different broadcast formats in part III both aspects will receive adequate attention.

This analysis shall also constitute a systematization of Fairclough’s original account of conversationalization. Although he illustrates the phenomenon by means of some selected examples of media talk, he does not empirically systematize his findings on conversationalization which therefore stays rather hypothetical in nature and its linguistic features remain largely unspecified. Hence the linguistic analysis performed in part III also functions to put Fairclough’s hypothesis of a conversationalized media language to the test and to elaborate on it in order to provide a more precise account of (the features of) conversationalization via linguistic analyses of a range of examples within selected television formats.

Such a systematization of conversationalization has to take account of the fact whether what we are studying is language use within a broadcast format – such as the news – that may be affected by tabloidization to differential degrees, or whether what we investigate is a true and comparatively newly developed tabloid television format – such as the daytime talk show. This distinction is of relevance in so far as we might ask for differences in the extent of conversationalization between formats that show a structural tendency to ‘go tabloid’ or that are ultimately tabloid by nature. A systematization of conversationalization will then also have to deal with two dimensions that can be ascribed to the linguistic phenomenon: On the one hand, conversationalization present in the language of the institutional representatives of television, e.g. news readers and presenters and talk show hosts, and, on the other hand,

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<sup>45</sup> See chapters 4 and 5 for an illustration of the nature of everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation.

<sup>46</sup> This is not to mean that Fairclough does not take into consideration structural features at the level of discourse organization at all, for in fact he does. (Cf. Fairclough’s 1994 account of conversationalization: “Conversationalization includes colloquial vocabulary; phonic, prosodic and paralinguistic features of colloquial language including questions of accent; modes of grammatical complexity characteristic of colloquial spoken language [...]; colloquial modes of topical development [...]; colloquial genres, such as conversational narrative,” 1994: 260). The point is that the ultimate nature of everyday conversation is mainly determined by the particular ways in which interaction is structured by means of a conversation-specific turn-taking system and Fairclough neglects this aspect of potentially relevant turn-taking phenomena in his discussion of conversationalization.

conversationalization illustrated via the language use of ordinary persons talking within the institutional setting of the television studio – a characteristic feature of the daytime talk show.

## Part II Everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation

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Chapter 3 has shown that contemporary media are affected by (increasing) market pressures that result in an overall emphasis on entertainment involving the tabloidization of produced media contents in the ways explained above. In the case of television tabloidization is expressed linguistically in the trend towards conversationalization – the inclusion of (features characteristic of) informal everyday conversation – displayed in (interpersonal) communication within the first frame of interaction.

In order to give an insight into the linguistic nature of television as an institution, chapters 4 and 5 will therefore elaborate on the characteristic features both of everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation. It will be discussed accordingly what it is that determines everyday conversation (i.e. private talk within the private sphere of private, personal matters) on the one hand and institutional talk (i.e. talk within the public sphere of public, institutional matters) on the other hand.

### CHAPTER 4 Verbal interaction in non-institutional contexts

Human verbal interaction, in general, is goal-oriented. That is, it is always aimed at the fulfillment of characteristically multi-faceted personal intentions that underlie a speaker's articulation of verbal messages in a particular communicative encounter between two or more interlocutors. Consequently, the participants to a conversation do generally not transmit verbal messages simply for the sake of communicating in the first place but rather to achieve a variety of possible concrete and individually desired communicative goals in the process of interaction. It is this communicative intentionality that governs the production of verbal messages in conversation.

Intentionality, in fact, is also central to two popular pragmatic theories that have been proposed in an attempt to explain the construction of meaning in human verbal communication: (1) *speech act theory* originally developed by the ordinary language philosopher Austin (1962) and systematized (cf. Levinson, 2000 [1983]: 237/238) later by Searle (1969) who regard language use as the performance of verbal actions<sup>47</sup> which consequently include the production of different types of speech acts for the fulfillment of various types of communicative intentions; (2) the *theory of conversational implicature* formulated by Grice (1975).<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> This view is also reflected in Austin's (1962) choice of "How to *do* things with words" as the title for his philosophical work on speech acts. *How To Do Things With Words* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962) was published posthumously as a collection of the William James lectures given by Austin at Harvard University in 1955 which entailed his ideas on a theory of speech acts (cf. Thomas, 1996: 29).

<sup>48</sup> Similar to Austin, Grice had already outlined his ideas on a theory of implicature in the William James lectures he gave at Harvard in 1967 (cf. Levinson, 2000 [1983]: 100; Thomas, 1996: 56). See in this connection, for example, Keller (1990: 22) on the general assumption of intentionality basic to human actions: "Unter Handlungstheoretikern herrscht im allgemeinen Einigkeit darüber, daß Handlungen

In speech act theory then any utterance, i.e. speech act, is intentional in that it is always 'equipped' with a speaker's particular communicative intention underlying its performance in a particular communicative context. Accordingly, "it is raining" may (1) point to the pure fact that it is raining at the moment, (according to Austin/Searle a type of speech act labeled *representative*). Alternatively, the speaker's intention may be that (2) the window should better be closed by a second person within the communicative context as it could rain inside. In the latter case the utterance expresses the speaker's request for direct action in a *directive* usage of the speech act. Grice (1975), via the assumption of a cooperative principle at work in human verbal communication, has shown how speaker/hearers are able to arrive at a correct interpretation in such communicative contexts as the following in which speaker B produces a seemingly non-relevant speech act by means of which (s)he conveys to speaker A that (s)he is not willing to leave the house as it is raining heavily.

Speaker A: "Let's go for a walk!" (directive)

Speaker B: "It is raining." (representative meant as rejection)

According to Grice speaker B creates a conversational implicature. Its correct meaning has to be detected by speaker A who, if communicatively competent, assumes that speaker B is indeed behaving cooperatively having produced a relevant linguistic contribution which leads speaker A to the interpretation that speaker B does not want to go outside at the moment.

'Communicative competence' is the key word here. In practice, the successful communication of diverse personal intentions in interpersonal communication is based on speakers' communicative competence which determines verbal interaction in any situational context (cf. figure 5). Communicative competence comprises conversational skills – grammatical and pragmatic knowledge – that are involved in the production of speech and in the derivation of meaning in interaction. Grammatical knowledge of a language is used to form grammatically correct sentences with respect to syntax, semantics, phonology, morphology and lexicon as the elements of the grammar component of communicative competence that establish a speaker's overall grammatical – or linguistic – competence. Pragmatic knowledge, on the other hand, determines how the grammar is actually (appropriately) employed in diverse social contexts of speech thus defining a speaker's pragmatic – or social – competence.<sup>49</sup>

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notwendigerweise intentional sind: Eine Aktivität einer Person als Handlung interpretieren heißt, ihr Intentionen zu unterstellen.“ This interpretation then includes the performance of speech acts as intentional communicative acts.

<sup>49</sup> The terms 'linguistic competence' and 'social competence' in figure 5 are adapted from Thompson (1997: 4). Communicative competence defined here as including both a speaker's grammatical *and* pragmatic knowledge of a language, in fact, goes far beyond the original Chomskyan usage of the term 'competence', who referred to competence as being restricted to grammatical knowledge only, i.e. knowledge about the correct workings of the language system via a finite set of abstract grammatical rules, leaving aside the actual use of grammar in speech – a speaker's performance – because of its 'degenerate quality' (quoted in Goodwin, 1981: 55; See originally

In figure 5 below, a speaker’s necessary pragmatic knowledge is illustrated by means of two quotes from Ninio and Snow (1996).<sup>50</sup>

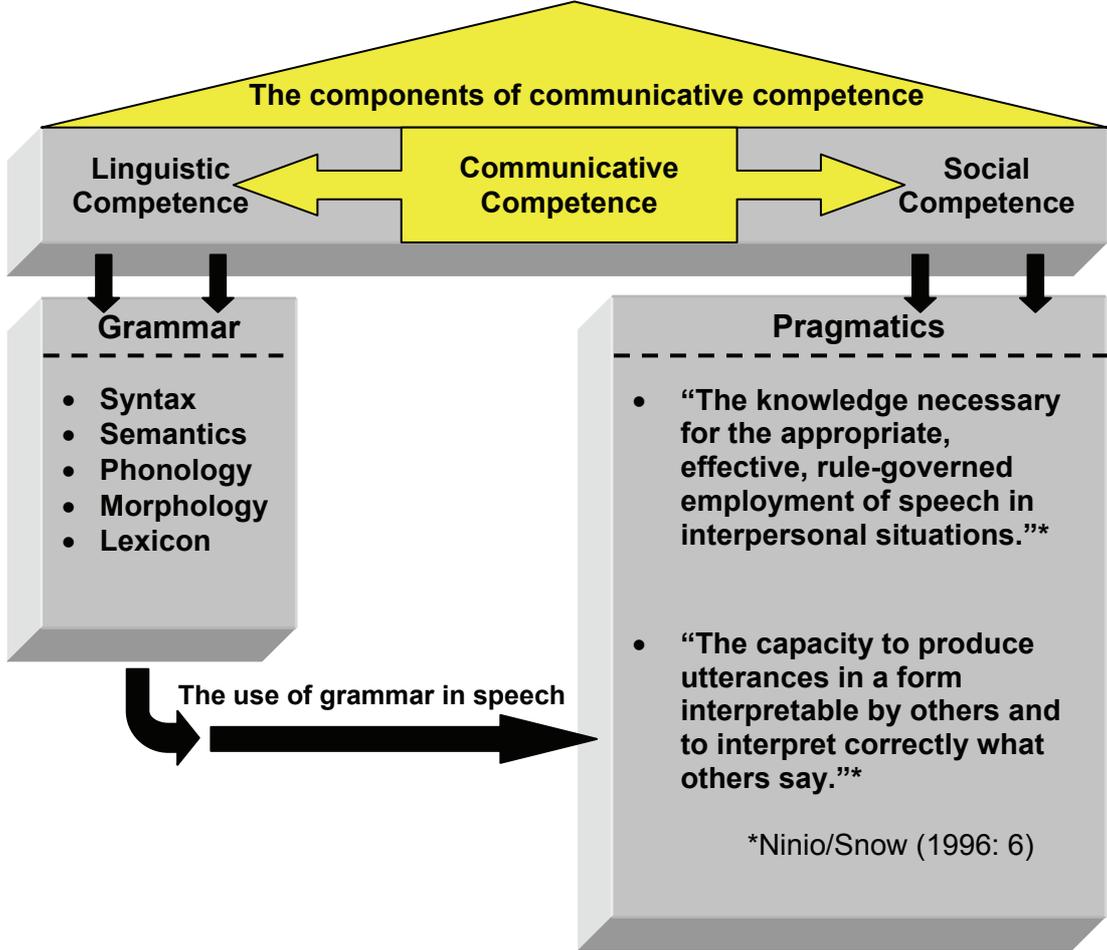


Figure 5: A model of communicative competence

Pragmatic knowledge thus can be said to guide verbal actions in the process of speech production in non-institutional contexts, that is, everyday conversation. In order to define the determinants of everyday conversation, the central question, therefore, is whether we can

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Chomsky, 1965). Such evaluations are rooted in early views within linguistics on language as an abstract system of specific rules (*langue*), on the one hand, and actual use of language (*parole*) with seemingly free, i.e. unsystematic, variation patterns, on the other hand. While the former was prominently seen as a subject worthy of scientific investigation due to its evident regularity, the latter was not so based on an initially ascribed lack of such regularity. (Modern sociolinguistics – which is concerned with linguistic performance, or *parole*, respectively – has shown that all language use is characterized, in fact, by systematic variation. For example, the important pioneering work of Labov in the United States (1966, 1972a, 1972b) or Trudgill (1974) in England within the variationist approach has illustrated the presence of systematic variation in speech by revealing typical sociolinguistic patterns that result from the correlation of linguistic variables with different social factors). On communicative competence, as defined here, involving both (grammatical) ‘competence’ and ‘performance’, see, for example, Foster (1990: 8f.) and especially Hymes (1972a), with reference and in opposition to Chomsky’s (1965) treatment of ‘competence’ and ‘performance’.

<sup>50</sup> Referring to the effectiveness of speech in different interpersonal situations, the authors, indeed, also express the above stated assumption of a general purpose-orientation (and thus intentionality) governing language use.

define the actual components of this pragmatic knowledge in more detail, which, in the words of Ninio and Snow (1996: 6), provides for the correct, i.e. “appropriate, effective, [and] rule-governed,” use of language in everyday conversation. In other words, what is it that determines the linguistic choices of communicatively competent speakers in everyday conversation and that defines their ‘space’ and hence also their limits for verbal action in non-institutional contexts of interaction?

#### **4.1 The determinants of everyday conversation**

The components of a speaker’s pragmatic knowledge concern (1) the (correct) employment of single speech acts in verbal interaction that are isolated from the direct conversational context in which they characteristically occur. That is, speech acts are studied without reference to the immediate verbal context – the *cotext* – of conversation.<sup>51</sup> The two theories to be discussed in this connection are the pragmatic theories by Austin and Searle (1962; 1969) and Grice (1975) introduced at the beginning of chapter four. (2) The constituents of pragmatic knowledge in this connection also refer to the correct application of single speech acts as concerns appropriate social behavior in particular social contexts. The concept of conversational politeness according to Brown and Levinson (1987) is of importance here. Finally, including the cotext of interaction, necessary elements of a speaker’s pragmatic knowledge regard (3) the effective use of speech acts within larger units of speech such as everyday conversation. The findings of conversation analysis according to Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) will be addressed here.

##### **4.1.1 The employment of single speech acts in verbal interaction**

###### **(a) Austin’s and Searle’s speech act theory and Grice’s theory of conversational implicature**

Both theories concern the correct, i. e. appropriate and thus communicatively effective, application of speech acts with a restriction to the content level.<sup>52</sup> According to speech act theory, correct application of speech acts on the part of the speaker allows the correct interpretation of these acts, and thus of the speaker’s intention, on the part of the hearer. For the appropriate use of speech acts, that is, to guarantee that a speaker’s intention – the

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<sup>51</sup> See, for example, Renkema (1993: 45) or Renkema (2004: 45) in this connection on the use of the terms ‘context’ and ‘cotext’ of interaction. As the context of interaction can principally denote both direct verbal and situational context, which may cause confusion, the term ‘cotext’ is often applied to refer to the immediate verbal context while ‘context’ itself determines the communicative situation.

<sup>52</sup> This is based on the assumption that language use, and hence speech acts, can be studied on three levels, namely (1) the *content level* referring to *what* is said in order to communicate an intention, (2) the *relationship/relational level* referring to *how* the content is structured (best) with regard to the addressee in order to communicate a personal intention, (face-work plays a role here), and (3) the more abstract *meta-linguistic level* designating the use of language to refer back to, i. e. to explain, language. In other words, we need language in order to talk about language.

illocutionary force – is recognized by the hearer as desired by the speaker, Searle (1969) formulated *appropriateness* or *felicity conditions*: several specific rules that speech acts must meet and which, when acknowledged and followed by speakers, provide for the success of performed speech acts.

Grice's (1975) theory of conversational implicature is a further development in pragmatics constituting a movement away from (the rules affecting speech acts within) speech act theory towards principles working in conversation.<sup>53</sup> Here, it is not the duty of the speaker to produce appropriate speech acts in order to be recognized by the hearer as intended by the speaker, but appropriateness is rather something that the hearer assumes in the interpretation of a speech act performed by a speaker, who is attributed by the hearer with a general willingness to cooperation. Grice (1975) termed this willingness the *cooperative principle* which is accompanied by four sub-principles, the conversational maxims of *quantity*, *quality*, *relation* and *manner*.<sup>54</sup> Each participant to a conversation is assumed to adhere to the cooperative principle and the maxims underlying each performance of verbal acts. Doing so, speaker/hearers behave appropriately and thus provide for the interpretability of speech acts, i. e. for the successful communication of intentions.

In actual speech, though, it is not sufficient for the success, i.e. effectiveness, of a speech act to adhere to a set of rules or principles only that provides for the correct interpretation of personal intentions. These, in fact, can only be successfully communicated if speech acts, in addition, reveal what may be termed 'social appropriateness' in that they are also always linguistic adaptations to the individual characteristics of particular speech situations. Such adaptive processes involve considerations about what can be said to whom in different social situations which will be referred to here as the sociolinguistic uses of speech.<sup>55</sup> They can be illustrated by Brown/Levinson's (1987) concept of a theory of conversational politeness involving the application of different politeness strategies in verbal interaction.

#### (b) Sociolinguistic uses of speech: Brown's and Levinson's politeness theory

A language user is regarded as being sociolinguistically competent if (s)he knows how to behave appropriately in different social contexts.<sup>56</sup> Sociolinguistic competence is then

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<sup>53</sup> See, for example, Thomas (1996).

<sup>54</sup> Grice's conversational maxims are useful later in chapter 7.1.1 for a characterization of the 'ideal' type of informative language that can be regarded to fulfill the mass media's important function of information (see chapter 1.2) in the assumed best possible way.

<sup>55</sup> With a focus on sociolinguistic uses of speech a change in perspective takes place as the pure content level of speech is left and the relationship level is considered, that is, how language is structured appropriately in order to express particular speaker relations in different social situations.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. in this connection Foster (1990: 181/182), with reference to Rice (1984), discussing sociolinguistic competence as comprising *social knowledge*, which is of threefold character: (1) containing *person knowledge* – the capacity to adopt the perspective of another person – as well as (2) *event knowledge* – the knowledge of scripts and schemata. In addition to these cognitive skills, social knowledge entails *social-category knowledge* which includes the understanding of social categories such as sex, age, social roles, or social status.

revealed in a speaker's ultimate capability to adapt his/her speech to the communicative requirements of the social environment, that is, to vary his/her language systematically with regard to the (assessed) formality or informality of the immediate communicative situation as influenced by particular speaker constellations involving social factors such as education, age, sex, or social class.<sup>57</sup> Aiming at the successful communication of personal intentions, a sociolinguistically competent speaker will therefore choose a communicative strategy that is most success promising, i.e. one that is regarded to fit the requirements of the social context in the best possible way.

The communicative strategies that characterize such sociolinguistic uses of speech can be illustrated by the politeness strategies which have been described by Brown and Levinson (1987) in their theory of conversational politeness. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers have the basic choice between different linguistic strategies for the communication of personal intentions which differ in their degree of directness in that the communicative force underlying the performance of speech acts is either reduced, i.e. conversationally redressed, or not thus expressing different degrees of linguistic politeness. Consequently, within politeness theory, a direct speech act that might well be used in a conversation between two close friends might be totally inappropriate, though, and hence ineffective, in a conversation between two strangers, i.e. two socially distant individuals. (Consider, for example, the baldly produced 'Lend me your Harley Davidson.'). Therefore, for reasons of communicative effectiveness usually a conversationally redressed and thus a more indirect and polite form of language will rather be chosen in the latter case (such as the negatively polite 'I know it's an unusual question and I'm terribly sorry, but could you by any chance lend me your Harley?'). Thomas (1996: 120) refers to this goal-oriented use of indirect speech acts as "intentional indirectness," a term which again emphasizes the communicative intentionality governing the production of speech acts in interaction.<sup>58</sup> The factors that influence the actual degree of intentional indirectness, or conversational redress, respectively are determined by Brown and Levinson (1987: 74ff.) by means of three sociological variables involving interlocutors' assessment, on the one hand, of their social relations while participating in the performance of speech acts in a particular situational context and, on the other hand, the actual character of the speech acts to be realized in this context: (1) social power expressing vertical relations between interlocutors and (2) their social distance, a horizontal relationship denoting the degree of familiarity between interlocutors, as well as (3) the extent to which a speech act that is to be performed by one interlocutor imposes on the other interlocutor.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> For a detailed discussion of the social characteristics of different types of speech situations see chapter 6.2.

<sup>58</sup> See also chapter 6.2. on intentional indirectness in connection with a definition of formal and informal speech styles.

<sup>59</sup> This is originally referred to as 'absolute ranking of impositions' (in the particular culture) by Brown and Levinson (1987: 74). Alternatively, 'rate of imposition' (cf. Renkema, 1993: 14; Renkema, 2004: 25/26) or 'cost

Inseparably connected to the use of politeness strategies for the performance of speech acts in interaction is the concept of ‘face’ which Brown/Levinson (1987) adapt from the social psychologist Goffman (1967).<sup>60</sup> It is generally assumed that the performance of speech acts in communicative encounters always potentially entails the risk of face threat on the part of both speaker and addressee. What speaker/hearers do then in conversation is face-work aimed at saving face. This is done by means of minimizing the intensity – or communicative force – of performed speech acts, i.e. face-threatening acts, via different politeness strategies (cf. Brown/Levinson, 1987: 60). According to Brown/Levinson (1987: 76ff.), the concrete intensity of threat to face underlying the performance of a speech act in a particular situational context – its ultimate weightiness – is determined by the interplay between the three mentioned sociological variables in this context. A face-threatening act is thus the sum of power and distance between the interlocutors and the rate of imposition of the communicative intention. It is this ultimate weight of a face-threatening act that determines the degree of actual conversational redress (i.e. intentional indirectness) and thus the politeness strategy that is chosen. Depending on the assessed weightiness, a speaker then has the basic choice between either performance or non-performance, i.e. avoidance, of the face-threatening act. In the latter case, the speaker says nothing, which is communicatively inefficient with respect to the initially stated goal orientation towards the fulfillment of personal intentions in communication. In the former case, the speaker’s linguistic possibilities consist in (1) the use of off-record strategies where the face threat is not directly visible. Such strategies include the speaker’s creation of conversational implicatures as described by Grice (1975).<sup>61</sup> (2) The speaker may choose between the two on-record strategies of positive or negative politeness directed at an addressee’s positive or negative face respectively by means of which the communicative intention is directly, i.e. unambiguously, expressed and the face threat is

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of imposition’ (cf. Meyerhoff, 2006: 87) are also used, with ‘imposition’ being another term for ‘intention’. ‘Weight/rate/cost of imposition’ thus denotes the actual intensity of a speaker’s concrete intention in speech, i.e. the extent to which the communicative intention underlying the expression of a speech act imposes on the addressee.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Brown/Levinson (1987: 61) defining ‘face’ as “the public self-image that every member [of society] wants to claim for himself [...]”. It should be noted, though, that, more properly, ‘face’ is rather constructed interactively. That is to mean, the concept of ‘face’ does not only involve a speaker’s self-image – the image (s)he wishes for himself/herself to represent in public – but rather also the image that the addressee assumes for the speaker. This ‘third-person image’ may, in fact, not accord with the speaker’s actually established self-image in a concrete case of interaction. This is the case as the addressee, understandably, cannot know the concrete image that the speaker has created for himself/herself – unless both share a high degree of familiarity involving mutual knowledge not only of generally existing positive and negative face wants but also of more particular, i.e. speaker-dependent, face wants that are theoretically possible. The point made here is that although the pure *existence* of face and basic face wants is mutually known to interlocutors – as Brown/Levinson assume the universality of face, this applies cross-culturally – the *shape* of face, however, may be speaker-dependent and therefore always subject to speculation on the part of the addressee. As a consequence, conversational encounters between two or more speaker/hearers always imply the potential risk of mismatches between the self-created and other-created ‘face’. The general possibility of such mismatches supports the view that interlocutors’ face in conversation is always in danger of being threatened.

<sup>61</sup> E.g. with respect to the Harley Davidson examples presented here: ‘Oh, tomorrow there’s the Harley Davidson convention and unfortunately my Harley is being repaired currently.’”

visible, though redressed correspondingly. (3) According to the politeness model by Brown/Levinson (1987), the speaker may further apply a third on-record strategy by means of which the communicative intention is again unambiguously but baldly expressed, i.e. without redressive action that would reduce the threat to positive and/or negative face in the performance of a speech act. (Cf. again the initially stated example: ‘Lend me your Harley Davidson’).<sup>62</sup>

Assuming intentionality in verbal interaction, conversational politeness according to Brown/Levinson (1987) should then not be misunderstood as a speaker’s true intention to be polite, though such an intention may, of course, be given. In the first place, conversational politeness as such should rather be regarded as a communicative strategy, since what speakers apply in conversation is a number of politeness *strategies* and such strategic behavior always implies a concrete goal-orientation, namely the fulfillment of communicative intentions underlying the performance of speech acts in conversation. The application of a particular politeness strategy in speech is thus to be viewed as the most economic way in order to achieve the communicative goal of getting personal intentions fulfilled. Put differently, this goal can only be achieved via the speakers’ mutual willingness towards cooperation. Consequently, the willingness to cooperation that is assumed on the content level (cf. page 39) is then also valid for the relationship level and is mirrored in the general willingness to adapt one’s speech to the requirements of the social context via the application of diverse politeness strategies.

Brown/Levinson’s (1987) theory of conversational politeness is of threefold significance for the investigation of television language: (1) It will be illustrated in chapter 6.2., section (b) that the three sociological variables of power, distance and weight/rate of imposition influencing the degree of conversational redress effectively function to determine different types of speech situations, including institutionalized ones. It is argued in this connection that different speech situations are characterized by specific speech styles, i.e. from informal to formal, depending on the gradual formalization of the situation as based on the constellation of the sociological variables. Politeness theory plays a role again in the definition of formal and informal speech styles in section (c) of chapter 6.2.

(2) As concerns verbal communication in institutional contexts, it will be shown in chapter 5.2.2.1, concerned with the characteristics of the institutional speech situation of television, that in television discourse, i.e. talk within the television studio, the sociological variables are of minor importance only and that face-work can be described as a simulation of that applied in everyday conversation.

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<sup>62</sup> For an illustration and detailed discussion of the different strategies to realize face-threatening acts see Brown/Levinson (1987: 68ff. and especially 91ff.).

(3) Furthermore, it will be demonstrated in chapter 7.2.1 that conversational redress is often fundamentally missing in verbal interaction on stage especially within daytime talk shows. This type of talk show characteristically often features baldly produced and hence highly face-threatening acts on the part of the guests on stage as a result of their usually high personal involvement into the discussed topics.

Up to this point, attention has been paid to the application of single speech acts only. In verbal interaction, however, speech acts do not occur in isolated form but they are typically part of larger units of speech such as everyday conversation. That is, they usually have a *cotext* – an immediate verbal context (cf. page 38). In the following chapter, the focus will be on the structure of everyday conversation as the most basic form of interpersonal communication and as the prototype of non-institutional talk.

#### **4.1.2 The employment of speech acts in conversation**

A speaker's pragmatic competence entails what may be defined as *conversational competence* – the knowledge of the correct workings of the particular speech-exchange system 'conversation' and other such systems.<sup>63</sup> This knowledge provides for the appropriate, i.e. rule-governed, application of speech acts (or utterances respectively) in verbal interaction within different situational contexts and hence for a structured conversation. It includes the competence for turn-taking in conversation, with turn-taking denoting the alternating employment of speech acts by two or more interlocutors. Providing groundbreaking work within early conversation analysis, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have illustrated a turn-taking system for conversation which governs the order of conversational turns and so provides for the structured progression of conversation. The described system accounts for observable features of conversation which characterize verbal interactions of communicatively competent speakers. Some of these features are of concrete interest for an illustration of the characteristics of institutional talk and especially also for talk applied within the daytime talk show format. That is, firstly, turn-taking takes place. This happens in such a way that consecutive turns are commonly immediately taken up. Secondly, only one speaker talking at a time is the predominant case. Thirdly, in conversation turn order is not pre-determined but results from specific turn-allocation techniques that are used by the participants to a conversation.<sup>64</sup> Of fundamental importance for turn-taking is the predictable

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<sup>63</sup> The term 'speech-exchange system' is originally used by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 696).

<sup>64</sup> For the complete features of conversation see Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 700f.). It should be noted that the features refer to conversations of conversationally skilled native speakers of (American) English. The characteristics of conversation, and thus the rules for 'doing conversation', may therefore be potentially different in other countries and languages.

It will be shown in chapter 5.2.1 that especially the third aspect of conversation – the absence of turn order pre-determination – can be fundamentally different in institutional discourse. As another type of speech exchange system, institutional discourse characteristically performed within institutional contexts typically features a turn-

end of a conversational turn. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 702) call this feature the “projectability” of possible completion points which allows the transition from a current speaker to a next speaker. At a possible completion point – the transition relevance place (TRP) – transfer of speakership can take place. This is achieved by means of next-speaker selection techniques – communicative rules that govern the transfer of speakership in conversation (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 704). In principle, a next speaker is arrived at when a current speaker selects the next speaker, or, if (s)he does not select, another speaker may self-select.

Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974: 724ff.) draw the following conclusions concerning the character of their proposed system. It is, firstly, a *local management system* in that it organizes transitions of speaker turns locally, i.e. from one turn to the next and *only* the next. Abiding by the rules of the system, a current speaker, thus, can only select the next speaker, but not the speaker after this next speaker. This local management is not only valid for turn order but also for turn size which is determined by “constraints imposed by a next turn, and by an orientation to a next turn in the current one,” (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 725). As turn order and turn size are controlled locally by the interlocutors in a conversation, the system is, secondly, also a *party-administered system*. Finally, it is *interactionally managed* because “the turn as a unit is interactively determined” (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 727). That is, the size of a conversational turn is not controlled by a current speaker alone but is always the result of interaction between the parties to a conversation. This is due to the existence of TRPs allowing other speakers to stop a current turn. Its length is thus determined interactively.

In fact, these conclusions by the authors about the nature of conversation reflect that its structure is the result solely of the (interactive) work of the interlocutors who, characteristically, are of equal status in that they share the same rights (and obligations) in doing conversation.<sup>65</sup> The structure of conversation then effectively functions to show a basic characteristic of human (verbal) communication, namely that it is based on interaction between speakers and hearers – the central feature that distinguishes interpersonal communication from classical mass communication (cf. chapter 1.1). Accordingly, interlocutors’ methods for doing conversation reveal that in the process of conversing meaning is interactively constructed, with ‘interactive’ denoting the active role that both

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taking system that – often significantly – differs from the one that has been described by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) for everyday conversation. Accordingly, the order of turns can be determined in advance to a certain degree depending on the formality of an institution and the connected formalization of (verbal and non-verbal) action within the institutional context.

<sup>65</sup> This, however, is correct only for the turn-taking system of the type of interpersonal communication defined as (everyday) conversation. The structure of verbal interaction in institutionally-framed contexts can be pre-determined based on the (degree of) formalization of a respective institution (cf. chapter 5.2.1). Such pre-determination typically also involves differences in the communicative rights and obligations of the interlocutors engaged in institutional communication.

speaker and hearer play in creating meaning in verbal interaction. Effective communication then, as has been argued in chapter 1.1, is displayed in the speaker conveying his/her intention in such a way that it is interpretable by the hearer, i.e. by designing his/her conversational contribution according to the communicative needs of the hearer, who, in turn, provides feedback to the linguistic input (s)he has received from the speaker whereby (s)he signals his/her understanding (or non-understanding) of what has been said previously. As a fundamental basis of human verbal communication, ‘interaction’ then refers to this mutual employment of communicative acts by the participants to a conversation where a speaker’s action is followed by a hearer’s (positive or negative) reaction – his/her direct and immediate feedback.<sup>66</sup> It is via the repeated succession of action and reaction in conversation that meaning construction takes place. Accordingly, Levinson (2000 [1983]: 44) defines interaction as “the sustained production of chains of mutually-dependent acts, constructed by two or more agents each monitoring and building on the actions of the other [...]”

The following example from Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks (1977: 369) aptly illustrates how meaning in conversation is interactively created.

- A: I have a: - cousin teaches there.  
 → D: Where.  
 A: Uh:, Columbia.  
 → D: Columbia?  
 A: Uh huh.  
 → D: You mean Manhattan?  
 A: No. Uh big university. Isn’t that in Columbia?  
 D: Oh in Columbia.  
 A: Yeah.

In the example speaker A initially uses the adverb ‘there’ expressing spatial deixis. Speaker D’s reaction – use of the interrogative ‘where’ as a request for clarification – reveals that (s)he is not able to interpret where speaker A’s use of ‘there’ points to. Obviously, speaker A did not manage to convey his/her intention effectively by producing an utterance that is apparently not designed according to the communicative needs of speaker D whose feedback consequently signals further refinement. It takes two more repair initiations by speaker D, which are accepted by speaker A correcting himself/herself, to finally arrive at the correct meaning. This example shows that we can define conversation as a process of speech formation with interactive meaning derivation.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. chapter 1.1 for a discussion of the nature of the feedback in both interpersonal and mass communication.

<sup>67</sup> See also Auer (1999: 140): “[D]er Handlungssinn [wird] interaktiv – in einem Zusammenspiel zwischen Darstellung der eigenen Intention durch den Sprecher und Darstellung der eigenen Interpretation durch den Rezipienten – produziert [...]”

Interactive meaning derivation via the succession of action and reaction clearly shows that human (verbal) communication is a type of communication that can be characterized as ‘two-way’ in so far as the hearer typically always provides feedback to the linguistic input (s)he receives from the speaker (cf. chapter 1.1). Indeed, the commenting on a speaker’s linguistic behavior by a hearer is a fundamental characteristic of human (verbal) communication. Thus, the direction of a linguistic signal is not only from speaker to hearer, i.e. one-way, but also from hearer back to former speaker (= two-way), who becomes the new hearer processing the incoming linguistic signal.<sup>68</sup> As Auer (1999: 16) points out in a discussion of Shannon’s and Weaver’s (1949) communication model, “der Weg von der Nachricht zum Empfänger ist nicht unidirektional [in contrast to mass communication], sondern eher einem reflexiven Hin-und-Her vergleichbar; die Botschaft [i. e. the actual meaning] liegt nicht schon vor Beginn des Kommunikationsprozesses fest, sondern entsteht in ihm.”

#### **4.2 The relative freedom of verbal action in everyday conversation**

The previous two sub-chapters focused on an explanation of the components of a speaker’s pragmatic knowledge in order to show what it is that determines (the structure of) verbal actions in non-institutional contexts of speech, i.e. everyday conversation. This chapter views these components with regard to a speaker’s potential restraints on verbal actions in everyday conversation.

It was explained that the successful communication of personal intentions in conversation is governed by the rules and principles of the components that establish a speaker’s pragmatic knowledge. In fact, it is the sole adherence to these rules and principles in conversation that constitutes the actual ‘restriction’ posed to communicative actions in non-institutional contexts, i.e. everyday conversation, and that, as a consequence, implies a relative freedom of verbal actions in everyday conversation. This is the case in so far as the stated restriction of verbal actions in instances of everyday conversation is not pre-determined by any institutional authority but characteristically results from conscious (or unconscious) speaker-dependent strategic decisions on how to achieve individual communicative goals in a concrete case of interaction in the best possible way. Hence, the action restriction in this sense is, as a rule, not due to any external influence, i.e. third-person determined, but typically self-imposed in nature. Interlocutors, therefore, enjoy a relative freedom of verbal action in everyday conversation and thus in non-institutional contexts. That is, using their pragmatic knowledge in speech, the participants to a conversation can always select among potential alternatives: alternative topics and alternative ways of talking about these topics. Accordingly, there are no

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<sup>68</sup> Interaction therefore implies that speakers become hearers in conversation. Hence we can speak of a ‘speaker/hearer’ in conversation.

serious restrictions concerning topic choice or style of speech<sup>69</sup> used in the production of a speech act in a communicative context, for in general communicative actions in everyday conversation are not pre-specified, i.e. regulated, in any way by anybody involved or not involved directly in the discourse situation. Shortly, in principle every topic and speech style that is conceivable theoretically is practically also possible in everyday conversation. Nevertheless, in practice, restrictions are obviously made by communicatively competent speakers as concerns their choice of conversational topics and the linguistic realization of these topics. This choice is characteristically governed by considerations – rational decisions – about the successful communication of personal intentions which always implies decisions of what can be said to whom in a particular situational context (cf. Brown/Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness). 'Relative' freedom of verbal action, therefore, is used in a restrictive sense to denote that everyday conversation as such *potentially* admits a range of conversational topics – from private to public<sup>70</sup> in character – and a range of speech styles – from formal to informal in nature – but that, in a *concrete case* of interaction, it is always necessary for successful communication of speaker intentions to constantly adapt one's verbal actions to the character of the current speech situation as influenced by respective speaker

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<sup>69</sup> 'Style of speech' is used here exclusively to denote situational style, i.e. linguistic adaptation to the requirements of a speech situation.

<sup>70</sup> 'Public' and 'private' are used here to relate to the degree of general social acceptance and – resulting from this – the overall socially regarded suitability of a conversational topic for occurrence in the public and/or private sphere. Thus, while public topics are socially well accepted in both the public sphere of institutional processes and the private sphere of private matters, private topics are regarded as suitable only within the private sphere. This characterization is based on the significance of potential conversational topics that is ascribed here either to society as a whole or to single members only. Accordingly, public topics are those topics that relate to diverse social and political processes and/or problems within a society's public, institutional sphere. They are discussed in parliament. That is, public topics typically involve all matters regarding (institutional processes within) the social and political system. Hence public topics are topics of public interest in so far as they refer to the workings of society as a whole. Therefore, public topics are also characteristically covered within the news media which inform society's members about relevant institutional processes, questions and problems thereby performing their classically ascribed information function (cf. chapter 1.2). In this way, public topics constitute a forum not only for public discussion within the public sphere but also for private discussion among media users within the private sphere. The discussion of private topics, on the other hand, is restricted to the private sphere. Private topics may well be of importance for the individual member of society but they should not be treated in public, with 'public' implying addressees that are not familiar with the speaker (cf. Brown/Levinson's (1987) sociological 'distance' variable). The familiarity factor is an important condition for the discussion of private topics – which include social taboo topics such as 'death' and 'sex'/'sexual encounters' – among interlocutors. It is obvious that such topics – as any conversational topic – involve considerations of 'face' and potential face threat. Thus, what can be in the focus of conversation between (close) friends is usually avoided by communicatively competent speakers in conversations between total strangers. This does not mean that private/taboo topics are generally of no wider social significance at all. Rather it is a social convention that we do not talk about these topics with strangers. Hence, this limitation is culture-specific and may therefore differ across cultures. However, what is generally socially regarded as 'public' and what as 'private' topic can well be individually different even within one and the same culture. That is, what is a private topic for one speaker can be a public topic for another speaker and consequently be viewed as appropriate for occurrence within the public sphere. That contemporary television illustrates (and supports) this view can be seen, for example, in the daytime show, a sub-type of the talk show format, (see chapter 7.2) where frequently private/taboo topics are publicly dealt with on stage by – usually – media-inexperienced guests. It seems that for obvious reasons of entertainment contemporary television deliberately deviates from the social convention in this respect.

constellations.<sup>71</sup> Thus, where a speaker has alternative ways of articulating his/her communicative intention – e.g. baldly or with redressive action according to Brown/Levinson (1987) – (s)he may choose the one which is most appropriate within a social context in so far as it is regarded as fitting the particularities of this context best and hence is most success-promising. It is in this sense that verbal actions are restricted in everyday conversation, i.e. in interaction within non-institutional speech situations.

A general freedom of action can also be determined for the overall structural organization of everyday conversation in the linguistic treatment of a conversational topic. Accordingly, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson's (1974) investigation of conversational structure has shown that the order of communicative acts in the speech-exchange system defined as 'conversation' is not prescribed but always constitutes the result of the system-specific local, interactive management of conversational turns by participating interlocutors. Being interactively and locally managed, everyday conversation reveals a communicative spontaneity that can be fundamentally restricted in institutional discourse. The structure of the latter is characteristically the result of institutional regulations which can affect communicative actions and their conversational structure in institutional discourse. Such regulations can then determine in advance the type<sup>72</sup> and order of communicative actions that are considered as appropriate within a particular institution (cf. chapter 5.2.1). Similar regulations are missing in everyday conversation whose structure is not fixed in this respect.

To sum it up, there is a relative freedom of communicative action to be found in everyday conversation which consists in topic choice, speech style and overall structural organization of discourse. 'Relative freedom' thus denotes a general absence of any pre-determination of speaker actions in this regard, i.e. a missing regulation of speech and thus missing control through any powerful institutional authority as relevant within institutional discourse. The restriction of action that does take place is typically a 'self-restriction' without institutional influence based on speakers' pragmatic competence governing the communication of personal intentions in non-institutional contexts of speech. The knowledge about this relative freedom of action in everyday conversation is thus a fundamental aspect of the pragmatic competence of any (communicatively competent) speaker in society, as is the knowledge about relevant action regulation in different types of institutional discourse in diverse institutional contexts of speech. It is this pragmatic knowledge that ultimately defines the limits of, and thus the actual communicative space for, a speaker's communicative actions in both everyday and institutionally-framed contexts of speech. In the former, a non-predetermined restriction of action via intentional self-regulation takes place. In the latter, restriction of action is pre-

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<sup>71</sup> See chapter 6.2 for a detailed discussion of the nature of formal and informal speech styles and the situational contexts in which they are made to function.

<sup>72</sup> It is explained in chapters 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 that institutions are characterized by institution-specific talk that is in accordance with the function to be fulfilled by the institution in society.

determined via institutional regulations. Institutional discourse then denotes institutionally regulated talk and thus controlled communicative behaviour.

As contemporary television is characterized by a high degree of conversationalization (cf. chapter 3) by means of heavily including features of (informal) everyday conversation, it is not surprising that the relative freedom of communicative action that has been determined here for everyday conversation, in fact, also applies to television talk. This is especially true for the daytime talk show format (see chapter 7.2.1).

## **CHAPTER 5 Verbal interaction in institutionally framed contexts**

It will be shown in the course of this chapter how, in contrast to everyday conversation, communicative action can be regulated, i.e. restricted due to pre-determination, in institutional discourse depending on the formality of the particular institution that is considered. Shifting the focus from successful communication in everyday contexts to communication in institutionally framed contexts, it will thus be explained in the next sub-chapters what is, firstly, to be understood by the term ‘institution’ and, secondly, what it is that characterizes the institutional frame of interaction and that consequently influences speakers’ communicative actions within this frame. This will finally allow an illustration of the central determinants of institutional discourse within institutional speech situations also with reference to the particularities of the institutional frame and speech situation of television.

### **5.1 The term ‘institution’ and its definition**

There is a range of theories of institutions with different conceptions about what is to be understood by an institution (and its function in society).<sup>73</sup> The often imprecise definition of the concept ‘institution’ is reflected in the heterogeneous use of the term ‘institution’ in linguistics and sociology (cf. Koerfer, 1994).

On the one hand, ‘institution’ is defined in a wide sense and language – the human means of communication – is correspondingly regarded as an institution in its own right.<sup>74</sup> This view also includes types of actions such as customs or rites, but also greetings or congratulations as possible parts of standardized and ritualized processes of interaction (cf. Dittmann 1979: 207). From the standpoint of a sociology of knowledge types of actions are the result of a process of institutionalization whereby habitual actions are mutually characterized (“typisiert”), i.e. clearly defined, by communicative partners.<sup>75</sup> In this connection ‘habitual’ refers to actions

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<sup>73</sup> For an overview see, for example, Schülein (1987), or Weymann-Weyhe (1978).

<sup>74</sup> This is described as “maximalistische Institutionsauffassung” by Ehlich and Rehbein (1994).

<sup>75</sup> Cf. Berger and Luckmann (1992: 58): “Institutionalisierung findet statt, sobald habitualisierte Handlungen durch Typen von Handelnden reziprok typisiert werden. Jede Typisierung, die auf diese Weise vorgenommen wird, ist eine Institution.”

that have become routine, i.e. those actions that are done regularly in the same manner. The term ‘institution’ is thus expanded to describe the regularities of human communicative actions (cf. Koerfer, 1994: 113).

On the other hand, ‘institution’ is more narrowly defined as public facility of a state with constitutional foundation. This conception is nearest to our everyday understanding of the term ‘institution’ and constitutes the view of political science.<sup>76</sup> Accordingly, Dittmann (1979: 211/212) refers to institutions as

öffentliche Einrichtungen, auf der Grundlage von Verfassung oder öffentlichem Recht [...] (Staatsorgane, Behörden, bestimmte Organisationen wie Parteien und Gewerkschaften), außerdem [...] bestimmte Verfahren (wie z. B. Wahlen) und [...] schließlich [...] soziale Gruppen oder Einrichtungen mit gesetzlicher (explizit-normativer) Grundlage, wie Ehe oder Schule.

Central to a definition of institution in this sense is that society – the social system – is organized into various institutions, i.e. sub-systems of society, by means of which human action is regulated. This regulation corresponds to the needs of a society for stable relationships. Hence institutions ideally are central elements of social structure established *by* a society *for* the (well-being of) society in order to organize and thus to stabilize human relationships. Fundamental to the (apparently goal-oriented) establishment of institutions in this connection is the existence of a “central idea” or “guiding principle” based on which the purpose, i.e. the function, of an institution in (the regulation of) a society is determined.<sup>77</sup> Institutions such as those of law, education and medicine are concrete, society-specific representations of institutional functions deemed elementary for the workings of society. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1990: 227) refers to institutions as a “*complex of norms* regulating the actions of persons in the process of social interaction.”<sup>78</sup> As relevant examples he presents the abstract concepts of property, “regulating behaviour where the acquisition, use, control, and disposal of objects of possession are concerned,” (ibid.) and authority as “a complex of norms regulating behaviour conceived to be necessary to the attainment of the common goals pursued in a collectivity” (ibid.). The mentioned (less abstract) institutions of law, education and medicine can be defined in a similar manner with respect to their ascribed functions in society. These institutions are, among others, characteristically represented in the buildings typical of the respective institution: court, school, university, hospital etc. (Indeed, it

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<sup>76</sup> Since the focus in the following is on discussing the specific use of language within those public facilities, this view is also adopted here.

<sup>77</sup> See Gülich’s (1981: 420) notion of a “Leitidee” that is connected to the establishment of an institution. The central idea or guiding principle is to be distinguished from the actual purpose of an institution in a society. Accordingly, Gülich mentions the central idea of justice underlying the institution of law the function of which is (among other things) the safeguarding of social order.

See in this connection also Ehlich and Rehbein (1980: 338): “Institutionen sind Formen des gesellschaftlichen Verkehrs zur Bearbeitung gesellschaftlicher Zwecke.”

<sup>78</sup> Italics are taken over from the author.

is legitimate to say that it is the setting – the physical embodiment of the actual institution – rather than the abstract institutional concept with an underlying guiding principle that we think of in the first place when we talk about ‘institutions’ as such).<sup>79</sup>

Summing up, an institution can be defined as a specific (socially) legitimized complex of norms with a regulating and hence stabilizing function in society which is physically represented by a location in which the function is executed and, what is of particular importance here, in which, additionally, function-specific interaction takes place – an aspect that will be elaborated on in the course of the following sub-chapter 5.2. In order to see what it is that determines verbal interaction in institutions, the following is a discussion of the structural features that are typically ascribed to institutions and their impact on verbal actions to be carried out within the institutional frame.

## **5.2 Institutions and their characteristic features<sup>80</sup>**

Institutional communication is a form of interpersonal communication, as is everyday conversation, the features of which were explained in chapter 4. It was illustrated that everyday conversation shows a relative freedom with regard to the verbal actions that can potentially be applied in concrete conversational encounters. The practical performance of verbal actions in the individual case of conversation is governed by the interlocutors’ communicative competence whose pragmatic component regulates the socially appropriate application of language in different situational contexts. Institutionally framed conversation differs significantly from everyday conversation in so far as it characteristically shows an institution-specific regulation, i.e. predetermination, of verbal actions hence lacking the relative freedom that is given in non-institutional context of interaction. Of course, a speaker’s communicative competence also comes into play as concerns communication in institutional contexts. The difference to everyday conversation lies in the fact that, in an institutional context, the pragmatic component needs to activate the principles relevant for effective, i.e. socially successful, communication in that particular institutional context which entail institution-specific forms of (linguistic and non-linguistic) action regulation. More generally, a speaker’s communicative competence necessarily has to entail knowledge about how to apply language appropriately and hence successfully in both institutional and non-institutional speech situations.

The following discussion of verbal interaction in institutionally framed contexts focuses on an illustration of the institutional frame of interaction and its capacity to efficiently regulate

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<sup>79</sup> Cf. also Ehlich and Rehbein (1994: 319) referring to these physical representations of institutions as ‘institutionsspezifische Verdinglichungen’: “Institutionen *vergegenständlichen* sich in Gebäuden und Geräten. Wir nennen dies *institutionsspezifische Verdinglichungen*.” (Italics are adopted from the authors).

<sup>80</sup> The features of institutions are only presented here in so far as they can provide useful background information for the discussion of the institution television.

verbal actions to different degrees (chapters 5.2.1 to 5.2.2.1). In this connection (chapter 5.2.3) emphasis will also be put on a determination of the specific form of talk that is used within the institutional frame and that will be referred to as ‘institutional talk’ (significantly contrasting in its characteristics with everyday conversation, i.e. private talk).

### **5.2.1 The restriction of verbal action within institutional frames**

Institutions regulate human (communicative) actions in accordance with their specific function in a society. In order to carry out their individual social function institutions can be formalized to different degrees. That is, communicative actions within the institutional frame are typically based on particular, institution-specific, regulations – of either linguistic (= explicit, i.e. codified) or non-linguistic nature – by means of which the structure of communicative actions within this institution can be effectively determined in advance. For example, ‘school’, as an institution of education, regulates the linguistic behavior of pupils within classroom discourse, among other things, via the non-linguistic, i.e. implicitly stated but generally acknowledged, rule of ‘do not interrupt the teacher’. This regulation is not codified and has to be learned in the process of socialization into the workings of classroom discourse. On the other hand, when we take a look at the institution of law, we find codified regulations that characteristically govern communicative actions carried out within the institutional frame. Thus, for example, the German Code of Criminal Procedure (*Strafprozeßordnung* (StPO)) strictly regulates the interaction between the participants in legal trials via clear determination of (the succession of) communicative actions within the courtroom. (*Who says what to whom in which order?*).<sup>81</sup> A comparably strict pre-specification of (institution-specific) communicative actions via codified regulations is characteristically missing in classroom discourse. Hence, interaction in courtrooms, in comparison with classroom discourse, is highly organized and therefore formalized in this respect.<sup>82</sup> More precisely, as Gülich (1981: 420) points out, “eine Institution [kann] Regelungen für ihre Kommunikationsabläufe treffen, durch die ihre Mitglieder gemeinsam die institutionsspezifischen Zwecke zu erreichen versuchen.” It is the grade of control of communicative actions via such (linguistic or non-linguistic) institutional regulations that defines the overall formality of an institution. Formality consequently describes the extent to which (interaction within) an institution is organized, i. e. formalized, via institution-specific regulations that determine how communication within the institutional frame has to take place in order for that institution to carry out its particularly ascribed institutional function in an

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<sup>81</sup> Cf. page 54. The complete German StPO can be viewed online at: <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stpo/index.html> [last access: 18.05.2010]. *Gesetze im Internet* ([www.gesetze-im-internet.de](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de)) is a service offered by the German Federal Ministry of Justice (*Bundesministerium der Justiz*) together with juris GmbH providing free online versions of the German Federal Law.

<sup>82</sup> On (the characteristics of) classroom discourse see, for example, Walsh (2006); on (the structure of) courtroom discourse see, for example, Mead (1985) or Levi and Walker (1990).

optimal way. In other words, the overall formality of an institution restricts communicative actions in such a way as to define their concrete organization, i.e. their succession, within institutional discourse.

According to Koerfer (1994) institutions can differ in the extent of formality they exhibit which is dependent on the actual force with which (codified) regulations govern communicative actions within the institutional frame. Therefore gradations in formality are structural aspects of institutions that effectively function to distinguish between different types of institution. Accordingly, they produce formal, mixed or non-formal institutions (cf. Koerfer, 1994: 225ff).

As Koerfer (1994: 225) explains, formal institutions are characterized by means of their formalization and legal foundation (“Formalisierung und Verrechtlichung”). In this case the force of regulation is serious. That is, complete regulation of possible communicative actions within the institutional discourse takes place, with the underlying regulations characteristically being codified. Typical examples according to Koerfer (1994) are courtroom discourse, which as has been shown is strictly regulated by society-specific codes of criminal procedure and church service with relevant orders of service.

Non-formal institutions show little formalization since they lack the special legal foundation that is central to formal institutions; codified regulations do exist but are generally not normative (which they are in formal institutions). That is, they are to be understood as guidelines/instructions for communicative actions and hence as general recommendations for the structure of institutional discourse instead (cf. Koerfer, 1994: 227).

Mixed institutions are located structurally somewhere between formal and non-formal institutions based on their degree of actual formalization via more or less effective institutional regulations. Koerfer lists therapeutic discourse in this connection which, because of the freedom of action characterizing the actual course of conversation, is situated rather in the direction of non-formal institutions:

Im Falle von Therapiegesprächen bewegen wir uns bereits am anderen Ende der Skala, an dem die nicht-formalen Handlungssysteme angesiedelt sind, denen nicht nur das Merkmal der Rechtsförmigkeit abgeht. Das heißt jedoch nicht, daß es keine kodifizierten Regeln gäbe. Sie unterscheiden sich aber nach Umfang, Detaillierungsgrad und vor allem nach der Durchsetzungschance, da es sich eher um Ratschläge und Empfehlungen zur Gesprächsführung [...] handelt (Koerfer, 1994: 227).<sup>83</sup>

Other examples of mixed institutions according to Koerfer (1994: 228) are school and university in which discourse and communicative actions in general are influenced – though usually without awareness on the part of the interlocutors – by institution-specific regulations (“Schulgesetze, Rahmenrichtlinien, Curricula” and “Hochschulgesetze, Studien- und Prüfungsordnungen,” Koerfer, 1994: 228). Yet, these regulations grant interactants significant

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<sup>83</sup> See also Gülich (1981: 449) in this connection.

space for communicative actions within the institutional frame which constitutes a central difference (of mixed institutions) to highly formalized institutions of law such as judicial discourse:

Bei aller Einschränkung durch sowohl rechtliche wie konventionelle Regelungen lassen Misch-Institutionen wie die Hochschule allen Aktanten jedoch erhebliche Handlungsspielräume [...]. Zwar sind die *Institutionsrollen* (Dozenten, Studenten) sowie Lehr- und Lerninhalte und damit *Rahmenthemen* strukturell vorgegeben, aber die Ausgestaltung von konkreten Seminar- bzw. Sitzungsthemen bleibt den Aktanten ebenso vorbehalten, wie die Wahrnehmung von *Dialogrollen* (Sprecher, Hörer) sowie *Interaktions-* und *Argumentationsrollen* (Diskussionsleiter, Protokollant, Referent, Proponent, Opponent) flexibel und zwischen den Beteiligten stark variierend gehandhabt werden können [...] (Koerfer, 1994: 228; italics are taken over from the author).

Depending on their grade of formalization due to more or less stringent action regulation, different types of institutions are then typically characterized by their institution-specific ‘system of action’ as constituted by an institution-specific organization of communicative actions.<sup>84</sup> For example, the system of action characterizing a highly formalized institution such as law with codified regulations governing (verbal) interaction within the institutional frame shows a pre-determined succession of communicative actions carried out within the courtroom. Accordingly, the order of communicative actions as defined e.g. by the StPO (Main Hearing, § 243ff.) for German court cases is the following:<sup>85</sup> First the judge checks if the defendant and the defense attorney are present. Then the judge questions the defendant about his/her personal background. Following this is the reading out of what the defendant is actually charged for by the government’s attorney. After this the defendant is told his/her right to deny any statements concerning what (s)he is charged for. This is followed by the examination of the defendant and after that by the hearing of evidence etc.

Communicative actions such as these are referred to by Gülich as “Interaktionsschemata” (1981: 436). Their pre-determined order – dependent on the formality of a respective institution - constitutes one typical feature of institutionally regulated communication. As Gülich points out, “[e]s ist charakteristisch für die Organisation eines institutionell geregelten Kommunikationsablaufs, daß die Institution im voraus festlegt, welche Interaktionsschemata in welcher Reihenfolge zu vollziehen sind” (1981: 435).

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<sup>84</sup> Cf. Koerfer (1994: 218) speaking of “institutionelle Handlungssysteme” with reference to Wunderlich (1976). Koerfer uses this term to denote the sequential structure of communicative actions within institutional discourse. His terminological choice is a plausible one if it is considered that a system – such as the language system – consists of a number of elements (such as lexical elements in the case of language) that constitute the system’s inventory and that stand in a particular relationship to each other thus forming a characteristic structure. Accordingly, an institution that is characterized by an institutional system of action consists of a number of (institutionally relevant) communicative actions that stand in a certain relationship to each other by means of being sequentially organized (in a more or less strictly determined manner). This organization constitutes the structure of the institutional system of action.

<sup>85</sup> The following description is based on an excerpt of the StPO provided in Koerfer (1994: 226).

In fact, pre-determination not only concerns the *order* of communicative actions, as has been exemplified here via the institution of law, but also the nature of communicative actions *as such*. Accordingly, an institution can specify in advance those communicative actions that are considered appropriate within the institutional setting. Appropriate actions are those that are in accordance with the social function to be fulfilled by an institution and their application guarantees that only function-specific talk will occur within the institutional frame of interaction. It is expected in institutional discourse that interlocutors restrict their communicative actions solely to those that conform to the institutional function of the particular institution they consult.<sup>86</sup> Speakers' knowledge of a restriction to function-specific talk within particular institutional contexts of interaction is a fundamental constituent of their pragmatic competence governing the socially appropriate, and hence successful, use of language in different social contexts.

It is likewise important for successful communication within institutional contexts that speakers not only know what kind of talk to apply in a particular instance of institutional discourse but rather also that their application of function-specific talk happens in accordance with their communicative roles as *agents* and *clients* that are adopted in that institutional discourse.<sup>87</sup> The former are the representatives of the institution (judges, teachers, doctors, etc.), the latter are those who contact the institution or are contacted by the institution (cf. Ehlich/Rehbein, 1980: 343). Successful interaction within an institutional context therefore requires both the activation of the communicative role of either agent or client in that context and interactants' mutual acknowledgement of one or the other role. As concerns the agents, in their function as representatives of an institution they occupy a particular social, i.e. institutional, role and the application of function-specific talk in this respect denotes the application of communicative actions that correspond to the individual institutional role that is fulfilled by the agent as determined by the institution. In this connection Koerfer (1994: 51) speaks of "institutionelle[m] Auftragshandeln." The agents' communicative actions therefore typically represent a role-oriented behavior according to their ascribed social role within the institution. This means that, unlike in everyday conversation, their actions in institutional discourse are governed not predominantly by their personal intentions but are rather

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<sup>86</sup> Gülich, even if only indirectly, takes up this aspect in mentioning the existence of potentially dysfunctional speech ("dysfunktionale Interaktionsschemata," 1981: 440) occurring in institutional discourse by which she means speech that is 'without function' within the institutional discourse and therefore irrelevant for the (appropriate) execution of the specific function of the respective institution. As she emphasizes, "es können [...] innerhalb solcher [institutionell geregelten Kommunikationsabläufe] Einschübe institutionell nicht vorgesehener und dementsprechend nicht geregelter Interaktion vorkommen" (Gülich 1981: 440). 'Not regulated interaction' in this connection means the occurrence of private talk and therefore non-institutionally regulated talk wrongly applied within the institutional frame. In this case Koerfer (1994: 258) speaks of a "Rahmenkonflikt." As will be shown in chapter 7.2, institutionally non-regulated interaction is a fundamental feature of talk applied within the daytime talk show format.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Ehlich's and Rehbein's (1994: 319) distinction between 'Agenten' and Klienten' as the two central types of interactants, or 'Aktanten' (Ehlich/Rehbein, 1977: 39), in institutional contexts.

determined by a communicative interest strictly following their institutional role within the realms of a clearly defined institutional purpose.

The adoption of an institutional role with a corresponding role-oriented communicative behavior then also has an impact on the ways in which face work takes place within institutional discourse. That is, it can effectively influence the type of politeness that is applied by the agent of the institution which can be determined to differ from the type of politeness that is typically mutually applied by interactants in everyday conversation. Accordingly, while the communicative encounters of the latter are characterized by the use of person-oriented politeness – face work done in everyday conversation which is guided by personal interest – the role-oriented behavior of the former involves the use of (and restriction to) role-oriented politeness. The difference in politeness types that is stated here is grounded in differential communicative roles that are adopted by speaker/hearers in non-institutional, i.e. everyday, contexts versus institutionally framed context of interaction. That is, speaker/hearers interacting in everyday speech situations do so in their communicative ‘roles’ as ordinary speakers with individually different personal intentions underlying their communicative actions. As rational cooperators with the communicative goal of effectively communicating personal intentions, speaker/hearers show their personal involvement and interest in their addressees via the application of politeness strategies (cf. Brown/Levinson’s (1987) account of a theory of politeness) that reflect their awareness and acknowledgement of their addressees’ face wants and thus serve the management of speaker/hearers’ social relations. The application of this person-oriented politeness promises the social, and hence overall communicative, success of verbal actions, i.e. both on an informative *and* a relationship level. Speaker/hearers interacting in institutional contexts, on the other hand, do so in their ascribed communicative roles as agents and clients.<sup>88</sup> Since the agent communicates with the client as representative and thus on behalf of the institution (s)he represents, it can be assumed that, in contrast to everyday conversation, there will generally be a lack of personal involvement present in the sense that the personal interest in the person, i.e. the client, talked to will be rather low. Consequently, what will rather be applied is role-oriented politeness instead of the person-oriented politeness that characterizes communicative encounters in everyday, non-institutional contexts of speech. That is, strictly speaking, face work does take place but is generally of a different kind than in everyday conversation, namely role-oriented in the first place. Yet it may be determined as correlating to positive/negative politeness (following Brown/Levinson, 1987) used in everyday speech situations. In accordance with his/her institutionally ascribed (socio-)communicative role an

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<sup>88</sup> Provided, of course, that their communicative encounter is a true instance of institutional discourse within the institutional setting in the case of which respective communicative roles are activated. It is also possible for two (or more) interlocutors to have a private conversation within an institutional setting in their aforementioned ‘roles’ as ordinary speakers (e.g. two pupils having a conversation about the latest PC game in the classroom). See in this connection also page 103ff. on the influence of the setting within a discussion of the dimensions of linguistic formality and informality. Here it is argued that the setting – the physical location of interaction – as such is only of minor importance for the perception of the speech situation as formal or informal.

agent's use of language, as a consequence, will tend to be of neutral, i.e. objective, character expressing the missing personal involvement on the relationship level. 'Tend' is used here restrictively to indicate that, although the communicative role of 'agent' governs appropriate overall communicative behavior including a relevant politeness type, it must nevertheless be admitted that an agent's use of language *can* but *need not necessarily* be objective in this respect because (s)he can in fact step out his/her institutional role and show personal interest in (the fate of) a client. (Consider, for example, a communicative situation in which a teacher steps out of his/her role as the provider of formal, institutional education addressing a pupil having serious personal problems). Communication in such cases can then also be guided by personal interest just as in everyday conversation.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, typically the interest in a person can be fundamentally missing when it comes to institutional communication. Thus, what is important is that as soon as two speaker/hearers find themselves communicating in an institutional context engaging in institution-specific forms of discourse, this characteristically involves the adoption of clearly ascribed and mutually acknowledged socio-communicative roles of 'agent' and 'client' that differ from their roles as communicators in everyday conversation in so far as the former have an impact on the type of interpersonal politeness applied in institutional discourse.

In fact, what is even more important, the impact of the communicative roles of 'agent' and 'client' also pertains to relevant (communicative) rights and obligations accompanying these roles. Accordingly, in his/her role as representative of a particular institution, an agent acting within and on behalf of this institution is accredited with institutional authority and hence with social power within the institutional frame. This power differential between agent and client results in an asymmetrical relationship that classically exists between the two types of interlocutor as soon as they participate in institutional discourse (see also Koerfer, 1994: 228). This asymmetrical relationship manifests itself in clearly defined communicative actions that are part of either the role of 'agent' or of 'client'. In other words, an institution can ascribe the communicative roles of 'agent' and 'client' to the speaker/hearers participating in institutional discourse whereby it determines appropriate, role-specific communicative actions and, doing so, also defines relevant rights and obligations of speaker/hearers in their communicative role.<sup>90</sup> To give an example: In classroom discourse the teacher acting on behalf of the

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<sup>89</sup> We should be careful though to treat this as an instance of true everyday conversation (within an institutional setting) since what happens here is an asymmetrical deviation from an ascribed communicative role on the part of the teacher which may not necessarily be reciprocated in a similar manner by the pupil. What happens in the concrete case of interaction, however, is largely a matter of speculation and depends on the interactants' individual perception of the formality/informality of the current speech situation, i.e. the 'scene'. (For a discussion of the 'scene' see the determinants of the speech situation, page 97ff.). It is therefore difficult to determine in advance whether there will be an asymmetrical or symmetrical, i.e. mutual, stepping out of a communicative role towards that of an 'ordinary' speaker or whether and when communicative roles of 'agent' and 'client' remain activated or are (mutually) re-activated.

<sup>90</sup> As aforementioned it is important for the institutional discourse to be effective that interlocutors' pragmatic competence comprises knowledge about appropriate ways of communicating in institutional contexts. Relating this to appropriate agent and client behavior, it is thus of importance not only that speaker/hearers mutually

institution 'school' as the provider of formal education is in his/her institutional role characteristically in possession of greater knowledge than the pupils. Accordingly, (s)he has a guiding function teaching the pupils what they need to know following a curriculum as determined by the institution. Thus, the teacher teaches and the pupils – as the clients – are those who have to learn. The teacher complies with his/her institutional role by using role-oriented politeness including directives<sup>91</sup> as types of speech acts typically used in classroom discourse. (As noted above, person-oriented politeness may also occur). The pupils, on the other hand, adhere to their ascribed communicative role as clients within the institution mainly by answering the questions posed by the teacher.

Role-oriented communicative behavior in courtroom discourse happens in a similar manner: the judge, government's attorney and defense attorney ask while the witnesses and the defendant(s) answer the questions. This fixed, hierarchical relationship between agents and clients, resulting from a difference in social power inherently connected to the two communicative roles, necessarily involves a social distance between the two types of interlocutor that is likely to be linguistically expressed via the use of a more formal style of speech, i.e. a language of distance that corresponds to the social distance between agent and client. This formal style of speech then includes the use of speech strategies aimed at the independence of the interactants, i.e. those strategies that emphasize interlocutors' mutual acknowledgment of (maintaining) their social distance.<sup>92</sup>

From what has been said so far it can be inferred that (1) institutions generally *execute social control* in regulating, i.e. clearly determining, the appropriate communicative actions of both agent(s) and client(s) within the institutional frame of interaction and hence, more generally speaking, they do so for the members of society. (2) Determining appropriate actions, an institution naturally *defines the limits* that are set to communicative actions within the institutional frame. These limits are posed by institution-specific regulations whereby an institution governs relevant institutional processes. Human action, consequently, is regulated by a definition of what is allowed and what is not in the process of social interaction within institutional frames. That is, as noted above, connected to institutional communication is the determination of (institution-specific) rights and obligations of both agent(s) and client(s). As a consequence, this also means that (3) *non-compliance* with the defined limits *can be sanctioned* by an institution. Accordingly, Parsons (1990: 227) argues that institutions define

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*acknowledge* their communicative roles in the institutional discourse but that they have further *internalized* their specific role, i.e. with accompanying rights (allowed actions) and obligations within the institutional setting. See in this connection also Parsons (1990: 227) speaking of a "role expectation."

<sup>91</sup> That is, questions not meant as questions for information but as requests for action in an attempt to elicit a correct answer. Hence, question-answer pairs characterizing classroom discourse characteristically reveal a syntactic structure of the first-pair part that differs from its actual communicative function. Questions posed in classroom discourse are therefore typical examples of indirect speech acts.

<sup>92</sup> See in this connection chapter 6.2 on the definition of different types of speech situations including institutionalized ones.

“the limits of acceptable behavior” so that “the tendency will be [...] for deviation from the norm [posed by the institution] to be punished” and Dittmann (1979: 210) aptly speaks of “Norm-Sanktions-Schemata” basic to (the definition of) institutions. We can see this, for example, in German courtroom discourse, where inappropriate linguistic behavior on the part of the clients, such as serious insults of one or several of the present clients or agents, normally results into severe reprimand or even imposition of a more or less serious fine. Likewise, the institutional authority of a teacher allows him or her to treat respectively constant inappropriate linguistic or other misbehavior within the classroom.

The limits thus set to the occurrence and order of communicative actions as governed by institutional regulations express the overall grade of formality characterizing an institution and it is these limits determining the concrete grade of formality of the structure of institutional discourse that denote the actual space and hence the institutional frame for communicative action within the institutional setting.

To sum up, from a linguistic point of view an institution can now be described as a system of communicative action, i.e. more precisely, a form of organization of institution-specific human communicative actions according to institution-specific regulations which create an institution-specific frame of interaction. As can be seen, the general organization of institutional discourse in this way differs strikingly from the organization of everyday conversation which, characterized by local management, does not entail any predetermination of appropriate communicative actions and their order. That is, in everyday conversation there is no pre-allocation of conversational turns as there is for institutional discourse. Consequently, the relative freedom of communicative actions shown to be valid for the structure of everyday conversation (cf. chapter 4.2) is not valid as a rule for institutional communication.<sup>93</sup>

The following chapter will leave the level of discourse and discourse structure and shortly focus instead on the extra-linguistic context of interaction, i.e. the particularities of the institutional speech situation in which discourse is situated, and, what is even more important for the current purpose, it will specifically also consider the particularities of the institutional speech situation that characterizes television.

### **5.2.2 The institutional speech situation**

Illustrating the particularities of the institutional speech situation can reveal what is actually meant when we speak of an ‘institutional frame of interaction’. That is, verbal discourse within both institutional and non-institutional contexts, or speech situations respectively, is naturally ‘framed’ in a particular way by these contexts simply by means of being situated in

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<sup>93</sup> Even if we consider non-formal institutions with less severe action regulation, the mere existence and ascription of the communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’ within institutional discourse suffices to demonstrate a fundamental difference to everyday conversation.

them. As has been argued above, the basic difference between institutional discourse and everyday conversation lies in the relative freedom of applied communicative actions. Thus, on closer inspection, we can more precisely define the particular ways of framing performed by a context in exactly this respect. In other words, the difference between institutional and non-institutional communication lies in the actual impact of the frame of interaction on (the freedom of applying) relevant communicative actions and hence it consists in the space granted in this way to these actions. The term ‘institutional frame’ consequently denotes the existence of a space for communicative actions. Ehlich and Rehbein (1994: 319) refer to this aspect speaking of a “Handlungsraum” that is constituted by an institution. According to the authors, this space determines the communicative actions that are possible and their structure within this space. The central question then is: how can we define this ‘space’? That is, how can the institutional frame be further described? In other words, what is it that characterizes the actual institutional speech situation?

Chapter 6.2, section (b) discusses the influence of the speech situation in general on speaker variation. Here it is argued that interlocutors vary their speech systematically with respect to the perceived formality/informality of the situational context in which they find themselves communicating. Communicatively competent speakers, accordingly, account for the assessed nature of the speech situation via the application of either formal or informal speech styles. The speech situation as such can be shown to be determined by three main factors: (1) setting and scene, i.e. the physical and psychological setting of interaction; (2) topic of the interaction and (3) participant relations which can be further illustrated via Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) three sociological variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ central within their theory of politeness.<sup>94</sup> Characteristically, different types of speech situations – informal, formal, or institutional ones – display a particular, i.e. situation-specific, interplay of these three factors.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, let us first shortly consider the constellation of the three determinants in turn as they appear in institutional situations in general and, in a second part (chapter 5.2.2.1), discuss their relevance for television.

Unlike everyday conversation, the successful execution of institutional processes – and this naturally includes institutional forms of discourse is usually bound to the individual physical representation(s) of, for example, the institutions of law, health, or education. That is, the physical setting, or location, of institutional discourse is characteristically predetermined, so that trials take place at the law court and formal education of pupils or students takes place at school or university, respectively. At least as regards the highly formalized institution of law, this is a necessary condition for institutional communication to be successful. Thus, a trial that takes place outside of the institution-specific location of the law court is without validity since it cannot be regarded a proper trial. This also means that a verdict has no serious effect unless it is performed in the appropriate setting, and, what is

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<sup>94</sup> See page 97ff. (*The determinants of the speech situation*) for an elaborate discussion.

<sup>95</sup> See page 108ff. (*Types of speech situations*).

particularly important, by the appropriate persons. Those who utter a verdict must be officially legitimized to do so; they have to be accredited with institutional authority. Thus, institutional processes are not successful unless they are produced by the appropriate persons in the appropriate setting, namely that one which is particularly associated with one institution, but characteristically not with another one.<sup>96</sup>

It should be noted, however, that although the setting is of importance for the successful *execution* of concrete institutional processes, it is less so for the pure *establishment* of an institutional speech situation. As is argued in chapter 6.2, interlocutors' mutual activation of the communicative roles of agent and client is sufficient enough to establish an institutional speech situation. Consequently, it is possible for two speaker/hearers to have an informal everyday conversation, and hence an informal speech situation, within a – by nature – institutional setting such as church, courtroom or classroom. It is the chiming of the church bells and the clergyman ascending the pulpit, the judge entering the courtroom and the ringing of the school bell that function as external cues triggering an activation of relevant communicative roles within the institutional context thus inducing an alteration from private, everyday conversation to institutional discourse within the formally institutional setting. The formerly informal speech situation will now turn into an institutional one and will be perceived so by the interlocutors. This aptly reflects the influence of the 'scene'<sup>97</sup> on the character of a speech situation (cf. page 103f.).

Speaking about role activation, home visits made by the doctor must be considered a special case among the cases of institutional discourse as portrayed here in so far as they constitute examples where the felicitous execution of the concrete institutional process is *not* bound to the institutional setting of the doctor's office or hospital. The role activation of 'doctor' (as agent) and 'patient' (as client) takes place within the – by nature – informal, non-institutional setting of the patient's home. The mutual activation of these communicative roles will suffice to create an institutional speech situation including relevant institutional discourse within a private setting.

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<sup>96</sup> Austin (1962) includes this aspect in his felicity conditions determining the successful production of what he initially refers to as 'performatives'. Accordingly, for performatives to be successfully produced there must be appropriate circumstances and persons (cf. Austin, 1962: 15). Austin gave up his initial distinction between performatives and constatives in favor of a theory of speech acts. In an attempt to systematize Austin's approach to speech acts, also Searle (1976: 14ff.) treats this aspect in his classification of illocutionary acts including acts performed in institutional contexts. Such 'declarations', in contrast to the other speech act categories, have the property to effect a change of reality via their performance. Yet, they do so successfully only provided that particular conditions are met. That is, their success relies on an institutional context including the adoption of specific communicative roles within that context: "[T]here must exist an extra-linguistic institution and the speaker and hearer must occupy special places within this institution. It is only given such institutions as the Church, the law, private property, the state and a special position of the speaker and hearer within these institutions that one can excommunicate, appoint, give and bequeath one's possessions or declare war" (Searle, 1976: 14).

<sup>97</sup> The psychological aspect of assessing a situational context as formal or informal in character.

When we take a look at institutional situations we find that the social relations of the interactants participating in institutional discourse are clearly defined via the existence of the communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’. Hence they necessarily incorporate a specific, namely pre-determined, constellation of the variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’, one that differs from mere formal and informal (everyday) situations. Accordingly, a negotiation of social relations, especially of social power, that takes place in everyday conversation does not happen here. Instead, it is mutual knowledge to the (communicatively competent) interlocutors that their interactions entail an asymmetry in social power connected to the adoption of differential communicative roles. The social relations between agent and client are consequently clear from the beginning and the existence of an asymmetry in social power thus is mutually acknowledged in advance, i.e. *before* both types of interlocutor actually engage in institutional talk. In this respect institutional speech situations constitute special cases of formal speech situations (cf. chapter 6.2 on types of speech situations). The asymmetrical relationship between both types of interlocutor in the institutional speech situation is concretely expressed in the agent’s (generally acknowledged) institutional authority (which allows him/her, for example, to sanction in an institution-specific manner inappropriate behavior of the client(s) within the institutional speech situation). As illustrated in chapter 6.2, this authority can be represented via the validity of Brown/Levinson’s (1987) ‘power’ factor. (Therefore: + power, meaning difference in power is given and relevant in the agent-client relationship).<sup>98</sup> There, it is also argued that this social asymmetry as resulting from an imbalance in power implies a social distance between agents and clients in the institutional situation. In this connection Brown/Levinson’s (1987) ‘distance’ factor is broadened to indicate social relations not only on a horizontal level – i.e. as grade of familiarity between interlocutors – but rather also on a hierarchical level. Hence differences in social power also mean a relevant social distance in this respect between agent and client. (Therefore: + social distance, denoting that social distance is given and relevant in the relationship between agent and client). Narrowing the ‘distance’ factor down to its original sense of ‘familiarity between interlocutors’, institutional situations show two possibilities: Interlocutors either know each other or they do not. In the latter case the ‘distance’ factor is of no relevance; in the former case we have to further elaborate on the exact nature of the relationship between agents and clients.

As discussed in chapter 5.1, institutions are established with a regulating function in society. Accordingly, providing for formal education, performing jurisdiction or offering a profound health care system are effective mechanisms whereby societies regulate and stabilize their citizens’ relationships. For a definition of the rate of imposition – Brown/Levinson’s (1987) third sociological parameter in the assessment of face threat – it is useful to take this aspect into consideration. Executing their individual function *in* and *for*

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<sup>98</sup> In contrast to this, social power alternates in everyday conversation ranging from irrelevant in highly informal, i.e. intimate, situations to more influential presence in more formal situations.

society means that institutions such as those of education, law and health are fundamentally concerned with diverse aspects that are of general social significance and interest: problems, events, actions etc. threatening the stability of the social system. Hence this also means that the rate of imposition that is connected to the concrete treatment of these aspects is, in fact, a significant one. That is, the diverse issues tackled by an institution in society imply an inherent weightiness simply because they are of so central importance for the (functioning of) society as such. This ‘thematic weightiness’ is, as a consequence, also mirrored linguistically in a heavy weight of imposition of relevant function-specific communicative acts by means of which these issues are handled. (Therefore a ‘plus’ for this third politeness factor: + rate (or: weight) of imposition).

This directly leads over to the last factor in the definition of types of speech situations: the topic of the interaction. The fact that institutions treat topics of general social significance and interest implies that these topics are ‘public’ topics by nature (to be contrasted from ‘private’ topics). In fact, this is exclusively the case, which is understandable taking into consideration that institutions are part of what is called the ‘public-sphere’ characterized by diverse institutional processes and differing in this way from the ‘private sphere’ characterized by the treatment of private matters. While the private sphere allows the discussion of both private *and* public topics, the public sphere typically excludes the discussion of private topics.<sup>99</sup>

The social sphere is not the only factor governing the occurrence of public topics within the institutional frame. In fact, occurrence is also restricted depending on a lack of familiarity between the interlocutors – agent(s) and client(s) – in the institutional speech situation. Hence a given unfamiliarity between the latter here steers their application of discourse topics towards those public in character. In view of the participant relationship, i.e. with relevant considerations of ‘face’, these topics are naturally less risky in character.

The manner in which relevant public topics are dealt with linguistically in the institutional frame can be predetermined to different degrees by institutions. Accordingly, as has been shown in chapter 5.2.1, institutional processes are governed by institution-specific regulations with differing ‘force’ based on which institutional discourse is more or less strictly organized (cf. Koerfer’s (1994) account of formal, mixed and non-formal institutions). That is, topically relevant communicative actions and their order within institutional discourse can be defined in advance. A negotiation of the order of actions as is the case in locally managed everyday conversation does thus not take place.

To sum up, institutional speech situations – in the ideal case – are characterized by a relatively high grade of formality expressed by (1) public conversational topics, (2) appropriate, institution-specific and hence fixed communicative actions and fixed order of

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<sup>99</sup> Cf. chapter 4.2. For a discussion of the public sphere in the media context see Livingstone and Lunt (1994) or Glynn (2000) with special reference to tabloid television. For a general account of the public sphere see Habermas (1989).

these actions in the treatment of the topic (= predetermination of conversational structure), (3) speaker relationships characterized by the constellation + power, + social distance (- familiarity), high rate of imposition (+). In rather formal everyday situations this constellation of the three politeness factors will be accounted for via the use of an appropriate politeness strategy (negative politeness preferred), i.e. by a rather high degree of conversational redress and consequently by a relatively formal style of speech.<sup>100</sup> Under the present conditions, this then will be the case with regard to the fact that an FTA, following Brown/Levinson (1987), is considered the sum of power, social distance and rate of imposition. (All are given and relevant here). That is, the resulting overall weight of the FTA in these circumstances is rather high and is therefore likely to direct the speaker's choice of politeness strategies towards a high degree of conversational redress in order to diminish the threat to face.

Although the constellation of the politeness factors is valid for institutional situations featuring institutional forms of discourse where, as has been shown, mostly role-oriented and *not* person-oriented politeness is applied, it may nevertheless be stated that, as in formal everyday conversation, the overall 'weightiness'<sup>101</sup> created by the factors will be accounted for by an equally formal style of speech with a respective degree of conversational redress that is according to the overall formality of the institutional situation, which results not only from the three politeness factors but also from the topic choice and the overall (largely predetermined) organization of the institutional discourse.

The explanations made so far then allow the following conclusion regarding the characteristics of the institutional speech situation – and thus of the institutional frame – including the talk that is used within this frame: (1) Based on the three central factors of setting/scene, topic and participant relationships, whose constellation has been summarized here for institutional speech situations, the institutional frame for communicative action can be described as a highly organized situational context demanding formal talk which characterizes the institutional discourse.<sup>102</sup> (2) This formal talk is thus in accordance with the – ideally – high grade of formality present in the institutional speech situation. The talk that is applied within the institutional frame and that establishes institutional (forms of) discourse will be referred to as 'institutional talk' henceforth. Chapter 5.2.4 is concerned with the concrete determinants of institutional talk.

For the current purpose of illustrating institutional talk as it appears on television, it is useful to take a look first at the particularities of the speech situation that characterizes the

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<sup>100</sup> See in this connection chapter 6.2, section (c) for a detailed discussion of the determinants of formal and informal speech styles. The section includes a relevant account of the assumed extent of conversational redress in formal and informal styles.

<sup>101</sup> Adopted from Brown/Levinson (1987).

<sup>102</sup> This is valid at least for the assumption of the ideal case, i.e. an underlying high grade of formality of a given institution.

institution 'television' and to discuss the relevance and constellation of the three determining factors of a speech situation when applied to (the institutional frame of) television.

### 5.2.2.1 The institutional speech situation of television

To begin with, the institutional speech situation of television, in fact, differs significantly from the one that has been described in the preceding chapter with respect to the institutions of law, health and education. This is the case in so far as the actual institutional frame as concerns television is split up into multiple levels – establishing distinct frames of interaction – with each level revealing a particular type of communication, notably interpersonal or mass communication (cf. figure 4). Accordingly, it is the specific tripartite structure of a first, second and third frame of interaction that distinguishes the institutional frame of television from the one of the other, traditional institutions that are focused on above. This peculiarity of the institutional frame of television though is the natural result of the nature and social function of television as a mass medium. That is, interpersonal communications taking place within the institutional setting of the television studio is produced with the specific aim of technically distributing it to a disperse audience. (Doing so television is supposed to fulfill the political functions that are traditionally ascribed to the mass media in (western) societies (cf. chapter 1.2)). It is this aspect that ultimately triggers the three-part fragmentation of the institutional frame of interaction. As a consequence, the institutional speech situation as such is *enlarged* as it involves both interpersonal communication (within a first frame of interaction, i.e. the institutional setting) *and* mass communication (within a second frame of interaction).<sup>103</sup> That is, the original – or *primary* – institutional speech situation as constituted by interpersonal communication within the institutional setting is broadened via a *secondary* frame of interaction (i.e. that of mass communication) to the specific institutional speech situation that characterizes television. This secondary frame of interaction is the result of televising the interpersonal communication within the primary speech situation thus turning the institutional speech situation into an additionally public one. Consequently, this enlargement means that the institutional speech situation of television is, in fact, at the same time both institutional *and* public in character as television provides potentially unlimited access to discourse within its institutional settings (see, for example, Mühlen, 1985: 11). This also means that via mass communication the institution television creates a significant connection between two social spheres that traditionally have been separated: the public,

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<sup>103</sup> Although the third frame of interaction – interpersonal communication within the private sphere as triggered by content reception (i.e. mass communication) – needs to be acknowledged as a part of the wider speech situation (i.e. institutional frame), it is the direct result of the technical process of mass communication and therefore it is not a part of the institutional speech situation proper which centrally involves only discourse within the institutional setting and its mass distribution within a first and second frame of interaction.

institutional sphere (in this case of television production) and the private sphere (of content reception) (cf. figure 4).<sup>104</sup>

This particularity of the speech situation of television consequently involves a special status of the communicative actions taking place within this situation. That is, they are also both institutional and public at the same time in being mass communicatively distributed. (We could argue that this aspect, in fact, strongly supports and increases the demand for public/institutional talk within the first frame of interaction). Consequently, all communicative actions that take place within the first frame of interaction are directed not only towards those interlocutors immediately present within the first frame of interaction (i.e. those interacting within the television studio) but are likewise also always produced with reference to a present studio audience and/or absent television audience at home. All television talk thus incorporates what may be called a ‘dual addressing function’ or ‘dual directedness’.<sup>105</sup>

In this connection the question arises whether – and if so in how far – the second frame of interaction has an influence on communication within the first one. In other words, does the knowledge on the part of the interlocutors within the first frame of interaction about their communicative actions being televised, i.e. broadcast to a mass audience, channel their actions into a particular direction, namely leading to enhanced linguistic formality? Mühlen (1985) views mass communication as an important factor in restraining the spontaneity of communicative actions. Thus, the knowledge of interlocutors in the television studio about their face-to-face interaction being witnessed on the television screen by large audiences will cause these interlocutors to calculate their conversational contributions before and during a

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<sup>104</sup> It will be shown in chapter 7.2 (*The talk show format*) that the impact of television in this respect not only consists in creating a sole *connection* between the two traditionally separated social spheres but also pertains to a significant *blurring* between them especially as concerns the treatment of private topics within the public sphere.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Mühlen (1985: 41) referring to this dual nature of television talk as “zweifache Gerichtetheit der Kommunikation” and “multilaterale Kommunikation.” Similarly, Burger (2005: 20) speaks of a “Doppeladressierung” within the inner circle of communication (i.e. what is called the first frame of interaction here): “Man kann dies auch eine „Brechung” [quotation marks are taken over from the author] der Kommunikation im inneren Kreis auf den äußeren Kreis hin nennen,” with the outer circle denoting the relationship between the interactants in the inner circle and the audience (i.e. what is called the second frame of interaction here involving defined by mass communication). According to Burger, if a studio audience is present, the communicative situation is even more complex correspondingly involving a triple addressing of both studio *and* absent television audience (2005: 20). Such a neat distinction though is not made here. What is more important is the general awareness on the part of the interlocutors within the first frame of interaction of their discourse being produced for a third party, that is, independent of whether this third party is actually present in the studio setting or not. We can illustrate this awareness and, consequently, acknowledgement of the studio/television audience (as part of the wider communicative situation) applying Bell’s (1984) audience design framework. Thus, depending on the television format that is focused on, we can classify the audience either as ‘addressees’ that are ‘known’, ‘ratified’ and ‘addressed’ or at least define them as ‘auditors’ that are ‘known’ and ‘ratified’ though not directly ‘addressed’ (cf. Bell, 1984: 159f.). The former applies to the news format; the latter applies to formats that feature interaction in the institutional setting such as the talk show format, including the daytime talk show, with a direct addressing of the interlocutors on stage and a simultaneous indirect addressing of studio and television audience. The significant aspect in this connection is that of an assumed and expected *ratification* of the audience that takes place in any case independent of whether it is a television audience or additional studio audience.

conversation (cf. Mühlen 1985: 70). According to Mühlen, it is, among other things, this special public access granted by the institution television that effectively functions to exclude spontaneous conversation (and thus everyday conversation) from occurrence within the institutional frame (cf. Mühlen, 1985: 71).<sup>106</sup> However, it must be considered that her view is that of 1985 and (the structure of) German television – which she refers to – has significantly changed after the introduction of the dual broadcasting system in 1984. One consequence of this change was the introduction of the daytime talk show format onto the German television market which now exists next to the classical talk show forms as studied by Mühlen (1985).<sup>107</sup> Hence, though she points out an important aspect of the institutional nature of television, her statement concerning the spontaneity of televised face-to-face interaction is somewhat outdated and cannot be left uncommented here for it is not of unrestricted validity when we investigate talk on contemporary television. Accordingly, it will be shown in chapter 7.2.1 that in the German and US daytime talk shows analyzed here spontaneous everyday conversation indeed does occur within the institutional frame.

Having addressed the special status of the institutional speech situation of television in general, what can we say about the constellation and relevance of the three determining factors ‘setting/scene’, ‘topic’ and ‘participant relations’ in particular?

(1) Setting/scene:

The occurrence of everyday conversation is not restricted to a particular setting. As has been argued on the basis of a ‘setting/scene’ distinction in chapter 6.2, it is generally possible to have an informal everyday conversation even within a – by definition – institutional setting unless particular, institution-specific, cues in the social context signal the activation of a more formal, i.e. institutional, speech situation with a relevant adoption of communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’ and appropriate forms of institution-specific discourse. Felicitous institutional discourse, in contrast to everyday conversation, is characteristically associated with an institution-specific setting (e.g. courtroom talk). This also applies to the institution ‘television’: institutional discourse is – with exceptions – bound to the institutional setting of the television studio. This is all the more the case since the mass distribution of this discourse requires relevant production technology that is provided centrally only within the institutional settings. (‘With exceptions’ is applied

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<sup>106</sup> In this connection Mühlen (1985: 69f.) also generally refers to spontaneity and planning of verbal actions as being related to the extent of carefulness with which communicative acts are produced in different speech situations. Accordingly, speech applied in institutional situations is rather carefully considered and hence less spontaneously produced than speech applied in informal everyday conversation. (On this aspect see also chapter 6.2, section (c): the discussion of linguistic formality and informality, which is also concerned with the degree of expectable speech planning in different situational styles). This is due to the overall power of an institution in general and the existing difference in power between agent(s) and client(s) in the institutional speech situation in particular.

<sup>107</sup> For a characterization of daytime talk shows see chapter 7.2.

above because satellite news gathering and, more recently, digital satellite news gathering enables correspondents to report on events from studio-external locations around the world. The correspondent acts as agent on behalf of the institution ‘television’, yet (s)he does so from outside the actual institutional setting of the studio).

The ‘scene’, as psychological counterpart of the setting, in this connection can be determined as being fundamentally influenced by the institution ‘television’ based on the individual conception of a television format with an underlying information or entertainment function (or a mixture of both). To explain this, in the institutional settings of the traditional institutions of law, health and education the clients’ perception of the speech situation is *not per se determined in advance* but can principally be both formal and informal in character. As has been discussed, it is possible to have an informal conversation in the institutional setting unless particular cues in the situation trigger a relevant change in perception towards a more formal, i.e. institutional, speech situation with all its consequences for participant roles and appropriate forms of discourse within this new situation. This is different in the institutional speech situation of television where the perception of formality/informality is generally *predetermined* depending on a particular format and its predominant communicative function. For example, when we consider the daytime talk show format with its central entertainment function, we find that the studio decoration can imitate the private sphere of content reception via emulation of a living-room thus creating a relaxed atmosphere that ultimately fosters the occurrence of informal everyday conversation right from the beginning.<sup>108</sup> In contrast to this stand information-oriented broadcast formats that create the formal context of expert-lay communication. Thus, if we consider a particular magazine type such as the health magazine (not investigated here) with a clear information function, verbal interaction between agent and client is characterized by what may be defined as (simulated) expert-lay communication with the presenter ‘acting’ as layperson representing the absent television audience. The clear information orientation and discussion of serious topics of assumed high public interest together with the adoption of communicative roles of expert and layperson contribute *in advance* to a perceived overall formality of the speech situation.<sup>109</sup>

## (2) Topic and participant relations

The simple fact that institutions are part of the public sphere is a significant factor that restricts the application of discourse topics within the institutional frame to those of public nature. Furthermore, the constellation of the three variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ illustrates a participant relationship in institutional situations that argues for a restriction to public topics (cf. chapter 6.2 on types of speech situations). (In

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<sup>108</sup> E.g. *Montel* and *Ricki*. See also chapter 7.2 on this aspect.

<sup>109</sup> What we see here is an obvious connection between entertainment and (situational) informality, on the one hand, and information and (situational) formality, on the other hand.

terms of a linguistic preference structure we can therefore speak of a preference for public topics as – using markedness terminology – unmarked topics in institutional situations. Deviations from this preference structure in institutional speech situations, i.e. in the form of an application of marked private topics, are noticed and can be sanctioned respectively by an institution).

When we talk about the institutional speech situation of television, however, we have to refine these central assumptions about the nature of institutional speech situations in general. Accordingly, as we have seen, the institutional speech situation of television is a special one in that it is both institutional and public in character with the latter being the result of an institution-specific process of mass communication whereby potentially unlimited public access to the institutional speech situation is granted. As the institution ‘television’ is also part of the public sphere, we can therefore uncritically accept the resulting logical demand for a restriction to public topics similar to the discussed traditional institutions. In reality, however, contemporary television frequently deviates from this theoretical demand. In fact, private topics – for obvious reasons of marketization – are now integral parts of contemporary programming policies especially as concerns the daytime talk show format (cf. chapter 7.2.1) which was introduced onto the German television market in the early 1990s. Their application significantly contributes to a blurring of the traditionally separated public and private sphere.

When we turn to participant relations in the institutional speech situation of television, however, we can state a significant difference to traditional institutions that consists in the relative unimportance of the three relationship-determining factors of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ for the speech situation of television. To explain this, in accordance with traditional institutional speech situations, place and time of interpersonal communication within the institution television are characteristically limited. That is, television talk is usually restricted to the television studio which provides the necessary technology for mass distribution – unless we have e.g. correspondents reporting from external locations. Likewise, the production and broadcast of television talk are subject to scheduling and consequently they are institutionally fixed. In television settings this spatial and temporal limitation though has wider implications: stable social relationships – the maintenance of which so fundamentally characterizes everyday conversation – need not and, in fact, *cannot* be properly build up in the short time of social contact in the institutional setting of the television studio. Let us consider, for example, the talk show where interlocutors – host(s) and prominent or non-prominent guest(s) – meet for the limited time of broadcast. During this time interaction takes place in the public sphere of the studio setting. Frequently – and this is valid for both classical and daytime talk shows – not only one guest but numerous ones are invited to the show with each additional guest consequently reducing the other guests’ concrete amount of time for potential interaction possibilities. The establishment, let alone maintenance, of social relationships is thus

nearly impossible and, in fact, often not desired, as is the case in daytime talk shows that are often – though not exclusively – based on the concept of carrying out personal conflicts in public, but not on the maintenance of stable social relationships (e.g. *Jerry Springer*). In short, interlocutors meet for a restricted time on stage where they engage in interpersonal communication that is subject to temporal restrictions as determined by individual format conceptions and it is highly likely that they never meet again in their entire life. This significantly reduces the necessity for extensive relationship management. Hence we can assume that these contextual restrictions will define the parameters for the type of face-work that is applied within the institutional speech situation of television. Thus, if face-work is applied ‘on stage’, it is of different character than that applied in everyday conversation where it lies at the heart of felicitous interpersonal communication, i.e. the successful communication of speaker intentions, and it can be described best as being not real but rather simulated or ‘staged’. On the part of the host – and probably of the institutional agent in general – this also means the adoption of a type of politeness that is rather role-oriented than truly person-oriented in character. That is, politeness is predominantly based on the adoption of a communicative role as institutional agent (e.g. host of a daytime talk show). Hence it is exclusively role-oriented and therefore does not express a true personal interest in the addressee that otherwise characterizes the application of person-oriented politeness in formal/informal everyday communication.

What then does the unimportance of the variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ mean for the application of public topics within the institutional speech situation of television, that is, when we consider that they are determined by the particular constellation of exactly these factors in traditional institutional speech situations? More generally, what can we say about the application of institutional talk – and this includes the use of public topics – within the institutional speech situation of television? Accordingly, due to the irrelevance of the aforementioned three relationship-defining factors for television, the theoretical demand for public topics and formal, institutional talk within the institutional speech situation for television seems to vanish. Hence it can only be attributed solely to the dual directedness of communicative actions within the first frame of interaction. That is, the overall, potentially unlimited public access to the institutional speech situation that is created via the technical process of mass communication theoretically results into a responsibility on the part of the institution ‘television’ towards the special kind of public it creates for a type of talk that is suited for this public and consequently suited to be broadcast. We can therefore say that the special status of television among other institutions that is created in this way (i.e. involving both an institutional *and* public speech situation) supports and increases the demand for institutional talk within the first frame of interaction.

The characteristics of the institutional speech situation in general and those of the institutional speech situation of television in particular finally allow a determination of what is to be understood by ‘institutional talk’, i.e. as a form of discourse that is in accordance with the overall formality of the institutional speech situation.

### **5.2.3 The determinants of institutional talk**

In accordance with the institutional speech situation, institutional talk, in detail, is characterized by (1) the application of public conversational topics. The treatment of those topics is (2) in a formal, i.e. institutional, speech style to be expected as resulting from the specific constellation of the three relationship-defining variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ in institutional contexts. The formality of the speech style will be expressed in syntactic structure via the use of an assumed high grade of conversational redress in the form of negative politeness, i.e. linguistic independence strategies, corresponding to the social distance existent between the interlocutors. The formality of the speech style will also be expressed in the overall choice of words and specific pronunciation features.<sup>110</sup> The verbal realization of public topics is therefore also in a public language, namely a style of discourse which, by means of its formality on the aforementioned levels, is suited for occurrence in the public (sphere), and which, in fact, can stand the public critique.

The treatment of conversational topics in the institutional speech situation is furthermore done in a fixed organization of institutional discourse. ‘Institutional talk’ consequently also centrally involves (3) a regulation of speech and thus is subject to social control by the institution it occurs in. As has been illustrated, this regulation consists in the pre-determination of possible communicative actions and their order by the institution. The application of communicative actions within the institutional frame hence is done in an institution-specific manner. What follows from this is a contrast to verbal interaction within non-institutional contexts – i.e. everyday conversation – where the organization of communicative actions is not specified in advance but is the product of the active work of interlocutors structuring the talk locally on a turn-by-turn basis (cf. chapter 4.2).<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> See chapter 6.1 for a detailed discussion of the characteristics of formal and informal speech styles entailing the features mentioned here.

<sup>111</sup> Thus, from a purely linguistic point of view, institutions are to be distinguished from everyday life, although they are more or less fundamental parts of our everyday affairs. Institutional talk, correspondingly, is to be distinguished from everyday talk. Cf. in this connection Güllich’s view, who avoids a clear distinction speaking of differences in grades of institutionalization (1981: 451). Nevertheless, the distinction between institutional talk, on the one hand, and everyday talk, on the other hand, as concerns the overall structure of conversation is justified as the above explanations should have shown. To be acknowledged are, however, the problems occurring with a distinction made between institutional and everyday talk as regards the view of ‘marriage’ or ‘family’ as institutions. As is obvious, what is used here is everyday talk, i.e. informal talk, not institutional talk. Thus, there is a conflict between the institution ‘marriage’ or ‘family’ and institutional talk that was shown to characterize the workings of institutions. This consequently leads to an exclusion of those rather abstract entities from the definition of institution within this paper. For this reason a refinement of the definition of institution as presented in chapter 5.1 is necessary. Accordingly, ‘marriage’ is excluded and only those entities are included

For an apt illustration of the differences between institutional talk (or: public talk) and everyday conversation (or: private talk) it is useful to take a look at the connection between (the character of) the setting and the speech style used in the setting as illustrated in figure 6 below:

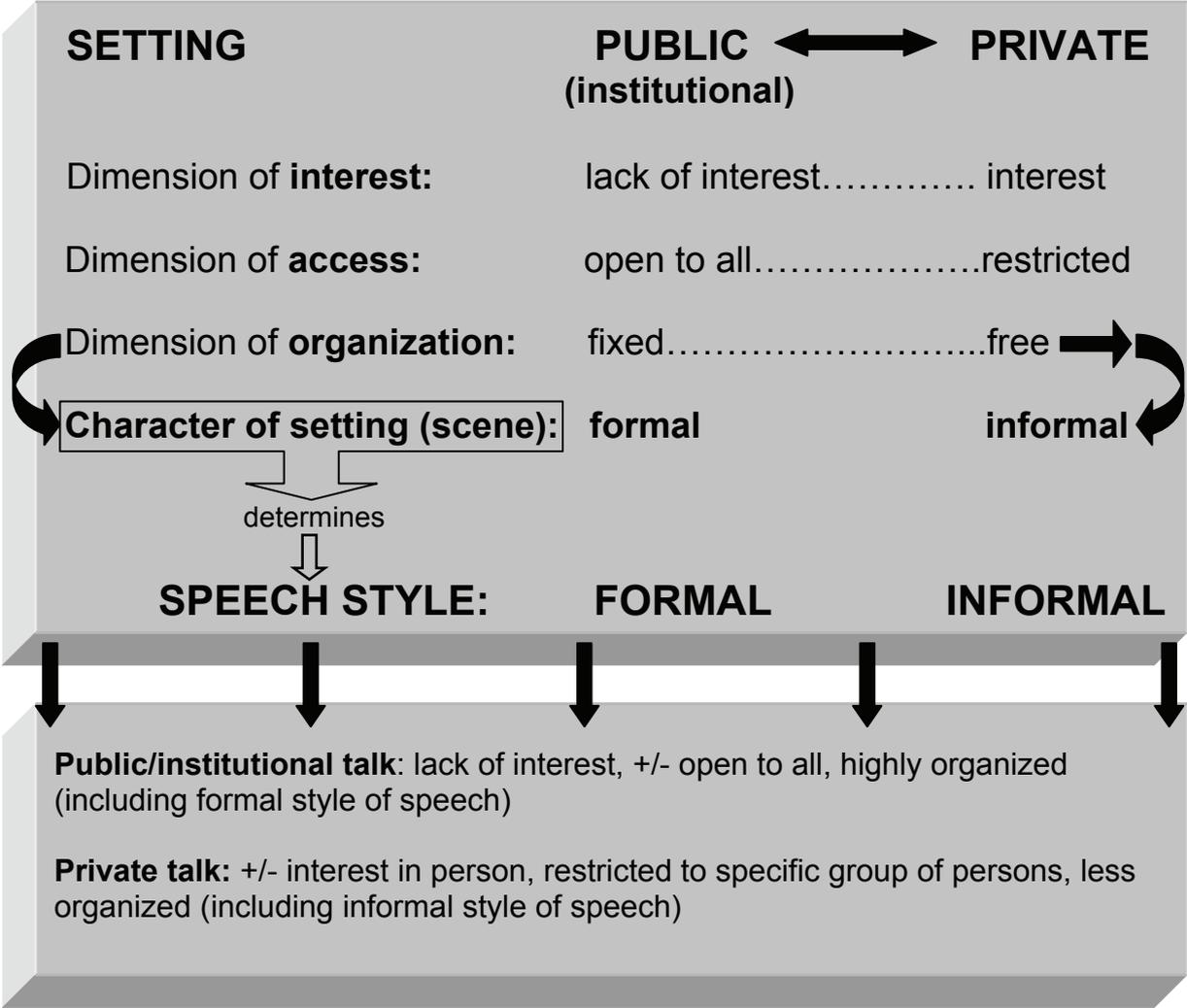


Figure 6: The connection between setting and speech style and the characteristics of public and private talk

Figure 6 demonstrates the connection between the setting and the style of speech that is used within this setting on the basis of three factors, or dimensions: interest, access and organization. These factors can be used to characterize in detail different settings from public, institutional to private in nature depending on how a studied setting ‘scores’ on a scale of interest, a scale of access and a scale of internal organization. ‘Interest’ and ‘organization’ were introduced in the description of institutional speech situations in chapters 5.2.2 and 5.2.2.1. The former denotes whether verbal interaction is guided by interest in a person or not. The presence/absence of personal interest hence refers to what has been illustrated above as

where a typical setting is given in which institutional talk takes place that shows structural differences towards everyday talk. Those entities then relate to school, university, court, etc.

person-oriented politeness (reflecting personal involvement) versus role-oriented politeness (lacking personal involvement and, therefore, personal interest). The latter – ‘organization’ – describes the grade of formality which determines a setting. Accordingly, a (highly) formal setting is a setting that is highly organized (via institutional regulations) including the way in which interaction proceeds (cf. ‘fixed organization’ in figure 6). An informal setting, likewise, is a setting that is less strictly organized also with reference to the structure of (verbal) interaction within this setting (cf. ‘free organization’ in figure 6).

We have to integrate the notion of ‘scene’ in a proper discussion about the influence of the setting on language use. As is discussed in chapter 6.2, page 103ff., the setting *per se* as physical location of (verbal) interaction is only of minor importance for language use within this setting. Figure 6 therefore presents the setting not as an isolated factor but necessarily in connection with ‘scene’ as the psychological aspect of the setting referring to interlocutors’ mutual assessment of the setting – and hence of the speech situation – as formal or informal in character as based on particular, institution-specific contextual verbal or non-verbal cues (cf. ‘character of setting (scene)’ in figure 6).

The third factor labeled ‘access’ is new in this connection but easy to understand. It denotes the access a person has to a setting and consequently to the interaction taking place in that setting. Institutional settings like school, university, or court are (more or less) open to everybody within a society and such settings are therefore public settings.<sup>112</sup> (Thus, in figure 6 the term ‘public’ is used synonymously with ‘institutional’). This means that the institutional speech situation is also a public one and the talk that is applied within this situation is therefore public talk and as such part of the public sphere. (Although institutions are unrestricted in this respect, they show effective restriction, however, as concerns the location and time of interaction. Both are characteristically fixed (cf. chapters 5.2.2 and 5.2.2.1)). ‘Private’, in contrast to ‘public’, correspondingly denotes settings that are not open to the public with access being restricted to specific ‘authorized’ persons only. Talk occurring within private settings is thus part of the private sphere. (Private talk – i.e. everyday conversation – hence shows the opposite restriction than does public/institutional talk: relevant access restriction but fundamental absence of a pre-specification of special place and special time of interaction).

In figure 6 ‘public’ and ‘private’ are two extreme poles on a scale of possible in-between forms of thinkable settings that are more or less public or private in nature depending on the constellation of the factors of ‘interest’, ‘access’ and ‘organization’ given in a studied setting.

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<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, among the typical dictionary entries for ‘public’ as the antonym of ‘private’ are “open to or shared by all the people” (cf. Swannell, J. (ed.) 1992. *The Oxford Modern English Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press) and “FOR EVERYONE [...] provided, especially by the government, for the use of people in general: *a public education system*  $\diamond$  *a public library*” (cf. Hornby, A. S., Wehmeier, S., McIntosh, C., Turnbull, J. and Ashby, M. (eds.) 2005. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* (7<sup>th</sup> ed.). Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press; Berlin: Cornelsen).

(In the figure this possibility is indicated by the two opposing arrows:  $\leftarrow \rightarrow$ ).<sup>113</sup> As can be seen, the two extreme positions are characterized by the following constellation of the three factors: public/institutional, i. e. formal, settings are determined by a lack of personal interest visible in interaction. They are open to all and show a fixed organization. Private/non-institutional, i.e. informal, settings are determined by the opposite: interest in person, restriction to specific group of people and free organization.

As is obvious, the talk that is applied in public/private settings mirrors the overall structure of these settings on a linguistic level (cf. figure 6). Public, institutional and private talk can thus be further refined. Based on the formality of public/institutional settings, **public, institutional talk** is characterized by the following:

- (1) It reveals a lack of interest in the addressee,
- (2) It is more or less open to everybody,
- (3) It is highly organized.

Based on the informality of private settings, **private talk** is characterized by the opposite:

- (1) It shows more or less interest in the addressee,
- (2) It is restricted to a specific group of persons,
- (3) It is less organized (probably free).

In this connection, figure 6 also illustrates the relation between the character of the setting/scene and the speech style appropriate for use in this setting. That is, the speech style that is used in public/formal and private/informal settings is in accordance with the formality/informality of the setting as determined by the latter's individual level of organization. Thus, in a public/formal setting the expected speech style will be formal in character while in a private/informal setting the expected speech style, correspondingly, will be informal in nature.

Turning to the aforementioned potential in-between forms of communicative settings, public settings may reveal a deviation from the original constellation of all three factors that has been shown to determine such settings. Accordingly, public settings may be highly fixed on the organizational dimension, but exhibit an oscillation on the dimensions of interest and access. Alternatively, public settings may also be less fixed in principle on the dimension of organization leading to a rather informal character of such settings. (It is this possibility of structural alternatives on the level of internal organization that mirrors Koerfer's (1994) concept of formal, mixed and non-formal institutions). Such a public, yet informal, setting

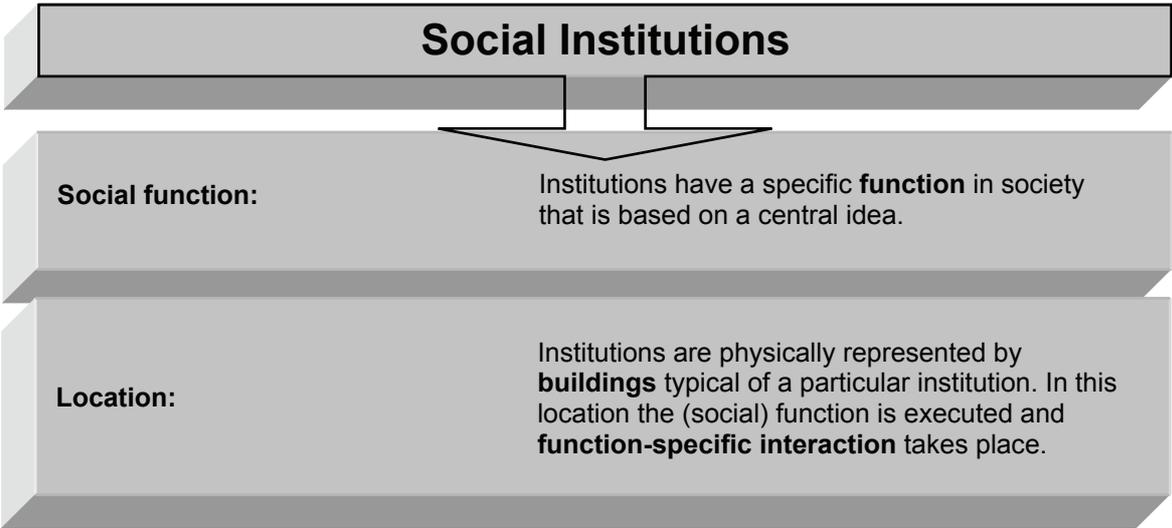
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<sup>113</sup> In fact, this illustration corresponds to Gülich's view of grades of institutionalization (cf. 1981: 451).

will thus be characterized by the use of an informal speech style which correspondingly reflects the character of the setting on the linguistic level.<sup>114</sup>

As can be inferred from figure 6, a distinction is made here between public, institutional and private talk, on the one hand, and the notion of ‘speech style’, on the other hand. Accordingly, public, institutional and private talk are *not* speech styles and the terms, therefore, should not be used interchangeably. Rather, the former are super-ordinate terms that denote a category of either public, institutional talk or private talk comprising particular, category-specific features. In other words, constructing complementary categories of talk, ‘public, institutional talk’ and ‘private talk’ subsume all the characteristic features that define the structure of talk used within institutional or non-institutional contexts. These features include the application of a particular, category-specific speech style. Hence, a speech style is just *one* component among a range of other components that build up a particular type of talk – either public, institutional or private. Public, institutional and private talk, consequently, means the use of but not the same as formal/informal speech style. (For the features of public, institutional and private talk see table 3 and, in more detail, table 6).

Table 2 below finally presents an overview of the features of institutions and shall function here to summarize what has been said so far on the particularities of institutions and institutional frames, that is, speech situations including the social relations of the persons (verbally) acting in these particular types of situational contexts.



<sup>114</sup> The notion of institutional settings that are public but informal in character will turn out to be important for the discussion of the talk show format in chapter 7.2, especially for those talk shows termed ‘daytime talk’ characterized by a heavy use of informal speech.

<b>Formalization:</b>	In order to carry out their specific function in society institutions can be <b>formalized</b> to different degrees according to <b>institutional regulations</b> .
<b>Action regulation:</b>	Via institutional regulations institutions can <b>determine in advance appropriate communicative actions and their order</b> in institutional discourse (= institutionally regulated discourse).
<b>Action limitation:</b>	Via institutional regulations institutions define the <b>limits</b> set to communicative actions within the institutional frame. Non-compliance with the limits can be <b>sanctioned</b> by the institution.
<b>Interactants and their social relations:</b>	The persons interacting in institutional settings are referred to as <b>agents</b> and <b>clients</b> . As representatives of institutions agents occupy an <b>institutional role</b> which implies the use of <b>role-oriented politeness</b> . The relationship between agents and clients is characteristically <b>asymmetrical</b> with the agents having institutional authority (= <b>social distance</b> between agents and clients).
<b>The institutional frame:</b>	Communicative actions are set within the <b>institutional frame</b> . The frame/the institutional speech situation – in the ideal case – is characterized by a relatively <b>high grade of formality</b> : public conversational topics, pre-determination of conversational structure (communicative actions + order), politeness factors: + power, - familiarity, heavy weight of imposition.
<b>Institutional talk:</b>	<b>Institutional talk</b> – the type of talk used within the institutional frame – is in accordance with the overall formality of the speech situation.

Table 2: The distinctive features of institutions

Table 2, in fact, points to the important distinctive characteristics whereby institutions and the institution-specific ways of communication within the institutional frame can be distinguished

from the ways of communication within everyday, i.e. non-institutional, contexts. The next chapter more closely elaborates on this aspect and focuses on a detailed illustration of and comparison between the characteristic features of institutional talk on the one hand and private talk (i.e. everyday conversation) on the other hand.

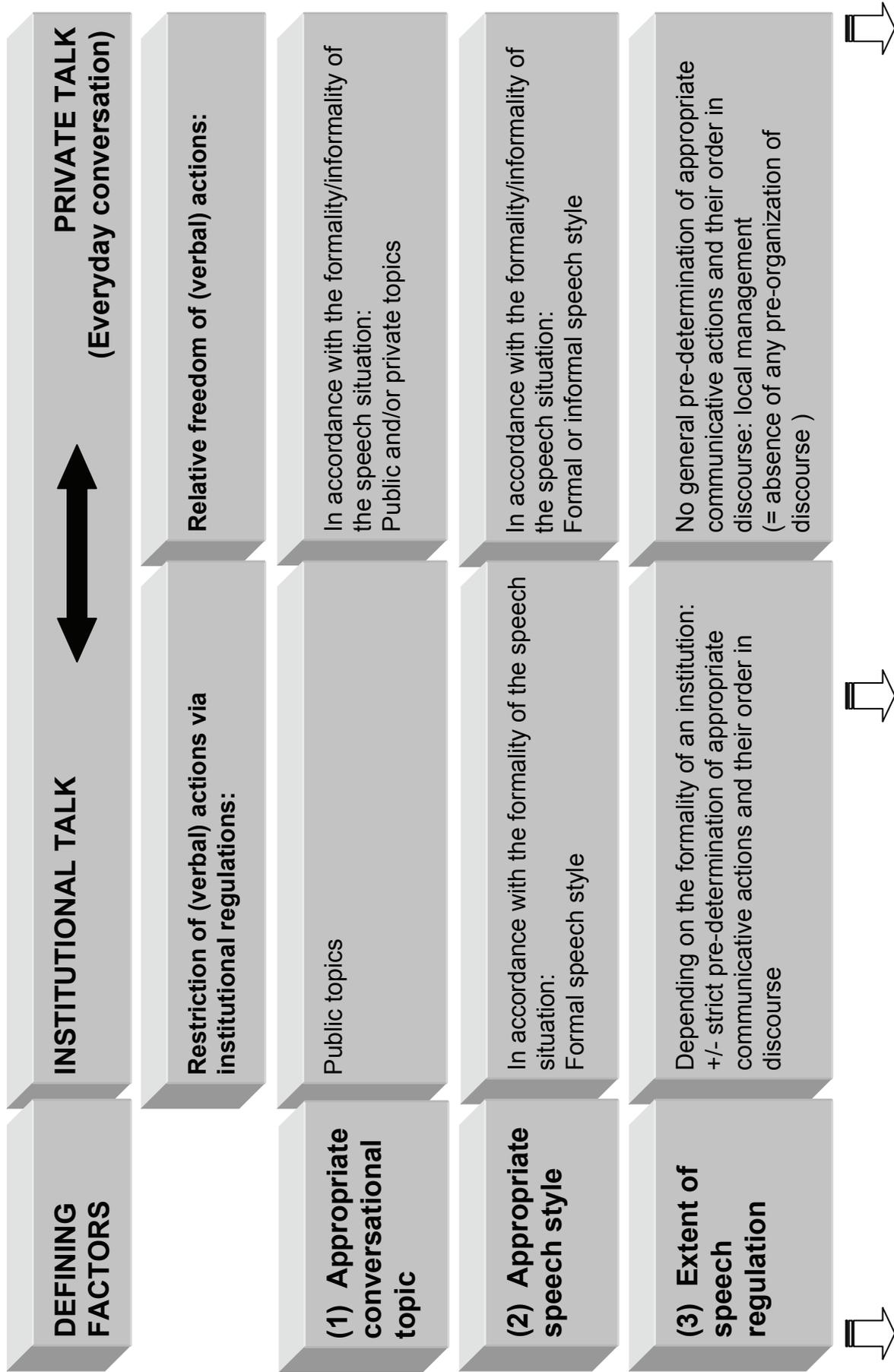
## **CHAPTER 6 A characterization of institutional talk and private talk**

With the help of the foregoing discussion in chapters 4 and 5 of the particularities of verbal interaction in non-institutional contexts and verbal interaction in institutionally framed contexts it is now possible to crystallize the factors by means of which both types of verbal interaction can be distinguished from each other. In other words, it is now possible to illustrate in detail the characteristic features of institutional talk on the one hand and of private talk (everyday conversation) on the other hand on the basis of the results of the two preceding chapters.

### **6.1 The defining factors of institutional talk and private talk**

‘Institutional talk’ on the left in table 3 represents the form of talk appropriate for use in institutions and therefore also appropriate for use in the settings of television. ‘Private talk’ on the right in the table constitutes the form of talk appropriate for use in everyday social situations. On the leftmost side are shown the factors that are relevant for a definition of the characteristic features of the two types of talk:

- **Appropriate conversational topic:** i.e. public and/or private in character
- **Appropriate speech style:** i.e. formal or informal in character
- **Extent of speech regulation:** i.e. extent of pre-determination of appropriate communicative actions and their order in discourse
- **Predominant type of politeness:** i.e. person-oriented or role-oriented politeness
- **Access to the speech situation:** i.e. extent of access restriction: public access or lack of public access
- **Place and time of conversation:** i.e. fixed or free



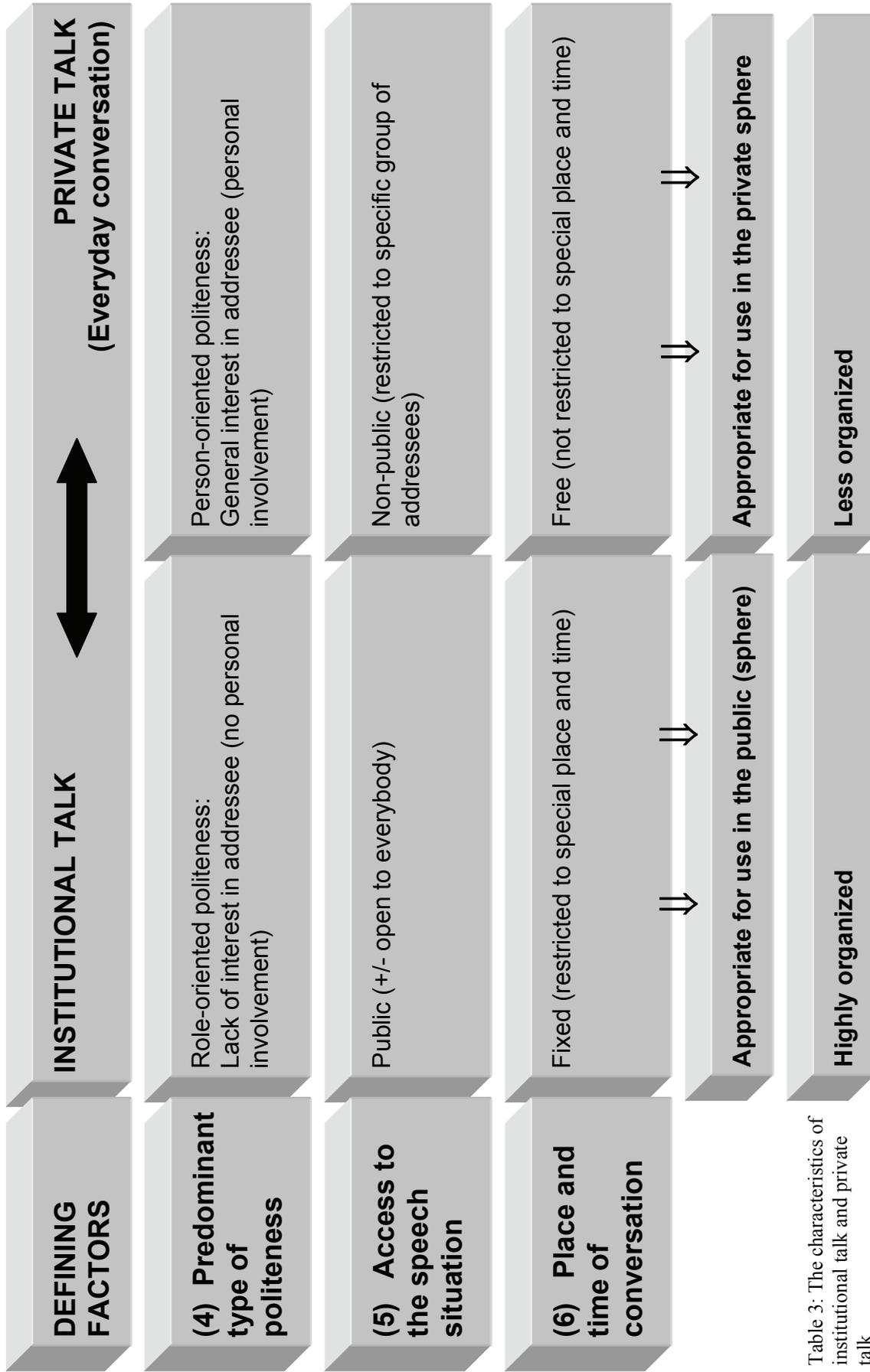


Table 3: The characteristics of institutional talk and private talk

The characteristics of institutional and private talk presented in table 3 aptly illustrate the overall restriction of communicative actions via the institution that exists in institutional frames of interaction and the relative freedom of communicative actions that can be found in everyday speech situations. The restriction of actions in institutional frames is twofold: (1) it is based on institutional regulations that determine appropriate communicative actions and their order. (2) The overall formality of the institution/the institutional speech situation demands a formal speech style, that is, a public form of speech, one that is appropriate for use in public and the discussion of public topics only. In everyday situations with different degrees of formality/informality a relative freedom of communicative actions is expressed in a general lack of, firstly, any pre-structuring of discourse and, secondly, any serious restrictions concerning topic choice or style of speech.

Table 3 defines institutional talk as ‘highly organized’ in opposition to private talk (everyday conversation) which is ‘less organized’. It should be noted in this connection that ‘less organized’ in the latter case simply refers to the fact that private talk is simply less organized when it is immediately compared to institutional talk, namely in so far as it generally does not show any pre-determination of the overall structure of discourse, i.e. of appropriate communicative acts and their order. Hence, ‘less organized’ here does *not* denote that private talk is in any way unstructured or unorganized in character. (As conversation analysis has shown, the contrary is the case: conversation is a highly structured speech-exchange system with its own systematic rules for managing the transfer of speakership (cf. chapter 4.1.2)).

Table 3 also illustrates the formal/informal nature of a speech style that is in accordance with the formality/informality of the institutional or everyday speech situation. In this connection, the question arises what is actually meant when we speak of a formal or informal style of speech. That is, similar to determining the characteristic features of institutional talk, on the one hand, and of private talk, on the other hand, is it possible to show in more detail the characteristics of both formal and informal speech styles as fundamental aspects of institutional and private talk? The following chapter, therefore, constitutes an attempt at highlighting the determinants of formal and informal speech styles within an overarching aim of highlighting the characteristics of institutional and private talk. This is also done with respect to the fact that the two notions ‘formal style’ and ‘informal style’ – though they are widely used in sociolinguistic literature and their implications are unproblematically understood even outside a scientific context – remain relatively fuzzy concepts, i.e. highly unspecified, in terms of their structural dimension. Chapter 5.2.3, concerned with the determinants of institutional talk, already provided a first, yet highly superficial, insight into the structure of a formal speech style on the syntactic, lexical and phonological level. The next chapter will further elaborate on possible structural dimensions of both linguistic formality *and* informality.

## **6.2. The structural dimensions of linguistic formality and informality: a discussion of the determinants of formal and informal speech styles**

### **6.2.1 Introduction**

#### The term ‘style’

We all that we use language everyday do so with what might be called a natural, i.e. intuitive, understanding of formal and informal communicative situations and appropriate verbal and non-verbal behaviour within these situations. That is, we, as speakers and members of a particular speech community, seem to (unconsciously) know what is meant when we refer to a formal or informal style of speech and when to use it. This knowledge seems to comprise the elementary structure of formal and informal styles, i. e. with reference to the diverse linguistic levels on which these styles are realized and differ from each other. Shortly, we do not only know *when* to be formal or informal but also *how* to be so linguistically in respective situational contexts. This knowledge forms our communicative competence and communicatively competent (native) speakers of a language have a linguistic repertoire of formal and informal styles at their command which enables them to switch linguistically between different types of social situations. The use of the notion of ‘style’ here is thus to refer to a speaker’s verbal repertoire by means of which situational variation is accomplished via formal and informal speech styles. A speech style, then, is a form of language – a linguistic variety – that is adapted to the requirements of the situational context, i.e. the speech situation. Designed by speakers in order to function in different types of speech situations, a style is thus a situationally appropriate variety of language. The concept of ‘style’ therefore denotes ‘situational’ or ‘contextual style’.

In fact, ‘style’ as such has been described as a rather complex notion (e.g. Sowinski, 1999; Irvine, 2001) which is mirrored in the diverse everyday usages of the term. Accordingly, we speak of a ‘lifestyle’, for example, or an individual’s particular style of clothing, thinking, talking, writing and so on that distinguishes this individual from other individuals within (and across) speech communities.

Within sociolinguistics, ‘style’ is seen in a very general sense as a communicative behaviour, i.e. a way of doing something. Styles, accordingly, are ways of speaking characterizing the individual speaker (Coupland, 2007). In this respect ‘style’ within sociolinguistics is traditionally referred to as intra-speaker variation (e.g. Eckert and Rickford, 2001) as influenced by and in accordance with the demands of the situational context. (This then corresponds to the definition of style as assumed here and, in fact, the discussion of the characteristics of situational styles that is to follow will necessarily include sociolinguistic approaches to the concept of ‘style’ which are shortly introduced below.)

### The terms ‘formality’ and ‘informality’

Having addressed style in general, what is actually meant when we speak of a ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ speech style? The terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ are common verbal everyday usage and they are also frequently used in sociolinguistic literature. However, a proper, that is, elaborate discussion that accounts not only for their meaning but also manages to translate the intuitive associations underlying these terms into scientific description is yet missing in scientific literature in the field. The terms, consequently, remain imprecise, i. e. with respect to describable characteristic features. ‘Formal’ and ‘informal’ are often mentioned in respective (sociolinguistic) literature concerned with social situations and corresponding situational styles but usually not focused on in more detail as concerns their possible deeper terminological implications. They remain unexplained in this respect. Rather, ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ are repeatedly used with their – presupposed – everyday commonsense meaning. However, this is not a criticism for our world knowledge in general and our societal knowledge in specific usually comprises respective knowledge about what is to be understood by ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ (behaviour of any kind) in the society that we are members of, so that we are able to distinguish ‘formal’ from ‘informal’ relatively unproblematically. The point is rather that interestingly the wider implications that these terms obviously carry have seemingly been of no great scientific interest so far. That is not to mean that there is no scientific consideration at all specifically of the two terms ‘formality’ and ‘informality’ within the study of style in language, for, in fact, they have well been in the focus of interest (e.g. Atkinson, 1982 and Irvine, 1979). Nevertheless, both authors do not intensively concentrate on characteristic structural components of linguistic formality and informality in greater and satisfying detail, though Irvine gives a first account. Accordingly, Atkinson (1982), in fact, emphasises that every speaker has an intuitive understanding of formality and informality and consequently refrains from a closer definition.<sup>115</sup> Atkinson (1982) takes on a sociological view, discussing the relationship between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ social action in light of (then recent) research done within conversation analysis. In this connection, he reviews the turn-taking system of everyday conversation which he defines as the informal, i.e. normal and therefore unmarked, way of interaction. According to Atkinson, the turn-taking procedures characterizing everyday conversation effectively function as a reference point for the researcher (and generally every competent speaker within a speech community) in the determination of interactions and their settings as more formal. That is, any departure from the normal turn-taking practices characterizing everyday conversation is interpreted as producing more formal interaction (cf. Atkinson, 1982: 101). The notion of ‘formal’ in this

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<sup>115</sup> Cf. Atkinson (1982: 87): “[T]he contrast between ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ interaction was and is in the first place a *members’* analytic distinction. That is, it is one which can perfectly readily be made and used by any competent speaker of [in this case] English, quite independently of whether or not he or she happens to have had a training in or knowledge of professional sociological theorizing.”

connection denotes ‘non-conversational’ (cf. Atkinson, 1982: 88) and degrees of departures from the turn-taking system of everyday conversation correspondingly result into degrees of perceived formality (of an interaction and its setting). In other words, the determination of particular sequences of interaction as ‘formal’ or ‘informal’ is based on our intuitive knowledge about the workings of everyday conversation which guides us in our classification of interactions (and respective settings) as deviating from conversation and therefore as more formal social actions. Atkinson (1982) refers to institutional settings such as judicial settings that are more formal in this respect in that interaction here features a turn-taking system characterized by the frequent pre-allocation of turns which makes courtroom interaction a different speech-exchange system than everyday conversation (cf. chapters 4 and 5).

While Atkinson (1982) positively views the meaning and characteristics of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ as part of analysts’ and speakers’ intuitive knowledge about language, Irvine (1979 [2001]: 189)<sup>116</sup> adopts a more negative perspective addressing the imprecision of the term ‘formality’: “Many anthropologists [...] have used terms such as formality without defining them or thinking about their definitions, simply assuming that the meanings are clear, when in fact the usages are vague and quite variable.” As concepts of ‘formality’ and ‘informality’ may differ between societies, Irvine (1979 [2001]) questions the usefulness of the term ‘formality’ (and ‘informality’) as an analytical tool especially for cross-cultural comparison. In search of a “more precise analytical vocabulary” (1979 [2001]: 189) she therefore illustrates four aspects of formality which should apply cross-culturally: *increased code structuring*, *code consistency*, *invoking positional identities*, and the *emergence of a central situational focus* (cf. 1979 [2001]: 192ff.).

Formality may be expressed linguistically by increased structural complexity. This *increased code structuring* includes various levels of linguistic organization: “intonation [...], phonology, syntax, the use of particular sets of lexical items, fixed-text sequences, and turn taking” (1979 [2001]: 192).

A second aspect of formality involves co-occurrence rules. Studies into register variation (e.g. Biber, 1988; Conrad and Biber, 2001) have shown that diverse written and spoken registers (e.g. conversations, prepared/spontaneous speeches, professional/personal letters) that can be said to differ in their ascribed degree of formality are characterized by the co-occurrence of particular, register-specific linguistic features (lexical items).<sup>117</sup> According to Irvine (1979 [2001]), speakers participating in formal discourse are more restricted in the linguistic choices they make than is the case in ordinary conversation which generally shows

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<sup>116</sup> All following page references of Irvine (1979) relate to the reprint in Duranti (2001).

<sup>117</sup> For register variation and co-occurrence features see also chapter 6.2.2.3 on structural complexity and word choice.

greater variation in the combination of lexical items. Irvine (1979 [2001]) calls this feature of formality/formal discourse *code consistency*, that is, consistency of linguistic choices.

A third aspect of formality refers to the communicative roles of interlocutors in formal and informal discourse. While in informal, ordinary conversation speakers communicate in their ‘roles’ as private persons, they adopt another, i.e. public, role in formal discourse (which involves notions of social distance). Irvine (1979 [2001]: 194) refers to this as the differing “social identities of participants in a social gathering.” Particular types of situations have the capacity to invoke particular social identities. Accordingly, formal discourse situations have the capacity to *invoke positional identities*. As Irvine (1979 [2001]: 194) puts it, “[f]ormal occasions invoke positional and public, rather than personal, identities” which are invoked in informal situations.

A fourth and final aspect relevant to formality with regard to cross-cultural application concerns the degree of interlocutors’ involvement in and attention to an ongoing discourse characterized by several participants. In discourse situations – or social gatherings – featuring multi-party talk there may be a difference between all the persons present in this situation as regards the degree to which they are involved, and thus attentive, in a current multi-party conversation. The question, according to Irvine (1979 [2001]: 195), is whether there is “a main focus of attention – a dominant mutual engagement that encompasses all persons present,” which would then imply the *emergence of a central situational focus* (of attention), or whether there are additional “side involvements” (1979 [2001]: 195). Thus, “[w]hen a social gathering has a larger number of participants [...] it may or may not be organized around a central focus of attention that engages, or might engage, the whole group” (1979 [2001]: 195).

Irvine’s (1979 [2001]) explanation of the four aspects of formality provides a first insight into the dimensions relevant for a distinction of linguistic formality and informality and, in fact, these four features of formality touched on by Irvine will also play a role in the elaborate discussion of the characteristics of formal and informal speech styles that is to follow. That is, *increased code structuring* will be the focus of interest in chapter 6.2.2.3 ‘The syntactic level: situational style and structural complexity’; *code consistency* will not appear directly but the discussion of linguistic formality/informality on the syntactic and lexical level will relate to recent findings in register variation including co-occurrence features. Irvine’s (1979 [2001]) *positional identities* will occur in the form of communicative roles in the discussion of different types of speech situations and their respective speaker constellations (chapter 6.2.2.2). Finally, the description of the ‘speech situation’ will also entail what Irvine (1979 [2001]) refers to as a *central situational focus* of attention.

## Research on ‘style’ within sociolinguistics and *stylistics*

Apart from research concerned directly with ‘formality’ and ‘informality’, the existing research on style in language (i.e. with respect to the English language) can generally be classified into two main approaches: (1) a sociolinguistic approach to style and (2) style investigated within *stylistics*.

As sociolinguistics is a rather wide research field, the sociolinguistic approach to style is not uniform in nature but rather entails characterizations of style from different perspectives as grounded in individual research interests and connected views on the function of styles in language. It is more correct then to speak of sociolinguistic approaches to style all subsumed under the superordinate term ‘sociolinguistics’.

Accordingly, approaches to style in language include the linguistic-anthropological perspective within the investigation of linguistic variation which is illustrated by, for example, the cross-cultural work on formality and style in general by Irvine (1979 [2001] and 2001), as introduced above.

The earliest approach to style within sociolinguistics is the variationist approach with pioneering work provided by William Labov (1966, 1972a/b) on social and stylistic variation. ‘Style’ according to Labov is understood as attention paid to speech by an individual speaker within the situational context of the sociolinguistic interview. Thus, the classic concept of ‘style’ in variationist sociolinguistics (as in sociolinguistics generally) is that of intra-speaker variation.<sup>118</sup>

As a social psychological approach to language variation, speech accommodation theory was developed in the early 1970s by the social psychologist of language Howard Giles and others (e.g. Giles/Taylor/Bourhis 1973, Giles/Powesland 1975) partly in reaction to Labov’s understanding of style as attention paid to speech. The major argument in this connection was that the speech of an individual is never so self-centered as Labov assumes. Rather it is the addressee who constitutes a major influence on the linguistic, i.e. stylistic, variation of the speaker. ‘Style’, within accommodation theory, therefore, should be interpreted in terms of a speaker’s attitude and orientation towards respective addressees which guide his/her linguistic choices in the direction of either convergence or divergence.<sup>119</sup>

Based on accommodation theory is Bell’s (1984) audience design framework. Bell (1984) specified the addressee that was determined as significant factor for stylistic variation in accommodation theory in so far as he highlighted the importance of the audience in stylistic variation. Style in language is correspondingly defined as audience design with the speaker

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<sup>118</sup> On this aspect see also chapter 6.2.2.3: *Social dialectology: situational style and the grade of self-monitoring in speech*.

<sup>119</sup> Cf. Giles and Coupland (1991: 62): “It was argued that the formality or informality of context and the criterion of ‘attention to speech’ which was what Labov took to explain situational variation in his interview data, could be reinterpreted, at least in part, as interpersonal accommodation processes. For example, casual speech may have been produced not only because of the informality of the context [...] but perhaps because the interviewer [...] had shifted to less standard speech forms.”

structuring, i.e. 'designing', his/her language according to the communicative characteristics (and communicative needs) of a present audience (which he distinguishes into different types of audience from actual addressees to mere eavesdroppers).

More recent research on variation in language includes studies into register variation (e.g. Biber, 1988; Conrad and Biber, 2001) focussing on co-occurrence features in order to determine the linguistic characteristics of (and differences between) diverse spoken and written registers as functioning in different situational contexts. (This use of 'register' corresponds to the use of the term 'style' as situationally appropriate language variety).<sup>120</sup>

Two recent contributions to the study of style within sociolinguistics which provide a good overview of the history of style research within the field are Eckert and Rickford (2001) and Coupland (2007).

Apart from variation studies, style has been (and is) investigated within *stylistics*. As Coupland (2007) points out, the label 'stylistics' became popular in the 1950s and it was established as a discrete branch of linguistics or applied linguistics (cf. 2007: 10). The primary concern of *stylistics* is the linguistic analysis of written texts – traditionally literary texts – with a focus on examining the characteristic linguistic features that organize these texts also in order to explain their literary effects on the reader. Hence *stylistics* often refers to *literary stylistics* and the study of the linguistic organization of written texts then provides a general description of *author's style*.

*Stylistics* today comprises a wide range of studied texts, not only literary ones. As Clark (2007: 97) mentions, "[s]tylistics was initially restricted to literary texts, but as the notion of 'literary language' became more fluid the range of texts considered suitable for stylistic analysis broadened to include newspaper articles, advertisements and so on." According to Coupland (2007: 10), "[m]odern stylistics has blended into different forms of discourse analysis."

The birth of *stylistics* as a discrete field of linguistics is closely connected to Jakobson's (1960) statement of a poetic function of language that generally characterizes any use of language, not only literary language/works, and that consequently makes the investigation of literary works – poetry, prose, plays – also a matter for analysis within linguistics (cf. Coupland, 2007; Clark, 2007).<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Cf. Biber (1995: 1): registers are "situationally defined varieties" and "*register* is used as a cover term for any variety associated with particular situational contexts or purposes." Biber (1995) presents a short overview of the terminology used in register studies and notes that "[r]eaders should be aware [...] that there is no general consensus within sociolinguistics concerning the use of *register* and related terms such as [...] *style*" (1995: 8). (Italics are taken over from the author).

<sup>121</sup> Jakobson, R. 1960. Concluding Statement: Linguistics and Poetics. In T.A. Sebeok (ed.), *Style in Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press), 350 – 377. Cf. also the back cover of Sebeok (1960) in this connection: "The study of literary style is often regarded as the exclusive province of the literary critic; yet, since verbal and literary expressions are types of "behaviour" involving the use of linguistic forms in a cultural context, it is apparent that the linguist, the psychologist, and the anthropologist are also concerned with aspects of verbal and literary style."

For the current purpose of determining the implications of formal and informal speech styles, the definition of ‘style’ within sociolinguistics as intra-speaker variation influenced by the situational context is of importance here and it is the speech situation that will play a major role in the definition of situational styles below.

In fact, an early, and according to Coupland (2007) a *stylistic*, account of style in the English language is Joos (1967) who, yet rather intuitively, defines five styles of spoken and written English usage, which he terms metaphorically the five clocks of English, and their characteristic linguistic features: *frozen style*, *formal style*, *consultative style*, *casual style* and *intimate style*.<sup>122</sup> *The Five Clocks* (1967) is an attempt to emphasize the functional character of language with different speech styles as functional varieties adequate for use in different situational contexts.<sup>123</sup> Doing so, Joos’ (1967) dominant intention is also to argue against the, at that time, existing and far-reaching assumptions about ‘good’ or ‘proper’ versus ‘bad’ English and their connected “English-usage guilt-feelings” (1967: 4). Herein lie its strengths. However, for the researcher’s aim of refining the components of linguistic formality/informality, its weaknesses are revealed in the sometimes present lack of concrete and elaborate explanation of the factors determining the different styles according to Joos (1967) and their assumed importance for a particular style. E.g. what does Joos (1967) mean by the feature ‘public information’? Who are the persons participating in *formal talk* and why is *formal talk* designed to inform? Why are the individual styles characterized by the use of exactly the particular key words, or ‘code-labels’, as determined by Joos (1967)? The explanations remain imprecise at times and thus Joos (1967) never leaves the pure intuitive level. (This, however, may be grounded in a major literary and therefore popular purpose of the book).<sup>124</sup> Keeping this in mind, *The Five Clocks* (1967) also provides an early, yet deficient, description of the features of linguistic formality and informality in so far as the author postulates the existence of the different contextual styles mentioned above but he does never directly comment on the grade of formality of the speech styles he defines. Nevertheless, such a distinction is implied by the text.

Despite its terminological deficits, Joos’ (1967) ideas on the characteristic features of different styles of (spoken and written) English do, in fact, play a role in this treatment of linguistic formality/informality and some of these will be returned to at different points during this discussion of the components of formal and informal speech styles. Accordingly, relevant

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<sup>122</sup> An early version of his treatment of the linguistic styles of (American) English is Joos (1959), reprinted in Fishman (1970). In the following all references to Joos’ early version of his discussion of linguistic styles relate to the reprinted version in Fishman (1970).

<sup>123</sup> Cf. the introduction to *The Five Clocks* (1967: xii): “From a purely technical and descriptive point of view, the value of *The Five Clocks* lies in its helpful classification and accurate description of the situations in which we communicate, and in connecting each of these with certain linguistic features characteristic of the style of discourse.” Cf. also Joos (1959 [1970]: 188) in *The Isolation of Styles*: “[I]f we ever get a believable description of English styles, the several styles will be found to be correlated to an equal or greater number of sociologically definable occasions. “

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Joos (1967: xiii).

features that will be focused on in more detail in chapter 6.2.2.3 include ‘background information’ on the contextual level, ‘planning of speech’ on the cognitive/psychological level and ‘code-labels’ on the lexical level of formality/informality.

Nevertheless, in spite of the existing scientific treatment, the actual character of formal and informal speech styles still remains relatively unspecified in terms of possible characteristic features. The question that arises therefore is whether we can give a proper and more precise definition of the two elusive terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ in connection with speech style; a definition that can resolve the yet existing terminological vagueness with the aim of presenting possible concrete and constitutive elements that can help to distinguish the concept of ‘formal’ from ‘informal’. The following explanations shall constitute an attempt at such a definition. The aim underlying the description of linguistic formality and informality is then also to provide an account of linguistic, i.e. stylistic, variation in the English language.

The description of situational styles in the upcoming sections will be approached firstly via general dictionary definitions. Secondly, knowing that a definition of situational styles cannot be done without consideration of the contexts in which these styles are used, the speech situation and its determining features will be illustrated in detail. This will include a discussion of different types of speech situations. Finally, attention will be paid to the concrete dimensions of linguistic formality and informality with regard to possible structural levels within the linguistic system of English by means of which formal and informal speech styles can be shown to differ from each other.

## **6.2.2 The dimensions of linguistic formality and informality**

### **6.2.2.1 General dictionary definitions**

*Formal/informal* constitute two opposite notions complementary in meaning and mutually exclusive. Obviously, the logical starting point and at the same time the easiest way for a detailed analysis of the antonyms is to take a look at different dictionaries of contemporary English and of other aspects concerning the English language and see which definitions they present. Are there similarities between the definitions? If so, which ones are there? Does a comparison between different dictionary definitions present a clue to single factors that may be important for a more detailed definition of the terms? That is, can a comparison contribute anything to a proper linguistic description of the terms? Hence, below are illustrated the following exemplary dictionary specifications from (1) *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, (2) the online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*, (3) *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, (4) the *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*, and, additionally (5) the *Longman*

*Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* as a specific reference book used within linguistics.<sup>125</sup>

As *formal/informal* is to be defined referring to speech style, relevant to an explication of constitutive factors determining the antonymous pair in this analysis are only those dictionary specifications that are in connection with language application in the widest sense. Therefore, other definitions are neglected.

### The single definitions of *formal/informal* according to the dictionaries

#### (1) *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*

##### **Formal** (*adj*):

“**1** (of a style of dress, speech, writing, behaviour, etc) very correct and suitable for official or important occasions: *The parties at the US embassy are much less formal than those at the British.* ◦ *She always has a very formal manner, which I find rather unpleasant.* ◦ *Your letter to the bank manager needs to be more formal than that.* [...]”

(5<sup>th</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr. 1998, p. 445)

##### **Informal** (*adj*):

“**1(a)** [...] **(b)** not official; not following established procedures: *establish informal contact with sb* ◦ *an informal arrangement/meeting/visit.* [...] **3** [...] (of language) appropriate for normal conversation and not for serious speech or writing: *an informal expression/letter.* See also COLLOQUIAL. Compare FORMAL, SLANG.”

(5<sup>th</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr. 1998, p. 585)

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<sup>125</sup> The selection criteria for reference works to be used for a definition of the *formal/informal* dichotomy were the following: a.) choice of a dictionary specifically directed at the learner of English. This was done with the expectation of finding a high degree of contextual information for the correct use of the lexical entries, that is, at least a degree of contextual information that is higher than in other, not explicitly learner-oriented, dictionaries. The relevant dictionary is Hornby, A. S. et al. (eds.) 1998. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* (5<sup>th</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr.). Berlin: Cornelsen; Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press. In the dictionary this contextual information is in the form of linguistic examples of use, i. e. entailing the word in question and illustrating its linguistic context. The amount of this contextualization is generally higher than in the other dictionaries that were used. (An exception to this is the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*). b.) Choice of more general dictionaries in not being specifically oriented to the learner of English. Relevant dictionaries are (1) the online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* to be viewed at: <http://www.askoxford.com/?view=uk>. (N.B.: There is a redirection to <http://oxforddictionaries.com/>. The site is now the online presence of Oxford Dictionaries in general). The written version is edited by Catherine Soanes and Sara Hawker and now exists in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition published in 2005 by Oxford University Press. (2) Della Summers (director) 2006. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (new ed., 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 5<sup>th</sup> impr.). Harlow: Pearson Education. c.) Choice of a dictionary as a more general source to different aspects connected to the English language: McArthur, T. (ed.) 2005. *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language* (reissued with new covers). Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press. d.) The selection of a reference work specifically for students of linguistics and those teaching linguistics. This was done in order to see whether there are differences to the other selected dictionaries in the general ways in which formal and informal are defined. The choice was with the underlying expectation of a more precise definition of the terms as concerns concrete factors that might be relevant for a further and more elaborate description and definition of the terms in this chapter. The relevant dictionary is Richards, Jack C., Platt, J. and Platt, H. 1996. *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr.). Harlow: Longman.

The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* refers to two aspects in its *formal/informal* distinction. Firstly, an explanation of *formal* is given with reference to the **speech situation** in which language is applied: a style of speech “very correct and suitable for official or important occasions.” Formal (speech style) thus is defined here in connection with formal discourse situations, namely official or important in character. *Informal*, on the other hand, is “not official” and therefore “appropriate for normal conversation and not for serious speech or writing.” That means, informal speech is appropriate for informal discourse situations in the private sphere of interaction featuring the referred to “normal conversation.”

Secondly, a definition of *formal/informal* at the same time refers to **language** or **style** respectively: a style of speech that is “very correct” (*formal*), or of such a character that it is “appropriate for normal conversation” (*informal*).

## (2) Online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*

### **Formal:**

“• **adjective 1** done in accordance with rules of convention or etiquette. **2** officially recognized: *a formal complaint*. **3** of or concerned with outward form rather than content. **4** (of language) characterized by the use of studied grammatical structure and conservative vocabulary. **5** (especially of a garden) arranged in a precise or symmetrical manner.

— DERIVATIVES **formally** adverb.”<sup>126</sup>

### **Informal:**

“• **adjective 1** relaxed, friendly, or unofficial. **2** (of clothes) suitable for everyday wear; casual. **3** referring to the language of everyday speech and writing, rather than that used in official and formal contexts.

— DERIVATIVES **informality** noun **informally** adverb.”<sup>127</sup>

The online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* also presents a determination of the *formal/informal* antonymy with respect to discourse situation and language or speech style. Accordingly, *formal* is “characterized stylistically “by the use of studied grammatical structure and conservative vocabulary.” Situationally, *informal* is defined as language that is used in everyday contexts of speech (“the language of everyday

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<sup>126</sup> To be viewed at: [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/formal?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/formal?view=uk) (no longer valid; redirection to: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/formal?view=uk>; the entry for ‘formal’ differs from the older one represented here).

<sup>127</sup> To be viewed at: [http://www.askoxford.com/concise\\_oed/informal?view=uk](http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/informal?view=uk) (no longer valid; redirection to: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/informal?view=uk>; the entry for ‘informal’ differs from the older one represented here).

speech and writing”) rather than in “official and formal contexts”, that is, within the public sphere.

### (3) The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*

#### **Formal** (*adj*):

“**2 BEHAVIOUR** formal behaviour is very polite, and is used in official or important situations, or with people you do not know well; ≠ **informal**: *Over the years, teaching methods have changed and become less formal.*

**3 LANGUAGE** formal language is used in official or serious situations; ≠ **informal**: *‘Yours sincerely’ is a formal way of ending a letter.*”

(4<sup>th</sup> ed., 5<sup>th</sup> impr. 2006, p. 633)

#### **Formality** (*n*):

“**3 [U]** careful attention to polite behaviour and language in formal situations: *There is always some degree of formality when one speaks to a stranger. | The loan was arranged with little formality.*”

(4<sup>th</sup> ed., 5<sup>th</sup> impr. 2006, p. 634)

#### **Informal** (*adj*):

“**1** relaxed and friendly without being restricted by rules of correct behaviour; ≠ **formal**: *The atmosphere at work is fairly informal. | The two groups met for informal talks.*

**2** an informal style of writing or speaking is suitable for ordinary conversations or letters to friends; ≠ **formal**”

(4<sup>th</sup> ed., 5<sup>th</sup> impr. 2006, p. 833f.)

Again, in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* there is a reference in the definition of the *formal/informal* pair to the discourse situation and the characteristics of the language or speech style respectively that is used. Thus, situationally, for *formal* a connection between style and situation is made: “formal language is used in official or serious situations”. If the reference point “behaviour” for the lexical entry *formal* is included – and eventually language is a form of behaviour – there is a corresponding definition of “formal behaviour” that is used in “official or important situations”. Furthermore, formal behaviour is characterized with a high degree of politeness (“very polite”) and, additionally, with a reference to the familiarity of the communicating persons. Accordingly, formal behaviour is used “with people you do not know well”. In the same manner the lexical entry *formality* presents a connection to politeness and the type of situation in its definition, formulating “careful attention to polite behaviour and language in formal situations.” As the opposite in meaning of *formal*, *informal* is correspondingly explained stylistically as being “suitable for ordinary conversations or letters to friends” and as “relaxed and friendly without being restricted by rules of correct behaviour.”

#### (4) *The Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language*

##### **Formal** (*adj*):

“A term concerned with: (1) Structure and order: *a formal education, formal grammar*. (2) More or less elevated and stylised ceremonial: *a formal dinner, formal and informal meetings*. (3) Style and usage of a relatively elevated and impersonal kind: *a highly formal writing style; ‘receive’ a more formal word than ‘get’*.”  
(reissue 2005: 234)

##### **Informal** (*adj*):

“A term in LINGUISTICS for a situation or a use of language that is common, non-official, familiar, casual, and often colloquial, and contrasts in these senses with *formal*. Whereas *Would you be so good as to help me?* is highly FORMAL, *Lend us a hand, would you?* is highly informal.”  
(reissue 2005: 297)

As in the foregoing definitions, the *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language* presents the two relevant approaches to a determination of *formal/informal* by situation and language/speech style. For *formal* the definition by style or “usage” is “relatively elevated and impersonal in kind.” For *informal* the classification is, with special reference to linguistics, both stylistically and situationally: “common, non-official, familiar, casual, and often colloquial.”

#### (5) *The Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*

##### **Formal:**

“[F]ormal speech [...] *n*

the type of speech used in situations when the speaker is very careful about pronunciation and choice of words and sentence structure. This type of speech may be used, for example, at official functions, and in debates and ceremonies. The English sentence

*Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be present here tonight.*  
is an example of formal speech.”

(2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr. 1996: 144)

##### **Informal:**

“[C]olloquial speech [...] *n*

also **informal speech**

the type of speech used in everyday, informal situations when the speaker is not paying particular attention to pronunciation, choice of words, or sentence structure. Colloquial speech is not necessarily non-prestige speech and should not be considered as SUBSTANDARD. Educated native speakers of a language normally use colloquial speech in informal situations with friends, fellow workers, and members of the family.

For example, they might say:

*Why don't you come around this evening?*  
rather than the more formal

*We should be delighted if you would pay us a visit this evening.*”

(2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr. 1996: 63)

“**style** [...] *n* **stylistic** [...] *adj*

I variation in a person’s speech or writing. Style usually varies from casual to formal according to the type of situation, the person or persons addressed, the location, the topic discussed, etc. A particular style, e.g. a formal style or a colloquial style, is sometimes referred to as a **stylistic variety**.”

(2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 6<sup>th</sup> impr. 1996: 360)

The *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* again uses a situational definition: Accordingly, a formal style of speech may be used “at official functions, and in debates and ceremonies.” An informal style may be used in “everyday, informal situations,” more precisely with “friends, fellow workers, and members of the family.”

Furthermore, this dictionary gives a definition by single characteristic features in which a formal style differs from an informal style. These features concern (1) pronunciation, (2) lexical and (3) syntactic features. The two styles can be distinguished from each other by the grade of careful consideration that is paid to these features while speaking.<sup>128</sup>

Additionally, this dictionary lists *style* as separate lexical entry. In the definition of style the dictionary gives different factors that can promote the use of a formal or informal style: the situation type, the communicative partners, the setting, and the conversational topic.

### The definitions compared

Table 4 presents an overview of the relevant definitions in the dictionaries. All the selected dictionaries define *formal/informal* by situation and/or language or speech style respectively. Doing so, all dictionaries make a general distinction between the public and the non-public; between official and non-official. With their definitions all dictionaries can give an initial clarification of the terms, which, however, is too imprecise with respect to a proper linguistic description for which the explanations remain insufficient. Accordingly, there are too many vague terms used. The *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English*, for example, lists “normal conversation” in its definition of *informal* without further specifying what is meant by “normal.” In this definition thus normal conversation excludes the occurrence of a formal speech style and consequently only refers to informal everyday conversation. However, normal – or everyday – conversation may include both informal and formal speech depending on the constellation, i.e. on the grade of familiarity, of the interlocutors among other things. In a corresponding manner the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* mentions the appropriateness of *informal* for “ordinary conversation.”

Apart from the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, the online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English* is the only

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<sup>128</sup> Although it seems to be only marginally important in this definition of *formal/informal*, the grade of conscious attention that is paid to speech can, in fact, be defined as a basic factor in the distinction between *formal* and *informal* and it will therefore be taken up again below in the discussion of self-monitoring.

dictionary that is more specific in its stylistic explanation of *formal* via referring to the actual verbal features of “studied grammatical structure and conservative vocabulary,” though respective linguistic examples to illuminate this definition are not given. *Informal* is defined in a similar manner by the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* and the online version of the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English*. Where the former uses “appropriate for normal conversation and not for serious speech or writing,” the latter gives “the language of everyday speech and writing.” Doing so, it automatically excludes *formal* from everyday speech and connects it to the mentioned “official and formal contexts.” Again the notion of everyday conversation or speech only refers to informal speech. The situational reference here is twofold: official *and* formal contexts. If *official* is regarded as institutional then *formal* can theoretically indicate an everyday context according to this definition. Thus, *formal* need not necessarily be connected to *official* but is different as the definition indicates. In this connection a corresponding characterization is given in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* for *formal* which is described as being used in “official or serious situations.” *Serious situation* could well designate a formal everyday situation. Accordingly, formal speech is then a part of everyday conversation as is informal speech. The *Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language* also shows a terminological imprecision speaking of “common” and “familiar” situations and language uses in the definition of *informal* thus indirectly referring to *formal* as uncommon and unfamiliar in character. The *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* presents the only direct reference to politeness in its *formal/informal* definition. As excepted the *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics* is generally more precise in its definition of the two terms including the characteristic features of pronunciation, word choice and sentence structure, as well as different factors which can influence the use of a formal or informal style: the situation type, the communicative partners, the setting, and the conversational topic.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> This criticism may create the impression that the definitions of the reference works that are used here are somehow inferior or deficient. However, it is intended here purely on the basis of linguistics. It should not be forgotten in this connection what the actual function of these dictionaries is, namely to list the words of the English language in alphabetical order and to shortly illuminate their meaning with the help of linguistic examples to illustrate their use in context. For such terms as *formal* and *informal* these dictionaries can present a good overview but they are generally too complex in all their aspects of meaning to be discussed there elaborately. This must be done elsewhere. As indicated above, in their explanations the dictionaries highly rely on the knowledge of their users in understanding such – in a linguistic sense - vague terms as “normal conversation.” This criticism then is only meant with respect to a proper and precise linguistic characterization for which these definitions are unsatisfactory. Consequently, for less specific “everyday purposes” all the dictionaries, of course, remain good reference works and their definitions good reference points.

Dictionary	Language/Style	Situation
Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English	<i>Very correct (formal) or appropriate for normal conversation and not for serious speech or writing (informal)</i>	<i>Suitable for official or important occasions (formal)</i>
Online version of the Compact Oxford English Dictionary of Current English	<i>Use of studied grammatical structure and conservative vocabulary (formal)</i>	<i>The language of everyday speech and writing, rather than that used in official and formal contexts (informal)</i>
Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English	<i>Suitable for ordinary conversations or letters to friends (informal); relaxed and friendly without being restricted by rules of correct behaviour (informal)</i>	<i>Formal language is used in official or serious situations; formal behaviour [...] is used in official or important situations, [...]; careful attention to polite behaviour and language in formal situations (formality)</i>
Concise Oxford Companion to the English Language	<i>Style and usage of a relatively elevated and impersonal kind (formal); common, non-official, familiar, casual, and often colloquial (informal)</i>	<i>Common, non-official, familiar, casual, and often colloquial (informal)</i>
Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics	<i>The type of speech used in situations when the speaker is very careful about pronunciation and choice of words and sentence structure (formal); the type of speech used in [...] situations when the speaker is not paying particular attention to pronunciation, choice of words, or sentence structure (informal)</i>  <i>Style usually varies from casual to formal according to the type of situation, the person or persons addressed, the location, the topic discussed, etc. (formal/informal)</i>	<i>At official functions, and in debates and ceremonies (formal)</i>  <i>Used in everyday, informal situations; with friends, fellow workers, and members of the family (informal)</i>

Table 4: The definitions of *formal/informal* according to selected dictionaries

Generally, all these definitions rely and depend on our knowledge about the meaning of such vague terms as “normal conversation” or “serious speech.” The knowledge about and the respective associations with these terms is generally presupposed in the definitions. In other words they are treated as commonsense terms. Without a speaker’s knowledge about the workings of his or her society, i. e. with respect to communicative norms of appropriate behaviour in different discourse situations, these definitions do obviously not work.

Interesting in this connection for a further clarification of *formal* and *informal* is the fact that the definitions reveal an – expectedly – direct connection between type of speech style and

type of speech situation. Accordingly, the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* mentions that “formal language is used in official or serious situations.” In the *Longman Dictionary of Teaching and Applied Linguistics* informal speech is “the type of speech used in everyday, informal situations” and in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* a formal speech style is “suitable for official or important occasions.” Thus, style is explained in combination with situation. In fact, the *Longman Dictionary of Teaching and Applied Linguistics* also explicitly refers to the speech situation as one determining factor in the choice of a formal or an informal style of speech.

This relationship between style and discourse situation will be the focus of interest in the following part about the possible impact of the situation on the kind of language that is used. Thus, although too imprecise generally, it is in this sense that the definitions – even though not all of them – can indeed function as a good starting point for a further determination of the *formal/informal* concept.

### **6.2.2.2 The influence of the speech situation**

Since speech occurs in social situations, it is important to see in what ways the underlying structures of situations determine the organization of talk

(Giglioli, 1972: 59)<sup>130</sup>

The above quotation by Giglioli (1972) aptly expresses the influence of the speech situation on language use as also stated by the dictionary definitions just discussed. As speech is always applied in a social context, this context naturally constitutes a significant factor in the actual speech application process. Thus, whenever speech is applied by communicatively competent speakers, it is done with consideration of this context.

In contrast to the definitions presented by the dictionaries, Giglioli, however, makes an important addition: Where the dictionary definitions point to the impact of the situation as such, Giglioli refers to the “underlying structures of situations [which] determine the organization of talk.” Thus, when we say that the speech situation can have an effect on the language variety which is used within this situation, then we need to do this in a more detailed manner, namely with consideration of the underlying structures pointed out by Giglioli. What we have to do then is to explain what is meant by these underlying structures. In other words, we need to determine what they actually refer to.

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<sup>130</sup> Taken from the editor’s foreword to part two *Speech and Situated Action*.

## The determinants of the speech situation

The underlying structures of speech situations that Giglioli (1972) refers to have been described in more detail in various studies concerned with the investigation of speech and the effect of the social context on speech application. One of the earliest accounts is Goffman's *The Neglected Situation* (1964),<sup>131</sup> in which the author states the requirement that the social situation be properly and appropriately integrated in the study of speech. The participants to the situation are in the foreground of his definition of the social situation which "arises whenever two or more individuals find themselves in one another's immediate presence, and [...] lasts until the next-to-last person leaves" (Goffman, 1972 [1964]: 63). Goffman implicitly distinguishes the actual speech situation from the greater surrounding social situation. Whereas the latter is characterized by the pure get-together and presence of possible interactants alone, i. e. *all* the individuals which are present in the social situation, the former specifically denotes those individuals engaged in focused interaction within this social situation by means of which they distinguish themselves from the other individuals in this situation. Accordingly, speech situations are characterized by participants revealing a mutual communicative attention and orientation. It is this joint mental engagement or "shared current orientation," as Goffman puts it (1972 [1964]: 64), that separates the participants in the immediate speech situation from those in the greater social situation. Goffman refers to this distinction applying the terms 'encounter' or 'face engagement' characterizing the speech situation and 'social gathering' alluding to the social situation (1972 [1964]: 64). A speech situation thus is more than a simple social gathering in that it characteristically features a conversational encounter of individuals – their mental engagement in conversation – in addition to their physical coming together.<sup>132</sup>

Where Goffman (1972 [1964]) emphasises the participants and their mutual communicative orientation in conversation producing focused interaction, Fishman (1972) points to the participants and their social relationship. Of additional importance to the definition of the speech situation according to Fishman (1972) is furthermore the conversational topic as well as the location in which speech takes place. A speech situation is accordingly determined as "the co-occurrence of two (or more) interlocutors related to each other in a particular way, communicating about a particular topic, in a particular setting" (1972: 48).

Halliday (1979) also refers to the interlocutors' social relationship. He defines three significant elements of the situation (cf. 1979: 142ff.): (1) 'field' denoting the type of (social)

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<sup>131</sup> Originally published in *American Anthropologist*, **66** (6), part 2, 133 – 136. The version referred to here is the one published in Giglioli (1972).

<sup>132</sup> In fact, Goffman, even though implicitly only, also makes a statement here concerning the access to a speech situation which was discussed in chapter 5.2.3 as one determining factor in the definition of institutional talk and (informal) everyday conversation. Whereas the access to an individual social situation is potentially unlimited, the access to a speech situation is characteristically not in that the referred to mutual communicative orientation constitutes a necessary prerequisite for engagement in the speech situation according to Goffman.

action that is carried out.<sup>133</sup> Connected to this action is the conversational topic – or subject-matter<sup>134</sup> – featured in this action. (2) ‘Tenor’ describes the social relationships between the participants to an interaction. Included here are two notions: firstly, the individual speaker characteristics that define the person of the speaker and, secondly, the communicative roles accomplished by speakers in different types of situations which consequently define the role relationships between interlocutors.<sup>135</sup> Finally, ‘mode’ refers to what Halliday calls the symbolic organization of texts produced within a situation including, for example, the medium through which a message is communicated (‘channel’) and the different communicative functions (informative, persuasive and the like) with which texts can be produced in communication.<sup>136</sup>

One of the most elaborate discussions of the speech situation and its constitutive elements is made by Hymes (1972b). He uses the acronym SPEAKING with each letter in the word denoting one element that is used to define the components involved in speech production (1972b: 58ff.): (1) act situation: setting and scene (‘S’), (2) participants (‘P’), (3) ends (‘E’), (4) act sequences (‘A’), (5) keys (‘K’), (6) instrumentalities (‘I’), (7) norms (‘N’), (8) genres (‘G’). Several components are further defined by Hymes containing sub-components. While some of the components refer to the ultimate character of the message itself, other components illustrate significant features of the speech situation. The former include ‘act sequence’ (form plus content of the message: what is communicated and how it is communicated), ‘key’ (the characteristic tone of the conversation), ‘instrumentalities’ (channel – the medium by means of which the message is transmitted: spoken, written, telegraphic etc. and forms of speech – the verbal repertoire of a speech community),<sup>137</sup> ‘norms’ (‘norms of interaction’ and ‘norms of interpretation’: referring to social norms connected to the production and interpretation of speech and nonverbal behaviour),<sup>138</sup> and ‘genres’ (different types of linguistic activity written or spoken in character such as commercial, poem, curse, sermon, tale, or form letter, for example). The latter include

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<sup>133</sup> According to Halliday (1979: 142/143) this is “typically a complex of acts in some ordered configuration,” thus constituting what Hymes (1972) has referred to as ‘speech event’ and Brown and Fraser (1979) have termed ‘activity type’. Both studies are discussed below.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Halliday (1979: 143). The notion of ‘subject-matter’ appears again in Brown and Fraser (1979) discussed below.

<sup>135</sup> These facets of speaker identity are important components of situation in the other studies by Brown and Fraser (1979) and Biber (1988) discussed below.

<sup>136</sup> ‘Text’ is explicitly used by the author and can be seen as superordinate term in that it refers both to written and spoken language, that is various forms of text which are characterized by their internal organization via rules within the language regulating the appropriate application of (all the structural elements within the) language.

<sup>137</sup> According to Hymes, the “verbal resources of a community” (1972b: 63). Hymes’ intention with ‘forms of speech’ is to indicate the existence of language variation that typically characterizes a speech community in which “language [thus] will be organized into various forms of speech” (1972b: 63), e. g. dialectal use of language versus use of standard language.

<sup>138</sup> Includes, for example, the socially appropriate application of conversational turns in different “speech exchange systems” (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974: 696), such as everyday conversation and different forms of institutional talk as debates, news interviews, etc. (See also chapter 4.1.2 for Sacks’, Schegloff’s and Jefferson’s (1974) groundbreaking account of the mechanics of turn-taking for ordinary conversation between communicatively competent speakers of English.

‘setting’ and ‘scene’, ‘participants’ and ‘ends’. While ‘setting’ refers to the location in which the speech activity takes place, ‘scene’ rather describes the speaker’s individual assessment of the character of the setting. The scene, according to Hymes, may alter then “from formal to informal, serious to festive, or the like” (1972b: 60) within one and the same setting. Scene consequently is a matter of perceiving a given setting and the given setting therefore is not to be viewed as a static construct – which it is in its actual sense – but its character – the scene – is rather open to constant change depending on individual perception. The scene, as a central aspect of setting, is correspondingly defined by Hymes as the “psychological setting” (1972b: 60). In this connection, a speaker’s actual perception of a setting as formal or informal is guided by cultural determination of what is formal and informal and can therefore be culturally different. According to Hymes ‘scene’ thus implies “the cultural definition of an occasion as a certain type of scene” (1972b: 60).<sup>139</sup>

When Hymes (1972b) mentions ‘speaker’ and ‘sender’, ‘addressor’ and ‘addressee’ and ‘hearer’ and ‘receiver’ or ‘audience’, his description of ‘participants’ is limited to who is sending and who is receiving a message in the communicative process (cf. 1972b: 60). That is, he restricts his definition of ‘participants’ to determining the direction the message takes in interaction. In this respect, Hymes’ (1972b) use of ‘participants’ is less detailed than that presented in the other studies by Brown/Fraser (1979) and Biber (1988) illustrated below, which offer an elaborate treatment of this point explicitly including the participants’ social relations in their definition of situational elements.<sup>140</sup>

With ‘ends’ Hymes refers to the purpose of communication, which, according to him, encompasses two aspects: (1) outcomes that are conventionally expected, e. g. the pronouncing of a judgement that is conventionally expected at the end of a trial, and (2) the speaker’s individual communicative goal underlying a communicative process. Hymes defines this as “*ends in view (goals) and ends as outcomes*” (1972b: 62).<sup>141</sup>

It should be noted that Hymes, in his description of the components of speech, distinguishes between the ‘speech situation’, the ‘speech event’ and the ‘speech act’ (cf. Hymes, 1972b: 56f.). Their definition according to Hymes is a matter of overall size. As Hymes points out correspondingly, “one will find a difference in magnitude: a party (speech situation), a conversation during the party (speech event), a joke within the conversation (speech act)” (1972b: 56). Following this description, the actual speech situation then can be determined as a social activity during (or in which) speech is applied. In this example the party constitutes

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<sup>139</sup> This implies that the understanding of what is formal and informal has to be learned during the speaker’s socialization into the communicative processes of his or her culture and the socially appropriate verbal and non-verbal communicative behaviour in formal and informal situations becomes an integral part of the speaker’s communicative competence.

<sup>140</sup> Hymes only indirectly touches on the relationships between the interlocutors in the examples he offers for this point. He does, however, not state these relationships as an additional separate point in his description of the components of speech (cf. 1972b: 61).

<sup>141</sup> Italics are taken over from the author.

the social activity but the party itself takes place somewhere (at a friend's house etc.). Thus, in addition, there is the location, i.e. the notion of 'setting' introduced earlier, which is of importance here. The speech situation then is to be seen as the overall social context of speech featuring (diverse) social activities within a certain setting. These social activities can themselves entail various linguistic activities – the actual speech events, which can consist of a varying number of speech acts. The primary difference between the speech situation and the speech event or speech act respectively according to Hymes lies in respective rules that govern the application of speech acts within speech events but do not determine the overall speech situation as such (cf. Hymes, 1972b: 56. Such rules concern, for example, the turn-taking procedures that can vary in different types of speech events).<sup>142</sup>

Similar and more thorough descriptions of the different components of the discourse situation are presented by Brown and Fraser (1979) and Biber (1988). Brown and Fraser (1979) take up Hymes' (1972b) notions of 'setting', 'scene', 'participants' and 'ends' and further elaborate on the points in their definition of the situational elements. The significant elements characterizing a speech situation according to the authors are (1) setting, (2) purpose, and (3) participants – the markers of situation (cf. Brown/Fraser, 1979: 34). Setting and purpose are subsumed as 'scene' by Brown and Fraser. Different from Hymes' (1972b) definition of 'scene' as psychological aspect of the setting, Brown and Fraser (1979) use the term to rather denote the physical context of speech that is constituted by setting and purpose (connected to the setting). For the speech situation this consequently means that it "involves scene (or context) plus participants" (Brown/Fraser, 1979: 34). The three components setting, purpose and participants are further distinguished into sub-components by the authors. Accordingly, the setting includes bystanders (persons present in the setting but not participating in the interaction),<sup>143</sup> locale, and time. As Brown and Fraser mention, these features of setting can be accounted for linguistically by respective markers in speech (cf. Brown/Fraser, 1979: 44).

The purpose of communication is twofold entailing activity type and subject matter. Connected to an activity type – Brown and Fraser give the examples of buying, selling, chatting, lecturing, conducting a meeting, negotiating and playing a game – are goals and activated roles of the participants which can differ depending on the type of activity that is carried out (Brown/Fraser, 1979: 40). Accordingly, the activity of 'buying' entails the goal of receiving a product of whatever kind via paying a certain amount of money on the part of the buyer. That means that at the same time the communicative roles of buyer and seller are activated in the course of this activity (cf. Brown/Fraser, 1979: 40 giving the example of teaching). Subject matter is defined by Brown/Fraser as the more specific purpose underlying

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<sup>142</sup> For the distinction between 'speech situation', 'speech event' and 'speech act' according to Hymes see also Auer (1999: 184).

<sup>143</sup> Cf. in this connection Goffman's (1972) distinction between the speech situation and the social situation illustrated above.

an activity type. That means, there are not merely the activities of teaching, playing games and conducting a meeting but rather of “teaching physics, [playing] football games, [and conduct] business meetings” (1979: 40). As the authors point out correspondingly, “[p]eople do not set out to buy, or negotiate, or play; they intend to buy clothes or food, to negotiate a wage increase or a loan from a friend, to play football or golf” (Brown/Fraser, 1979: 42). The individual activity type then, in being about something in particular, has a specific content to it which is labelled subject matter by the authors. According to Brown/Fraser, the subject matter of an individual activity type will be reflected in the speech that is applied in this activity in such a way that the speech is topically related to the (specific) content of the activity. As Brown and Fraser put it, “[t]he notion of purpose requires the specification of content at a more detailed level than that of activity type. This we shall call ‘subject matter’, and we shall assume isomorphy between subject matter of the activity and topic of the speech, [...]” (1979: 42).<sup>144</sup>

Brown and Fraser use ‘participants’ to describe the identity of the speaker more closely. The speaker’s identity is correspondingly twofold in character involving, on the one hand, features both on a social and personal, i. e. individual, level and, on the other hand, the speaker’s (social) relations to other speakers in direct interaction with regard to communicative roles.<sup>145</sup> The former is labelled ‘individual participants’ and the latter ‘relationships between participants’ by the authors (1979: 35).<sup>146</sup>

Douglas Biber’s (1988) illustration of the situational elements resembles that of Brown and Fraser (1979) in many respects.<sup>147</sup> Among the important components of the speech situation are again the participants to an interaction, the setting, as well as topic and purpose. Similar to Brown and Fraser (1979), the factor ‘participants’ is of twofold character entailing features of personal and social identity – labelled ‘personal characteristics’ and ‘group characteristics’ – and social relations between speakers in interaction again with reference to communicative roles of institutional or private type.<sup>148</sup> Another element defined by Biber in the description of

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<sup>144</sup> As is obvious, Brown and Fraser exclude such instances where the topic of the talk is not identical with the (content of the) activity type that is being carried out as, for example, when “participants might be repairing a car while chatting about films” (1979: 42).

<sup>145</sup> According to Brown and Fraser the speaker’s social identity is constituted by his or her membership to a certain group: class, sex, age, ethnicity – the factors traditionally focused on in social dialectology revealing phonological variation. The identity of the speaker as individual, on the other hand, includes his or her personal characteristics: personality, interests etc. but also attitudes and emotions, for example (cf. 1979: 35). Communicative roles refer to the speaker either acting on behalf of an institutional role or as a private person maintaining interpersonal relations (cf. Brown/Fraser, 1979: 35/50).

<sup>146</sup> For a schematic and more detailed illustration of the components and subcomponents of the speech situation the reader is referred to the original article by Brown and Fraser (1979: 35). The authors do not only present a thorough discussion of the components that make up the speech situation but also of different linguistic markers of the situation and its single components respectively.

<sup>147</sup> Indeed, Biber explicitly refers to Brown’s and Fraser’s (1979) description of the components of the speech situation as a source of reference which his own discussion in his words “heavily draws on” (1988: 29).

<sup>148</sup> It should be noted that the term ‘communicative role’ is explicitly used by Biber (1988) not in connection with the social relations among participants but to define who sends and who receives a message in interaction.

this factor is constituted by the amount of shared background knowledge between interlocutors referring to (1) culturally dependent world knowledge that is generally expected in the communicative process and (2) individually specific personal knowledge that can be expected based on the character of the personal relations between interlocutors, that is their grade of familiarity.

Corresponding to Brown and Fraser (1979) Biber (1988) defines 'scene' as including 'setting', 'topic' and 'purpose' with 'topic' being an individual component and not a sub-component of purpose as with Brown and Fraser (1979). As Hymes (1972b) does, Biber also determines the scene as a speaker's individual perception of the character of a given setting which can thus change in the degree of respective formality or informality (cf. 1988: 32). Similar to Brown and Fraser (1979) 'setting' entails time and place of interaction as well as 'superordinate activity type' carried out within this setting which can be said to correspond to Brown's and Fraser's (1979) notion of 'activity type' (cf. 1988: 31).<sup>149</sup> Referring to Hymes' 'ends' (1972b), Biber explains the purpose connected to the conversational topic as implying two types of goals: conventional and personal ones (cf. 1988: 31f.). The other situational elements according to Biber (1988) and shortly mentioned here are (1) 'social evaluation' of the communicative event and the content of a message, (2)<sup>150</sup> the 'relations of participants to the text' denoting the advantages and disadvantages connected to the production and comprehension of spoken and written language, and, finally (3) the 'channel' through which a message is conveyed.<sup>151</sup>

## Conclusion

From what has been illustrated so far about the components of the speech situation, it can be said that the initially posed statement of the impact of the speech situation on the character of the language used by speakers in this particular situation is an oversimplification and has to be refined correspondingly. Consequently, it is not the situation *as such* which influences

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In reference to Hymes (1972b) these communicative roles correspondingly include addressor, addressee and audience (cf. 1988: 30). This constitutes an additional sub-component not determined by Brown and Fraser (1979).

<sup>149</sup> Biber states one additional sub-component of the setting, namely the 'extent to which space and time are shared by participants' (1988: 30). This element is of significance for the study of communicative processes within the (traditional) mass media. As is argued in chapter 1.1, the dislocation of space and time is a typical feature that distinguishes mass communication from interpersonal communication.

<sup>150</sup> This component 'social evaluation' contains the 'speaker's attitudes towards content' as sub-component which is itself composed of three elements according to Biber (1988). One of these elements is the speaker's 'degree of commitment towards the content', or his/her 'epistemological 'stance'' (1988: 31). This element, describing in how far the speaker is certain of the truthfulness of the message (s)he has produced or is about to produce, in fact, will be taken up later in this discussion about the formal/informal concept when the point 'occurrence of utterance modality and speaker's modality' especially with reference to the mass media is focused on. It will be shown that expressions of epistemic modality are a frequent part of information-based texts in the mass media.

<sup>151</sup> For a full discussion of all the situational elements the reader is referred to the respective chapter 'situations and functions' in Biber (1988).

linguistic choice but rather the different situational elements and their interplay in various situations form a factor in language variation. The above discussion of the components of the speech situation according to different studies thus can function to illustrate the underlying structures of speech situations initially pointed out by Giglioli (1972). Of the presented studies some are more and others are less thorough in their explication of these structures, that is, the components of the speech situation. Among the former are Hymes (1972b) and especially Brown and Fraser (1979) and Biber (1988), who draws heavily both on Hymes and Brown and Fraser. Be that as it may, (all) the presented studies reveal the importance of especially three central determinants of the context of speech, i. e. the speech situation. Accordingly, (1) physical setting – the location of interaction – and psychological setting (‘scene’) – the perceived formal or informal character of the physical setting, (2) purpose and topic,<sup>152</sup> as well as (3) participants and their relations can be said to form the three major components of the situation of speech. Thus, when we state the influence of the speech situation on language use, we have to do this with reference to (the interplay of) these components that make up the situation and that can trigger language variation. Following some of the studies presented here, it has to be considered, however, that in the interaction of the different components the extent with which a single component can contribute to variation in speech can differ.

As a result, there are factors which are more important than others in influencing linguistic variation thus inducing a certain formal or informal style. For example, Brown and Fraser (1979: 44) explicitly refer to the comparatively subordinate status of the physical setting *as such* as a factor causing language variation when they say that “[t]he physical setting in which interaction takes place generally has little determining power over linguistic characteristics of the speech used in that setting; it appears to be rare that speech choice is actually determined by the setting *per se*.”<sup>153</sup> This is plausible when we consider that, for example, two friends can have an informal conversation in the home of one of the friends but they can also have the same informal conversation in the institutional setting of the classroom. A simple change in the physical setting does not automatically effect a change in the formality of the applied language style even though the setting is, by definition, an institutional and therefore formal one. Rather – based on cultural definitions of formality and informality – it is the friends’ perception of a changed character of the setting, i. e. the scene, from informal to formal that leads to a change in linguistic behaviour. E. g. the ringing of the bell and the entrance of the teacher at the beginning of the school lesson can bring about a change in the formality of the scene connected to a redefinition of communicative role-relationships. That is, during their informal conversation in the classroom, the two friends are interlocutors with equal status,

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<sup>152</sup> Given here as one element because of the close connection of purpose and topic mentioned by Biber (1988: 31), although he lists both as separate situational components, and as Brown and Fraser (1979) state topic as being entailed in the superordinate purpose.

<sup>153</sup> Italics are taken over from the authors.

their relationship therefore being a symmetrical one. The appearance of the teacher and the beginning activity of teaching change the scene from informal to formal as it will bring about the awareness and adoption of ascribed communicative roles of teacher and pupil. This adoption of the communicative role of 'pupil' on the part of the two friends entails an acknowledgement of a given asymmetry in power in the teacher-pupil relationship while the symmetry between themselves is kept. With the changed character of the physical setting the two friends thus leave their 'role' as private persons and take over that of the pupil. The awareness of the changed scene from informal to formal including the adoption of respective communicative roles will result in the choice of an overall linguistic style that is in accordance with the changed scene on the one hand and the communicative role on the other hand. That is, the overall formality of the scene will be complied with by a respective formal variety of the language; a stylistic variety that is socially appropriate, i. e. appropriate to the changed social circumstances.

The minor influence of the physical setting alone and the major influence of the scene as the perceived character of the physical setting is also pointed to by Hymes (1972b: 60): "In daily life the same persons in the same setting may redefine their interaction as a changed type of scene, say, from formal to informal, serious to festive, or the like."<sup>154</sup>

Also Biber (1988) uses the classroom example to explain the significance of the scene. Similar to the pupil-pupil and teacher-pupil relationship just illustrated, he includes the possibility of the teacher in his 'role' as private person having an informal conversation with his/her students in the institutional setting of the classroom before the lesson actually begins:

For example, an instructor and students can sit in a classroom before class having an informal conversation. As the time for class passes, the instructor can begin to teach, causing the perception of communicative activity to shift from an informal conversation to a more formal lecture or class discussion. The participants and the physical and temporal setting remain constant, but the perception of the scene changes (Biber, 1988: 32).

In fact, the above quotation renders the setting/scene concept more transparent. Biber argues with reference to the perceived formality/informality of communicative activities carried out within the physical setting of the classroom: an informal conversation versus a more formal lecture. It is then important to consider that when we speak of a changed scene of communication, we do this with regard to a change in the social activities that take place in the physical setting. These activities are perceived as more or less formal or informal thus constituting the formal/informal perception of the scene as the 'psychological' assessment of the physical setting. Physical settings then are not in themselves formal or informal; formality and informality are no inherent properties of physical settings. Rather settings are determined

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<sup>154</sup> In his description of the components of speech Hymes does not make an explicit statement concerning the importance of individual components over the other ones that he lists. He does not claim a hierarchical order between the situational elements, though it may well exist (cf. 1972b: 66). As a consequence, Hymes does not make an explicit difference between the potential of psychological and physical setting for influencing language variation.

by the social activities that are typically associated with them such as sermons in church, or teaching in the classroom, for example. These activities can render a setting formal or informal or a stage in-between these two extremes. With the occurrence of an activity that is commonly associated with a certain setting – the sermon in church – the perception of formality will be activated.<sup>155</sup> This activation of formality does, however, not necessarily take place with other activities that are featured within the same setting, namely those that are *not* typically associated with this setting such as the informal conversation between friends within the location of the church. This setting alone will not lead the friends to the assessment of formality. It is the beginning of the sermon that activates this assessment. The pure physical setting is therefore independent of notions of formality or informality; there is no correlation between setting per se and grade of formality. Perceptions of formality and informality are activated based on social activities that are – culturally dependent – connected to a physical setting because they are typically associated with it. With regard to Hymes (1972b) Brown and Fraser (1979: 44) refer to this as “settings imbued with cultural import [...] [which] are associated with the activities which customarily take place in them [...]” The assessment of formality or informality of the respective social activity carried out within a physical setting then leads to the application of a style of speech that is appropriate to the (grade of formality of this) social activity.

Concerning ‘topic’ as the other central component of the speech situation, Brown and Fraser (1979: 42f.) point to the capacity of the conversational topic to provoke linguistic variation. Accordingly, the character of the topic at talk will have an influence on the character of the applied speech style, for example, as concerns the use of lexical items. Indeed, it is an obvious fact that lexical choice is largely determined by that what speakers are talking about. Thus, a conversation about soccer will entail vocabulary that is specifically connected to this type of sport, while a conversation about playing golf will naturally feature lexical items that are typically associated with this sport. Moreover, the same lexical items may be used with slightly different meanings in topically different conversations. Accordingly, in the two sports examples the word ‘lawn’ is likely to be associated with the pitch in soccer and with the golf course in golf. Another example will help to further illuminate how the topic at talk may yield linguistic variation. As mentioned above, the formality/informality of the social activity taking place within a physical setting will lead to an equally formal or informal style of speech in accordance with this activity. In other words, part of a social activity can – but need not necessarily<sup>156</sup> – be a linguistic activity that ideally corresponds to the formal/informal character of this social activity and, in its accomplishment,

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<sup>155</sup> As based on cultural definitions of what is formal and what is informal. The cultural definition has to include the setting and its connected typical social activity.

<sup>156</sup> There are diverse social activities that can be carried out without any linguistic activity that accompanies it such as repairing the car or washing the dishes. On the other hand, there are also social activities which are correctly executed only by means of linguistic activities which constitute fundamental components of these social activities. Such social activities concern, for example, diverse institutional proceedings such as court cases, political debates, business meetings and so on.

is ideally also topically connected to this social activity. Thus, the topic of the linguistic activity corresponds to the social activity that is carried out. How then can the topic be described to influence language variation? Let us again take the concrete example of language applied in the classroom. In their informal conversation before class starts the two friends may discuss various topics including, for example, the sports examples given above. But, as we know, with the beginning of the lesson the communicative roles of teacher and pupil are activated and the situation changes. Each lesson features the social activity of teaching biology, mathematics, chemistry and so on with further distinctions into what may be called ‘micro-social’ activities of teaching the structure of the human DNA, geometry or organic and inorganic substances, for example. These macro and micro social activities will then constitute the topics at classroom talk. Consequently, the linguistic activities featured in the classroom will be topically related to the social activities. That is, they will typically include lexical items that have a specific reference to the individual subject – such as ‘DNA’ in biology – and that can function to distinguish one subject from the other, i. e. by occurring, not exclusively but predominantly, in connection with a specific topic. It is in this sense then that the topic can yield language variation.

Discussing the influence of the topic at talk on linguistic variation, Brown and Fraser (1979: 43) also refer to the work of Labov (1972b) who has shown that conversational topics within the sociolinguistic interview which emotionally move the interviewee result in the application of speech informal in character, i. e. the non-prestige variety. Here, although the social context of the interview situation is formal in character, it is the underlying emotionality connected to the content of the interviewees’ talk that has a ‘psychological effect’ resulting in the application of informal instead of formal speech.<sup>157</sup>

This leaves the participants and their relations as final situational factor. With ‘extent of shared knowledge’ Biber (1988) mentions one important aspect in the definition of the relationship between interlocutors and, doing this, further refines what it is that can lead speakers to vary their language in interaction with other speakers.<sup>158</sup> The discussion of this component of situational context focused on identity features as illustrated in the work of Biber (1988) and Brown and Fraser (1979) which include the adoption of communicative roles either of institutional or private type. Biber (1988) as well as Brown and Fraser (1979) list social status and social power as one determining factor in the definition of speaker relations. In their famous work on linguistic politeness Brown and Levinson (1987) have shown how the relationship between speakers in interaction can be characterized by means of three sociological variables which determine the choice of a respective linguistic politeness strategy in a concrete speech situation. Here, (relative) ‘power’ is one such variable next to

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<sup>157</sup> See Labov (1972b), chapter 3 (The isolation of contextual styles). Emotionally arousing topics in the form of retelling a danger of death experience are shown by Labov to be a useful means within the sociolinguistic interview in order to overcome the observer’s paradox and to receive natural unmonitored speech.

<sup>158</sup> For the extent of shared knowledge between speakers in connection with formal/informal concept see the point ‘contextual level: possible differences in information structure’ below.

‘social distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’, the latter denoting the degree to which the speaker’s personal intention in communication imposes on the (freedom of the) addressee (cf. Brown/Levinson, 1987: 74f).<sup>159</sup> According to Brown and Levinson (1987), speakers assess the ultimate threat to face of a speech act to be performed – the weightiness of a face-threatening act – based on the sum of these three variables in concrete interaction, which then results in the application of a respective speaker-dependent politeness strategy that is assumed to fit best the social circumstances (cf. chapter 4.1.1, section b.).

Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) approach to conversational politeness is helpful in providing an additional refinement of the definition of ‘participants’ in this connection whose relationship in interaction can be determined via the constellation of the three mentioned variables. Where the concepts of ‘social distance’ and/or ‘power’ are included in the works of Biber (1988) and Brown and Fraser (1979), the rate of imposition is – not surprisingly – exclusively used by Brown and Levinson (1987) because their approach is essentially face-oriented. That is, the content of speakers’ utterances is studied with respect to its capacity for face protection or face threat which implies considerations about the heaviness of speakers’ intentions. In their approach the social relations between the participants constitute themselves fundamentally through mutual considerations of face in concrete interactive processes which lead to the application of (individually assessed) appropriate utterances.

Moreover, Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) approach to politeness can illustrate something else: it can tell us something about formality and informality respectively. That is, the ultimate weight of a face-threatening act, which is the sum of the three dimensions ‘social distance’, ‘power’ and ‘rate of imposition’, expresses a (grade of) formality/informality, not of the speech situation as such, but with respect to the ‘socially meaningful content’ as constituted by the constellations of the variables and implicated in the utterance. The formality/informality of this socially meaningful content – or of the ultimate weightiness of the face-threatening act – then finds its expression in a respective formal/informal politeness strategy in order to account for the weightiness of the speech act that is to be produced and thus also for the social dimensions leading up to this weightiness. To give an example: A socially meaningful formal content would be the result of the sum of a heavy rate of imposition, an asymmetrical relationship between the interlocutors as based on a difference in power that is connected to communicative roles,<sup>160</sup> and an existing unfamiliarity between the participants. On the other hand, a socially meaningful informal content would result from the sum of a less heavy rate of imposition, a symmetrical relationship between the participants to a conversation as based on equality in power, and an existing familiarity between the

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<sup>159</sup> ‘Social distance’ should not be confused with ‘power’. The former describes the grade of familiarity between the interlocutors, whereas the latter refers to social power denoting possible differences in the power status of participants. This factor can thus indicate the symmetry or asymmetry in the relationship between the participants to a conversation.

<sup>160</sup> For example, agents and clients of institutions characteristically differ in their power status with the agents having institutional authority included in their institutional role (cf. chapter 5.2.1).

interlocutors. In other words, the sum of these dimensions results into the assessment of the overall weightiness of the face-threatening act as formal or informal and, as a consequence, leads to the application of a respective formal/informal politeness strategy that is thus in accordance with the socially meaningful content built from power, distance and rate of imposition.

If we acknowledge that each speech act as such is potentially face-threatening, Brown's and Levinson's (1987) approach to conversational politeness is also helpful in refining the situational element of the 'topic' from the viewpoint of social relations. That is, the topics at talk and their contents always imply the risk of face-threat in their linguistic treatment. To compensate for this risk communicatively competent speakers apply respective speech strategies with which they constantly manage their social relationships.<sup>161</sup>

### Types of speech situations

It was mentioned above that the pure statement of the influence of the speech situation on the language that is applied within this situation is, in fact, an oversimplification. Thus, when we want to discuss the influence of the speech situation we have to do this with regard to the various situational elements that have been illustrated so far as constituting the situational context of speech. From all the described components three were determined to crystallize as central ones for the definition of the speech situation: (1) Setting/scene, (2) topic as well as (3) participants and their social relations. It is the interplay of these elements that constitutes the speech situation and that can trigger linguistic variation. Or, in other words, different types of situations (informal/formal/institutional) are characterized by differing constellations of these elements which can themselves vary with respect to the degree to which they may influence linguistic behaviour in the situational context. (As was shown above, the formality of the physical setting as such is not of actual relevance for linguistic variation but the setting associated with a specific social activity and connected linguistic activities is).<sup>162</sup> It is then possible, to roughly determine these types of speech situations. Accordingly, each type of situation can be described to feature a characteristic constellation of the situational elements setting (including scene), topic and participant relations. The latter was refined with the help of the three sociological variables 'social distance', 'power' and 'rate of imposition' which are central to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) theory of conversational politeness. Therefore, apart from variations in topic and physical setting, different types of speech situations may be characterized also by differential constellations of these sociological variables.

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<sup>161</sup> Brown's and Levinson's (1987) theory of conversational politeness will be taken up again later in this discussion of the formal/informal concept.

<sup>162</sup> See in this connection also research into the contextualization of language (e.g. Duranti and Goodwin, 1992). The context – what is referred to here as the 'speech situation' – is no static entity that frames speech but rather is built and, what is most important, can be modified via those acting in it.

Accordingly, an informal situation may be defined via the following arrangement of the three variables:

- (1) **Social distance:** in informal speech situations familiarity between the interlocutors should necessarily be given. That is, mutual knowledge of and contact with each other can be defined as a pre-condition for informal speech situations to arise. Yet, the grade of knowledge – and thus of familiarity – between the participants to a conversation may vary. Accordingly, the persons interacting may be intimates, friends (with varying degrees of intimacy characterizing the relationship), or relatives and, generally, all persons with characteristic gradations in the closeness of their social relations including, for example, fellow workers, superiors, or a speaker's circle of acquaintances. The same speaker may have a nodding acquaintance only with some of the persons belonging to this circle. In general, there seems to be no proper reason why persons with a characteristically low degree of familiarity should not have informal conversations. The important factor is that familiarity – as mirrored in the depth of mutual knowledge and social contact – is given at all.
  
- (2) **Power:** With the 'power' factor the case is more differentiated, for its relevance and extent in conversation can be said to be dependent on the individual speaker constellation, that is, with regard to what has been mentioned above concerning their grade of familiarity. Consequently, between (close) friends power may be irrelevant due to the fact that they are situated on the same social level. There is no difference in what has been referred to earlier as their 'communicative roles'. All interlocutors act in their 'role' as private person on behalf of their own personal interests; interests which are not connected to the fulfilment of institutional roles of any kind. Their relationship in the immediate communicative situation is, therefore, a symmetrical one. On the other hand, notions of power may also be relevant even in the perception and construction of informal speech situations. Thus, in an informal conversation between employer and employee – e. g. during lunchtime at the workplace – an awareness of power differences may exist on the part of both speakers, but maybe first of all on the part of the employee. This may be the case even though the employer may not act on behalf of his institutional role in the concrete situation of interaction but rather as a private person. Of course, later this employer will again readopt his/her institutional role which accredits him/her with institutional authority and therefore with social power. Generally then the power factor may be relevant to differing degrees in informal situations based on the actual speaker constellation and a possible awareness of social roles that can be, however, of minor importance in these situations.

- (3) **Rate of imposition:** The rate of imposition underlying the production of speech acts – which form the contents of the conversational topic – can vary. (This, in fact, counts for every type of speech situation, which may all, without exceptions, feature speech acts that can differ in their degree of potential face threat as based on the individual speaker intention in a respective situation). Accordingly, the weight of a speaker's communicative intention that finds its linguistic expression in the performance of a speech act can be heavy or not. In short, as speaker intentions can be diverse so can be their assessed rate of imposition. (As argued in chapter 4.1.1, based on this assessment which directly expresses the risk of face threat underlying the verbalization of a speech intention, communicatively competent speakers, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), choose what they call a *politeness strategy* that is regarded as appropriate means which fits best the character of the speech intention).

This leaves 'topic and 'physical setting' for the description of an informal situation. In general it can be assumed that an informal situation may not be limited with respect to topics that are allowed to be applied by interlocutors in this situation. This assumption can be based on the existing overall familiarity between the participants to a conversation. This familiarity potentially allows topics that are otherwise barred from situations characterized by the absence of interlocutors' mutual knowledge and social contact, as is the case with formal situations (see below). Due to the absence (or low degree) of familiarity, the application of private topics may imply a face threat (or at least a higher degree of face threat) that would be non-existent in informal situations characterized by a high extent of familiarity between interlocutors. Frequent social contact and knowledge about the addressee can also entail knowledge about which topics are potentially more face threatening than others and should therefore be avoided and which topics can be raised without overtly risking a threat to face. Because this in-depth interpersonal background knowledge can be fundamentally missing in formal situations, topics are raised with more careful consideration of what is appropriate and what is not. Thus, private topics with their connected high degree of potential face threat are likely to be avoided. Whereas, depending on individually different communicative intentions of speakers, topics raised during conversations in informal situational contexts may be theoretically both private and/or public in character with 'public' and 'private' denoting the generally accepted suitability of a conversational topic for occurrence in the public and/or private sphere.<sup>163</sup> This does not mean that in informal situations topics are raised regardless of considerations about the addressee. In fact, the actual topic choice in a concrete situational context is dependent on the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors. That is, are they close friends or do they have a nodding acquaintance with each other only? In the former

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<sup>163</sup> See also chapter 4.2.

case, with an underlying high degree of familiarity and a connected reduced risk of face threat, the appearance of both private and public topics is likely to the same extent. In the latter case, characterized by a rather low degree of familiarity, the application of private topics is likely to step in the background in favour of public topics with a reduced potential of face threat. The point here is that informal situations in principle leave open the choice between private *and* public topics. The actual topic choice in a concrete speech situation is then a matter of individual consideration based on the social closeness of the participants to a conversation.

What about the physical setting? There is no connection between the grade of formality of the speech situation and that of the location of speech. That is, an informal speech situation does not imply an informal setting, i. e. with restriction to the private sphere of personal matters, such as the speaker's own or a friend's home. Rather informal speech situations can also include places within the public sphere: the supermarket, but also the courtroom or the classroom, for example. In other words, an informal speech situation can potentially feature a formal or institutional setting respectively. As the classroom example has shown, two friends can have an informal conversation within this institutional setting with the overall character of the situation being an informal one as experienced by the two friends. Keeping the setting/scene distinction in mind, this perceived informality of the speech situation exists until a change in the scene takes place connected to specific social and linguistic activities associated with the setting in combination with the activation of communicative roles of agent and client of the institution. In short, just as an informal conversation can take place in any type of physical setting, so an informal speech situation does generally not imply a specific type of location but can be constructed everywhere from an informal to an institutional setting.

A formal situation may be defined via the following constellation of the three sociological variables:

- (1) **Social distance:** Though the degree of familiarity can vary, it is an important (and dominant) factor in the definition of informal situations. In formal situations familiarity can be given or not. That is, the interlocutors may know each other or they may not. In the latter case they are strangers. The question that arises in this connection is whether the participants to a conversation can also be friends as in informal situations, i.e. whether friends can construct a formal situation in the process of interaction. Below the relevance and dominance of the power factor is stated for formal situations. If this is considered, a problem arises at this point: in the relationship between friends power, as argued above, is not relevant and their communicative relationship thus is a symmetrical one. This argument would then

exclude friends as interlocutors from formal situations. Participants to a conversation must then show a degree of familiarity that defines them not as friends but rather as acquaintances in the widest sense. Where the former are characterized by their social closeness and strong personal relationships, the latter lack these characteristics.

- (2) **Power:** As illustrated above, in informal situations the relevance and extent of the power factor is connected to the individual speaker constellation. Thus, between close friends the power factor may be less dominant (and rather irrelevant) than in an employer-employee constellation. Distinct from informal situations in this respect, formal situations can show a dominance of this factor. Especially in conversations between strangers the social power relations between them are usually not clear from the beginning of the conversation but are rather a matter of negotiation. Power then is a dominant factor as it has to be negotiated during the process of interaction. This activity of negotiation may result in the determination of an asymmetrical relationship between the interlocutors with one interlocutor incorporating more power than the other one.
- (3) **Rate of imposition:** As in informal situations, the rate of imposition connected to speech acts can vary depending on the weightiness of the individual speaker intention that is to be expressed verbally.

It was discussed above that the familiarity between the participants to a conversation is an essential condition for private topics to occur. Because the degree of familiarity and the interpersonal knowledge connected to it can be highly reduced and up to be non-existent in formal situations, conversational topics have to be necessarily raised with more careful consideration regarding their situational appropriateness. The given social distance between communicative partners can be said to constitute a reason for the avoidance of private topics. The initiation of a private topic may be perfectly appropriate during a conversation with a (close) friend. The same topic, however, initiated in the presence of a stranger can cause a serious threat to face making the stranger feel uncomfortable. In formal situations public topics are therefore the safest ones and probably also the most appropriate ones with respect to the generally low degree of familiarity. With public topics the entailed risk of face threat is potentially reduced.

Finally, what can be said about the setting of a formal situation? Is there a restriction as concerns possible locations? That is, does a formal speech situation imply a formal setting? In fact, this raises another question, namely is there such a thing as a 'formal' setting? If so, how should a concrete formal setting look like? Again the setting/scene distinction can

provide an answer: there is no such thing as a ‘formal’ setting. That is, not the setting as such is formal or informal; no physical setting has an inherent formality (or informality) as its characteristic feature. Rather, formality (and informality) is a matter of perceiving the character of a setting. This perception can in principle be independent of the immediate location of speech. As the classroom example has illustrated, the same setting (and the whole speech situation) can be perceived as both formal and informal based on the constellation of speakers (pupil-pupil versus teacher-pupil) and the activation of communicative roles connected to social activities that are typically associated with the classroom setting. As a consequence, there is no absolute restriction as regards the setting of formal situations, though some settings may be more naturally associated with formality as they feature specific social activities (and connected linguistic activities) such as the sermon in church. Also here it is possible to perceive the situation as informal as long as typical social activities – such as the sermon – are missing and an informal conversation between friends takes place. Interestingly, both church and classroom are institutional settings. But what about ‘everyday’ settings such as the supermarket or a friend’s home? Can such ‘next-door’ locations be part of a formal situation? At least one of these settings – the friend’s home – is not connected and generally associated with specific social activities ordinarily taking place in it and that would lead to the perception of formality. The supermarket can be determined to feature such an activity, namely that of buying. However, the setting with its associated activity does not automatically lead to the assessment of formality in the way that the sermon in the church may do. It is not accredited with formality in this respect. Formality then must be the result of the speaker constellation within these everyday settings: a dominant power factor and a less dominant familiarity factor may lead speakers to assess a concrete situational context as formal in character. Consequently, these settings can be formal (and thus part of a formal speech situation) but they need not be so.

A special case of formality is illustrated by institutionalized situations in the sense that they imply what may be called a ‘natural awareness’ of social roles valid in them. That is, such situations are formal with regard to the characteristic speaker constellation of agent and client they show. Distinct from formal situations where social roles and their connected social power are a matter of negotiation, institutionalized situations are characteristically invariant in this respect. A negotiation of power does, accordingly, not take place. Instead these situations characteristically feature an activation and mutual acknowledgement of the social and communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’.<sup>164</sup> It is due to the strict allocation of these roles that the constellation of the three sociological variables in institutionalized situational contexts can be determined to be fundamentally different from that of a formal and informal everyday situation.

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<sup>164</sup> In fact, the acceptance of these ascribed roles is a necessary pre-condition for effective, i. e. successful, communication to take place in institutions.

(1) **Social distance:** The difference in power between the agents (see ‘power’ below) – the representatives of an institution – and the clients – those attending the institution – also implies a relevant social distance, not with respect to an actually missing familiarity between the interlocutors agent and client, but rather as concerns the asymmetrical relationship resulting from this difference.<sup>165</sup> This asymmetry is then included in the social roles of agent and client which equip one participant with power while the other one is typically characterized by a lack of it. The social distance expressed in power differences is then also mirrored in the actual fulfilment of the given social roles of agent and client. That is, in the concrete institutional discourse situation the agent can be assumed to restrict himself or herself to the fulfilment of his or her institutional role only which implies that (s)he does not act as a private person with any personal interest in the addressee that may otherwise be given outside the institutional context.<sup>166</sup> Social distance is then revealed in the lack of personal interest incorporated in the institutional role of the agent.

If social distance is used in the sense in which it has been used here before in the description of situational types, i. e. denoting the degree of familiarity between interlocutors given in a speech situation, there are two logical possibilities. The participants either know each other or they do not. In the latter possibility, the case is clear: there is no relevance of the familiarity factor. Agent and client have never met before. In the former case some further differentiation of their relationship is useful. Do the interlocutors – agent and client – know each other also on a private level (because they are neighbours etc.) and, for a given reason find themselves in an institutional conversation within an institutional speech situation with the connected activation of the social roles of agent and client (because one of them is a judge and the other the witness etc.)? Do they know each other not on private terms – and thus without the activation of social roles – but instead only because – again – a given reason necessitates frequent interaction between the interlocutors within an institution on an agent-client basis (for example a doctor-patient relationship)? In both cases familiarity is given simply because social contact and mutual knowledge are given. In the first case, the grade of familiarity may be determined as being more dominant than in the second case because in the first one

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<sup>165</sup> The definition of ‘social distance’ in this connection is in a different sense than it has been applied so far in the determination of situational types which restricted the term to grades of familiarity existing between participants to a conversation. Here, the meaning of ‘social distance’ is broadened in order to literally express a social distance between interlocutors with regard to a concrete imbalance in social power. (This definition is, in fact, also different from the one as originally intended by Brown and Levinson, 1987).

<sup>166</sup> This does not mean that lack of personal interest is a rule in institutional speech situations. Of course, interest in the addressee can be given. Accordingly, a teacher *can* show personal interest towards the pupil, as can the doctor towards the patient. The point is that this interest need not necessarily be given in the fulfilment of representing an institution.

there is additional knowledge on the private level. When, however, communication within the concrete institutional situation is considered (including an activation of the social roles), can there also be expected a difference in the gravity of the relevance (and dominance) of the familiarity factor in the two cases? The answer is probably 'no' as the familiarity factor is likely to step in the background in favor of fulfilling the ascribed institutional roles of agent and client implying a characteristic social distance.

(2) **Power:** In institutional speech situations power is a dominant factor and it significantly defines the relationship between the interlocutors in these situations. That is, agent and client are typically characterized by their asymmetrical relationship: a fixed hierarchy – which is usually accepted – resulting from the ascribed roles of agent and client entailing communicative rights and obligations. As representative of a respective institution, the agent has more power than the client has, such as the judge as representative of the institution of law has more power than the defendant or the witness(es). The agent then acts (and is expected to act) according to his/her function as representative of the institution. That is, (s)he incorporates an institutional role that accredits him or her with institutional authority. As discussed above, the power of representatives of institutions is naturally assumed and usually accepted, in contrast to formal everyday situations where the power of the participants to a conversation is a matter of negotiation.

(3) **Rate of imposition:** Institutions such as those of law, health and education fulfil important social functions in that they are part of the public sphere and treat topics of general social significance and interest: the medical treatment of patients, administering the law, education of citizens. Focussing on the concerns and problems characterizing the co-existence of a society's individuals, institutions provide for the working of society. As discussed in chapter 5.1, institutions are established with regard to a stabilizing function in a society and it is in their institutional proceedings that they execute (and illustrate) this function with the overall aim of what may be described as providing for a general 'social balance'.

If we want to characterize the nature of the issues that are dealt with by institutions, we have to admit their general and overall inherent 'weightiness' simply because they are of fundamental importance for the society as such. Accordingly, issues such as education, medical treatment and jurisdiction would be defined by everyone as 'serious topics' entailing 'serious content' in commonsense terms. Thus, (decisions on) medical treatment in a concrete case may have a serious impact on the further development of the patient's state of health and jurisdiction has a serious influence on the future of the defendant: acquittal or

conviction. These topics then are in themselves of a respective overall weightiness, which is (necessarily) also mirrored linguistically. The rate of imposition connected to speech acts, therefore, can be assumed to be heavy in frequent cases. In the individual case the rate of imposition, of course, depends on the concrete significance of the issue that is dealt with by an individual institution. That is, we have to state a difference in the weightiness underlying a teacher-parent conversation about a child's frequent disturbance during school lessons and a court case resulting in the acquittal or conviction of the defendant. The former can result in the exclusion from classes; the latter in the exclusion from society. Thus, it can imply a serious cut in the personal freedom of the individual. It must also be considered that the issues treated by one institution only may equally differ in their significance: does a court case have as its topic a case of murder or of shoplifting?

As can be seen, the weight of imposition here is connected not only to the individual speech act that is performed but also – and in the first place – to the 'gravity' of the issue as such that is treated by a respective institution. The 'gravity' inherent to an issue can vary between institutions and in one and the same institution. This gravity then finds its linguistic expression in respective linguistic activities with an assessed rate of imposition.

Because institutions are part of the public sphere and are concerned with topics of social significance and interest, the types of topic they treat can be determined as exclusively public in character. What is mirrored here is a clear separation between the public sphere (of public matters) and the private sphere (of personal matters). Both spheres have their characteristic topics. But where the private sphere generally allows the treatment of both private and public topics, the public sphere traditionally bans private topics and treats them as inappropriate.<sup>167</sup>

In fact, the requirement of a public nature of conversational topics can also be explained via the missing dominance of the familiarity factor. In the description of informal and formal situational contexts of speech familiarity between interlocutors was defined as the necessary pre-condition for the treatment of private topics. The potentially missing familiarity between interlocutors in institutionalized situations thus implies a treatment of public topics only. Otherwise a high risk of face threat may be given. As mentioned above,

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<sup>167</sup> In contrast to this, recent developments within the contemporary mass media illustrate a strong tendency to feature private topics. The institution television, for example, shows that the traditional separation between the public and the private sphere cannot be maintained and that clear-cut boundaries are frequently blurred instead. As part of a general tabloidization of television contents topics formerly restricted to the private sphere enter the public sphere of television production. This trend is especially reflected in the emergence of the daytime talk show format (see chapter 7.2).

institutions are established with respect to the fulfilment of a certain function in society, such as jurisdiction, for example. This also means that there is a characteristic restriction to this function only. Other societal functions are respectively performed by other institutions. Accordingly, all communicative actions within an institution are designed with regard to the fulfilment of this one function. These communicative actions entail conversational topics and their allowed nature (public or private) and respective linguistic activities. Deviations from the pre-determined design of communicative actions can then be stated to constitute a disregard for the general function of the institution and also for the institutional role of the agent which is constructed according to this function. Both, agent and client need to have the will to engage in the institutional situation and thus in the institution-specific function that is to be fulfilled. This willingness towards engagement implies talking about and restriction to public topics, i. e. function-specific topics. The restriction to public topics can be determined to be a fundamental part of the institutional role of the agent. Accordingly, whenever deviations from the expected nature of topics do occur – in the form of private topics initiated by the client – this means neglecting the function of the institution and the role of the agent. There will then be a threat to face that is connected to the institutional role but it will not necessarily affect the agent as private person.

As discussed in chapter 5.2.2, the physical setting of institutionalized speech situations is predetermined. Normally, institutional communication is situated in and can be bound to the special location of the institutional building. Accordingly, a court case that takes place outside of the court house has no validity as has the punishment given by the representatives of law. Apart from the present agents of the institution of law (judge, lawyers etc.) and the clients (defendant, witnesses etc.), the institutional situation requires the respective physical location that is associated with the court case. Otherwise, the punishment officially given is without effect for the defendant. Such declarative speech acts as ‘I hereby sentence you to seven years of imprisonment’ therefore have no influence on the fate of the defendant as long as they are not uttered in the appropriate setting (and by the appropriate person). That is, the punishment has to be declared within the location that is institutionally relevant and traditionally associated with the execution of the institutional function.

On the other hand, there are situations which can be characterized as institutional because they feature the role-activation of agent and client, although they do not officially take place in the usual institutional location. Such an example would be constituted by a home visit by the doctor with a characteristic doctor-patient relationship.

To sum up, it is probably the social distance between interlocutors together with possible differences in social power that leads speakers to perceive a concrete situational context as ‘formal’ thus resulting in a comparatively more careful consideration of conversational topics (and connected speech acts). Likewise, it is probably the social closeness between interlocutors in connection with the symmetry in social power that lets speakers perceive a concrete situation of speech as ‘informal’. The perception of a speech situation as institutional is likely to be connected to an additional activation of the communicative roles of agent and client within the institutional setting which entail differences in power and clearly determine the rights and obligations of the interlocutors in the concrete case of interaction. Accordingly, it is possible that in the teacher-pupil example a situation formerly perceived as informal turns into an institutional one with the entrance of the teacher and the beginning of the lesson signalling a strict allocation of roles and respective communicative behaviour.

### Summary and conclusion

As speech is always applied in a situational context, this context naturally constitutes a significant influential factor for the actual speech application process. That is, whenever speech is applied in a concrete speech situation – everyday formal/informal or institutional – this is usually done with reference to the actual character of this situation as perceived by the individual speaker. Thus, the assessed formality or informality of the speech situation will be complied with by a respective formal or informal speech style applied by the speaker. This situational variation – the capacity to apply and vary one’s language appropriately with respect to the situational context - is a fundamental part of a speaker’s linguistic repertoire and defines his or her communicative competence.

The above discussion has illustrated different surveys concerned with the speech situation and the elements it is composed of. Consequently, when we speak of the influence of the speech situation on the language that is applied within it, we have to do this with respect to the elements that can be determined. It is their interplay that actually defines different types of speech situations. Accordingly, setting, topic and participant relationships, which can be further refined via the sociological variables ‘social distance’, ‘power’ and ‘rate of imposition’, can be used to demonstrate different types of situational contexts to be distinguished by the grade of formality they show. Degrees of formality/informality characterizing the speech situation are then reflected in respective degrees of formal or informal speech styles. That is, an individually assessed formal speech situation will be complied with in the form of a formal speech style; an individually assessed informal speech situation will be complied with in the form of an informal speech style.

The discussion so far has revealed much about the elements that construct a situation and in how far the situation can influence linguistic variation. What it has not done, however, is an

illustration of the actual linguistic expressions of formality and informality. Accordingly, when we say that the formality/informality of the speech style will be in accordance with the formality or informality of the speech situation, this does not say anything about the linguistic features that characterize formal and informal speech styles. The question that consequently arises is whether we can determine their content and illustrate concrete linguistic features in order to get an understanding of what is actually meant when we speak of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ in connection with speech styles. In other words, is it possible to define linguistic style features in a similar way in which it is possible to define situational elements and their constellation in formal, informal (and institutional) situation types?

### **6.2.2.3 The determinants of formal and informal speech styles: possible levels of distinction**

What can be expected in general? It can be assumed that linguistic expressions of formality and informality will be revealed on diverse levels of the language system. Formality and informality can correspondingly be determined to affect the syntax, lexicon and phonology of the language so that situational styles will be likely to exhibit a preferred choice of lexical items and a preferred sentence structure as well as typical pronunciation features. Formal and informal styles will then differ from each other in this respect so that – ideally – they can also be identified on the basis of these differences when they are studied by the researcher. An informal style thus may show the following characteristics: on the lexical level it is likely to show the use of informal vocabulary (like ‘boss’ instead of ‘employer’, ‘drunk’ instead of ‘intoxicated’ etc.). This also means that hard words will generally not be used. Having a foreign character, these types of words are usually more ‘sophisticated’ and scholarly in character and are likely to occur rather in written or formal spoken language than in informal spoken language. An example can be illustrated by the use of ‘interrogate’ versus ‘ask’. In the history of English there have been profound influences from other languages on the native language of the English which enriched the vocabulary. One of the most prominent linguistic influences is French, another is Latin. Today English is regarded as having synonyms at three levels (cf. Baugh and Cable, 1997: 182f.). One example is *ask-question-interrogate*. The first is native English, the second is of French origin, while the third comes from Latin and in this connection is the most sophisticated one (ibid.). In (informal) situational contexts speakers can be assumed to apply ‘ask’ instead ‘interrogate’ which implies a respectively higher degree of associated formality and thus will appear with an assumed higher probability in written language or formal spoken language.

The use of informal vocabulary may also include slang terms. In contrast to informal talk we can define ‘slang’ as implying a high degree of ungrammaticality on the syntactic level

and the typical use of in-group vocabulary on the lexical level.<sup>168</sup> Informality being the more neutral term, ‘slang’ may be defined as the extreme form of informality. In sociolinguistic descriptions of the phenomenon of age-grading – the linguistic variation exhibited in the speech of the individual speaker as (s)he moves through time – youth language has been shown to feature to a high degree in-group expressions with a characteristic in-group meaning. The frequent use of these terms with a differential meaning functions as a means of identification with (and of) the group and thus it represents an expression of youth identity to be clearly distinguished from adult identity. They are the linguistic manifestation of a general resistance towards and disapproval of adult norms and values that typically characterizes teenage life. Such differential use of terms is reflected in their unfamiliarity (of contextual meaning) especially among older generations.<sup>169</sup>

On the syntactic level informality may be revealed in a comparatively simple sentence structure via the syntactic coordination of sentences. That is, parataxis is likely to be preferred to hypotaxis, the use of complex syntactic structures characterized by subordination of sentences. Hence, complex structures with inserted relative clauses can be expected to occur only infrequently if at all.<sup>170</sup>

As concerns pronunciation, linguistic informality can be assumed to be reflected in a less careful pronunciation of words resulting from a low level self-monitoring while speaking. (This point is directly taken up below). This reduced attention to speech is then likely to lead to the contraction of linguistic forms such as *I’m*, *we’re* instead of *I am* and *we are*, which imply the linguistic reduction of the involved form of ‘to be’. Often such reductions can be explained as the natural result of a fast speech rate which can affect clear pronunciation in connected speech. Thus, *with him* in fast speech can be phonetically realized as [ˈwɪðɪm] and not as [ˈwɪθ ˈhɪm] or [ˈwɪð ˈhɪm].<sup>171</sup> Another informal pronunciation feature is constituted by

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<sup>168</sup> The used in-group expressions can have a characteristic in-group meaning, i.e. an additionally ascribed meaning that characteristically differs from their general everyday meaning. Thus, drug addicts, for example, use the adjective *high* with a referential meaning of expressing an emotional state induced by drug use which is different from the everyday sense of the word.

<sup>169</sup> See in this connection Chambers (1995) on age-grading and youth language. On youth language in general see Androutsopoulos and Scholz (1998).

<sup>170</sup> In this context the general question applies whether in spoken language, i.e. especially in (spontaneous) everyday conversation, complex syntactic structures are relevant at all independent of the type of style that is considered. See in this connection p. 127ff.: *The syntactic level: situational style and structural complexity*.

<sup>171</sup> It is left open here whether there is a difference between formal and informal speech styles as concerns the general phonological features of connected speech. These features are the simple result of words occurring in combination in speech which may affect their concrete phonological realization. Of course, those combinations occur in both formal and informal styles. As a consequence, their relevance may be stated equally for both formal and informal styles. The question is whether and in how far the differences in the level of self-monitoring indicated above and the connected grade of carefulness with which words are pronounced in formal and informal styles can have an influence on the concrete phonological realizations of words with respect to the typical features that have been described for connected speech, such as assimilation, elision or the occurrence of the linking-r. (While it may be assumed that the processes of elision and assimilation are indeed affected by the level of individual attention to speech in the form that a high level of self-monitoring is likely to produce a careful pronunciation of words lacking these processes and that a low level of self-monitoring is likely to result in a less careful pronunciation of words thus showing these processes, the occurrence of the linking-r may be a more

what is often referred to as ‘g-dropping’ denoting the pronunciation of word-final *-ing* in words like *running* or *going* which can usually alter between [ɪŋ] and [ɪn], a velar or alveolar nasal. The informal way of pronouncing such words is the production of the alveolar nasal [ɪn].<sup>172</sup> (The name ‘g-dropping’ for this linguistic phenomenon is probably connected to the characteristic spelling of the words that are pronounced in this way: *runnin’*, *goin’*). Phonological realizations of different variables such as this one are of special interest in the next chapter concerned with a speaker’s level of self-monitoring while speaking. The studies on different phonological variables within social dialectology are highly useful for a further determination of the characteristics of formal and informal speech styles.

Based on the foregoing descriptions for an informal speech style, a formal style of speech then may be assumed to show the opposite characteristics on the lexical, syntactic and phonological level. Thus, lexically the formality of speech is likely to be expressed generally in the use of a less informal vocabulary. This can include the use of hard words but it clearly excludes the application of slang terms. Since slang has a high capacity for face threat it is no proper candidate for formal styles of speech as used in formal situations. In informal everyday situations the application of slang terms is restricted to the group in which these terms are specifically used in order to signal group membership. Here, the use of these terms constitutes a communicative behaviour that is in line/in accordance with the general group norms. Within the group their use is thus expected and their application does not necessarily perform a face threat which it would outside the specific group and especially in formal situations with their typical constellation of the sociological variables. (Accordingly, the ritual insults that have been described by Labov (1972a) in his studies of New York street gangs are not regarded as serious face threats on the part of the gang members but rather function to signal group integration and, as odd as it sounds, they may be seen as a way of relationship management within the group.)

Keeping in mind what has been said concerning the general occurrence of complex structures in spoken language at all, formality may be expressed in various subordination patterns resulting in a respectively higher complexity of syntactic structures compared to informal speech.

On the level of pronunciation a respectively higher degree of self-monitoring is likely to take place which will then, in turn, lead to a more careful and thus clear pronunciation of words. That means, ‘g-dropping’ will not take place and the velar nasal [ɪŋ] will be preferred to the alveolar nasal [ɪn]. As mentioned, it is difficult to determine – if at all – which

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fundamental phonological process independent of levels of individual attention to speech). Additionally, another question is whether there are significant and measurable differences in the speech rate between formal and informal styles and, if there are indeed differences, how many of the differential phonological features can be ascribed to different speech rates.

<sup>172</sup> Other alveolar realizations can include [n] or [ɔn].

phonological features of connected speech can be influenced in formal (and informal) speech styles on the basis of self-monitoring.

Leaving now the hypothetical level, what about studies that can help to concretize what has been assumed so far? Are there linguistic expressions of formality and informality that are revealed and supported by respective studies? In fact, there are.

### Social dialectology: situational style and the grade of self-monitoring in speech

A first refinement of the characteristic phonological features of formal and informal styles can be made on the basis of the methodology and findings of social dialectology within the field of sociolinguistics. In his groundbreaking urban dialect studies on the linguistic variation occurring in the speech of New York City residents Labov (1966, 1972b) illustrates characteristic patterns of social and stylistic stratification. The phonological variables he focuses on are, among others, the already mentioned (ng) representing the pronunciation of word-final *-ing* and (r) denoting the pronunciation of /r/ in post-vocalic position either at the end of a word or word-internally preceding a consonant. Both variables have different forms of realization in New York City speech. The variants that are shown to occur are (1) those mentioned above for (ng) namely the velar and alveolar nasals [ŋ] and [ɲ] as well as (2) the presence or absence of post-vocalic /r/ in pronunciation. Labov demonstrates a relationship between the socio-economic status of an individual and the use of a certain variant in the form that the higher the socio-economic status, the more standard (or prestige) varieties will generally be used and the lower this status, the more non-standard (or non-prestige) varieties will generally be used. What is even more interesting in this connection for the definition of the features of formality and informality is the finding that there is, apart from social stratification, also characteristic style stratification: a relationship between the grades of formality/informality of the speech style and the use of prestige versus non-prestige variants among all socio-economic status groups. That is, with increasing formality of the speech style the use of prestige varieties also increases among all social groups. Likewise, with decreasing formality of the speech style the use of prestige varieties also decreases among all social groups and the use of non-prestige varieties increases correspondingly. Thus, considering the two variables (ng) and (r) and their variants, Labov shows that the increasing formality of the speech style is complied with by the presence of /r/ in pronunciation and the velar nasal [ŋ] as prestige varieties while increasing informality, on the other hand, is complied with by an r-

less pronunciation and the use of the alveolar nasal variant [ɱ] which constitute the non-prestige varieties.<sup>173</sup>

Important in this connection and for the current purpose of defining formality and informality is the methodology applied in the elicitation of informant speech in order to create linguistic styles differing in their degrees of formality/informality. In *The Social Stratification of English in New York City* (1966), Labov describes the linguistic styles that are elicited in the situational context of the sociolinguistic interview. These contextual styles – word lists, reading style, careful speech and casual style – differ in their degree of formality with the first being the most formal one and the last mentioned the most informal one in character. These styles are elicited in the general context of the interview on the basis of interview techniques that evoke the occurrence of speech styles differing in their apparent grade of formality.<sup>174</sup>

What is significant here is that in the context of the interview situation the different speech styles can be distinguished by their grade of formality with regard to the informant's grade of self-monitoring that takes place in the course of the sociolinguistic interview. There is thus an apparent relationship between the extent of self-monitoring that takes place while speaking and the formality of the speech style elicited in this manner. This is in such a way that the formality of the speech style increases with the informant's increasing attention to his or her own speech. Likewise the apparent informality of the speech style increases with the informant's decreasing attention to his or her own speech. For the definition of the terms 'formal' and 'informal' this means that they can be determined to include differences in the extent of self-monitoring that takes place while speaking. 'Formal' and 'informal' thus can be distinguished from each other via the factor of conscious attention that is paid to speech. A formal style then means a high grade of self-monitoring, i. e. a high grade of conscious attention paid to speech. With respect to style stratification described above this means that a formal style will entail the use of prestige varieties (such as pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/ and the use of the [ɱ] variant) to a high degree. An informal style correspondingly means a low grade of self-monitoring and, according to style stratification, implies the use of non-

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<sup>173</sup> The same patterns of social and stylistic stratification for the variable (ng) have been found by Trudgill (1974) in Norwich, England. The contextual styles that he describes are slightly different from the ones listed by Labov (1972b). The difference, however, is mainly a matter of naming. Accordingly, similar to Labov, Trudgill uses 'word list style', 'reading passage style' and 'casual style'. What is termed 'careful speech' by Labov is labelled 'formal speech' by Trudgill.

That social and stylistic stratification are similar in the United States and in England seems to indicate that there might be an intercultural similar tendency for these patterns of linguistic distribution. It is highly imaginable that speech differing between socio-economic status groups is intercultural relevant and that the formality of the situation in different cultural contexts is also systematically complied with by a respective style of speech featuring characteristic prestige and non-prestige varieties. (Chambers, 1995 demonstrates such a tendency for the factors 'sex' and 'gender' influencing male and female speech patterns in different cultural contexts).

<sup>174</sup> See Labov (1966: 90ff.) for a detailed illustration of the methods applied to elicit the speech styles in the sociolinguistic interview. The contextual styles and their description are also to be found in detail in Labov (1972b: 79ff.). A German translation of the isolation of contextual styles is also to be found in Dittmar and Rieck (1976).

prestige varieties to a high degree such as the absence of /r/ and the use of the [ɪn] variant.<sup>175</sup> Put in another way this means that the determined variants of a variable can function as indicators of either formality or informality so that any given presence of a certain variant theoretically allows an immediate statement concerning the formality or informality of the applied speech style.

Figure 7 below functions to sum up what has been explicated so far. As can be seen, there are two characteristic features by means of which ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ can be refined: (1) the degree of self-monitoring that is high with formal and low with informal styles and (2) the relative frequencies of prestige and non-prestige varieties that are connected to the grade of self-monitoring. Based on the studies of speaker variation within social dialectology, phonological prestige and non-prestige varieties can be determined as has been done here for the variables (ng) and (r). The figure also emphasizes the existence of a continuum of linguistic styles represented by word list style, reading style, careful speech and casual style which show gradations in their characteristic formality and consequently in their frequency of featuring prestige or non-prestige varieties. At first sight and in a formal semantic understanding of the terms, ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ seem to represent two mutually exclusive terms, for something that is (defined as) formal cannot be informal at the same time. But when different types of situations are considered and the appropriate speech styles used within them, we do find relevant gradations in formality and informality (as mirrored in the styles defined in social dialectology). Thus, with respect to speech style, the complementary character of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ that is semantically prominent on the lexical level is weakened on the level of style. Accordingly, they are two extremes on a linguistic continuum of styles which allows in-between forms of styles that are more or less formal or informal in character.<sup>176</sup> Levels of formality and informality are then expressed linguistically in relative frequencies of phonological variants, i. e. respective prestige or non-prestige varieties.

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<sup>175</sup> The use of ‘to a high degree’ in this connection is chosen to indicate that the occurrence of prestige varieties is not exclusively restricted to formal styles and that, likewise, the occurrence of non-prestige varieties is not only restricted to informal styles. The difference between the two styles lies in the general frequency of their occurrence. That is, a formal style will entail comparatively more prestige varieties than an informal style will. Likewise, an informal style will contain comparatively more non-prestige varieties than a formal style will. This is also reflected in the diverse studies on phonological variation within social dialectology. The differences between the styles in this respect are therefore not absolute ones.

It should also be noted that the study of speaker variation by means of linguistic variables is not limited to phonological variables as presented here. The variables studied and the determined prestige and non-prestige varieties can be of diverse character: phonological, grammatical, lexical.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. reading style and careful speech as linguistic forms located between the two extremes word list style and casual style.

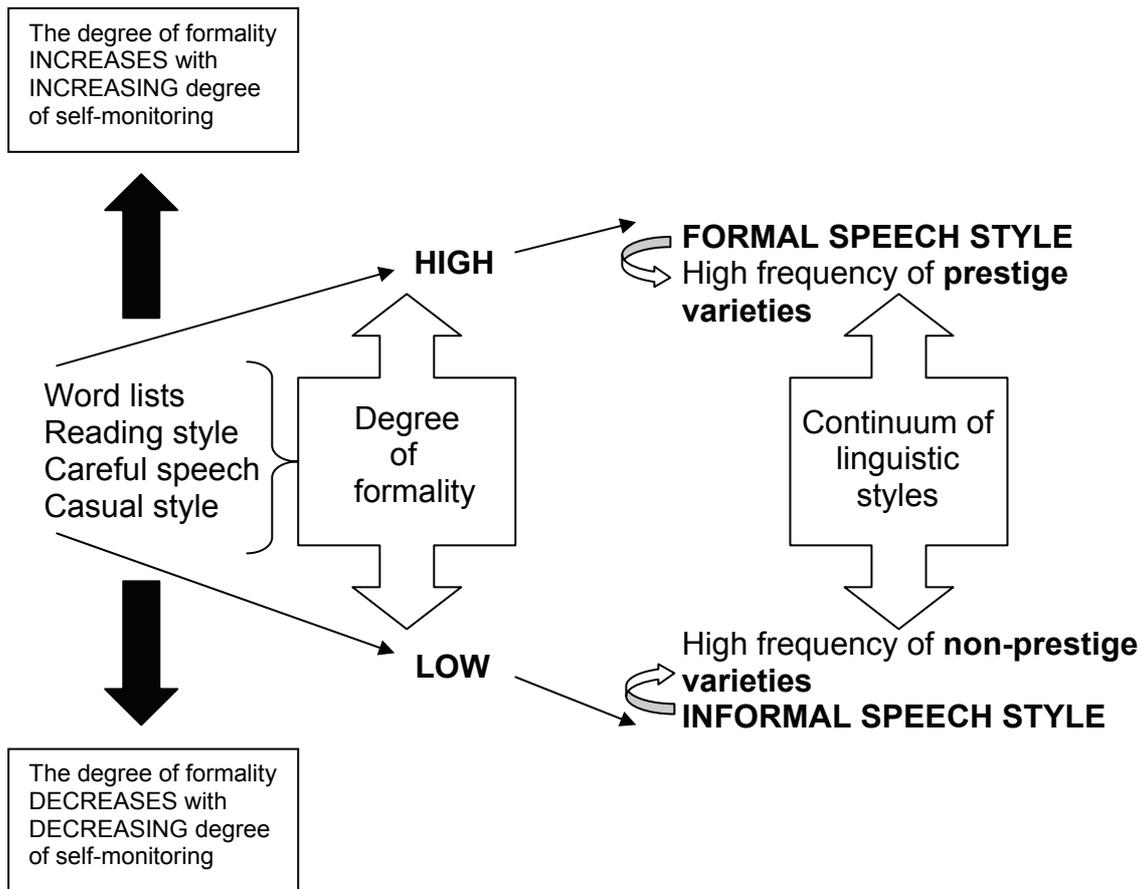


Figure 7: Self-monitoring and use of speech style in social dialectology

The following is a short overview summarizing the main aspects of the foregoing discussion of linguistic formality and informality assessed within social dialectology.<sup>177</sup>

**At a glance**

**SOCIAL DIALECTOLOGY**

**Formal style:**

- High grade of self-monitoring
- High frequency of prestige varieties

**Informal style:**

- Low grade of self-monitoring
- High frequency of non-prestige varieties

<sup>177</sup> Each of the following levels of distinction in order to determine the dimensions of formal and informal speech styles will be concluded, too with a relevant overview of the main aspects that were discussed.

It is worth making one final remark: This approach to speaker variation does not only help to define the characteristics of formality and informality on the basis of self-monitoring in the speaking process. It demonstrates something more fundamental. Although the dominant aim within social dialectology is not to show a formal connection between the situation and the style used in this situation, it can, in fact, illustrate this connection and help to concretize situational variation. Thus, what has been stated in theory above about the relationship of the character of the situation and the character of the speech style is shown by the concrete studies of speaker variation in social dialectology. Accordingly, the nature of the speech situation, constituted by the overall context of the sociolinguistic interview and induced by the different interview techniques, finds its linguistic expression in respective linguistic styles which are characterized by differential degrees of prestige and non-prestige varieties.

In fact, the interview situation as such incorporates an inherent formality here resulting from the presence of the observer and the knowledge of being observed on the part of the informants. This formality is reflected in the observer's paradox: The knowledge of observation in a given situational context will lead the informants to monitor their speech to a higher degree than they would usually do under normal unobserved conditions in this context.<sup>178</sup>

Interview contexts, in general, imply an inherent formality simply because they are part of diverse institutional procedures within the public, institutional sphere. The difference of these interviews to the sociolinguistic interview lies in their dominant function: The former – mass media interviews, job interviews, patient interviews – elicit speech with the underlying aim of informing or entertaining an audience, testing an informant's qualification for a job, or inquiring about a patient's mental and physical state of health. The latter elicit speech with the aim of studying the nature of this speech on diverse linguistic levels. Although the sociolinguistic interview can take place outside of a concrete institutional setting, it is nevertheless institutional, and therefore highly formal, in character due to the presence of the observer.

### The syntactic level: situational style and structural complexity

Apart from those on the lexical level of concrete word choice, our intuitive ideas about linguistic formality and informality certainly concern differences in grammatical structure. Thus, the question to be treated here concerns the structural arrangement of linguistic contents on the level of syntax. That is, can we say anything about the surface complexity of syntactic structures in formal and informal speech styles? Do situational styles differ in this respect so

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<sup>178</sup> Labov's interview technique correspondingly featured specific elements in order to overcome the observer's paradox and to elicit what he termed 'casual style' – speech natural in character without the effects of observation and therefore unmonitored and spontaneous (cf. Labov 1972b: 85ff.).

that there is a tendency towards peculiar complex or less complex sentence structures which typically define these styles and distinguish the one from the other?

It was discussed above that situational styles may be characterized syntactically by a style-specific type of sentence structure. Thus, whereas informal styles are likely to exhibit syntactic coordination, formal styles will prefer subordination of sentences. That is to say that the structural differences between formal and informal styles are not absolute in character in that subordination of sentences is not exclusively restricted to the former and that, likewise, coordination of sentences is not confined to the latter alone. Rather, formal and informal styles can be expected to show a syntactic preference structure – either subordination or coordination – which is commonly used by these styles and is regarded as the normal means for transferring linguistic contents into grammatical structure within each type of style. Thus, it will be more normal for formal styles to include hypotaxis and more normal for informal styles to feature parataxis. Nevertheless, each style may principally also include sentence structures typically associated with the other one. The difference between formal and informal styles in this respect then is one of quantity, not quality. Situational styles consequently may be assumed to differ in the relative frequency with which they make use of subordination and/or coordination. Keeping this in mind, the central, though only theoretical, difference between formal and informal styles, nevertheless, will then be one of perceived comparatively structural complexity versus structural simplicity and thus it will be one of relative syntactic formality or informality, to use the two central terms of discussion here. Simply put, intuitively, we would expect formal styles to be more complex in structure than informal styles and vice versa thus drawing a natural connection between ‘formality’ and ‘complexity’ as well as ‘informality’ and ‘non-complexity’.

Before leaving the pure hypothetical level and going into more detail, there are, in fact, two problems arising in connection with the discussion of syntactic complexity/non-complexity of situational styles which deserve to be treated at this point.

The first problem concerns whether it is appropriate at all to speak of ‘sentence structure’ in connection with *oral* communication. Referring to the existence of sentences as basic structural units in oral communication, Biber et al. (1999: 10) point out that “the very notion of a sentence in conversation is problematic” and that “the ‘sentence’ is a notion that is not applicable to spoken language.” The authors base their argument on the very nature of conversation, i.e. spoken language in general. The point is that the speaker may indicate structural units by specific ways of intonation, i.e. rising or falling, and deliberate speech pauses, but the structural units intended by the speaker are generally far less clear and detectable than in written language where the author’s structuring of textual contents is visible in his or her use of specific punctuation marks. In spoken language, however, punctuation marks such as final periods or question marks are characteristically simply missing – unless they are dictated for whatever reasons. As Biber et al. (1999: 1039) point out, “[i]n reality,

conversation has no generally recognizable sentence-delimiting marks such as the initial capital and final period of written language” and thus it is problematic to speak of the ‘sentence’ as the basic structural unit also within spoken language.

The lack of punctuation marks is then a concrete difficulty that the researcher is confronted and has to cope with when transcribing conversation. Final transcripts of naturally occurring conversation do, in fact, contain sentence-final punctuation marks but their insertion is the result of a partly intuitive and speculative process of detecting such structural units based on respective linguistic cues provided by the speaker.

Moreover, it is not only the formal locating of punctuation marks within conversation that is problematic. Natural conversations are characterized by typical performance phenomena of dysfluency and error (cf. Biber et al., 1999: 1052ff.). The detection and determination of formal structural units within spontaneous conversation is additionally complicated by the occurrence of frequent linguistic features such as hesitations, false starts, or repetitions. Based on the spontaneous application of speech, conversations are generally subject to many performance errors which have to be repaired by the speaker (or by other speakers) in order to keep the flow of conversation and to avoid its breakdown. These performance features define the character of conversation and contribute to the general problem of formally speaking of ‘sentences’ when it comes to determine the structural units of conversation. In written language, the sentence is a structural unit that is associated with a sense of (structural) completeness. Due to the mentioned performance errors this sense of completeness can be fundamentally missing in spontaneous conversation where possible structural units are often not completed initially.

A second problem in this connection refers to the grade of structural complexity generally possible in spoken language, i.e. spontaneous conversation. It is assumed above that formal and informal speech styles differ from each other on the basis of their underlying grade of structural complexity, with formal styles showing an expected higher grade of complexity than informal ones do. The problem again concerns the ultimate nature of (spontaneous) conversation. The central question is whether speech styles – independent of whether they are formal or informal – can move beyond a certain level of structural complexity at all. The concrete possibilities of conversation in this respect are actually limited: High structural complexity in the form of linguistic subordination necessarily implies a certain amount of time for pre-planning conversational contents. Effective, spontaneous everyday conversation, however, requires that extended pre-planning does not take place in order to avoid unusual speech pauses and thus to prevent from a risk of a breakdown of conversation. In practice then, there is a constant interactive pressure to talk, to keep the flow of conversation, and consequently to avoid long pauses such as those that would result from pre-planning. To guarantee the undisturbed flow of conversation, pre-planning is therefore necessarily limited. Comparing the situational characteristics of newspaper language and conversation, also Biber

et al. (1999: 9) emphasize the little opportunity for pre-planning in conversation as such where conversational contents have to be produced ‘online’, i.e. ad hoc in the course of the ongoing conversation.<sup>179</sup> As the authors point out, “[s]ituationally, conversations are very similar in their production circumstances, [...]. For example, all conversations are [...] produced spontaneously, with the words and grammatical organization being assembled on the spot as the conversation unfolds” (Biber et al., 1999: 23). This stated similarity between conversations then can provide an answer to the initially posed question concerning the possible grade of structural complexity in spontaneous everyday conversation. That is, it seems to support an argument against high structural complexity in formal speech styles as based on the general requirement of linguistic spontaneity in conversation as such.

In their research on conversational structure, Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974), though they do not explicitly state it, have also pointed to the significance of linguistic spontaneity for the workings of turn-taking in conversation. According to the authors, one typical feature of conversation is that possible gaps in turn-taking, i.e. in the transitions from a speaker’s turn to another speaker’s turn, are characteristically minimized. Consecutive turns are commonly immediately taken up by the speakers to a conversation (cf. Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson, 1974: 700f.). This interactive spontaneity in turn-taking guarantees the constant, uninterrupted flow of conversation. Spontaneity, however, is not only important between the turns of two different speakers. Also within the conversational turn of a single speaker linguistic spontaneity is needed because every longer pause taken by a speaker also always carries the potential risk of losing the floor, i.e. the current right to speak in conversation.

To sum up the argument, even in formal styles of speech within everyday conversation a certain degree of linguistic spontaneity can be expected as it is expected from conversation in general and this will naturally limit the possible grade of allowed structural complexity.

If we leave the level of spontaneous everyday conversation, however, the conditions for linguistic production may be somewhat different. Thus, on the institutional level we may find formal styles, for example, in connection with prepared speeches where we can assume that a planning process of linguistic contents has preceded the actual making of the speech in public. The result may be a higher level of complexity than in a formal style featured in spontaneous everyday conversation where, as was argued, the possibility for careful consideration of linguistic contents is characteristically missing due to the formal requirement of spontaneity. As prepared speeches usually consist in the reading out of written-down language – language which has been carefully prepared for being reproduced in public – a characteristically higher degree of structural complexity here, in fact, may be not an unusual expectation but rather the

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<sup>179</sup> Within research into register variation the possibility to pre-plan linguistic contents is defined as one situational parameter among other ones that have a direct impact on the distribution of linguistic features in different registers. Accordingly, the overall linguistic nature of different registers is always the result of the characteristics of the situational context in which they are used as determined by the parameters of, for example, mode (spoken/written), interactiveness, domain, communicative purpose, topic, and the mentioned production circumstances of online versus careful production of linguistic contents. (See, for example, Biber et al., 1999: 5, 15 for the different situational characteristics).

general rule. Staying on the institutional level, this may be again different when the focus is on spontaneous speeches where the reduced possibility of pre-planning of what is to be said can be expected as a general rule just as it is expected in spontaneous everyday conversation.<sup>180</sup>

This last point of the assumed difference between the structural complexity of formal styles on the private level of everyday conversation and on the institutional level of public speeches will be taken up again in the following discussion of the possible linguistic means of structural complexity offered by research into register variation. The central question is then whether it is possible to leave the hypothetical level and to describe in more detail what is meant by ‘structural complexity’ via determining concrete and ideally characteristically occurring linguistic features of syntactic formality and informality. In fact, it is Biber’s (2001) recent work on register variation that enables the researcher – at least partly – to leave the pure intuitive level of explaining syntactic structure and to reveal possible structural properties of formal and informal speech styles. In his article Biber (2001) investigates the overall syntactic complexity of different spoken and written registers on the basis of the occurrence and characteristic distribution of a variety of linguistic features that are associated with either reduced or increased linguistic complexity.<sup>181</sup> As other studies of register variation have shown, spoken and written registers and their individual sub-registers<sup>182</sup> do not show absolute differences in the linguistic features generating their structural complexity. Rather registers characteristically differ in their relative frequency with which they use linguistic features. The linguistic nature of different registers is defined by their co-occurrence features, i.e. features which occur together in texts that can be ascribed to their superordinate registers. Registers are characterized and can be distinguished on the basis of their co-occurrence patterns. Similarly, the structural complexity of different spoken and written registers is determined by the frequency with which the features that are either associated with reduced or increased complexity occur in these registers. Biber’s (2001) approach to structural complexity draws on the factors or dimensions respectively defined in his earlier studies on register variation (cf. Biber, 1988). The ideal model of structural complexity according to Biber (2001) is a five-dimensional model and the studied registers show a particular, that is register-specific, distribution of the complexity features on each of the five dimensions. The nature of a register with respect to its overall structural complexity is then constituted by the

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<sup>180</sup> Prepared and spontaneous speeches are also two spoken sub-registers that Biber (1988) is concerned with in his study of the linguistic co-occurrence features in and across different spoken and written registers. Prepared speeches include, for example, university lectures, final statements in court cases, political speeches or sermons. Examples of spontaneous speeches, on the other hand, are dinner speech or speeches held in the House of Commons (cf. Biber, 1988: 69). As is argued here, Biber (1988: 71) points out that “[s]pontaneous and planned speeches differ in the amount of time permitted for production, [...]” On planning see also *The cognitive-psychological level: situational style and speech planning* below.

<sup>181</sup> See table 5 below or Biber (2001: 219) for a complete list of these features.

<sup>182</sup> The actual registers chosen for analysis belonging to the more generally determined registers of spoken and written language such as conversations, speeches, interviews, letters, or official documents.

dimension scores of this register for each dimension as illustrated in figure 8 below for the spoken registers focused on by Biber (2001).

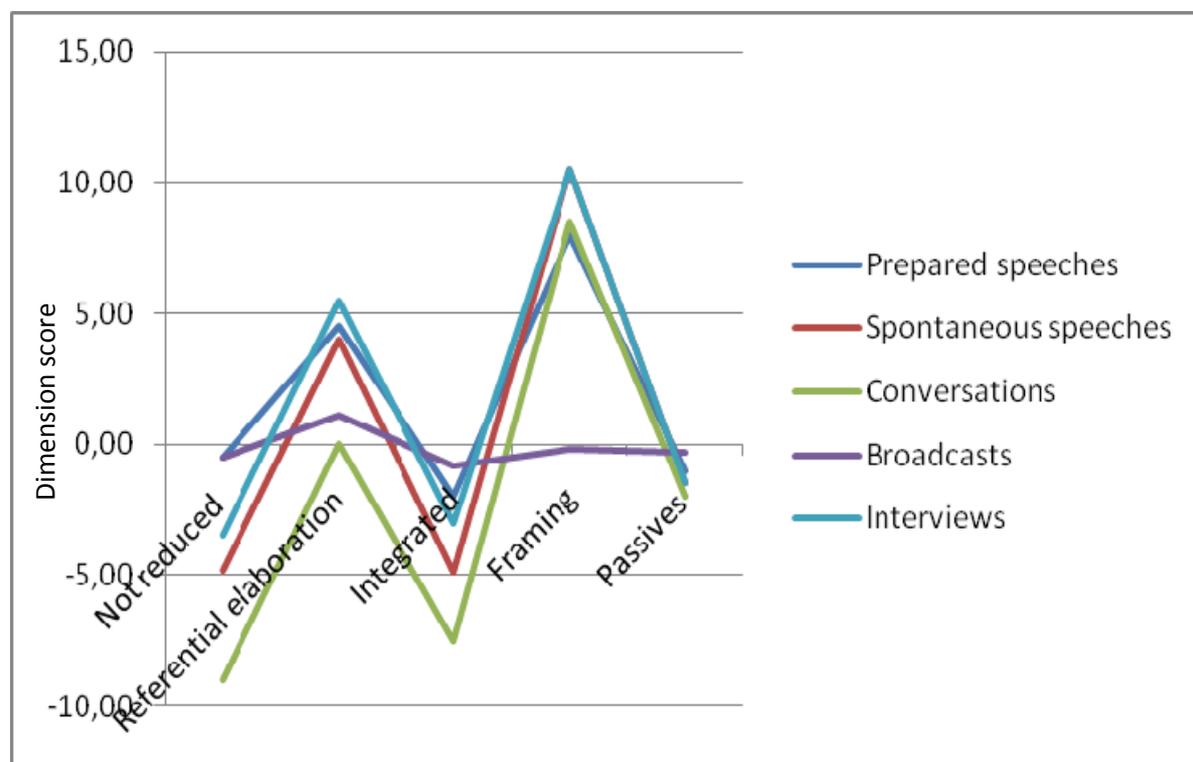


Figure 8: Complexity dimension scores for five spoken registers according to Biber (2001)<sup>183</sup>

Following his earlier studies on register variation, the five complexity dimensions are (1) *Reduced Structure and Specificity*, (2) *Structural Elaboration of Reference*, (3) *Integrated Structure*, (4) “*Framing*” *Structural Elaboration*, and (5) *Passive Constructions* (cf. Biber, 2001: 227ff.).

Dimension (1) *Reduced Structure and Specificity* denotes the existing grade of structural elaboration and specificity in a register. Thus, is a register characterized by an elaborated structure or rather by a reduced structure with respect to a reduction in overall structural elaboration and specificity? The linguistic features determining this dimension (and therefore the complexity of a register with respect to this dimension) include *that*-deletions and contractions for the level of structural reduction, use of the pro-form *do*, use of the pronoun *it* and demonstrative pronouns for the expression of less specified reference, and clause coordination for an existing fragmented structure. All the features are associated with a reduced linguistic complexity according to Biber (2001).

Dimension (2) *Structural Elaboration of Reference* corresponds to the third dimension (*Explicit versus Situation-Dependent Reference*) defined in the 1988 analysis of register

<sup>183</sup> Taken over and adapted from Biber (2001: 236).

variation by the same author and indicates a register's level of referential specificity. That is, the speaker or writer can choose how much information (s)he provides about the identity of the referents that are focused on. Either (s)he can explicitly identify referents or provide elaborating details about (the identity of) these referents, or (s)he can decide simply not to do so. In the latter case, referential identity is more dependent on the situational context. Grammatically, (the level of) referential elaboration is expressed in the application of particular dependent clauses which can be used to specify and elaborate the identity of referents, such as the different types of relative clauses presented by Biber (2001).

According to Biber (2001: 233), written registers with an informational purpose frequently use integrative features and are thus characterized by their *Integrated Structure*, Biber's third complexity dimension.<sup>184</sup> With linguistic features such as prepositional phrases and noun-noun sequences<sup>185</sup> authors can create a high amount of information packed into their texts on the level of information structure. Biber calls this an "extremely dense use of [...] [linguistic] features in written informational registers" (2001: 233) which result into "a relatively dense integration of information in a text" (2001: 223). To this dimension also belongs the grade of lexical specificity, i.e. the use of long words and diversified vocabulary which, according to Biber, "reflect a careful, precise word choice" (Biber, 2001: 223).

As Dimension (2), dimension (4) "*Framing*" *Structural Elaboration* makes use of dependent clauses, though with a difference in syntactic (and communicative) function. Here, structural elaboration via dependent clauses is used in order to justify the expression of personal attitudes and opinions in more personal and attitudinal registers such as conversation. Accordingly, dependent clauses as 'framing' devices can be said to 'frame' these opinions syntactically (and metaphorically) in such registers (cf. Biber, 2001: 233/234).

The last dimension *Passive Constructions* corresponds to the fifth dimension in the 1988 analysis (*Abstract versus Non-Abstract Information*) and includes the use of agentless passives and *by*-passives. The presentation of information via passive structures can be used to express a minor importance of the agent connected to an action that is reported in a register.

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<sup>184</sup> Respective registers include press reportage, official documents, academic prose, biographies constituting informational narrative, as well as professional letters as written interaction with an informational purpose (to be distinguished from personal letters). (Cf. Biber, 2001: 233).

The informational purpose ascribed to registers in the studies into register variation corresponds to the idea of the communicative function of information (versus entertainment) used in this work in connection with the medium television which includes the use of function-specific linguistic features.

<sup>185</sup> E.g. *census questions*, *family census* (cf. Biber, 2001: 233).

Features associated with reduced complexity	
<b>Structural reduction</b>	<i>that</i> deletions contractions
<b>Less specified reference</b>	pro-verb DO pronoun IT demonstrative pronouns
<b>Fragmented structure</b>	clause coordination
Features associated with increased complexity	
<b>Integrated structure</b>	Nouns prepositions attributive adjectives nominalizations phrasal coordination
<b>Lexical specificity</b>	word length type / token ratio
<b>Passive constructions</b>	agentless passives <i>by</i> -passives
<b>Dependent clauses</b>	
<b>Structural elaboration of reference –     postnominal modifiers</b>	<i>wh</i> -relative clauses on subject position <i>wh</i> -relative clauses on object position 'pied piping' relative clauses <i>that</i> relative clauses on object position <i>that</i> relative clauses on subject position
<b>Attitudinal clauses</b>	sentence relatives
<b>Complement clauses</b>	<i>wh</i> clauses <i>that</i> complement clauses to verbs <i>that</i> complement clauses to adjectives infinitives
<b>Adverbial clauses</b>	conditional adverbial subordination causative adverbial subordination concessive adverbial subordination other adverbial subordination
<b>Participial clauses</b>	present participial postnominal clauses past participial postnominal clauses present participial adverbial clauses past participial adverbial clauses

Table 5: The surface features associated with reduced/increased linguistic complexity according to Biber (2001)<sup>186</sup>

Depending on the influence of the situational parameters which were mentioned above, different spoken and written registers will score differently on these dimensions with respect to their frequency of using respective complexity features thus showing the referred to

<sup>186</sup> Taken over and adapted from Biber (2001: 219).

register-specific patterns of linguistic complexity/non-complexity. As figure 8 illustrates, the complexity profiles of the studied registers reveal that individual registers, depending on how high or low they score on a single dimension, can be relatively complex or non-complex with regard to this dimension, or, as Biber (2001: 235) puts it, “[...] no register is consistently complex with respect to all dimensions.” Interestingly, the spoken registers – except for broadcasts – show similar complexity profiles, i.e. a similar, though not identical, distribution of linguistic features on each of the five complexity dimensions. Thus, as can be seen for the spoken registers, there are no absolute differences as concerns the use linguistic features but there is only variation with respect to the general frequencies with which these features are used in different registers. Taking into consideration the influence of situational characteristics on linguistic, i.e. register, variation, similar complexity profiles then also mirror similar context conditions for (the majority of) the spoken registers.

Although Biber’s (2001) focus is not on the difference between linguistic formality and informality, his five-dimensional model of discourse complexity is indeed helpful for a refinement of the linguistic characteristics of formal and informal speech styles on the level of structural complexity. Of interest in this connection are therefore only the spoken registers dealt with by Biber (2001) and their complexity profiles.<sup>187</sup>

The discussion of situational styles and their linguistic characteristics refers to the occurrence of these styles in (spontaneous) everyday conversation. It was discussed above that a reduced possibility for pre-planning linguistic contents in spontaneous everyday conversation will limit the possible degree of overall structural complexity in both informal *and* formal styles. It was also emphasized that this may be different when the focus of interest is not any longer on spontaneous everyday conversation but on language use on the institutional level where we can find formal styles in connection with prepared speeches that may allow a characteristically higher degree of pre-planning – and therefore also a higher degree of overall structural complexity – than those in everyday conversation. It was furthermore argued that in speeches held spontaneously the reverse might be again the case: a reduced level of structural complexity as the underlying situational condition of spontaneity mirrors that of everyday conversation and limits the degree of structural complexity.

In fact, Biber’s (2001) five-dimensional model of discourse complexity, as based on the findings of his earlier studies into register variation, can help to concretize what has been hypothesized here for the levels of structural complexity in different registers and, most importantly, it can illustrate relevant complexity features by which these registers are characterized. Among the registers studied by Biber (2001) for their structural complexity are also conversations and prepared as well as spontaneous speeches, and these are exactly the registers of interest here for the current purpose of defining the complexity character of

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<sup>187</sup> For a detailed characterization of the complexity profiles of both the studied spoken and written registers see Biber (2001: 235ff.).

formal and informal styles. As Biber (2001) does not directly, i.e. explicitly, consider the linguistic features of situational styles as such, it is not possible to state anything concrete about their levels of structural complexity. The author, however, focuses on conversation and therefore also indirectly on formal and informal styles as featured in everyday conversation. The complexity profile he presents for conversation as such then also covers both informal and formal styles of speech and reveals respective linguistic features shared by both types of situational style.

Figure 8 shows the complexity profiles of conversation, prepared and spontaneous speeches. As can be seen, their complexity profiles are similar but yet different with respect to the extent of complexity present. In other words, the three registers make use of the same linguistic features but they differ in the frequency with which these features are used. Accordingly, there is a distinction in the discourse complexity between the registers with conversation being the least complex of the registers followed by spontaneous speeches and finally by prepared speeches which are slightly more complex than spontaneous speeches on some of the dimensions. The table illustrates that the three registers show nearly the same extent of structural complexity on the two dimensions of passive constructions and framing structural elaboration. More profound, though slight, differences in the extent of structural complexity are to be found on the remaining three complexity dimensions. As Biber points out, the differences in the extent of complexity between the spoken registers are the result of the influence of the situational parameters of that register (cf. Biber, 2001: 237).

To concretize the results, it can be stated in conclusion that (1) Biber (2001), drawing on his 1988 analysis of register variation, presents concrete linguistic features that are associated with either reduced or increased complexity. The features he defines for complexity/non-complexity can be used to support what has been initially stated about the assumed level of structural complexity in situational styles. It was argued that a low level of structural complexity will be reflected in a general tendency towards coordination of sentence constituents, whereas a characteristically higher level of structural complexity will be expressed in a tendency towards subordination. The former was determined to be the case for informal styles and the latter was defined as a typical feature of formal styles. Listing diverse complexity features, Biber (2001), in fact, also makes a formal connection between levels of perceived structural complexity and their respective linguistic expressions of syntactic coordination versus subordination: Clause coordination – defined as *fragmented structure* – is a linguistic feature associated with reduced complexity according to Biber, while subordination, represented by the various types of dependent clauses listed, is explicitly referred to as a feature associated with increased complexity (cf. Biber, 2001: 219).

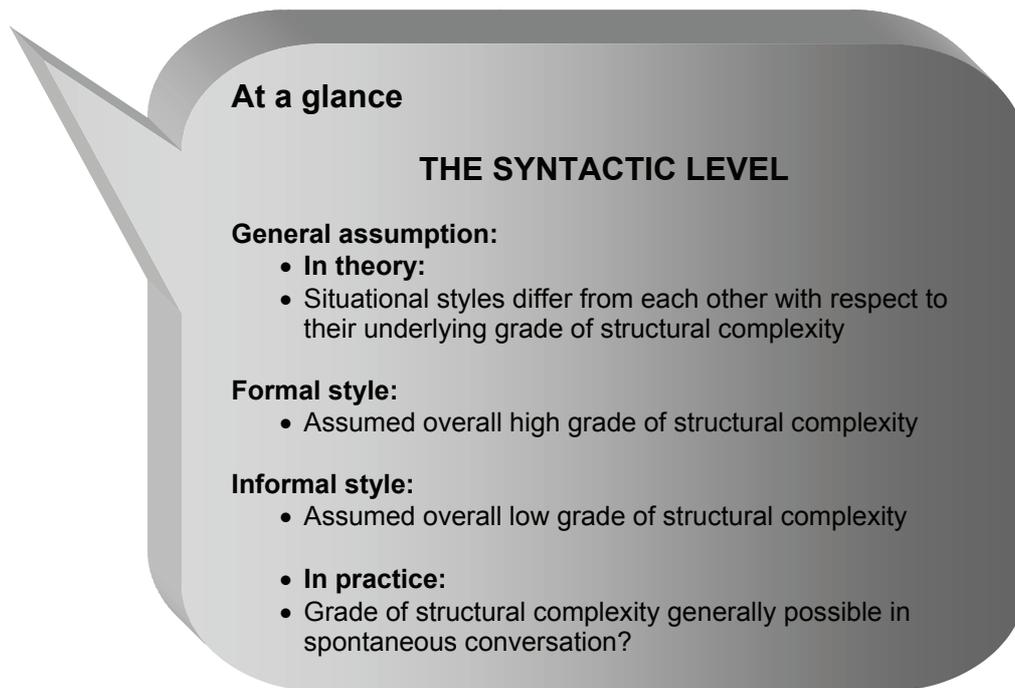
It was also pointed out above that the extent of overall structural complexity will be limited in conversation as such based on the underlying requirement of spontaneity and the connected reduction in the possibility to pre-plan linguistic contents. This condition, as was

argued, will also apply to formal styles. This theoretical consideration is reflected in the complexity profile for conversation presented by Biber (2001). As can be seen, conversation is non-complex on the dimension of *Reduced Structure and Specificity*. Conversation permits the use of reduced structures as represented by the respective linguistic features of reduced complexity. As Biber (2001: 231) explains, the results of conversation for this dimension are attributable to the production circumstances – the demands of on-line production which do not allow a careful consideration and thus a prior planning of linguistic contents. Accordingly, conversation shows a high negative score on this dimension. If, additionally, the scores of spontaneous and prepared speeches for this dimension are considered, it can be seen that the results also here mirror what has been hypothesized above concerning the expected levels of structural complexity in prepared and spontaneous speeches in comparison with conversation. Thus, prepared speeches, according to Biber (2001: 231/232) “are less influenced by the production circumstances due to the effect of prior planning, and so they show relatively few reduced forms” and therefore a higher degree of structural complexity on this dimension than conversations and spontaneous speeches. The structural complexity of the latter on this dimension lies between that of prepared speeches and conversation featuring a moderate negative score. According to Biber (2001: 231) this is the case because spontaneous speeches are subject to the same production circumstances as conversations in being “similarly influenced by on-line production,” which results in a structural similarity between the two registers. Spontaneous speeches, however, differ from conversations with regard to their communicative purpose in that they are much more information-oriented and therefore show a less frequent use of reduced forms (cf. Biber, 2001: 231). This draws them structurally nearer to prepared speeches in character.

Reconsidering the results for all three spoken registers, one thing is striking and should be noted in this connection: the three registers all show negative scores for this dimension on which high negative scores indicate a highly reduced structure while high positive scores denote a high level of structural elaboration. Biber (2001: 237) ascribes a non-complexity for this dimension to all the spoken registers which thus permit the use of reduced structures with the lowest frequency in prepared speeches, a moderate frequency in spontaneous speeches and a high frequency in conversations. This shows that even though prepared speeches leave room for prior planning of linguistic contents, their structural complexity in this respect is, after all, not as high as might have been initially expected. The overall frequency of using reduced structures is low in comparison with the other spoken registers, but not in comparison with the written registers focused on which all but one show positive scores on this complexity dimension (cf. Biber, 2001: 236).

As was indicated, a register’s level of structural complexity may be high on one dimension but low on another dimension. Accordingly, the complexity profile for conversation – the register of central interest – reveals that conversation is complex on some dimensions and

non-complex on others which is based on the situational characteristics or parameters respectively referred to by Biber and illustrated above. The same is true for the other spoken registers (and the written registers as well). Differential influence of situational parameters on a register leads to varying complexity profiles comprised of the five complexity dimensions and the distribution of particular linguistic features on these dimensions.



**At a glance**

**THE SYNTACTIC LEVEL**

**General assumption:**

- **In theory:**
- Situational styles differ from each other with respect to their underlying grade of structural complexity

**Formal style:**

- Assumed overall high grade of structural complexity

**Informal style:**

- Assumed overall low grade of structural complexity

- **In practice:**
- Grade of structural complexity generally possible in spontaneous conversation?

### The lexical level: situational style and word choice

In his discussion of the five styles of English Joos (1967) argues that each style is characterized by certain style-specific lexical items by means of which a style can be identified by the hearer. These lexical markers – i.e. labels – of style are correspondingly termed “code-labels” by the author and, following Joos, each of the speech styles he defines thus has its own typical code-labels (cf. Joos, 1967: 27). The auxiliary *may*, for example, functions as typical code-label for Joos’ *formal style*.<sup>188</sup> Used in utterances such as ‘May I help you?’ as presented by Joos (1967: 36), *may* then serves to identify the question as an instance of formal speech: “The formal code-[label] inform[s] each hearer that he is in a formal frame [of interaction] [...]” (1967: 36).

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<sup>188</sup> Cf. Joos (1967: 36) and Joos (1970 [1959]: 190): “The leading code-label of formal American English seems to be the word *may* [...]”

As is the case with *formal style*, also *consultative style* and *casual style*<sup>189</sup> – the two colloquial styles according to Joos (1967) – show particular code-labels by means of which the speaker determines the character of the communicative frame for the hearer as informal. Respective casual code-labels include “an arbitrary list of [conventional] formulas, all very stable, which are learned individually and used to identify the style for the hearer’s convenience” (Joos, 1967: 27). According to Joos (1967: 27/28) one such typical code-label conventionally used in casual style includes the expression ‘Come on!’ addressing the relational status of the interlocutors as friends – the typical interactants within casual style.<sup>190</sup>

On the lexical level, *casual style* is furthermore characterized by the use of slang (cf. Joos, 1967: 23ff.). (It should be noted though that slang terms do not have an actual status as code-labels according to Joos). Slang is defined by Joos (1967: 23/24) not structurally with regard to a high degree of linguistic informality and probable ungrammaticality (resulting in popular views of slang as ‘bad language’) but more specifically with respect to its inherent social function of signalling the high degree of familiarity between the interlocutors in *casual style* which admits a shared knowledge and interpretation of slang meanings. Consequently, when slang is applied, “[...] the addressee, an insider, will understand what not everybody would be able to decipher” (Joos, 1967: 24/25). Socially, slang in *casual style* thus serves to distinguish ‘insiders’ from ‘outsiders’, the latter being language users whose lack of familiarity with the ‘insiders’ results in a corresponding lack of that special kind of background knowledge characterizing ‘insiders’ which includes the mentioned knowledge of specific slang terms and their correct interpretation.<sup>191</sup>

The consultative code-labels described by Joos are of twofold character. On the one hand, *consultative style* typically features lexical items that are characteristically avoided in *formal style*: (1) those that are indefinite, i.e. less specific in nature, such as *thing* instead of the more precise “*item, plan, problem, event, etc.*” (which would be preferred in *formal style*) and (2) those items that carry additional notions of informality such as “*or so*” and “*about*” in contrast to “*approximately*,” which is defined as “a formal word” by Joos. (Cf. Joos, 1967: 28).

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<sup>189</sup> Italics are used to indicate the names of the styles as established and used exclusively by Joos (1967).

<sup>190</sup> Used in a directive sense ‘Come on!’ can mean “anything from ‘Consider yourself among friends’ to ‘You’re invited’; while ‘Come on, cheer up!’ means nothing but ‘Cheer up because you’re among friends’” (Joos, 1967: 28). Joos (1967: 28) defines ‘Come on!’ as “one of the commonest” code-labels of casual style.

<sup>191</sup> The notion of ‘insider’ as used by Joos here should be understood more generally as the degree of familiarity between the participants to a conversation whose (shared) knowledge/information status marks them as ‘insiders’ (and the lack of which marks them as ‘outsiders’). It does rather not specifically denote a speaker’s social and communicative status within a group of speakers, i.e. within a social network. It is probably for this reason that Joos also explicitly excludes notions of register – as forms of group-specific talk including group-specific words incorporating group-specific, i.e. specialized, meanings – from his definition of slang: “‘leather’ is not slang but thieves’ cant for ‘wallet’” (1967: 24). Joos’ definition of slang follows the one given in *Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 1953), edited by Neilson, William H. et al.: “[l]anguage comprising certain widely current but usually ephemeral terms (especially coined or clipped words, or words used in special senses, or phrases, usually metaphors or similes) having a forced, fantastic, or grotesque meaning, or exhibiting eccentric or extravagant humor or fancy” (quoted in Joos, 1967: 24).

On the other hand, *consultative style* shows specific discourse markers consisting in speakers' backchanneling in conversation ("yes, yeah, unhunh, that's right, oh, I see, yes I know," Joos, 1967: 28). In discourse studies, the mutual application of such minimal responses has been described as serving the function of supporting the interactive flow of conversation and signalling mutual attentiveness and cooperation during the conversational process (cf. women's conversational styles in language and gender research).

As initially stated, the disadvantage of Joos' (1967) description of the styles of English is the general lack of detailed description and explanation of the features determining the different styles he assumes. In fact, this also applies to the aforementioned code-labels. Thus, *why* exactly a certain code-label is of particular importance for one style while another one is so specifically for another style remains generally unanswered. His ascriptions then are highly intuitive in character and therefore speculative to a high degree.

Trying to leave the pure intuitive level in search for a more precise, i.e. study-based, determination of lexical formality/informality though seems to be far from easy. The actual specification of formality and informality on the lexical level turns out to be problematic in practice and cannot, in fact, be supported by any concrete studies concerned directly with the choice of words in formal versus informal speech situations and their corresponding formal or informal stylistic varieties. Thus, we are left here, similar to Joos, with our intuitive notions about lexical formality and informality and hence we have to rely on our common assumptions and expectations once formed in socialization processes guiding us in our decisions about what is appropriate lexically and what is not in different types of speech situations.

These expectations concerning correct word choice in situational styles can be described in terms of preference structure which has also been assumed above in connection with typically expected syntactic structures underlying formal and informal stylistic varieties. That is, the lexical difference between formal and informal speech styles is determined on the basis of characteristic, style-specific, i.e. preferred lexical items. In formal styles of speech, preferred, or unmarked, lexical items are those items that are typically associated with linguistic formality. Likewise, in informal speech styles, preferred lexical items are those items that are typically associated with linguistic informality. With reference to the linguistic examples provided earlier, the former will prefer 'intoxicated' while the latter will rather prefer 'drunk'. In general, those items that are preferred in formal styles will not be preferred in informal styles and vice versa. The application of linguistically marked vocabulary in either or the other speech style will usually be noticed and treated respectively as deviating from the social norm of what is commonly regarded as linguistically appropriate in a specific communicative context. Yet, what is actually regarded as appropriately formal or informal linguistically in a concrete case of conversation is also always a matter of a speaker's individual acknowledgement of what is appropriate and what is not in a given speech situation and thus

what may be acknowledged by one speaker as fitting the (linguistic) demands of the communicative context may not be acknowledged in the same way by another speaker. Nevertheless, it seems justified to assume that communicatively competent speakers of the same speech community will have the same general assumptions about lexical expressions and their degree of formality/informality and appropriateness in different communicative contexts and they will consequently behave in a similar manner linguistically in contexts differing in their perceived degree of formality. These speakers will then also base their linguistic decisions on whom they are talking to. That is, a given constellation of speakers will influence these speakers' actual choice of linguistic expressions in a speech situation. This will be in such a way that a low degree of familiarity between these speakers will generally result into a more careful application of such expressions and therefore into a corresponding tendency to use more formal expressions, while a high degree of speaker familiarity will reveal a tendency to the opposite: a less careful application of linguistic expressions which are thus less formal in character. Such linguistic tendencies are connected to interlocutors' mutual considerations of face in different situational contexts. Accordingly, in situations of reduced speaker familiarity, speakers will prefer linguistic items which are regarded as reducing the level of threat to face and consequently they will choose more formal expressions than in situations featuring speakers characterized by their high degree of familiarity.

In fact, it is the very nature of conversation itself that contributes to the ultimate problem of specifying formality and informality lexically. Everyday conversation as such covers a wide range of different speaker constellations and the communicative contexts – the physical settings – in which conversations take place are not predetermined. Accordingly, there can be two-party or multiple-party conversations featuring speakers with diverse levels of familiarity and different social status which take place at home, at school, in the cinema, in the streets and so on. This social diversity then consequently also implies a general linguistic diversity that is theoretically possible. It can be difficult therefore to provide a precise definition of what are typical linguistic expressions of conversation in general and – more important here – of formal and informal conversation in particular.

As concerns the former, studies into register variation (e.g. Biber et al., 1999) show that conversation, similar to other registers, is characterized by the occurrence of typical lexical patterns – so-called 'lexical bundles'. Lexical bundles are sequences, i.e. bundles, of words which (most) commonly occur together in a register. Co-occurrence patterns can be identified via corpus analyses revealing a statistical tendency for certain word forms to co-occur in studied registers. A combination of words qualifies as a lexical bundle if it is identified via such corpus analyses as a recurring sequence of three or more words. Recurrence, in fact, is the necessary condition for a lexical sequence to be defined as a lexical bundle. That is, in order to be classified as a lexical bundle, a combination of words must characterize the

linguistic nature of the register ‘conversation’ as such in that it is used frequently across different instances of conversation, i.e. across different texts belonging to the register ‘conversation’.<sup>192</sup> To give an example, according to Biber et al. (1999: 1002), “[...] a clause fragment, consisting of a subject pronoun followed by a verb phrase” is “[b]y far the most prevalent type of lexical bundle in conversation [...]”. There are four-word, five-word and six-word bundles in this category. Respective four-word lexical bundles include expressions with, for example, ‘I + know’ (e.g. *I don’t know what+*, *I don’t know how+*, *I don’t know if+*, *I know what you+*), ‘I + think’ (e.g. *I don’t think so*, *I don’t think it+*, *I don’t think you+*, *I think it was*, *I think I might*), or ‘I + want’ (e.g. *I don’t want to+*, *I want to go+*, *I want to see*, *I want to know*).<sup>193</sup> Examples of five-word lexical bundles include *I don’t know what it+*, *I don’t know what to+*, *I don’t know if I*, or *I mean I don’t know*. Finally, typical six-word bundles are *I don’t know what it is* and *I don’t know what to do*. Biber et al. (1999: 1001/1002) classify the lexical bundles systematically used in conversation into a total of 14 major categories.<sup>194</sup>

According to the authors, the recurrence of these conversation-specific lexical bundles contributes in a significant way to the overall linguistic nature of conversation which is determined by a verbal repertoire that is both restricted and repetitive (cf. Biber et al., 1999, ch. 14.1.2.7). The reason for this lies, on the one hand, in local repetition as when “[s]peakers often repeat partially or exactly what has just been said in the conversation, [...]” (Biber et al., 1999: 1049). On the other hand, this is based on the frequency with which (the same) lexical bundles are used in and across texts. A third factor contributing to the repetitive nature of conversation is constituted by the register’s typically low type/token ratio in comparison with written registers (cf. Biber et al., 1999: 1049). Conversation, therefore, is characterized by the general absence of lexical specificity which is determined by the use of a diversified vocabulary.<sup>195</sup> Verbal restriction and repetition created in this way are induced by the

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<sup>192</sup> See Biber et al. (1999), ch. 13: *Lexical expressions in speech and writing*. According to the authors, in the linguistic analyses “[...] lexical sequences are counted as ‘recurrent’ lexical bundles only if they occur at least ten times per million words in a register” (1999: 992).

<sup>193</sup> The authors use ‘+’ to indicate that a particular lexical bundle is also part of another, i.e. longer, lexical bundle. E.g. the four-word bundle *I don’t know what+* given above is also incorporated into the five-word bundle *I don’t know what to+*, which is in turn again included into the six-word bundle *I don’t know what to do* (cf. Biber et al., 1999: 1001).

<sup>194</sup> (1) personal pronoun + lexical verb phrase, (2) pronoun/noun phrase + be +, (3) verb phrase with active verb, (4) *yes-no* question fragments, (5) *wh*-question fragments, (6) lexical bundles with *wh*-clauses, (7) lexical bundles with *to*-clauses, (8) verb + *that*-clause fragments, (9) adverbial clause fragments, (10) noun phrase expressions, (11) prepositional phrase expressions, (12) quantifier expressions, as well as (13) other expressions and (14) meaningless sound bundles. See Biber et al. (1999: 1001ff.) for a detailed explanation of these categories and their corresponding lexical bundles.

<sup>195</sup> ‘Tokens’ denotes the total number of words featured in a text while ‘types’ refers to the number of different words used in this text. The ‘type-token ratio’ thus indicates “[t]he relationship between the number of different word forms, or **types**, and the number of running words, or **tokens**, [...]” (Biber et al., 1999: 52; bold type is taken over from the authors).

See in this connection also Biber (2001: 219) and the current author’s own explanations above concerning situational style and structural complexity. Type/token ratio is described by Biber (2001) as one of a number of other linguistic features associated with increased linguistic complexity. Denoting a register’s degree of lexical

demands of online production (and processing). Thus, the pressure on interlocutors for interactive spontaneity in conversation restricts the level of possible (pre-)planning of conversational contents (cf. Biber et al., 1999: 53 and 1049). As the authors point out, this “[t]ime pressure makes it more difficult for speakers to exploit the full innovative power of grammar and lexicon: instead, they rely heavily on well-worn, prefabricated word sequences, readily accessible from memory” (1999: 1049).

Consequently, what we *can* do then is to describe general tendencies of word choice for the register of conversation *as such* in terms of a restricted and repetitive repertoire which consists in, among other things, conversation-specific lexical bundles. The same is valid for a lexical specification of linguistic formality and informality. That is, what we *can* do is to determine general tendencies of probable lexical choice in concrete speech situations as based on our intuitions as language users about lexical expressions and their commonly ascribed level of formality/informality as well as their corresponding appropriateness in particular instances of speech situations. In short, we can say whether a certain expression is more formal or informal in character and therefore more likely to appear in formal or informal speech styles. (Such general tendencies of lexical choice are reflected in Joos’ (1967) description of the relatively informal “Need a hand?” versus the more formal “May I help you?” characteristic of his *formal style*). What is problematic, though, is to provide more precise descriptions and *clearly* state what it is that determines formal and informal speech styles on the level of concrete word choice (in a way similar to Joos’ (1967) notion of specific ‘code-labels’). That is, are there typical code-labels of linguistic formality/informality?

On the one hand, we may well exclude the occurrence of a given lexical item in a formal speech style because it is considered too informal to be applied and does not promise the effective communication of speaker intentions. Is, however, a word such as ‘intoxicated’, on the other hand, always and exclusively used in and restricted to formal conversations? We are inclined to say that it is not. In fact, ‘intoxicated’, though formal in nature and typically featured in medical jargon, seems to be nevertheless generally a proper candidate for use in both formal *and* informal speech styles independent of the actual degree of familiarity between the interlocutors. Accordingly, we can imagine two close friends having an informal conversation about the health condition of a third friend: “The doctors said he was heavily intoxicated when admitted but actually I can’t really believe that he was because usually he doesn’t drink any alcohol at all. I don’t think he was too drunk to drive.” Thus, their high degree of familiarity does not necessarily exclude the use of ‘intoxicated’ (though it is admittedly only part of reported speech here.) At the same time ‘intoxicated’ can be part of a

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specificity, it is part of Biber’s (2001) third complexity dimension labelled ‘integrated structure’. (Cf. *The syntactic level: situational style and structural complexity* in this work and page 223 in Biber, 2001).

formal doctor-patient conversation: “You were heavily intoxicated when admitted last Thursday.”

Thus, while ‘intoxicated’ may be used both in formal and informal conversations, there are also other formal linguistic items whose occurrence is generally more restricted to formal styles of speech alone. Such items refer to speaker relations in that their use in informal styles can question the nature of the close personal relationship between the interlocutors in a concrete speech situation. Consequently, in informal speech styles (between close friends) this can be an unnecessarily and unusually high structural complexity including high negative politeness in connection with a carefully considered and perceived ‘out of place’ word choice on the lexical level.

In search for what is typically formal and informal lexically, the central question is then whether those lexical bundles that have been determined for conversation as such can also be found, for example, particularly for formal and informal conversation. That is, a more precise description of lexical formality and informality should ideally reveal lexical bundles that are typically used in formal styles of speech and those that are characteristically featured in informal speech styles. In the meantime we have to get by with our general tendencies, i.e. our intuitive assumptions about linguistic expressions and their ascribed degree of formality/informality that influences their general occurrence in respective speech styles.

Similar to syntactic complexity described above, the actual distinction between theory and language use in concrete conversations should also be taken into consideration in this connection. That is, we could go so far as to say that the same demands of online production which require a necessary linguistic spontaneity in conversation and which are mentioned above as a significant factor reducing the level of overall structural complexity even in formal styles of speech will also have an impact on the general level of lexical formality that is likely to occur in such speech styles. In other words, these demands will restrict the application of overly carefully considered, and therefore formal, lexical expressions even in formal speech styles.<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> Biber et al. (1999) refer to the vernacular range of expression employed by conversation (cf. chapter 14.1.2.8) thus, though implicitly, showing that a precise determination of formality and informality on the lexical level seems to be indeed problematic. Accordingly, the authors restrict themselves to very generally stating that “the style of conversation is overwhelmingly informal” (1999: 1050), which is among other things shown in lexical choice.

### At a glance

#### THE LEXICAL LEVEL

##### Formal style:

- General tendency:
- Use of lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality and regarded as appropriate for use in formal styles of speech

##### Informal style:

- General tendency:
- Use of lexical items typically associated with linguistic informality and regarded as appropriate for use in informal styles of speech

#### The cognitive-psychological level: situational style and speech planning

The explanations within the last two sections indicated the influence of the demands of online production in spontaneous everyday conversation on the syntactic and lexical level involving an expected limitation in structural complexity and word choice which is assumed to affect both formal and informal speech styles. Put positively, this limitation guarantees the interactive spontaneity required from the interlocutors in spontaneous everyday conversation within formal and informal communicative contexts, i.e. speech situations. This then points to another level for the definition of and distinction between linguistic formality and informality: situational style and the degree of (possible) speech planning that is connected to the demands of online production. That is, we are dealing here with notions of planned versus unplanned speech and their importance for situational styles thus focussing on the cognitive-psychological level of formality and informality.<sup>197</sup>

Underlying each process of speech planning are speakers' communicative intentions assuming that the ultimate goal in human interaction is the successful communication of personal, i.e. speaker, intentions. These communicative intentions are then verbalized, i.e. transformed, by speakers in illocutionary acts, or simply, speech acts (e.g. representatives, directives, commissives). The actual verbalization of communicative intentions requires a planning process by the speaker that involves, firstly, (the type of) concrete conversational, that is propositional, content. (Thus, *what* is to be verbalized? What is the underlying

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<sup>197</sup> Cf. also Brown/Fraser (1979: 49): "The planned/unplanned dimension appears to us to be a major psychological correlate of the formal/informal dimension of a situational analysis."

intention in speaking?). Secondly, it involves the actual and final form that the proposition should take. (Thus, *how* exactly is a speech act to be formulated? How should the propositional content be structured in regard to the speaker's addressee(s)? Relevant considerations in this connection include matters of information structure as based on the particular speaker-hearer constellation in a communicative encounter (e.g. what can be mutually presupposed as shared knowledge thus admitting a reduction in the degree of the speaker's linguistic explicitness in regard to mentioned referents? What is given and what is new information with respect to the immediate conversational content in context? What about stylistic foregrounding and backgrounding of information?).

The speaker is guided in his/her decisions about how to verbalize a desired propositional content by the influence of the situational context, i.e. the speech situation, the determinants of which have been explained above. It is the particular speaker constellation or relationship respectively that significantly affects the content and form of speech acts to be produced, not only with respect to information structural considerations but also, and in the first place, with respect to politeness considerations, that is the mutual acknowledgement of speakers' face wants. Consequently, the (successful) verbal articulation of speaker intentions necessarily involves a speaker's communicative competence, both grammatically and pragmatically. Grammatical competence (or: linguistic competence) is required to produce grammatically correct sentences/utterances (speech acts) on the levels of syntax, semantics, phonology, morphology and lexicon. Pragmatic competence (or: social competence) includes pragmatic knowledge that is needed in order to produce not only grammatically correct speech acts but to make those communicative acts fit the interactive demands of the situational context. That is, pragmatic knowledge enables the speaker to perform speech acts appropriate to the specific formal/informal/institutional character of the speech situation.<sup>198</sup>

The impact of the demands of online production on the interactive structure of spontaneous everyday conversation as illustrated above can then be located within the grammatical component of a speaker's communicative competence. It is here that these demands have a significant influence on the propositional content to be expressed causing the referred to reduction in syntactic and lexical complexity.

The cognitive process of speech planning whereby speakers get from communicative intentions to the articulation of these intentions has been described in detail by Levelt (1995). According to Levelt, the planning process involves two stages, a stage of *macroplanning*, followed by a stage of *microplanning* (cf. Levelt, 1995, ch. 4: *The Generation of Messages*). *Macroplanning* procedures include the speaker's elaboration of his/her goals in communication – i.e. of the actual communicative intention(s) – and the selection of relevant information to be expressed in order to realize these goals interactively. *Microplanning*

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<sup>198</sup> For a model of communicative competence as assumed here see chapter 4.

procedures, on the other hand, involve the assignment of the appropriate propositional structure by the speaker to the information to be expressed as selected during the *macroplanning* stage. Such *microplanning* processes also pertain to matters of information structure. Shortly, the stage of *macroplanning* is concerned with the formulation of the concrete speaker intention and therefore with the actual content of talk to be encoded in a message by the speaker (= the *what*). The result of such *macroplanning* procedures are abstract, i.e. not yet articulated, speech acts.<sup>199</sup> The stage of *microplanning* refers to the process whereby the chosen content is arranged by the speaker in that recently macroplanned speech acts are correspondingly given a specific propositional format involving considerations of information structure (= the *how*). The result of *microplanning* is then a particularly shaped abstract preverbal message (that needs yet to be prepared for actual articulation via additional operations involving syntactic, prosodic and phonetic aspects).<sup>200</sup>

Concerning the aforementioned impact of the speech situation on the interaction patterns between speakers, also Levelt emphasizes that the two cognitive processes, *macroplanning* and *microplanning*, are subject to the immediate influence of the situational context.<sup>201</sup> The central interactive task of the speaker/hearer in this connection is to correctly assess the character of the speech situation and, correspondingly, to detect the type of discourse in which (s)he is currently participating, e.g. spontaneous (formal or informal) everyday conversation. As Levelt (1995: 112) points out,

[t]he speaker has to keep track of the type of discourse in which he is engaged, and of the special role assigned to him. The speaker makes a category mistake if he constructs his messages in the framework of the wrong discourse type – for example, if he takes an examination to be a debate, or air-traffic-control discourse to be everyday conversation. It is especially important that the type of discourse in which interlocutors are engaged be mutually known, so that the participants will be on common ground.

If the latter is *not* mutually known, a speaker's planning processes will result into the construction of dysfunctional speech acts within (the purpose of) the current interaction. Consequently, the communication of personal intentions – i.e. speaker goals – will be unsuccessful and the interaction, in the worst case, will break down.

In her discussion of planned versus unplanned speech also Ochs (1979: 77) argues on the basis of the potential influence of the discourse situation the demands of which “may affect every dimension of discourse planning,” i.e. content-based and relationship-based. The

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<sup>199</sup> Cf. Levelt (1995: 109): “Its [i.e. macroplanning] output is an ordered sequence of what we will call *speech-act intentions* (sometimes shortened to “speech acts”). These are messages as far as specified for intended mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and content.” (Italics are taken over from the author).

<sup>200</sup> For syntactic, prosodic and phonetic operations see Levelt (1995, ch. 5 – 10).

<sup>201</sup> “Both sides of the message-encoding process are heavily context-dependent. [...] [T]he speaker must take into account the precise discourse situation [...]” which is constantly changing (Levelt, 1995: 110).

situational demands within spontaneous conversation are such that “a communicator cannot plan the form of his communication because the situation in which he is participating requires more or less continuous monitoring” (Ochs, 1979: 75). Constant monitoring is grounded in the particular turn-taking system for conversation which is characterized by the local management of speaker turns, i.e. on a turn-by-turn basis (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974). As a consequence, “[w]here turn-taking is locally managed in this sense, it may take priority over the expression of well-formed [i.e. structurally complex] propositions for the communicator” (Ochs, 1979: 75). What Ochs describes with ‘situational demands’ here has been referred to as the impact of ‘online production’ above. According to Ochs (1979), then, situational demands (together with conceptual demands)<sup>202</sup> are effective constraints on discourse planning and may therefore lead to relatively unplanned discourse (cf. 1979: 75ff.).

In fact, Ochs’ treatment of planned and unplanned discourse is useful for the current purpose of elaborating on the cognitive-psychological aspect of linguistic formality/informality here for two reasons: (1) She provides a concrete definition of what may be understood by ‘planned discourse’ in comparison with ‘unplanned discourse’ and, doing so, also shows how both types of discourse can be distinguished from each other. Central to Ochs’ (1979) concept of planning in this connection are the two notions of *forethought* and *design* or *organization* which differ in the degree to which they are present in planned and unplanned discourse (cf. Ochs, 1979: 55). While the former can be determined to refer to the selection of actual contents of talk, i.e. of *what* is to be verbalized, the latter concerns the structuring of these contents, i.e. *how* they are to be verbalized.

Now, the idea of speech planning according to Ochs (1979) fundamentally involves the point of time at which *forethought* and *organization* occur in an interaction, namely either prior to the expression of respective contents to be communicated or rather ‘on-line’, i.e. spontaneously in the process of their communication. Accordingly, while “[u]nplanned discourse is talk that has not been thought out prior to its expression” and where “the communicator has not organized how an idea or set of ideas is going to be expressed or how some speech act [...] or event [...] is going to be performed prior to the time of communication” (Ochs, 1979: 55), planned discourse is characterized by the opposite. This results into the following features of planned and unplanned discourse as determined by Ochs (1979: 55):

**Unplanned discourse** is discourse that lacks forethought and organizational preparation.

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<sup>202</sup> Conceptual demands, according to Ochs, have an influence on recipient design. Conceptual demands refer to the expression by the speaker of cognitively complex ideas whose articulation requires the speaker’s complete attention. This can result into the speaker neglecting the communicative needs of the addressee. The speaker consequently may fail to plan his discourse in this respect. As Ochs (1979: 76) argues, “[f]or example, he may fail to attend to social norms constraining how long a turn at talk should be, how much information should be conveyed, and the appropriate form of expression for that addressee.”

**Planned discourse** is discourse that has been thought out and organized (designed) prior to its expression.

*Forethought* and *organization* in Ochs' (1979) concept of discourse planning correspond to the basic levels of planning referred to above as the selection of the propositional content to be communicated (= the *what*) and the actual structure of this content (= the *how*). Both aspects are also fundamental to the stages of *macroplanning* and *microplanning* in the generation of verbal messages as described by Levelt (1995).

It should be noted though that there is a conceptual difference between speech planning according to Levelt (1995) and the concept of planned and unplanned discourse after Ochs (1979). That is, Levelt (1995) is concerned generally with the question of how speakers get from their communicative intentions to the articulation of their intentions. Thus, he focuses on the general process of how verbal messages *per se* are created and any such process ultimately involves the stages of *macroplanning* and *microplanning* independent of the fact that what we are producing may be spontaneous – and therefore characteristically unplanned – everyday conversation. Every discourse, i.e. also spontaneous everyday conversation, is thus necessarily planned in this respect; every discourse necessarily features *macroplanning* and *microplanning*. Ochs' understanding of 'planning', on the other hand, is different to Levelt (1995) in that her notions of *forethought* and *organization* denote an actual 'pre-planning' of conversational contents before expression (that is inherent to planned discourse only). 'Planning' thus means 'pre-planning' and 'planned discourse' therefore means discourse that has been subjected to a conscious process of pre-planning before utterance (in contrast to unplanned discourse).

Speaking of consciousness, the difference between Levelt's (1995) account of speech planning and Ochs' (1979) account of planned versus unplanned discourse can then also be viewed in terms of the speaker's level of consciousness connected to the planning processes. Accordingly, *macroplanning* and *microplanning* in message generation as such should rather be unconscious cognitive processes in order to guarantee the interactive spontaneity required from speakers participating in, for example, everyday conversation. The notions of *forethought* and *organizational preparation* as used by Ochs (1979), on the other hand, rather imply a higher degree of consciousness underlying the production of either planned or unplanned talk. Planning thus is an active, i.e. conscious, process carried out by the speaker.

Ochs (1979) discusses what she calls relatively planned and unplanned discourse in connection with first language acquisition relating the two forms of discourse to the characteristics of child language at different developmental stages:

We find that adult speech behaviour takes on many of the characteristics of child language [...]. For example, spontaneous dialogues and multi-party conversations among adults evidence greater reliance on developmentally early communicative strategies. [...]. On the other hand, more planned communicative behaviour makes greater use of more complex

structures and of strategies developed later in the child's life. [...] That is, we suggest that, when speakers have not planned the form of their discourse, they rely more heavily on morphosyntactic and discourse skills acquired in the first 3-4 years of life. The counterpart of this suggestion is that more planned language use draws on knowledge that is acquired or learned [...] later in life (1979: 53/54).

The underlying argument for a definition and comparison of (relatively) planned versus unplanned discourse is that the socially and linguistically developing child makes use of more complex syntactic structures/speech strategies with increasing age. When it is assumed that unplanned discourse features speech strategies developed early in the child's life, while its planned counterpart is characterized by linguistic strategies developed later in the child's life, as Ochs (1979) does, then this has an influence on the grade of syntactic complexity of planned and unplanned discourse (as is, in fact, stated in the quotation by Ochs: "more planned communicative behaviour makes greater use of more complex structures"). Thus, we get a connection between the degree of planning of discourse and the degree of syntactic complexity characterizing this discourse:

**(Relatively) planned discourse:** higher syntactic complexity than relatively unplanned discourse (= communicative patterns acquired late by the child).<sup>203</sup>

**(Relatively) unplanned discourse** (spontaneous dialogues and multi-party conversations): syntactically less complex than relatively planned discourse (= communicative patterns acquired early by the child).

Ochs (1979) focuses on the features of (relatively) planned and unplanned discourse which generally refer to the overall structural organization of discourse by the speaker (resulting in perceptions of either syntactic complexity or non-complexity). Such features pertain to ways in which the speaker structures and connects propositions to each other. Accordingly, (relatively) unplanned discourse is characterized by referent deletion and the absence of subordinate conjunctions linking propositions (cf. Ochs, 1979: 62ff.). According to Ochs (1979), it is the immediate conversational context that links propositions in (relatively) unplanned speech and that is consequently used by potential addressees in the interpretation of the propositional content. Such features do also include linguistic phenomena resulting from the demands of on-line production in spontaneous conversation. That is, (relatively) unplanned speech involves the use of frequent repetitions and conversational repair signalling that "planning is going on in the course of the speech act itself" (Ochs, 1979: 71).

It should be noted that Ochs' (1979) explanations of the characteristics of planned versus unplanned discourse are based on the investigation of both spoken and written language, more specifically, of unplanned spoken discourse and planned written discourse. She does not

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<sup>203</sup> E.g. complementation, cleft constructions, certain types of relative clauses, passives (cf. Ochs, 1979: 54).

consider planned spoken discourse and unplanned written discourse (cf. 1979: 55). This raises the question of a general and absolute distinction between written and spoken language in terms of their degree of plannedness, i.e. a possible and automatic ascription of ‘planned’ to written language and of ‘unplanned’ to spoken language. Tawake (1985) has addressed this aspect in her discussion of planned and unplanned discourse in which she reviews and draws on Ochs’ (1979) findings and shows that the distinctions between planned and unplanned discourse determined for written and spoken language by Ochs (1979) are, in fact, also valid for written discourse alone.

Finally, having discussed the notion of ‘planning’ as such, the underlying assumption in this section would be that we can define linguistic formality/informality on the basis of the degree to which linguistic contents (communicative acts) are planned or unplanned in different situational styles (i.e. in the sense of conscious pre-planning according to Ochs, 1979). That is, a formal speech style would be characterized by a relatively high degree of speech planning (and syntactic complexity) whereas its informal opposite would show a comparatively low degree of planning (and syntactic complexity).

In fact, such a distinction is also implied by Joos (1967) for his *formal style* and his informal *consultative style*. Thus, while the former “demands advance planning” (1967: 37), the latter is “entirely automatic” (1967: 33/34) and “speakers never plan more than the current phrase” (1967: 37).<sup>204</sup> However, as has been argued above, such a distinction is hard to maintain in practice due to the spontaneous nature of the register ‘conversation’ as such which functions as a significant factor in the reduction of pre-planning and therefore in the limitation of overall syntactic complexity of linguistic structures.

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<sup>204</sup> It should be noted, though, that Joos (1967) connects the pre-planning characterizing his *formal style* to the communicative context in which this style is applied: “[T]he formal speaker has a captive audience” and therefore he “is under obligation to provide a plan for the whole sentence before he begins uttering it, and a delimitation of field for his whole discourse before he embarks on it” (1967: 37). That is, his *formal style* does not correspond in this aspect to formal style as defined by the current author which is constituted by a speaker-addressee relation (as is informal style) but lacks an actual audience. In fact, the existence of an audience is a significant factor which would move informal style away from the private sphere of spontaneous everyday conversation towards the public sphere of actual speeches.

### At a glance

## THE COGNITIVE-PSYCHOLOGICAL LEVEL

### In theory:

Situational styles differ in their degree of planning

### Formal style:

- General tendency: relatively high degree of speech planning

### Informal style:

- General tendency: relatively low degree of speech planning

### In practice:

Degree of planning generally possible in spontaneous conversation? -> Demands of online production

### The contextual level: situational style and information structure

In his discussion of the five clocks – i.e. styles – of English, Joos (1967) determines ‘background information’ as one characteristic factor for the definition of speech styles. The different styles of English he illustrates can then be distinguished not on the basis of the amount of background information given by a speaker during a conversation, but rather via the importance of (the presentation of) background information for a speech style in general.

Although the present discussion of contextual styles works exclusively with the two concepts ‘formal’ and ‘informal’, Joos’ (1967) account nevertheless presents a good starting point for an elaboration of the terms in this section focussing on information structure.

Among the five styles of English described by Joos (1967) three are helpful in this connection: The two colloquial styles *casual style* and *consultative style* which are defined as “informal clocks”, i.e. styles, by Joos (cf. 1967: 19ff.) as well as *formal style* referred to as “informative clock” by the author (cf. Joos, 1967: 33ff.).<sup>205</sup> Joos (1967) never truly explicitly comments on the actual degree of formality of the styles he explains. (He never directly highlights different grades of formality between the focussed-on styles in the form that, for example, “among the five styles explained here, *intimate style* is the most informal one in

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<sup>205</sup> Italics are used to indicate the names of the styles as established and used exclusively by Joos (1967). Thus, *formal style* here refers to Joos’ (definition of) style while normal type indicates the use and definition by the author of the present discussion.

character”). He leaves this interpretation open to the reader restricting himself to the existence of different situational contexts and their appropriate linguistic equivalents: (native) speakers of (American) English have “[...] two English-usage clocks [...] for use on different occasions, plus three others that are more or less reliable depending on [their] experiences and the distances to [their] horizons,” (Joos, 1967: 6). Yet, such a distinction, in fact, seems evident and justified in two respects: Firstly, the labels given to the styles by the author reveal an underlying, though unexpressed, assumption of degrees of formality/informality connected to the described styles. Accordingly, we find the distinction between *formal style* and the two informal styles *consultative* and *casual style*. Secondly, the description of the interactants using these styles and their social relations in different conversational encounters reflects differences in the formality/informality of the situational context. Thus, the two colloquial styles *consultative style* and *casual style* differ with respect to their participants in that the former is used between strangers (cf. Joos, 1967: 23) while the latter is typical of conversations between friends, acquaintances and insiders (cf. Joos, 1967: 23). These speaker constellations influence the presence of background information characterizing each style. According to Joos (1967), one of the defining features of *consultative style* is that the speaker provides background information in conversation because “he does not assume that he will be understood without it” (1967: 23). This is the case as his addressees are strangers whose knowledge status may differ from that of the speaker.<sup>206</sup> This is different in *casual style*. As the prototypical addressees in this style are (more or less) familiar with and thus socially (more or less) close to the speaker, *casual style* is characterized by the absence of background information (cf. Joos, 1967: 23). In *formal style* background information plays an important role again where it is “woven into the text in complex sentences” (Joos, 1967: 37). Joos (1967) does not exactly comment on the speaker relations in *formal style* the way he does for his two defined colloquial styles. Accordingly, a similar account of the grade of familiarity between the interactants for *formal style* is missing. As mentioned above, *formal style* is termed an “informative clock” by Joos (1967) whose major function according to the author lies in the information of the addressee(s): “[f]ormal style is designed to inform” (1967: 35). Therefore, background information can be seen as a significant feature of *formal style*. (Though Joos (1967) himself never makes this explicitly clear.)

When we compare the two colloquial styles *consultative* and *casual style* with *formal style* we can see that the presence/absence of background information, on the one hand, directly results from the social relations between the interactants requiring either the former or allowing the latter. On the other hand, with *formal style*, this presence is rather a matter of the information function that is ascribed to this style of speech by the author. In short, background information according to Joos (1967) then relates to the level of interpersonal relationships or is defined by the communicative function of a style on the content level.

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<sup>206</sup> Cf. Joos (1967: 23): strangers are “people who speak our [i.e. the English] language but whose personal stock of information may be different.”

For a discussion and refinement of linguistic formality/informality on the contextual level it is important in this connection that Joos (1967) makes a distinction with regard to background information between formal and informal styles that is similar to the basic assumption concerning the occurrence of what is termed ‘explicit information’ in situational styles as presented below. Thus, according to Joos (1967), *formal style* is characterized by the presence of background information due to the reasons illustrated above. The two informal styles *consultative* and *casual style* feature either presence or absence of background information based on the above mentioned speaker constellations. For the current purpose especially *casual style* is interesting: informal in character, used between familiar persons and lacking background information. In short, leaving aside *consultative style*, we find a general presence of background information in *formal style* and a general absence of this type of information in informal style, i.e. *casual style* which corresponds to the grade of explicit information in formal and informal speech styles assumed below in this section.

Joos’ (1967) approach to a style definition based on background information is useful in two respects here. Firstly, he defines the participants of informal style – his *casual style* – as ‘insiders’, and thus, implicitly, hints at the influence of speakers’ personal network structures on the knowledge status that can be ascribed to them as highly integrated members of social networks. Secondly, his approach raises the question why (the presence of) background information is important in talk between strangers (cf. Joos’ (1967) *formal style*). According to Joos (1967) the reason is to be found in a differing stock of information between speaker and listener (cf. Joos, 1967: 23). However, there is something more to it: The stock of information is something that a speaker assumes another speaker has. Consequently, speakers’ mutual presuppositions about their addressees play a role in the actual amount of presented background information, which is then the result of interactive conversational work.

These two aspects ‘presuppositions’ and ‘social networks’ and their importance for the refinement of linguistic formality/informality on the contextual level of information structure will be treated in more detail in the following part.

In his classification of the elements defining the speech situation, Biber (1988) also points out the extent of shared knowledge which, next to communicative roles mentioned above, determines the social relations among the participants to a conversation. Shared knowledge, according to the author, is twofold referring to what he calls ‘cultural world knowledge’ and ‘specific personal knowledge’ (cf. 1988: 30). In the following discussion ‘general background knowledge’ or simply ‘background knowledge’ will be used which can imply both types of knowledge that are referred to by Biber (1988). As Biber mentions, the relationship between the interlocutors “can differ in terms of the amount of specific and cultural/world knowledge they share” (Biber, 1988: 29). For the successful communication of communicative contents, possible differences in the degree of shared knowledge have to be considered by speakers in conversation. This happens on the basis of relevant presuppositions about knowledge statuses

that are made by speakers depending on whom they are talking to in a concrete situational context. Assumed differences in the amount of shared knowledge can then influence the way that language is used, i. e. structured – in this concrete situation. That is, presupposed differential degrees of shared knowledge will find their linguistic expression in terms of information structure – the presentation and organization of information for an addressee in a communicative process.<sup>207</sup> The ability to structure information according to the communicative needs of the addressee – which are determined here by the knowledge status – is part of a speaker's communicative competence. As initially mentioned, communicatively competent speakers are able to apply language appropriately with regard to different social situations. This situational variation includes relevant considerations about the addressee and his or her communicative needs with respect to knowledge status. Situational style is thus also a matter of how to organize that which is to be verbalized appropriately with respect to the addressee and his or her assumed knowledge base. It can then be assumed that speakers, based on their assumptions about their addressees, define for themselves what is given and what is new information from the standpoint of the addressee in a concrete speech situation. Their assumptions are then reflected in the various ways in which information is structured in conversation.

The basic assumption underlying information structure in this connection is that a distinction between formal and informal speech styles can be made according to the respective level of contextualizing of information that takes place in the process of conversing. That is, situational styles can be expected to show differences in the grade of explicit information<sup>208</sup> that is given by speakers when addressing their communicative partners. In this connection, the grade of explicitness of this information can be defined to be based on the presuppositions made by speakers concerning the knowledge status of their communicative partners. Thus, depending on the person they are talking to in different types of speech situations, speakers can be expected to structure the desired information that is to be verbalized as based on the presupposed amount of shared background knowledge. The question is always what kind and amount of background knowledge can I expect of the person I am currently talking to? Above different types of speech situations and their possible speaker constellations were discussed. It is the relationship between the participants to a conversation in these differential situational contexts that can have an impact on the way in which information is structured in these situations. One determining factor in the definition of participant relations was shown to be 'social distance' denoting the grade of familiarity between the interlocutors. It was illustrated that formal and informal situations differ from each other in this respect in that informal situations are characterized by the relevance of the familiarity factor which was discussed to

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<sup>207</sup> See, for example, Lambrecht (1994) for a detailed discussion of what is to be understood by the term 'information structure'.

<sup>208</sup> Corresponds to Joos' (1967) 'background information'.

imply mutual knowledge that the interlocutors have of each other. Based on the actual degree of familiarity the grade of mutual knowledge can be assumed to vary. Consequently, the amount of presupposed shared background knowledge is likely to be different between friend-to-friend constellations and other speaker constellations mentioned in the description of informal situations which are characterized by a comparatively low degree of familiarity. In the discussion of this type of situation it was stated that there are varying degrees of intimacy that can characterize the social relations between friends. Thus, the amount of presupposed background knowledge must also be expected to vary depending on the depth of individual social relationships between friends. To state a general high amount of shared background knowledge in friend-to-friend constellations, in fact, oversimplifies the nature of possible (and actually existing) social relations. In theory the character of social relations can be described with the help of the 'social network' concept which has been illustrated a relevant and dynamic factor in the study of speaker variation within sociolinguistics.<sup>209</sup> Accordingly, social relations find their expression in types of characteristic social network structures. Every member within a society is also a member of smaller social networks of different kinds within this society which define his or her social environment: family, friends, colleagues at the workplace, sports club membership, and so on. Social networks arise from the social ties an individual has with other individuals. As Milroy puts it, networks are "the informal social relationships contracted by an individual" (1980: 174). The character of these social relationships can be measured in terms of density and multiplexity (cf. Chambers, 1995: 71ff). The former denotes the quantity – i. e. the number – of social ties between the members of a network. Put in other words, how many individuals in a network which is observed know each other? The latter describes the quality of the existent social ties: How deep are the relationships between the members of a network?<sup>210</sup> The result are characteristic network structures of high or low density featuring multiplex or uniplex social ties between their members. Density and multiplexity can function to denote an individual's integration into a network under study. Accordingly, relevant distinctions can theoretically be made between central members and those located at the fringe of the network.<sup>211</sup> In fact, the notions of 'insider' and 'outsider' aptly fit in here which are commonly used to denote an individual's status with respect to group membership. Group membership then implies varying levels of integration into the group and when it is assumed that group integration includes (group-) specific background knowledge that is shared among the members of the group, it can also be assumed that different levels of integration into this group will also be reflected in

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<sup>209</sup> For a short introduction to the network concept see, for example, Chambers (1995) or Milroy (1980). In the book Milroy describes her male and female network studies undertaken in three working-class communities in Belfast, Northern Ireland, for which she demonstrates fundamental linguistic variation.

<sup>210</sup> According to Chambers (1995: 72) factors which can constitute multiplexity are kinship, workplace associations, neighbourhood or any other factor that can function to deepen a relationship between two or more persons.

<sup>211</sup> As Chambers points out, however, network measures of density and multiplexity have been discussed by sociolinguists but "they have not yet been applied directly in any sociolinguistic study" (1995: 72).

characteristic degrees of knowledge that defines and is shared within the group.<sup>212</sup> Hence insiders distinguish themselves from less integrated members and outsiders on the basis of this specific group internal background knowledge. This is in such a way that this knowledge is shared by the central members but characteristically decreases among peripheral members and, with high probability, is non-existent among outsiders. For the mentioned friend-to-friend constellation and their amount of shared background knowledge this means that their relationship needs to be refined in terms of the nature of the contact shared with a given circle of friends determining their social environment. That is, when it is assumed that the friends are part of the same social network, they may differ as concerns their individual level of integration into this network. Different levels of network integration then can have an influence on the amount of background knowledge that is shared between the friends and that can therefore be presupposed in conversation. If the friends both are highly integrated central members in the greater network of friends, a high amount of (group-specific) shared background knowledge can be expected. If, however, the friends have a social relationship in the form that one speaker is a central member and the other one is a peripheral member, shared background knowledge may be the case to a characteristically lower degree. As a consequence, the information that is to be verbalized necessarily has to be structured in consideration of the speakers' mutual status within this network. The network status may allow a high amount of linguistic vagueness resulting from a low grade of explicit information given by speakers in the situational context as based on the assumed high extent of shared background knowledge. Alternatively, the network status may require the opposite: a high grade of explicit information to be given in the speech situation as based on the assumed low extent of shared background knowledge which then implies a characteristically low amount of linguistic vagueness.

What has been stated here for differences in network integration can be stated more generally for the relevance or non-relevance of the familiarity factor in informal and formal situations. Thus, the given grade of familiarity between speakers in informal situations generally implies a respective extent of shared background knowledge that is given. The extent of shared background knowledge that is presupposed is then expressed linguistically in a respective grade of explicit information. Hence, a high grade of familiarity may allow a low degree of explicit information; a given but low grade of familiarity may require a degree of explicit information that is correspondingly higher.

In the discussion of different situation types it was said that in formal situations familiarity can be given or it can be not. In the latter case the interlocutors are strangers and in the former case they were determined not friends but rather acquaintances. This minor relevance of the familiarity factor in formal situations then implies a correspondingly low extent of shared background knowledge between the interlocutors which is expressed linguistically in a

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<sup>212</sup> This group knowledge includes the values and norms existing within the group.

respective degree of explicit information that is necessary for successful communication in these situations. The expected result is a low grade of linguistic vagueness in formal situations as compared to informal ones.

Below is a constructed example of the contextualization of information in different situational contexts in order to comply with differences in the assumed amount of shared background knowledge between the interlocutors.

(1) *Yesterday I met John.*

(2) *Yesterday I met an old friend of mine who lives in London. His name is John.*

Sentence (1) entails a high amount of linguistic vagueness for there is no further information given by the speaker concerning the mentioned person in the sentence. Underlying the utterance of this sentence – just as any sentence – is an assumption on the part of the speaker that the addressee will be able to interpret the sentence without any extra detail given. That is, based on his or her presuppositions, the speaker expects the addressee to know who *John* is. He has then designed his utterance according to the communicative needs that he expects from the addressee.<sup>213</sup>

The utterance of (1) requires the familiarity of speaker and addressee with a respective degree of shared background knowledge which, in this case, includes knowledge about the mentioned person ‘John’. If familiarity is not given, sentence (2) will rather be the case. The utterance of (1) in speaker constellations with a characteristic lack of familiarity and a connected lack of shared background knowledge is likely to be unsuccessful. The speaker has to take into consideration the possibility that the addressee does not know who *John* is. As a consequence (s)he provides more detailed, i. e. explicit, information about the person that is the topic of the utterance. The result is a reduction of linguistic vagueness that characterizes sentence (1). The production of sentence (1) in situations which rather call for sentence (2) then constitutes a violation of the maxim of quantity referring to the appropriate amount of information to be given by speakers in situational contexts.<sup>214</sup> This violation will then require conversational repair to avoid the breakdown of communication.

With respect to differential grades of familiarity in different types of speech situations, sentence (1) is thus a proper candidate for informal situations and sentence (2) for formal ones. ‘Proper candidate’ in this connection is to denote that (1) is not exclusively restricted to and used in informal situations and that, likewise, (2) is not only used in formal situations. The allocation is an ideal one based on the individually determined grades of familiarity and connected amounts of shared background knowledge for formal and informal situations which

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<sup>213</sup> Cf. in this connection the term ‘recipient design’ coined by Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974). (See also chapter 4.1.2).

<sup>214</sup> For an overview and discussion of the conversational maxims in Grice’s theory of implicature see, apart from the original (Grice, 1975), for example, Levinson (2000 [1983]). (See also chapter 4.1.1).

can necessitate the use of ideally either (1) or (2). Of course, in the individual concrete case of conversation within formal or informal situational contexts the degree of contextualizing of information can differ because it is, after all, a matter of individual speaker choice and speakers differ as concerns their communicative competence. The examples given here are chosen to constitute expected general tendencies in different types of communicative situations as based on the amount of presupposed shared background knowledge existing between interlocutors.

Can the nature of this background knowledge be further refined? Let us first consider informal situations characterized by the relevance of the familiarity factor. Even though the actual degree of familiarity can vary in the concrete case, its presence means that a certain amount of shared knowledge is presupposed by speakers. That is, it can be generally assumed that knowledge about certain entities/referents forming conversational topics – persons, events and so on – is mutually given and, consequently, is not contextualized in discourse, i. e. transformed into explicit information about these entities. In other words, certain entities are not commented on any further in the sense that no background information is provided.

Returning to social networks for a moment, it can be assumed that in dense, multiplex network structures, characterized by the close contact between and high integration of their members, information will be likely to circle among those that are highly integrated. Hence, information will spread relatively fast within the network and becomes the background knowledge that is mutually presupposed by its members in future conversations and therefore does not receive explicit verbalization in the presentation of information. This circulation of information then can be fundamentally missing in formal situations due to a lack in familiarity and thus due to a lack in contact. Hence the background information that is presupposed in informal situations must be verbalized in formal situations – see sentences (1) and (2) above – since the same entities which are known in informal situations cannot be expected to be known in formal situations and therefore need further elaboration when they become discourse topics. What then can be assumed as a shared base of knowledge in formal situations? The amount of shared background knowledge may be restricted to a general basic type of knowledge – political, social, etc. – that can be received from the mass media. This knowledge is potentially accessible for everybody and can therefore be generally presupposed in the communicative process.<sup>215</sup> Background knowledge then can be determined as being of twofold character. Firstly, it is based on close social contact and therefore group-specific so that it can only be properly expected from members of the group and ideally from those that

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<sup>215</sup> Nevertheless, speakers can also differ as to what and how much knowledge they actually extract from the mass media. In the concrete case of interaction, speakers' presuppositions about other speakers with whom they are not familiar thus may be wrong. This means that the actual amount of shared background knowledge that speakers can expect from each other is not clear from the beginning but must rather be worked out during the process of communication.

Cf. in this connection also Biber's (1988) use of 'cultural world knowledge' which can be determined to imply general world knowledge to be received from the mass media but also from the individual's closest social environment during the process of socialization which is then also specific cultural knowledge.

can be defined as core members. Secondly, it is media-based and hence of more general character and group-independent in such a way that it is not connected to and influenced by close social contact of speakers. It is therefore of potentially unlimited access.

Again, with formal situations there is the risk of oversimplification as far as the general statement of a low extent of shared background knowledge is concerned to exist in these situations. There are cases in which the amount of shared background knowledge can be determined to be independent of the familiarity between the speakers. There are groups – or networks – whose members can lack the familiarity factor and who can, nevertheless, show a high grade of background knowledge that is shared. Such a network would be constituted by a group of scientists gathering for their annual meeting in order to talk about topics of general significance. In these scientific networks the members need not necessarily be familiar with each other but they are familiar with the topics at talk and they share respective knowledge about these topics. There is thus a high degree of background knowledge specifically connected to the topics of scientific interest that can be presupposed among the members of the group. Generally speaking, there are then what may be called ‘special issue networks’ or ‘specialized scientific networks’ whose members can be defined as lacking in that type of background knowledge that is characteristically presupposed among friends but who share – and are usually expected to share – specific subject-based knowledge about scientifically important topics. This knowledge is mutually presupposed in the scientific discourse and not (necessarily) explicitly verbalized.

In making general statements about shared and missing background knowledge in different situational contexts, we have thus to distinguish between the nature of the familiarity characterizing speakers, that is, whether it is based on frequent and intensive contact between speakers in social networks or whether it rather directly refers to knowledge about specific topics circulating in scientific networks only. The former implies shared knowledge as a result of contact; the latter is contact-independent and presupposes shared knowledge due to familiarity with, i. e. interest in and discussion of, a topic within a scientific community.

Presupposed background knowledge then can be of threefold character: (1) contact-dependent as based on individual network structures where specific topics are known only to specific persons, (2) contact-independent as based on the mass media potentially granting unlimited access to their contents, and (3) contact-independent as based on familiarity with topics in scientific networks.

### Summary and conclusion

Keeping in mind the special cases of scientific networks and differential network status among friends the following generalizations can be made: Informal situations are characterized by the familiarity of speakers. From this follows that a certain amount of

knowledge can be presupposed by interlocutors in these situations. It can be assumed that certain referents are known and thus are not explained in more detail when they become topics at talk. That is, explicit information is not given or highly reduced. The expected existence of sufficient background knowledge about these referents then results into a high degree of linguistic vagueness (cf. sentence (1) above).

Formal situations, on the other hand, are characterized by missing familiarity of speakers or minor importance of this factor. Accordingly, information must be structured in a different way than in informal situations, as the base of expected shared background knowledge is characteristically lower in that it may be restricted to a general basic knowledge that can be received via the mass media. This knowledge is potentially accessible for everybody and only this knowledge is generally presupposed. Certain other referents are probably not known to the addressee and therefore need further elaboration when they appear as discourse topics. Consequently, explicit information is likely to be given, which is a necessary pre-condition for the success of applied speech acts in this type of situation. The reduced base of assumed shared background knowledge will thus result into a characteristically lower degree of linguistic vagueness (cf. sentence (2) above).

In short, the relational difference characterizing formal and informal situations will be complied with linguistically by a respective degree of contextualization of information. Hence the formal and informal styles applied in these situations are likely to reveal linguistic expressions in order to refer to differential grades of familiarity. That is, differences in familiarity are considered by speakers in their relevant presuppositions about what can and what cannot be expected as shared background knowledge. Differing presuppositions will then consequently lead to variations in the presentation of information within utterances as illustrated in the constructed examples above.

### At a glance

#### THE CONTEXTUAL LEVEL

##### Formal style:

- Based on expected low degree of shared background knowledge in formal situations:
- Expected high grade of explicit information  
↓
- Low grade of linguistic vagueness

##### Informal style:

- Based on expected high degree of shared background knowledge in informal situations:
- Expected low grade of explicit information  
↓
- High grade of linguistic vagueness

### Linguistic politeness: situational style and the extent of conversational redress

It was illustrated above that studies into register variation by Biber and others can be used to account for a theoretically stated difference between formal and informal styles as regards their overall syntactic complexity by means of identifying concrete lexical elements that characterize these styles. In other words, it was argued that the lexical elements statistically shown to constitute formal and informal registers indeed do allow a statement about the connected structural complexity of the latter. The point of discussion here, in fact, is of a more intuitive nature without empirical basis. Nevertheless, it can be considered useful for a refinement of formal and informal styles of speech. Accordingly, an additional approach to a formal/informal definition is based on Brown's and Levinson's (1987) theory of linguistic politeness which was introduced in chapter 4.1.1, section (b) and considered in the discussion of the speech situation above. The research interest in this connection is limited to the aspect of intentional indirectness (as an expression of a speaker's conversational redress) that is especially focused on by Thomas (1996) in her introduction to the field of linguistic pragmatics.

Brown and Levinson (1987) argue on the basis of intrinsically face-threatening acts which require linguistic compensation in the form of politeness strategies.<sup>216</sup> The concrete realization of a politeness strategy then depends on the individually estimated risk of potential face threat in a linguistic encounter. Accordingly, the range of possible politeness strategies includes the basic decision between verbalization and non-verbalization of an FTA with verbalization again leaving the speaker with two options, that is performing the FTA on-record or off-record. If the speaker chooses to produce his or her communicative intention on-record (s)he may do so either baldly without mitigating the force of the uttered act or (s)he may instead apply such force-reducing linguistic devices in the form of what Brown and Levinson call 'positive politeness' and 'negative politeness' strategies (cf. 1987: 68ff).

If we assume result-orientation for (informative) everyday conversation, it is obvious that non-verbalization, from a strategic point of view, constitutes the least success-promising of the possible strategies discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987). A communicative intention whose fulfilment depends on the engagement and goodwill of another person and which is not realized verbally does, in the worst case, not succeed. Successful communication of personal intentions thus optimally requires the performance of the FTA via one (or several) of the politeness strategies. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) there is then a correlation between the speaker's estimation of a concrete face threat connected to the verbalization of a communicative intention and the politeness strategy that will be chosen in order to compensate for the assumed degree of this threat. Thus an estimated high risk of face threat will be compensated via the choice of a linguistic strategy that is considered an appropriate

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<sup>216</sup> It should be noted that Brown and Levinson indeed do state the general existence of speech acts that are inherently face-threatening but they do not explicitly assume this potential for *any* speech act produced.

redressive means for the current purpose and we can assume that it will consist in a rather high degree of linguistic indirectness characterized by what Brown and Levinson (1987) refer to as ‘off-record’ strategies, i.e. strategies which result in conversational implicatures. An assumed lower risk of concrete threat to face in a linguistic encounter will correspondingly imply the use of speech strategies less indirect in character, that is, on-record either with or without the application of force-mitigating devices.

The notion of indirectness mentioned here has been treated in different publications on the character of speech acts and since the aim of this discussion is to present a refinement of the terms ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ with the help of the concept of conversational indirectness, the term ‘indirectness’ should not be left unexplained at this point, at least shortly.

The foregoing discussion on situational style and information structure has, among other things, illustrated that language is vague, that is with regard to a characteristic imprecision in the way in which it is often used by speakers to denote respective referents in conversation. This linguistic vagueness was described to result from an assumed high amount of shared background knowledge between interlocutors in a given situational context. Thus, a speaker may choose the highly vague version of *Yesterday I met John* or, given a lack in shared background knowledge, (s)he may instead use the version with a correspondingly high degree of explicit information: *Yesterday I met an old friend of mine who lives in London. His name is John*. In order to make his/her conversational contribution fit the requirements of the situational context and thus the communicative needs of the addressee, a communicatively competent speaker will design his or her utterance on the basis of whom (s)he is addressing, i. e. how much shared background knowledge can be expected and what degree of linguistic ‘precision’, that is explicitness, is therefore needed in the structuring of information.

The characteristic imprecision of (the English) language is even more evident in the way that cohesion is achieved in written and oral texts via diverse deictic elements. Thus, all kinds of English texts usually include a range of adverbs/adverbials of time and/or place or personal pronouns in order to locate referents in space and time with reference to the speaker. For example, in a conversation between speaker A and speaker B, speaker A may say *Yesterday I met him there*. From the point of view of information structure this utterance is extremely vague: Firstly, it makes use of personal deixis in the form of the personal pronouns ‘I’ and ‘him’. Secondly, with the adverbs ‘yesterday’ and ‘there’ it entails both temporal and spatial deixis. Viewed in isolation, it would be impossible for speaker B to correctly interpret this utterance simply because of the fact that the relevant reference points for ‘him’ and ‘there’ are missing with which the deictic elements can be linked. In other words, the exact real-world referents are not clarified. Thus, ‘him’ can principally denote any kind of male referent, while ‘there’ can point to any type of location. As a result, the utterance is imprecise and therefore vague in character. Nevertheless, in actual conversation, this perceived vagueness does not seem to constitute a serious problem for interlocutors. In conversation this utterance becomes a part of a longer stretch of talk and these elements become interpretable as the relevant

reference points are usually provided by speakers during the communicative process. Thus, what seems to be vague at first sight is usually easily managed by interlocutors. This management is possible with the help of the *cotext* – the immediate verbal context in the ongoing conversation. The given contextual information then allows a correct interpretation of those deictic elements used in the process of conversing thus providing for the overall success of communication.

The concept of linguistic indirectness illustrates that (the English) language is not only vague but also ambiguous in character. Accordingly, there is no clear one-to-one relation between a linguistic form and its communicative function in speech. That is, one and the same form can have different functions while the same function can be expressed by different linguistic forms. Therefore, in conversation numerous utterances can in principle be interpreted in several ways by listeners, who are consequently faced with the task of arriving at the correct interpretation, that is, an interpretation that corresponds to the communicative intention of the speaker. A typical example that can be used to illustrate indirectness is *It's cold in here*.<sup>217</sup> There are two possible interpretations of this utterance: either directly as a statement on the condition a location is in or indirectly as a directive request to close the window or door respectively. Thus, the same linguistic form can express two different functions. At the same time the same function, let us say the request to close the window, can be expressed by the just mentioned *It's cold in here*, or by other forms such as the more direct *Would you close the window, please?* Speech acts such as *It's cold in here* are indirect whenever ambiguity is present in a situational context with reference to the intended speaker's meaning, that is if, due to a lack in semantic transparency, several ways of interpretation are possible. In indirect speech acts there is thus a gap, an overt discrepancy, between utterance meaning – the pure linguistic or referential meaning as based on the propositional content – and the actual speaker's meaning – the intention of the speaker, i. e. his or her illocutionary force, underlying the locutionary act. Thomas (1996) has described this ambiguity as the difference between what is said and what is meant. In indirect speech acts what is said differs from what is meant. The deduction of meaning from propositional content alone can consequently lead to misinterpretation in a concrete situational context in which the communicative function of the linguistic form is different from the one expressed by the propositional content alone. In general then, indirect speech acts leave the addressee with two possibilities: the direct or the indirect reading. As is the case with linguistic vagueness, it is usually no problem for communicatively competent interlocutors to choose the correct reading in a concrete conversational encounter. The ambiguity underlying indirect speech acts is resolved with the help of the situational context which clarifies the intention of the speaker.

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<sup>217</sup> Cf. Brown and Levinson (1987: 215).

The importance of the situational context in meaning derivation, in fact, illustrates something else: indirectness is not an inherent quality of utterances as such. Rather they *become* indirect due to their specific application by the language user in a given situational context. It is the language user who makes an utterance (intentionally) indirect in a speech situation with a certain communicative function in mind. The same utterance (*It's cold in here*) can be used differently, i. e. either directly or indirectly, in different contexts. Thus, in one context it may well be used directly as a statement while in another one it may be used indirectly as a request for action. It is the task of the listener then to decide on the basis of his or her background knowledge (general world knowledge and relevant knowledge about the addressee) and given situational as well as direct conversational cues which reading – direct or indirect – is more likely in a concrete communicative context.<sup>218</sup>

There are two aspects to the definition of linguistic indirectness to be found in the literature on the topic (cf. Thomas, 1996 for an overview). On the one hand, the specification of indirectness typically concerns the above mentioned gap between utterance meaning and speaker's meaning, i. e. between locution and illocutionary force. On the other hand, there is an additional dimension to the concept of indirectness referring to whether the interpretation of speech acts by the listener happens directly or rather indirectly via a higher level of cognitive effort connected to the interpretative process (cf. Leech, 1983). In the former case of direct speech acts the speaker's meaning, or illocutionary force, is implied in the proposition and the level of processing effort is correspondingly low. In the latter case of indirect speech acts this is different. The illocutionary force in utterances such as *It's cold in here* is not explicitly expressed in the proposition but has to be deduced from it with the help of common conversational principles<sup>219</sup> and the above mentioned direct situational and conversational cues. This deductive process is thus accompanied by a comparatively high level of cognitive effort. Indirect speech acts are consequently to be distinguished from direct speech acts on the basis of the amount of cognitive work that is required in order to correctly decode linguistic messages. Indirect speech acts, or better, different levels of indirectness, are characterized by their relative cognitive complexity with reference to the actual length of the interpretation path connected to the listener's processing of the received input.

When Thomas (1996) speaks of 'intentional indirectness', she makes an implicit reference to the assumed communicative competence of language users. Based on their communicative competence (cf. chapter 4), speakers decide what can be said to whom in a given situational context. 'Intentional' indirectness in this connection denotes that the application of indirect speech acts is *not* the result of the communicative incompetence of speakers who are not able

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<sup>218</sup> For linguistic indirectness see, for example, Thomas (1996) who is useful as a starting point into the concept. She presents a short overview of the basic approaches to a definition of linguistic indirectness. A classic article on indirectness is Searle (1975).

<sup>219</sup> Cf. the general assumption of cooperation in conversation constituted by the adherence to Grice's cooperative principle and the connected conversational maxims.

to express their intentions in another more direct and less risky way. It rather constitutes a *deliberate* means in communication reflecting strategic speech use as a result of individual considerations about what is to fulfil best the individual communicative intention in a concrete situational context.<sup>220</sup> In the beginning of this discussion about the formal/informal concept the determinants of this situational context were explained. In this connection the speaker relationship was focused on which can be defined via the three sociological variables of power, social distance and rate of imposition (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987), the constellation of which can be shown to characterize different types of speech situations. Based on these variables the character of a speaker relationship in a concrete speech situation then finds its linguistic expression in a respective deliberate (and thus intentional!) choice of one of the politeness strategies as explicated by Brown and Levinson (1987). In other words, levels of (intentional) conversational indirectness and, more generally, concrete levels of conversational redress in a linguistic encounter are based on the estimation of speaker relationships – the mutual measurement of power, social distance and rate of imposition by interlocutors. It is exactly this aspect of linguistic choice depending on speaker relations that Thomas (1996) focuses on when she asks how speakers can know the appropriate level of indirectness in a situational context (cf. 1996: 124ff.). The relevant factors she elaborates on in the discussion of this question correspond to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) sociological variables: power, social distance and rate of imposition.<sup>221</sup> Also Leech (1983: 126ff.) has considered this aspect in his explanation of the Maxim of Tact as one basic constituent of a general Politeness Principle. Accordingly, the relationship between any two speakers is defined via their vertical distance and horizontal distance which contribute to an overall existing social distance (cf. 1983: 126). While the former denotes the power relationship between the interlocutors, the latter signals their level of familiarity. The perceived social distance between interlocutors determines the degree of tact – and therefore of linguistic politeness – needed in the verbalization of, for example, directives. Degrees of linguistic politeness are then expressed via different levels of indirectness. Following Leech (1983: 127) the parameters determining speaker relations and influencing the degree of tact/linguistic politeness are (1) the cost of a verbalized speaker intention *A* to a hearer *h*,<sup>222</sup> (2) the horizontal distance between a speaker *s* and a hearer *h*,<sup>223</sup> and (3) the power relationship between *s* and *h*.<sup>224</sup> Although Leech's (1983) explanation of the influence of speaker relations on the level of linguistic indirectness is strongly reminiscent of Brown's and

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<sup>220</sup> Assumed intentionality then also means assumed rationality underlying linguistic actions. That is, speakers do have a reason for why they behave linguistically as they do. The reason is the orientation at the successful communication of personal intentions which, depending on the character of the speech situation, implies speech strategies characterized by different levels of indirectness. (See also Thomas, 1996: 121f. on the aspect of rationality.)

<sup>221</sup> Though Thomas (1996) does not make any explicit reference to Brown and Levinson (1987).

<sup>222</sup> Corresponds to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) 'rate of imposition'.

<sup>223</sup> Corresponds to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) factor 'distance'.

<sup>224</sup> Brown's and Levinson's (1987) 'power' variable.

Levinson's (1987) argumentation, he does not explicitly refer to their work on politeness, as does Thomas (1996).<sup>225</sup> Accordingly, when Leech (1983: 127) states that

- (i) the greater the cost of *A* to *h*,
- (ii) the greater the horizontal social distance of *h* from *s*,
- (iii) the greater the authoritative status of *h* with respect to *s*,
- (iv) the greater will be the need for optionality, and correspondingly for indirectness, in the expression of an impositive, if *s* is to observe the Tact Maxim,

the (probably deliberate non-explicit) relation to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) concept of linguistic politeness becomes obvious: Levels of (intentional) indirectness in a concrete situational context are based on the estimation of speaker relationships – the mutual measurement of power, social distance and rate of imposition by interlocutors. There is thus a correlation between the level of indirectness and the (assessed) nature of the speaker relationship that has been shown to determine characteristic types of speech situations.

In this connection the basic assumption about situational style and the extent of conversational indirectness (as an expression of conversational redress) comes into play and can be stated as follows: Formal and informal speech styles can be distinguished by their degree of intentional indirectness and hence by the extent of conversational redress that is reflected in this degree. That is, formal speech styles will theoretically require a higher degree of intentional indirectness (implying a higher degree of conversational redress) than informal speech styles will do. This is assumed because the characteristic speaker relationship determining different situation types necessitates appropriate language use. Put differently, the constellation of the three sociological variables of 'power', 'distance' and 'rate of imposition', which define the nature of speaker relations in different types of situations, can have an impact on the level of conversational redress (and hence on the level of indirectness) with which communicative intentions are verbalized in conversation. Accordingly, it was discussed above that informal situations are typically characterized by the relevance of familiarity between speakers while (a difference in) social power is of minor relevance only. These situations characteristically feature friends as interlocutors. From this it follows that the overall informal nature of the communicative situation theoretically admits the application of less indirect language. Friends may potentially talk with each other less indirectly than speakers who are socially more distant to each other. The informal speech style that is in accordance with the informality of the speech situation then consequentially implies the use of less indirect language.<sup>226</sup> Formal situations, on the other hand, it was argued are

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<sup>225</sup> He does make a reference, though, to the original concept by Brown and Gilman (1960).

<sup>226</sup> Of course, in practice, the level of intentional indirectness is also always a matter of the actual weight of imposition that a personal intention is accredited with, even among friends. Informal speech styles thus do not exclude high levels of indirectness. The point here is simply to state a general tendency. If the intention of a friend heavily imposes on the personal freedom of the other one within an informal situation, a respective level of intentional indirectness may of course be chosen in order to reduce the overall impact and to provide for the successful communication of this intention. Thus, even among close friends there is a difference between

characterized by their interlocutors' low degree of familiarity and the relevance of the power factor. This constellation has to be considered in the application of speech and the overall formal nature of the situational context will thus be reflected in the use of more indirect speech strategies.

Linguistic indirectness is *the* integral constituent of Brown's and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness in which an increasing risk of face loss through linguistic actions is compensated via linguistic strategies increasingly indirect in character thereby expressing increasing levels of politeness. Consequently, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), the more indirect a speech strategy, the more polite it will be in character.<sup>227</sup> In this connection it should not be forgotten that politeness in speech is not to be understood as a rule of behaviour in the form of 'you ought to be polite in conversation'. Linguistic politeness is to be seen as a truly strategic behaviour in result-orientated conversation in order to achieve the communicative goal of successfully fulfilling personal intentions. Accordingly, different levels of politeness – as expressed in different levels of indirectness – are applied in speech based on the estimation of what is necessary linguistically for the successful communication of personal intentions in different types of situational contexts.

#### At a glance:

### LINGUISTIC POLITENESS

- Formal and informal styles can be distinguished by their degree of expected necessary conversational redress (reflected in degrees of intentional indirectness):

#### Formal style:

- Expected comparatively high degree of conversational redress  
↓
- Assumed high degree of intentional indirectness
- Therefore more polite in character

#### Informal style:

- Allows comparatively low degree of conversational redress  
↓
- Assumed possible low degree of intentional indirectness
- Therefore less polite in character

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intending to borrow another friend's drilling machine or his or her Harley Davidson. The actual overall weightiness of the communicative intention has to be properly and appropriately realized in speech.

<sup>227</sup> Cf. in this connection Brown and Levinson (1987: 134) stating that "indirect speech acts function as *hedges* on illocutionary force [...]" (Italics are taken over from the authors). Thus, their use may be regarded as reflecting linguistic politeness.

### The linguistic means of indirectness

In the discussion of their theory Brown and Levinson (1987) illustrate a range of different speech strategies that can fulfil the function of the different *on record* and *off record* super-strategies of politeness they present. Based on their discussion of these strategies, it should be possible to illustrate the linguistic means of indirectness. That is, we should be able to determine the linguistic elements characterizing different levels of indirectness. Figure 9 below shows the super-strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) representing the basic choices a speaker has with regard to the verbalization of his/her communicative intention and its connected risk of face threat. The super-strategies, as introduced above, differ with respect to their degree of indirectness. Thus, the higher the number of a strategy that is chosen, the more indirect this strategy is in character. Based on the estimated amount of face threat connected to a communicative intention, a higher or lower-numbered super-strategy will be chosen by the communicatively competent speaker in order to compensate for this threat. There is, accordingly, a correlation between the risk of face threat and the level of indirectness required of a linguistic act. As Brown and Levinson put it, “[g]iven the [...] set of strategies, the more an act threatens S’s or H’s face, the more S will want to choose a higher-numbered [i. e. more indirect] strategy” (1987: 60). Among the possible strategies for doing face-threatening acts there is an increasing level of indirectness from bald on record over positive and negative politeness to off record strategies.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> Because it can be communicatively inefficient, strategy 5 ‘Don’t do the FTA’ is not considered. Also it should be noted that according to Brown and Levinson (1987) only off record strategies – strategies inviting conversational implicatures – are truly indirect in character. Positive and negative politeness strategies are direct strategies as they include, according to the authors, “one unambiguously attributable intention” (1987: 69). Speech acts such as the negatively polite “Can you pass the salt?” are frequently treated as cases of indirectness in the literature on the topic. Brown and Levinson (1987) argue that such speech acts are cases of conventional indirectness and are therefore not to be treated as indirect but as rather direct in character. That is, they have lost their indirect status because their use has become so conventionalized that there is no more any ambiguity present concerning an interpretation between a question for ability and a request for action. The authors refer to this as ‘on-record off-recordness’ (1987: 212). Indirectness in this discussion does include positive and negative politeness strategies and the term ‘indirectness’ refers to cases where personal intentions are expressed not in the most direct way – baldly according to Brown and Levinson (1987) – but rather indirectly and more complicated via additional linguistic elements that accompany the propositional content with the aim of reducing the threat to face in conversation.

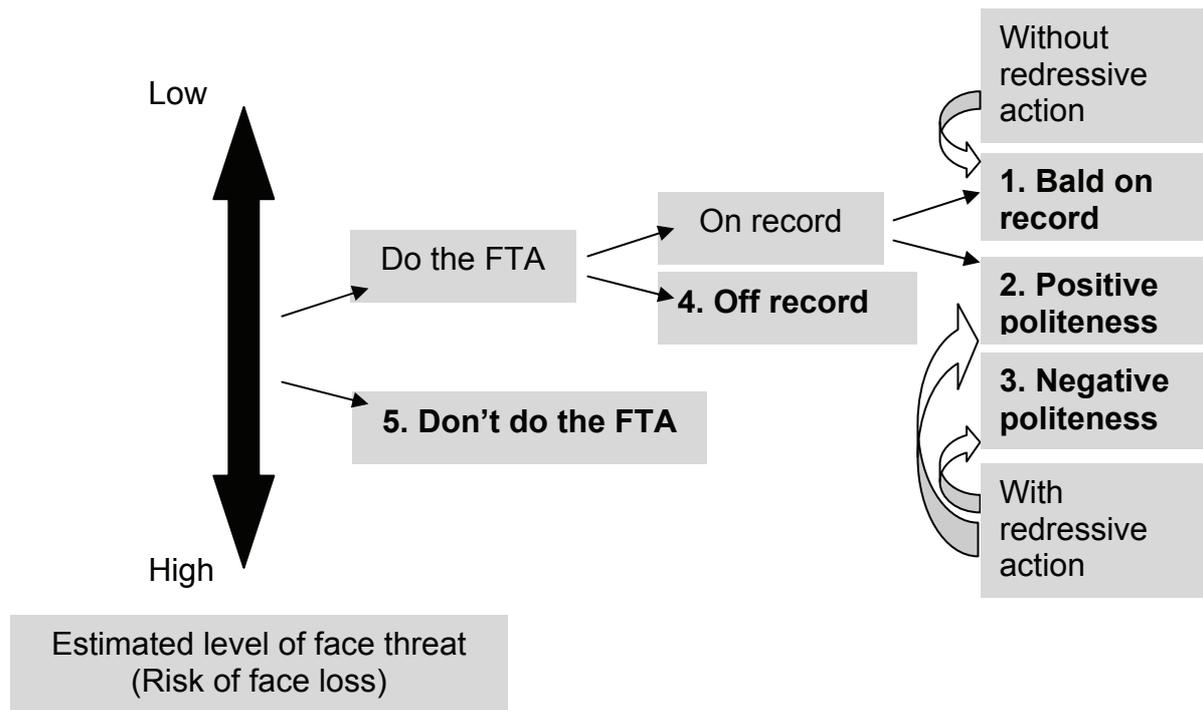


Figure 9: The super-strategies of politeness according to Brown/Levinson (1987)<sup>229</sup>

What does this consequently mean for the occurrence of super-strategies of politeness in formal and informal speech styles applied in respective formal and informal situations?

It was argued above that, based on their characteristic speaker relations, formal styles require a higher degree of intentional indirectness than informal styles do. Consequently, not every politeness super-strategy listed by Brown and Levinson (1987) is equally suitable for formal *and* informal styles. In informal styles any super-strategy is potentially thinkable without restriction. Any level of directness/indirectness may occur. Based on the rate of imposition of personal intentions and the connected estimation of a risk of face loss on the part of both the speaker and the addressee these intentions may then be verbalized either baldly without any redressive action or with linguistic action formally compensating for an estimated higher risk of face loss in the form of positive or negative politeness or off record strategies. Formal styles, on the other hand, seem to exclude bald on record strategies – the most direct formulation of personal intentions.<sup>230</sup> This can be based on their ultimate nature. The speaker constellation in formal situations characterized by the relevance of social power and given social distance implies an awareness of face stronger than that in informal situations. That is to say, in contrast to informal situations where the mutual ‘constituents’ of face are known to the interlocutors simply because the interlocutors are familiar with each

<sup>229</sup> Taken over and adapted from Brown and Levinson (1987: 60).

<sup>230</sup> Exceptions may be bald on record strategies applied in formal situations which are considered highly effective in occurring cases of urgent emergency such as warnings without face redress uttered for the benefit of the addressee. (See also Brown/Levinson’s (1987) cases of non-minimization of the face threat).

other, the unfamiliarity of the speakers in formal situations means that power relations have to be negotiated and face, consequently, has to be constructed interactively during the communicative process. The given social distance and possible power asymmetry have to be acknowledged and respected and the communicative means for the illustration of this acknowledgement is an appropriate level of indirectness that guarantees the success of the communication of personal intentions via reducing the threat to face. Bald on record strategies – except in cases of emergency – may be a sign of disrespecting the status quo of power and social distance thus creating a threat to face that may result in the failure of communicating intentions.

Which type of super-strategy can we expect then in informal and formal speech styles and their respective types of situational context?

### 1.) Formal speech situation:

- Characterized by a formal speech style with a required comparatively high degree of intentional indirectness

As explained above, the required degree of linguistic indirectness excludes Brown's and Levinson's (1987) super-strategy 1 of performing an FTA without redressive action. This leaves super-strategies 2 to 4. Super-strategies 3 (negative politeness) and 4 (off record strategies) can be regarded relatively unproblematically as proper candidates for the occurrence in formal styles. On the one hand, this is the case simply because they present the two highest levels of indirectness in the model provided by Brown and Levinson (1987). More convincingly, on the other hand, this is evident when the subordinate strategies discussed by the authors are considered. Accordingly, the strategies for performing negative politeness according to Brown and Levinson (1987) express the (required grade of) face-orientation that would be expected in formal speech situations. Their instructions for correct negatively polite linguistic behaviour<sup>231</sup> and the connected verbalization via subordinate strategies<sup>232</sup> all express the necessary acceptance of and respect for the addressee's face wants. An example can be used to illustrate the general 'mechanics' of negative politeness. Thus, let us assume speaker *A*'s desire is to borrow the car from a neighbour (s)he is unfamiliar with. Following Brown and Levinson (1987), *A* then can choose between the different super-strategies. As *A* wants his/her intention to be fulfilled, (s)he seeks for that strategy which promises to be most successful. Taking into consideration the addressee's face and the degree to which his/her future speech act may constitute a threat to the addressee's

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<sup>231</sup> 'Be direct' [i.e. conventionally indirect], 'Don't presume/assume', 'Don't coerce H', 'Communicate S's want to not impinge on H', 'Redress other wants of H's' (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129ff.).

<sup>232</sup> 'Be conventionally indirect', 'Question, hedge', 'Be pessimistic', 'Minimize the imposition', 'Give deference', 'Apologize', 'Impersonalize S and H', 'State the FTA as a general rule', 'Nominalize', 'Go on record as incurring a debt, or as not indebteding H' (cf. Brown and Levinson, 1987: 129ff.).

face, speaker *A* will avoid the bald on record version of ‘Lend me your car’. Instead, there is a general tendency towards a more indirect and more polite version via the use of a range of additional elements that help to mitigate the illocutionary force of the performed speech act: ‘I’m sorry I have to ask but could you possibly lend me your car?’ This version is force reducing by means of (1) being in the form of a question for action. This leaves the addressee with an option not to act as requested. (2) The speech act entails an apology for the imposition and (3) it contains the adverb ‘possibly’ as hedge on the illocutionary force. What happens here is that while the propositional content stays the same, the overall linguistic structure becomes more complex, that is longer, in character due to the inclusion of additional linguistic elements with the central strategic function of formally reducing the illocutionary force of the speech act.<sup>233</sup> Using the car-example, Brown and Levinson (1987: 142f.) illustrate the increasing complexity from the most direct ‘Lend me your car’ to the most indirect and complex ‘There wouldn’t I suppose be any chance of your being able to lend me your car for just a few minutes, would there?’

Off record strategies are the only truly indirect speech strategies according to Brown and Levinson (1987) and are therefore also highly suitable for formal styles of speech. The speaker creates conversational implicatures and, doing so, does not state the FTA directly, thereby reducing the potential risk of face loss. Accordingly, ‘My car has broken down’ leaves the addressee with two different readings, i. e. either the one of a simple statement or that of a directive request. The speaker then, with the possibility of referring to the statement reading, cannot be made responsible for having performed a concrete FTA.

What about the application of super-strategy 2 (positive politeness) in formal situations? Taking into consideration the characteristic speaker relationship (relevance of power and social distance) in formal situations, the question in this connection is which type of politeness is simply more likely? That is, which face wants will be considered with greater probability, positive or negative face wants? With reference to the speaker constellation it seems evident that positive politeness is inappropriate because its use presupposes a familiarity between the interlocutors that is actually non-existent. Its use in formal situations therefore is always accompanied by the ultimately higher risk of a threat to face. This risk can only be compensated for appropriately by the use of negative politeness. To sum up, while off record strategies and negative politeness are suitable candidates for application in a formal style due to their indirect nature, positive politeness is less likely a candidate as it lacks the required degree of indirectness and expression of deference – the acknowledgment of a given social distance.

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<sup>233</sup> Cf. in this connection the above mentioned additional dimension of cognitive effort in the definition of indirectness (Leech, 1983). The inclusion of additional illocutionary force reducing elements illustrates increased production effort on the part of the speaker.

## 2.) Informal speech situation:

- Characterized by an informal speech style with a comparatively low degree of intentional indirectness

Where the speaker relationship in formal situations excludes bald on record and positive politeness strategies, the explained speaker relationship in informal situations (familiarity and minor importance of the power factor) allows an inclusion of these strategies. Thus, in informal speech styles all four types of super-strategies discussed by Brown and Levinson (1987) may *potentially* occur. Whether they *actually* occur depends on the concrete situation. That is, as has been indicated above, a speaker in an informal situation may also prefer not to choose a bald on record or positive politeness strategy which, based on the given familiarity of the speakers, are theoretically possible, but maybe not appropriate strategies for the current purpose. Instead (s)he uses a negative politeness strategy which promises to be more successful than the more direct positive one. The speaker may decide so because the estimation of the ultimate weight of the FTA connected to his/her personal intention may require this. In other words, whether positive or rather negative politeness is chosen with friends in practice depends on the actual rate of imposition connected to a communicative intention. Negative politeness as well as off record strategies are thus also proper candidates for informal situations; they are not restricted to formal ones.

## Situational style and linguistic modality

Classic typological approaches to the description of modality within linguistic semantics typically refer to the basic distinction between epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality as the three central modal categories (e.g. Lyons, 1977; Palmer, 1990, 1986 and 2001).<sup>234</sup> Modality, as a semantic category, denotes a speaker's qualification of a state of affairs, i.e. of what (s)he states in the proposition (e.g. Nuyts, 2001). Any communicatively competent (native) speaker of a language characteristically has a range of language-specific grammatical and/or lexical modality markers at his or her disposal by means of which (s)he qualifies, and thus modifies, the propositional content whenever (s)he feels the need to do so. As a consequence, modality, in this sense, has an influence on the truth value of the proposition. Epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality are the categories whereby this qualification is performed in spoken (and written) language and epistemic, deontic and dynamic modal meanings are typically, though not exclusively, expressed by the modal auxiliaries – in this case those of English.

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<sup>234</sup> Lyons (1977) focuses on epistemic versus deontic modality. See Palmer (1990) for the definition of a modal system including all three terms. In Palmer (1986) the author favors a two-term system of epistemic and deontic modality. A second and completely revised edition of Palmer (1986) is Palmer (2001) in which epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality are classified as subcategories of either one of the two basic types of modal supercategories labelled *propositional modality* and *event modality*.

Epistemic modality is knowledge-oriented in character referring to “the state of a proposition in terms of knowledge and belief [...]” (Nuyts, 2006: 9). Accordingly, a speaker can modify the propositional content in accordance with his or her individual knowledge status. Thus, (s)he may choose between *he is at home* and *he may be at home*, to give a simple example. The proposition in both versions is the same but while semantically the former constitutes a factual statement, the epistemic modal meaning of the auxiliary *may* in the latter has an influence on the proposition in that its application functions to restrict the factual character implied by the former version. In examples like this one, speakers’ modifications, i.e. qualifications, of a state of affairs therefore also express these speakers’ degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition and saying *he may be at home* consequently reflects that they are not fully committed to the truth of what they state in the proposition:<sup>235</sup> *He may be at home* indicates a speaker’s assumption but not his/her definite knowledge about the referent’s presence at home. The speaker is unsure in this respect and signals his/her insecurity via the application of linguistic elements with epistemic modal meanings thereby restricting the factuality of the proposition.<sup>236</sup>

Deontic modality, on the other hand, is action-oriented by nature pertaining to actions to be performed either by the speaker himself/herself or by other speakers.<sup>237</sup> In this sense, deontic modality typically covers notions such as permission and obligation (cf. Nuyts, 2001: 25; Nuyts, 2006: 4). E.g. *he may/can go home now* constitutes a permission on the part of the speaker directed at the referent of the utterance.

Finally, dynamic modality is concerned with abilities/potentials and needs/necessities on the part of the speaker and possible other speakers, i.e. “of any participant in the state of affairs” (cf. Nuyts, 2006: 4). Accordingly, the above-mentioned example *he can go home* does not only include a deontic interpretation but it also incorporates a possible dynamic modal meaning in that the referent in question is able to go home (on his own), for example, based on a regained physical ability to walk after the cure of a broken leg. Examples like this one or like *Pete is perfectly able to solve this problem if he wants to* given by Nuyts (2006: 3) thus reflect “an ascription of a capacity to the subject-participant of the clause (the subject is able to perform the action expressed by the main verb in the clause), [...]” (Nuyts, 2006: 3).

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<sup>235</sup> Cf. Palmer (1986: 51/121) on the definition of the term ‘epistemic’ saying that it “should apply [...] to any modal system that indicates the degree of commitment by the speaker to what he says.” Accordingly, epistemic modality “is concerned [...] with the expression of the degree or nature of the speaker’s commitment to the truth of what he says.”

<sup>236</sup> For a detailed analysis of the linguistic elements expressing epistemic modality in Dutch, German and English see, for example, Nuyts (2001), who focuses on a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, or Palmer (1986 and 2001), whose description of linguistic modality also covers a variety of Non-European languages.

<sup>237</sup> Cf. Palmer (1986: 121): Deontic modality “is concerned with language as action, mostly with the expression by the speaker of his attitude towards possible actions by himself and others.”

### ‘Utterance modality’ and ‘speaker’s modality’

As qualifications of a state of affairs, all three types of modality typically have in common an expression by the speaker of his/her evaluation of what (s)he states in the proposition. In other words, a speaker’s modification of the propositional content also always implies his/her individual evaluation of and thus his/her personal attitude towards uttered states of affairs.<sup>238</sup> It seems then that modality as defined above is inherently subjective in nature, an aspect which is also considered by Palmer (1986: 16f.).<sup>239</sup>

For the current purpose of discussing the occurrence of linguistic modality in situational styles this assumption of subjectivity underlying the three modal categories is important in so far as the argumentation of the current author will be based on a distinction between what is called here ‘utterance modality’ – which includes the three classic modal categories – and ‘speaker’s modality’ which is to refer to the expression of the speaker’s subjective attitude towards what (s)he says. In the classical literature on modality such a distinction, i.e. with reference to an explicit category of speaker’s modality including speaker view, is typically not made. Instead, descriptions of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality usually include the subjective speaker view as integral part of modality, i. e. utterance modality (e.g. Palmer, 1986). In the literature the underlying subjectivity ascribed to the classic modal categories is characteristically reflected not only in their shared status as attitudinal categories but rather also in the use of such terms as ‘epistemic evaluation’ or ‘epistemic stance’ (e.g. Biber et al., 1999, chapter 12 on the grammatical marking of stance) or the reference to ‘subjective modality’ (versus ‘objective modality’) through Lyons (1977) (which is also taken up for discussion by Palmer, 1986). That a formal distinction between the speaker’s subjective perspective (speaker’s modality) and actual utterance modality is not present in the classic literature on the topic can, however, particularly be seen in the use of what Nuyts (2001) labels ‘mental state predicates’ or ‘propositional attitude predicates’ respectively, which serve to support the expression of different modal meanings. These predicates include lexical elements such as *I think that...*, or *I believe that...* as in *I think (that) he is probably ill*.<sup>240</sup> In examples like this, the proposition is modified via the modal adverb *probably* which assigns an epistemic modal meaning to the propositional content. The mental state predicate *think* in this connection functions to make the speaker attitude and thus his/her degree of commitment towards the uttered state of affairs explicit. *I think* is frequently discussed within the category of epistemic modality though usually without any separate emphasis on the fact that, by using

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<sup>238</sup> Cf., for example, Nuyts (2006: 17f.) referring to the shared status of the modal categories as attitudinal categories. Likewise, Palmer (2003: 7), referring to epistemic modality only, says that it “is concerned solely with the speaker’s attitude to status of the proposition.”

<sup>239</sup> “Modality in language is [...] concerned with subjective characteristics of an utterance, and it could even be further argued that subjectivity is an essential criterion for modality. Modality could, that is to say, be defined as the grammaticalization of speakers’ (subjective) attitudes and opinions. [...] [I]f modality is concerned with the attitudes and opinions of the speaker, subjectivity is clearly basic” (Palmer, 1986: 16/17).

<sup>240</sup> Other examples of mental state predicates apart from *think* – as the prime example – and *believe* are *doubt*, *know*, *suppose* and *guess* (cf. Nuyts, 2001: 109). According to the author, this is, however, not an exhaustive list.

it, the speaker states his/her personal view towards what (s)he says explicitly (e.g. Palmer, 1986; Biber et al., 1999 and also Nuyts, 2001 who devotes himself completely to the discussion of epistemic modality). This may be connected to the defined status of all three modal categories as qualificational, i.e. attitudinal categories, which involve the speaker perspective as an inherent feature and which is therefore probably not given any explicit reference.

Herein lies the central difference to the definition of linguistic modality in connection with a discussion of contextual styles at this point. Examples like *I think (that) he is probably ill* containing a mental state predicate by means of which the speaker makes his/her personal view towards a state of affairs transparent will be referred to as ‘speaker’s modality’ while those examples lacking the overt expression of the speaker’s perspective will be labelled ‘utterance modality’ incorporating the three traditional modal categories of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality: *He is probably ill*. Let us stick to the current example for a moment in order to explain this in more detail:

- (1) *He is ill.*
- (2) *He is probably ill.*
- (3) *I think (that) he is probably ill.*
- (4) *I think (that) he is ill.*

Example (1) is an outright statement of fact. The speaker/writer commits himself/herself fully to the truth of what (s)he states in the proposition.

Example (2), on the other hand, is a typical instance of epistemic modality with the modal adverb *probably* contributing an epistemic modal meaning to the uttered state of affairs. The modal adverb therefore influences the proposition in that via its use the speaker is not fully committed any longer to the truth of the proposition. The factuality of (1) is thus restricted respectively. In other words, what the speaker does here is expressing his or her knowledge (status) about the likelihood of a state of affairs which (s)he signals to potential addressees.

Example (3) reflects the same epistemic modal meaning as (2) with the exception that (3) has a stronger focus on the subjective perspective of the speaker as it contains the mental state predicate *think* whereby the speaker, in deictically referring back to himself/herself, overtly expresses his/her personal attitude towards the uttered state of affairs. This self-referentiality and explicit statement of speaker attitude respectively is fundamentally missing in (2). Exactly this is what is labelled ‘speaker’s modality’ here: the overt expression of personal speaker perspective (i.e. attitude) on a subject matter via stance markers such as the mental state predicates/propositional attitude predicates *think* or *believe*. (Other lexical elements marking speaker stance – the expression of personal attitudes or feelings/emotions – include valuating adjectives and their superlatives (e.g. *nice, beautiful, terrific, wonderful...* and attitudinal/emotional opposites such as *nasty, ugly, awful, horrible...*), valuating (sentence) adverbs (e.g. *(un)fortunately, interestingly, incredibly, absolutely...*), as well as a range of

possible lexical items expressing a speaker's present emotions (e.g. adjectival: 'I was *happy*...', verbal: 'I *love* to...').<sup>241</sup> Thus, whenever a speaker makes use of one of these lexical elements whereby (s)he underlines his/her personal opinion and/or expresses current emotional states, this is referred to as 'speaker's modality' in this work.

Semantically, in contrast to the modal adverb *probably*, the mental state predicate *think* in (3) does not have an influence on the truth value of the proposition. That is, while *probably* evidently modifies the propositional content in so far as it expresses the speaker's degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition, *think* does not do so. Rather *think* is a stylistic addition that supports and intensifies the expression of speaker attitude towards the uttered state of affairs as reflected in the modal element *probably*. Therefore, although *think* conveys epistemic stance, it does not itself contribute anything to the truth value of the proposition. In other words then, the basic distinction between 'utterance modality' – the three traditional modal categories of epistemic, deontic and dynamic modality – and 'speaker's modality' as defined above is in terms of their degree of influence on the proposition. Whereas 'utterance modality' influences the propositional content, 'speaker's modality' does not have such an influence.

In fact, example (4) is a more problematic case concerning a clear distinction between 'utterance modality' and 'speaker's modality' as defined here. As indicated above, examples like (4) (or (3)) or the one used by Nuyts (2001: 29: *I think/believe/...they have run out of fuel*) are treated as cases of epistemic modality and thus as cases of utterance modality, leaving aside respective considerations of explicit speaker perspective. In fact, there seem to be two readings of the mental state predicate *think*. On the one hand, *think* may be interpreted as 'in my opinion' ('I *personally* think (that)...') thus reflecting speaker attitude. In this case it may be defined as an instance of 'speaker's modality'. For example, (4) seems to be the semantic equivalent to (1). As in (1) the speaker/writer in (4) commits himself/herself fully to the truth of the proposition. In this reading *I think* then simply constitutes a linguistic addition, i.e. a stylistic means applied by the speaker/writer in order to emphasize his/her personal view: 'in my opinion he is ill'. At the same time, it seems clear, however, that there is also an epistemic reading to (4), especially when we consider (4) in connection with (3). Thus, *I think* may also be regarded as an expression of uncertainty: 'I am not really sure but I think that he is (probably) ill'. In this connection (4) seems to be less epistemic in nature than (3) which features the additional epistemic marker *probably*.

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<sup>241</sup> See in this connection also Biber et al. (1999: 974f.) for a more detailed list of attitudinal stance markers including those presented here.

### ‘Utterance modality’ and ‘speaker’s modality’ in situational styles

When we consider situational styles, we can state without doubt that, in principle, both utterance *and* speaker’s modality can and will be used in formal as well as in informal speech styles within spontaneous everyday conversation. The two types of communicative style generally admit high levels of subjectivity via the interlocutors’ mutual expression of personal views and opinions towards each other and towards the subject matters focused on in conversational encounters. Since speakers in everyday conversation act in their social ‘roles’ as private persons with personal communicative interests and intentions underlying the performance of speech acts, this is not surprising.<sup>242</sup> In fact, Biber et al. (1999) dedicate one chapter of their *Grammar of Spoken and Written English* to the occurrence of linguistic modality across different spoken and written registers, including conversation as spoken register.<sup>243</sup> In this connection, the authors point out that especially conversation makes frequent use of different grammatical devices marking speaker stance which is due to “[...] the high personal involvement of conversation, where it is always topical to talk about oneself, [and thus] it is not surprising that stance markers are used most frequently in this register” (1999: 979).

Also Eggins and Slade (1997) discuss the occurrence of linguistic modality as part of the grammar of what they refer to as ‘casual conversation’ which corresponds to informal (spontaneous) everyday conversation in this work, i.e. conversation featuring an overall informal style of speech.

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<sup>242</sup> The degree to which a speaker actually states his or her personal views and opinions in a concrete case of interaction may be defined as being based on the individual speaker constellation in this case. Thus, while a high level of familiarity between speakers may admit an equally high level of interpersonal subjectivity, a low level of familiarity between interlocutors may well function to restrict the expression of personal opinions and views in order to minimize the level of threat to face. This is based on the assumption that every speech act is potentially face-threatening and this capacity of communicative acts will be of special significance in those speech situations which feature interlocutors with a characteristic lack of familiarity in so far as this lack will imply that the overt and blunt statement of speaker opinion may carry a higher risk of face threat than in those situations defined by the familiarity between speakers. This is also a significant aspect when it comes to institutional speech situations which are typically defined by participant relations of reduced familiarity, and, more generally, greater social distance. Hence, the use of a formal speech style as part of an overarching institutional talk that is appropriately applied in the institutional speech situation also involves both utterance and speaker’s modality, but we may assume that the expression and actual degree of the latter is characteristically influenced by the interactants’ social distance that defines their relationship. (This social distance can be seen as the ultimate result of the particular constellation of the three sociological parameters of ‘familiarity’, ‘power’ and ‘rate of imposition’ in the institutional speech situation in combination with the adoption of communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’ and the accompanying application of role-oriented politeness that is associated with the role of ‘agent’). That is, we may assume a reduced occurrence of speaker’s modality on the part of agents since they act in their roles as representatives of an institution and on behalf of an institution, but not in their ‘roles’ as private persons with individual attitudes and orientations. Consequently, the evaluations by agents of persons/objects/events etc. in the institution-specific discourse with clients can be determined to be restricted to those that relate to their fulfilment of their particular institutional role. In short, speaker’s modality does occur but is generally limited in so far as it is role-based only. This is different with clients. Since they do not act on behalf of an institution they are potentially less restricted in this respect as concerns their expression of personal attitudes and opinions in the institutional discourse (although, of course, misbehaviour may be sanctioned).

<sup>243</sup> See Biber et al. (1999), ch. 12: ‘The grammatical marking of stance’.

Of special interest for the purpose of this paper is what happens when we leave the level of spontaneous everyday conversation and take a look at institutional talk, i.e. with respect to talk on television here. As is discussed in detail in part III, television talk includes both formal, i.e. institutional, and informal, i.e. private, talk as based on the two major communicative functions of information and entertainment underlying featured television formats.<sup>244</sup> As their name indicates, situational styles are speech styles functioning in different types of speech situations. Accordingly, a formal style was explained here as appropriate for use in formal situations while an informal style is regarded as suitable for use in informal situations. A communicatively competent (native) speaker then adapts his/her individual speech style to the assessed nature of the communicative context.

When we consider linguistic formality and informality within televised media talk, the following is meant: As is the case with situational styles in spontaneous everyday conversation, also formal and informal styles featured on television serve as appropriate communicative means in different types of 'televised' speech situations. These situations are characteristically determined by the television format itself and its connected communicative function of either information or entertainment (or a mixture of both) which is realized linguistically via the application of format-specific language, i.e. either formal or informal in character depending on the communicative function that is predominant in the concrete case. In other words, it is assumed in general that a formal linguistic variety will serve best the information function ascribed to the mass media in an information-oriented television format (e.g. the classic German public-service news format *Tagesschau*) while an informal linguistic variety will serve best the entertainment function in an entertainment-based television format (e.g. diverse daytime talk shows as featured in American and German television).

In particular this means that a formal style featured on television and serving the information of the audience implies the application of language that is reduced to the pure transmission of (factual) information, i.e. of facts unbiased in character. Formality with respect to television talk then also implies a characteristic linguistic objectivity that minimizes any psychological impact on the audience in one or the other direction. This use of language with a clear focus on objective information transport constitutes a communicative restriction to the content level of speech and therefore an exclusion of the relationship level. The latter is a fundamental component of everyday conversation by means of which speakers manage their social relationships. As speakers are individuals with personal opinions and diverse communicative intentions, this management necessarily includes high degrees of linguistic subjectivity and is reflected emotionality in the use of a range of affective elements and the occurrence of linguistic modality as discussed above.

The relationship level is of importance for a definition of an informal style featured on television. The general commercialization and tabloidization of contemporary mass media

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<sup>244</sup> Let us neglect for a moment those creative mixtures of information and entertainment labelled *infotainment* or *docutainment*.

contents is accompanied by a process of conversationalization of public, i.e. institutional media, language. Accordingly, with respect to television, we find that informal everyday conversation with its characteristic subjectivity and emotionality on the relationship level is increasingly applied within the settings of television and becomes an integral part of television language as a strategic and stylistic means to fulfil the entertainment function.<sup>245</sup> With the inclusion of the relationship level the factuality, i.e. linguistic objectivity, found on the content level is then necessarily lost and the pure transmission of factual information steps into the background in favour of a subjective use of language characterized by various elements of linguistic emotionalization functioning to emotionally move the audience and by means of this to evoke a feeling of entertainment. (In this connection, entertainment of the audience can mean both relaxation and tension, i.e. the creation of positive and/or negative emotions). Thus, such elements are deliberately, i.e. strategically, applied by the institution in order to achieve and fulfil the entertainment function. Their use then implies and aims at a ‘cognitive manipulation’ of the audience in the direction of entertainment. This manipulation takes place in the form of an emotional movement of the audience. Accordingly, while linguistic formality on television typically includes a linguistic objectivity with the communicative aim of minimizing any psychological impact on the audience, linguistic informality on television maximizes this impact for the benefit of entertainment, and thus, finally, for the benefit of assumed audience attraction.

Having defined what is meant by linguistic formality and informality with respect to television talk, let us return to linguistic modality and consider its occurrence in formal and informal styles featured on television.

#### Linguistic modality in formal and informal television talk

In this connection it is especially speaker’s modality that is of interest here and the basic assumption about this type of modality is that there will be a difference concerning its occurrence in formal and informal styles within spontaneous everyday conversation and in formal as well as informal institutional, i.e. televised, media talk. That is, while it is acknowledged that *both* types of situational style in everyday conversation basically admit speaker’s modality, the underlying assumption for formal and informal talk on television is that the latter does imply this type of modality while the former does not. This assumption is based on the foregoing discussion about the occurrence and suitability of formal and informal styles in information and entertainment-oriented television formats. It was stated accordingly that a formal style will serve best the linguistic demands of an information-oriented television format and that an informal style will do so in an entertainment-based television format.

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<sup>245</sup> For more detailed information on tabloidization and the linguistic process of conversationalization see chapter 3.

Let us first consider informal television talk. Why can we claim the occurrence of speaker's modality especially and exclusively in this linguistic variety? It is explained in chapter 3 that with the process of conversationalization features of informal everyday conversation are introduced into the public language of media content production. Consequently, it can be hypothesized that with conversationalization also speaker's modality enters informal television language simply due to the fact that, as we have seen, it constitutes a significant part of (formal and informal) everyday conversation.

A typical entertainment-based television format is the classical talk show format with its contemporary sub-format of the daytime talk show. The conceptual design of the daytime talk show format includes the 'performance' of ordinary persons talking about their everyday problems on stage which offers them the space for more or less extensive self-presentation.<sup>246</sup> As those persons act in their common everyday social 'roles' as ordinary speakers, the occurrence of speaker's modality is highly imaginable especially if we consider the daytime talk show's specific concern with the mentioned personal problems which are dealt with publicly on stage and not, as is the normal case, within the private sphere. As they constitute 'personal' problems usually in the form of a disturbance of interpersonal relationships, their treatment necessarily includes high levels of subjectivity in order to regain relational balance independent of the fact whether they are discussed in the private or the public sphere. In other words, the immediate involvement of the speaker (i.e. the talk show guest) in the focussed-on problem ultimately implies this speaker's emotionality and therefore his or her linguistic subjectivity in the public discussion of this problem on stage. The basic assumption in this connection is that this linguistic subjectivity will then also be reflected in the application of speaker's modality – the communication of personal viewpoints.

When we turn to formal television talk and take into consideration that a formal style is described above as the appropriate linguistic variety within an information-oriented television format, the resulting basic assumption is a characteristic absence of speaker's modality in this linguistic variety. The reason lies in the above mentioned reduction of such television formats to the pure content level of speech in presenting factual information unbiased in character. Such objective information of the audience then necessarily requires the absence of any expression of speaker stance in format-specific formal talk featured on television. In chapter 7.1.1 it is discussed that the ideal informative language, on the content level, roughly corresponds to the Gricean conversational maxims.

The prototypical, purely information-based television format is generally the news format, e.g. the German public-service news program *Tagesschau*, and we can expect that, in fulfilling its information function, it will be characterized by a lack of speaker's modality.

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<sup>246</sup> See chapter 7.2 for more detailed information on the talk show format including the daytime talk show.

These are then the basic expectations concerning the probable occurrence of speaker's modality in format-specific formal and informal television talk. Unfortunately, it seems that such a characterization, in practice, turns out to be more difficult than just proposed especially in other cases. That is, there are television formats which are not clearly information or entertainment-oriented but instead have a communicative focus lying somewhere in-between the two directions which is popularly referred to as *infotainment* – a conceptual mix between information and entertainment of the audience. What about the appearance of speaker's modality in such hybrid cases?

Of scientific interest in this connection is especially the magazine format featured on German television. The concept of the magazine format is 'open' or 'heterogeneous' in character in that it generally allows a range of diverse text types which, based on the type of magazine and its individual conception, can be both information-oriented and/or entertainment-oriented. That is, according to its overall structural conception, the magazine format *as such* does generally not pre-determine which text types can occur and in which order they can occur in a magazine-styled program and thus it is conceptually 'open' in this respect.<sup>247</sup> (As opposed to structurally more static formats such as the above mentioned German public-service news program *Tagesschau* which is classically restricted in the number and type of texts it features). Because the magazine format is so versatile in its structural conception, it is not by chance that we find so many magazine types on German television, e.g. news magazines, political magazines, health magazines, or the referred to tabloid magazines which, except for health magazines, will also be focussed on in chapter 7.3. The advantage of the 'magazine' format is that so many otherwise thematically diverse contents can simply be put together and joined freely under the label 'magazine'.

As there are diverse magazine types, the predominant communicative functions they aim to fulfil can be equally diverse. That is, magazines can basically cover a wide range of communicative functions from mainly pure entertainment (the tabloid magazine) over objective information (news magazine) to a mixture of both, i.e. infotainment which can itself be either more information- or entertainment-based. In other words, the heterogeneity that determines the format's structural conception can also be applied to the communicative aim(s) underlying their broadcast. With respect to our scientific interest in the occurrence of linguistic modality in the magazine format we can therefore assume that speaker's modality will be present to differing degrees in this format as such and that consequently the actual extent of this type of modality will be dependent on the type of magazine that is investigated

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<sup>247</sup> However, that is not to mean that such programs are unstructured. In fact, we usually find that magazine-styled programs, just as other television programs, aim at a characteristic, i.e. program-specific, structural organization and visual presentation of broadcast contents with the underlying aim of increasing the program's recognition on the part of the audience. Tabloid magazines, for example, make frequent use of certain thematic blocks ('lifestyle', 'celebrities', etc.) which are often introduced by means of a specific visual style which makes these blocks recognizable for the viewer. They usually recur in every new broadcast of the program and in this way they characteristically contribute to its visual identification.

in the individual case. Accordingly, in theory we would expect an entertainment-oriented tabloid magazine to feature speaker's modality to a comparatively higher degree than, for example, a news magazine with a predominant information orientation.

This then leaves us with the following general and concluding assumption about the occurrence of speaker's modality in televised media contents: If objective information of the addressee in information-based formats such as the news format is (ideally) characterized via the absence of speaker's modality, then likewise it can be assumed that with a deviation from the pure information function towards a stronger focus on the entertainment function in the broadcast of television contents, there will be an increase in the subjective presentation of these contents which implies an increase in the use of speaker's modality.

As noted before, this is the theory, but what about the practice? Again it seems that such a specification of speaker's modality on television is not as easy as stated here and the basic hypothesis concerning its occurrence in different television formats seems to oversimplify the matter. Chapter 7 is concerned with the news format, the talk show format and especially with a detailed linguistic analysis of the magazine format, and it will be seen in how far the basic assumption made here matches the actual results found in the analysis. That is, it will be shown whether – and if so, in how far – the basic assumption needs to be refined in practice.

For the moment, the following remarks shall suffice to illustrate the general problem: (1) In chapter 7.3.1 it will be discussed that the presenter hosting the magazine can play a significant role in the occurrence of speaker's modality as the concept of the presenter in the magazine implies (the fulfilment of) different institutional functions which are specifically ascribed to the presenter and which, in fact, incorporate the application of speaker's modality.

(2) It has to be noted that the prediction of the absence of speaker's modality in the – by definition – information-oriented news format is in some cases rather a structural ideal than reality. Meanwhile there exist different news formats on the German television market produced by the two types of broadcaster, i.e. public-service and private/commercial. While the former traditionally sticks to the ideal of objective information, the latter partly features a more entertainment-based, subjective presentation of news contents in the form that especially in connection with soft news – 'light' or popular news often with a focus on celebrities – speaker's modality can be and often is applied. That is, we find that news presenters often provide a short final (personal) comment on foregoing soft news contents.

(3) Due to the heterogeneous conception of the magazine format as such, also the news magazine allows a range of different text types that are information-based but also opinion-based in character, such as the commentary typically featured in this type of magazine which is usually explicitly introduced as the text type 'commentary' by the news magazine's presenter and performed by a speaker authorized as a specialist on a particular topic of interest previously focused on in the magazine.

Consequently, this means that, strictly speaking, speaker's modality *does*, in fact, *also* occur in the ultimately information-oriented news format. What is interesting in this connection is how the occurrence of speaker's modality in this format is treated by the media – in this case television – in order to perform and stick to the information function – the transmission of factual information.<sup>248</sup>

(4) Indicated in (3), the structural heterogeneity of the magazine format illustrates that when we intend to investigate the occurrence and distribution of speaker's modality it is important to distinguish not only between different broadcast formats and the communicative functions associated with these formats, but also to make an additional characterization of the individual text types featured in a concrete program and in different formats. The general occurrence of speaker's modality is thus assumed to be both format-dependent *and* text type dependent. Broadcast formats are structurally organized into format and program-specific units of talk, i.e. text types, which characterize the individual format/program of the format. These text types are themselves structured linguistically in such a way as to fulfil best the predominant communicative function of the format. Therefore, the conception of the same text type can be different in different formats with different communicative functions. Accordingly, the overall structural organization of the text type 'interview' featured in the informative news format can be fundamentally different from the interview found in the predominantly entertaining talk show. That is, we can expect a (structural) difference between a news interview and a talk show interview as based on the underlying communicative function to be fulfilled by a broadcast format. This structural difference refers to relative (linguistic) objectivity (= the news interview) versus relative (linguistic) subjectivity (= the talk show interview). In other words, the choice and actual (linguistic) realization of one and the same text type such as the interview is dependent on the communicative intention of the format in which it is featured.

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<sup>248</sup> Valuating statements, for example, are typically attributed to third persons – so-called news actors – in the media.

**At a glance**

**LINGUISTIC MODALITY**

**Basic assumptions:**

**EVERYDAY CONVERSATION**

**Formal style and informal style**

- Use of utterance modality in both styles
- Speaker's modality is used in formal and informal styles due to the personal involvement of speakers
- Degree of speaker's modality (interpersonal subjectivity) is influenced by the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors:  
**High level of familiarity** = possible high degree of speaker's modality  
**Low level of familiarity** = reduction in speaker's modality

**At a glance**

**LINGUISTIC MODALITY**

**Basic assumptions:**

**INSTITUTIONAL TALK**

**Formal style**

- Use of utterance modality and speaker's modality
- Use of speaker's modality is influenced by the speakers' social relations in the institutional speech situation

**TELEVISION**

**Formal television talk**

- The appropriate linguistic means to serve best the information function in an information-oriented television format
- IN THEORY: Ideally there is no speaker's modality to be expected in information-oriented formats as based on the requirement of factual (= objective) information
- IN PRACTICE?

**Informal television talk**

- The appropriate linguistic means to serve best the entertainment function in an entertainment-oriented television format
- Entertainment implies the subjective presentation of television contents achieved via the use of speaker's modality (= linguistic subjectivity)

Situational style and associated forms of linguistic (inter)action: speech activities and speech events

This final level of distinction is strongly connected to the nature of the institutional or non-institutional, i.e. everyday, speech situation, each involving a situation-specific constellation

of speaker relations and the application of situation-appropriate (formal or informal) forms of talk that have been determined here as institutional talk or private talk (everyday conversation). The social relations between the interlocutors in institutionally framed contexts of speech are determined, firstly, by the adoption of the communicative roles of ‘agent’ and ‘client’ which imply the (predominant) use of role-oriented politeness. Secondly, they are fundamentally defined by the particular constellation of the three sociological variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’ in the institutional speech situation (cf. chapter 6.2.2.2). Not only the specific constellation of these three variables, but also the expectable application of role-oriented politeness in the institutional speech situation reveals a significant social distance between agent(s) and client(s) in so far as it reflects a general lack of interest in the addressee and hence a lack of personal involvement – two aspects whose presence so fundamentally characterizes everyday conversation.

Linguistically, this social distance will be expressed in the use of an assumed high grade of conversational redress in the form of negative politeness, that is, linguistic independence strategies (cf. chapter 5.2.3). More generally, this entails all speech strategies that emphasize the present social distance between agent(s) and client(s) in the institutionally framed context of speech.

The social relations between the interactants in everyday speech situations are characterized by the opposite: the use of person-oriented politeness that reveals a general interest in the addressee and consequently a (high) personal involvement in what is being talked about. It is this personal involvement that is mirrored in the presence of speaker’s modality – the expression of speaker attitude – in both formal and informal speech styles (cf. the preceding section on situational style and linguistic modality). Personal involvement thus entails the application of involvement strategies (use of positive politeness) which is, presumably, directly influenced by alternating degrees of social closeness between the interlocutors in non-institutional speech situations. Hence, more generally, personal involvement means the application of speech strategies that emphasize and immediately reflect the interactants’ degree of social closeness.

It can be assumed that the overall nature of the speaker relationship prevailing in verbal interaction in institutional and non-institutional speech situations will also immediately trigger not only the occurrence of a formal speech style<sup>249</sup> or an informal speech style<sup>250</sup> but will also affect the occurrence of particular, i.e. style-specific, speech activities and speech events.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> As part of an overarching institutional talk and in accordance with the overall formality of the institutional speech situation.

<sup>250</sup> As part of an overarching private talk and in accordance with the overall informality of the everyday speech situation.

<sup>251</sup> The basic distinction between speech activities and speech events in this connection lies in the presence or absence of interaction that characterizes such forms of linguistic action. Speech activities are fundamentally non-interactive in that a listener does not – and is not expected to – react verbally. That is, (s)he does not produce a speech act him- or herself during another person’s ongoing speech activity (e.g. a narrative). That means that

That is, linguistic informality characteristically comprises the use of speech activities and events that can be considered typical of an informal speech style. Considering that an informal speech style can be described, on the relationship level, as entailing a high grade of personal involvement in what is being talked about which is connected to the high extent of familiarity between interlocutors, relevant speech activities and events to be applied are correspondingly usually those that involve and express the close familiarity and/or high personal involvement characteristic of this informal speech style as used in informal social situations. In this connection high personal involvement in what is being talked about is reflected in the interlocutors' mutual use of affective, i. e. emotional, language expressing their state of being emotionally moved. (This implies the application of speaker's modality). The use of language is therefore generally subjective in character. The concrete speech activities and events that are typical components of speech in informal situations are hence (personal) narratives, telling a joke, or making fun of somebody (= speech activities), as well as forms of phatic talk (e.g. gossip) and all forms of (verbal) conflict that show a high degree of affective language (= speech events).<sup>252</sup>

In correspondence with linguistic informality, linguistic formality characteristically features the use of speech events (and activities) that can be considered typical of a formal speech style: discussions and debates. That is, the speech activities and events used in formal situations are those that show a reduction in personal involvement. Accordingly, the use of language is less subjective in character in that it lacks the emotionality that is found in informal speech activities/events. The use of language hence is in accordance with a lack in personal involvement of what is being said and an existent social distance between interlocutors as characteristics of formal talk. Relevant speech events therefore include debates and discussions (as the more neutral forms of conflicts typical of informal situations).

When we consider the occurrence of a formal style not as part of private talk (everyday conversation) but as part of institutional talk that is applied in an institutional speech situation, it should be noted that the featured speech events and activities are generally dependent on the type of institution and the function-specific interaction taking place in the institutional speech situation. Consequently, a debate, as speech event, will occur e.g. in political discourse but usually not in classroom discourse.

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although a speech activity such as a narrative indeed does entail *potential* transition relevance places, these are not *actual* transition relevance places and speaker change, therefore, does not take place until the current narrator signals the end of his/her narrative in that narrative's coda. Speech events, on the other hand, are based on interaction between interlocutors.

<sup>252</sup> Personal narratives and the execution of personal conflicts are types of informal speech activities/events that – otherwise characteristic of everyday conversation – are central elements of the discourse featured in the daytime talk show format (see chapter 7.2.1).

**At a glance:**

### **SPEECH ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS**

- Formal and informal styles can be distinguished on the basis of expected speech activities and speech events

**Formal style:**

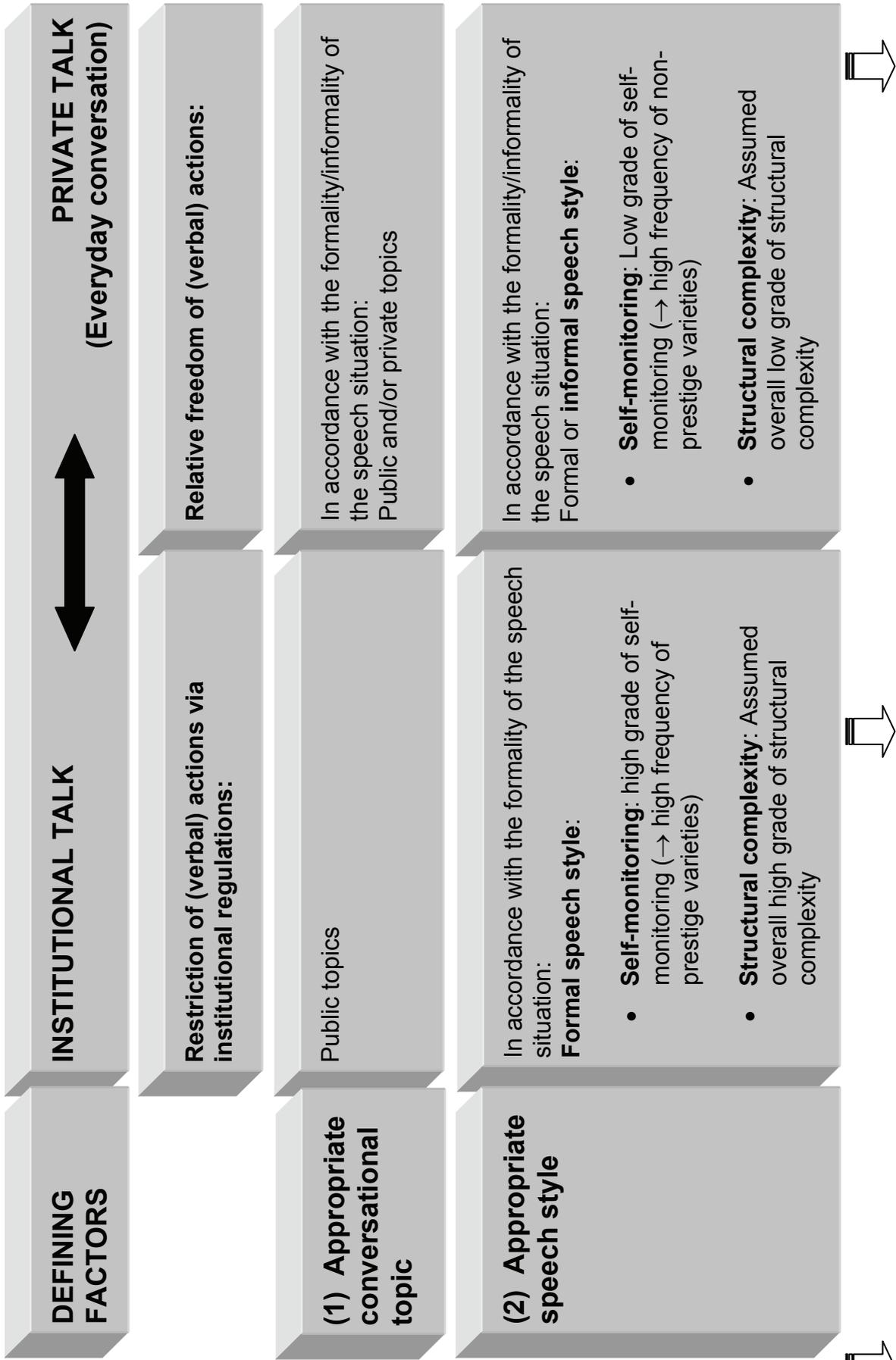
- Use of speech activities and speech events typical of linguistic formality: e.g. discussions, debates
- = less subjective, less emotional

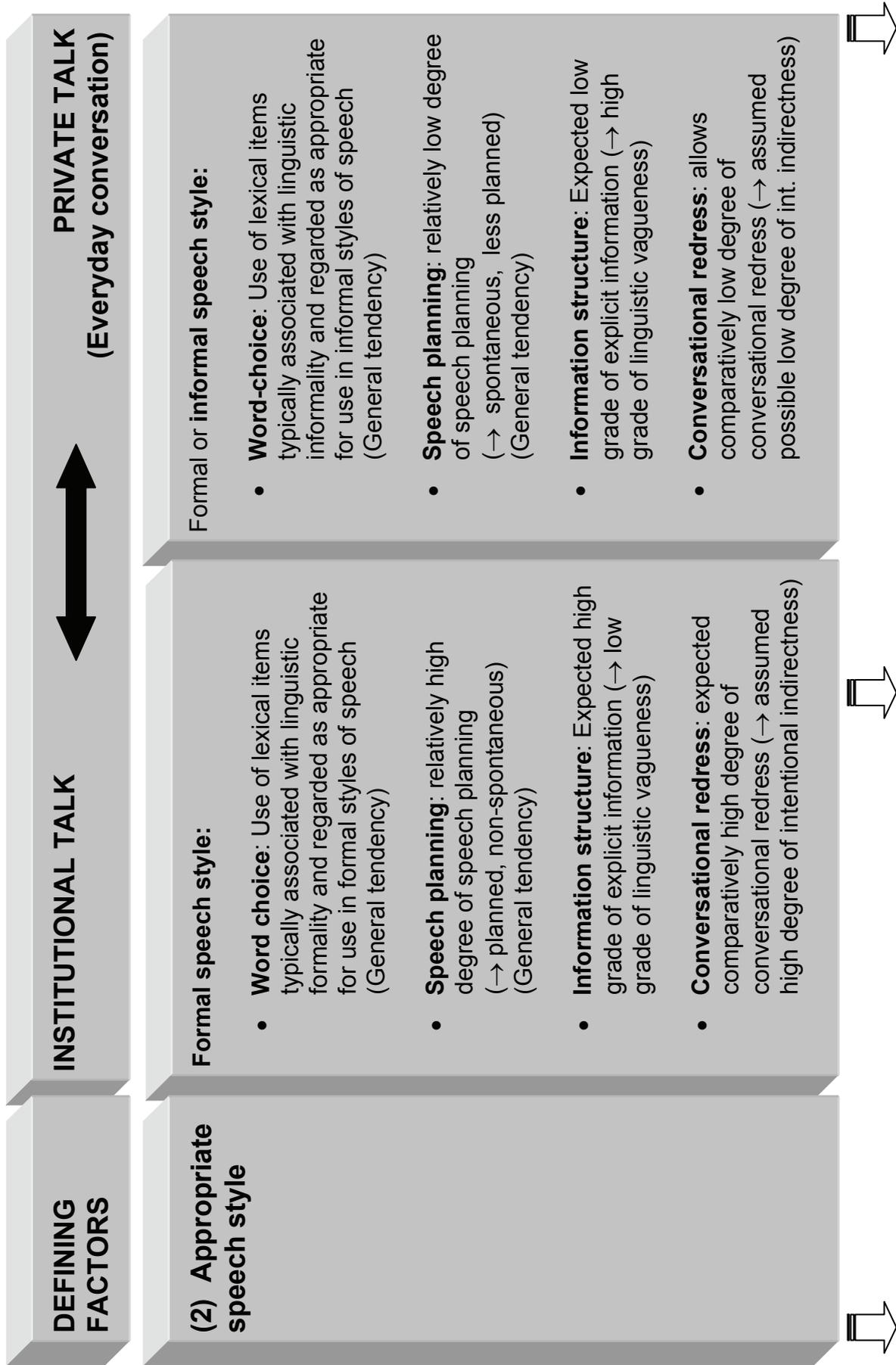
**Informal style:**

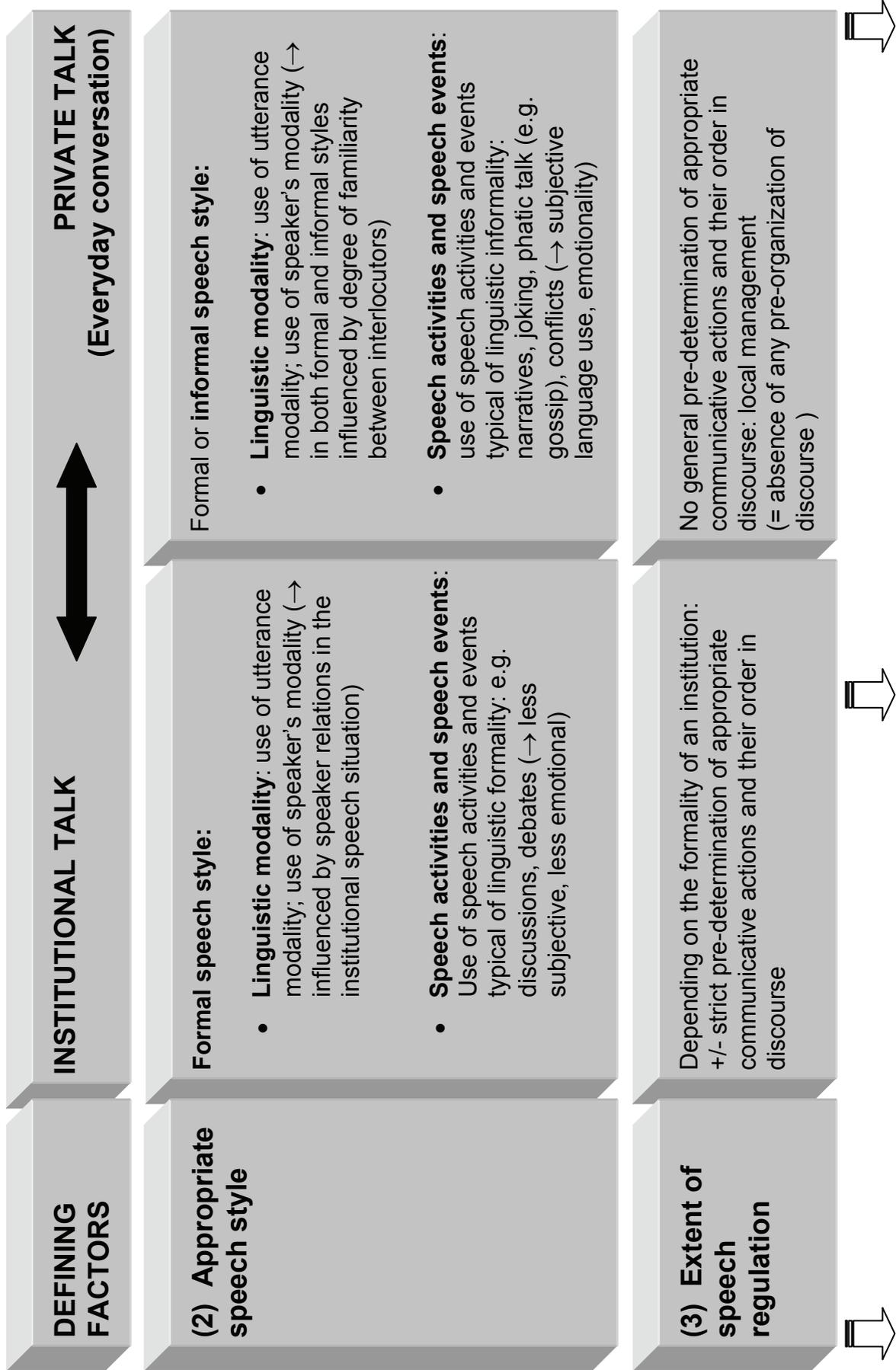
- Use of speech activities and speech events typical of linguistic informality: narratives, joking, phatic talk (e.g. gossip), conflicts
- = subjective language use; emotionality

### **6.2.3 Conclusion: the characteristics of institutional talk and private talk**

The preceding chapter on formal and informal speech styles has illustrated in detail possible levels by means of which both types of styles may be distinguished in a general attempt to determine the characteristic features of linguistic formality and informality. The results can now be transferred to the characterization of institutional talk and private talk given in table 3. Accordingly, table 6 (p. 188ff.) is a more detailed version of table 3 supplemented with the defining elements of formal and informal speech styles.







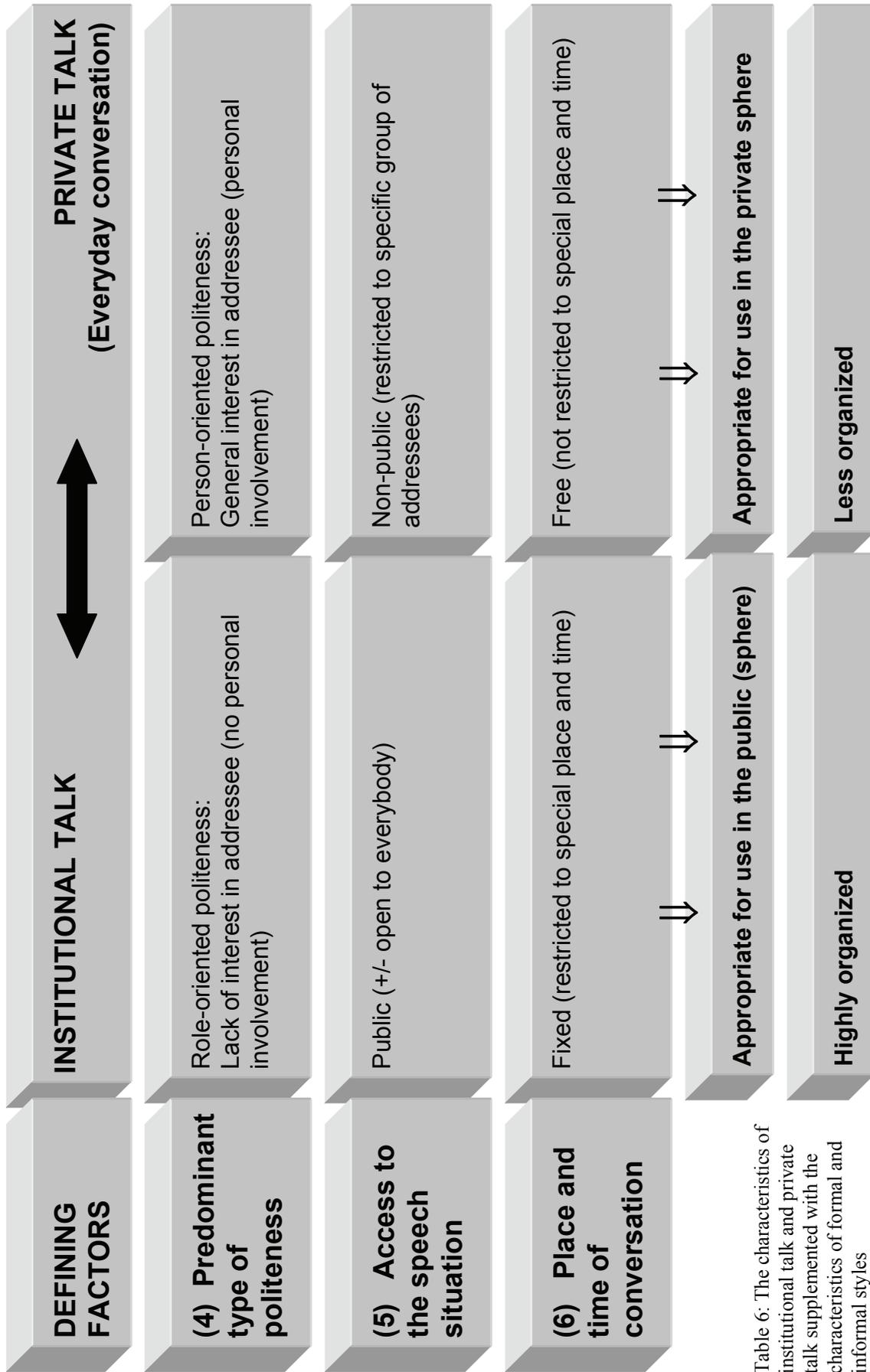


Table 6: The characteristics of institutional talk and private talk supplemented with the characteristics of formal and informal styles

### 6.3 The conceptual continuum of language

Table 6, the illustration of the characteristic features of institutional talk and private talk, constitutes the basis for the analysis of television talk in chapter 7, i.e. the interpersonal communication characterizing the institutional speech situation within the first frame of interaction. We can see that institutional talk and private talk (everyday conversation) represent two extreme conceptions of language appropriate for use in different social spheres. The former, dependent on the formality of an institution, is highly organized with respect to restriction of communicative actions; the latter is less organized – but not unorganized – with respect to relative freedom of communicative actions. Consequently, institutional talk and private talk can be regarded as two extreme poles on a scale (of language organization) and table 6, correspondingly, can be understood as illustrating those two poles. From this it follows naturally that it is possible to have other conceptions of language. That is, we need to acknowledge the potential existence of possible in-between forms of talk that are located on the scale somewhere between the two extreme positions of institutional talk and private talk. Such forms of talk will then show different grades of organization, i.e. relevant limitation or lack of limitation of communicative actions, which move them within the scale near the institutional or private end of the structural organization of talk. This means that table 6 can be used to illustrate what may be called a *conceptual continuum* with institutional talk and private talk at its outmost ends: a continuum of possible conceptions of language from institutional to private in character. Accordingly, table 7 (p. 195f.) is a transformed version of table 6 showing institutional talk and private talk as extreme positions within a conceptual continuum of basic linguistic possibilities. It is this conceptual continuum that forms the final matrix for the linguistic analysis to be performed in chapter 7.

The conceptual continuum as presented here is partly inspired by Koch's and Oesterreicher's (1986) account of the characteristics of written versus spoken language. The term 'conceptual continuum' is used in accordance with the authors' representation of the characteristic features of written and spoken language forming a conceptual continuum ("konzeptionelles Kontinuum," Koch/Oesterreicher, 1986: 19).

In fact, Koch's and Oesterreicher's (1986) description of written and spoken language is not at all connected to the use of language within institutional and non-institutional contexts. Their original intention consists in the comparison of the features of written and spoken language as the possible ways, i.e. communicative strategies, to conceptualize human language. As communicative strategies applied in using language, the features 'spoken' and 'written', according to the authors, denote styles of speech that are informal (= spoken) or formal (= written) in character. 'Spoken' and 'written' constitute the extreme positions on a conceptual continuum. Koch/Oesterreicher present possible conceptions of language from rather spoken, informal in character ("sprechbezogen"), such as talk among friends, to rather written, formal in character ("schreibbezogen") such as administrative regulations (cf.

Koch/Oesterreicher, 1986: 18).<sup>253</sup> The extremes ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ are equipped with what the authors call communicative conditions (“Kommunikationsbedingungen,” Koch/Oesterreicher, 1986: 19). These conditions are certain features – communicative parameters<sup>254</sup> – that typically characterize spoken and written language. Based on these parameters the authors classify language that is spoken in character as language of intimacy (“Sprache der Nähe”), representing the one extreme, and language that is written in character as language of distance (“Sprache der Distanz”), representing the other extreme (cf. Koch/Oesterreicher, 1986: 21).<sup>255</sup>

Although Koch’s and Oesterreicher’s (1986) account of written and spoken language is not at all an attempt to distinguish institutional from non-institutional communication, it turns out to be highly useful, in fact, for an illustration of the characteristic features of institutional talk and private talk as has been done here, since, interestingly, the communicative parameters they mention aptly describe the defining factors of institutional talk and private talk as presented in tables 3 and 5.<sup>256</sup> Due to the overt resemblances between the two originally independent and unconnected conceptions of language, Koch’s and Oesterreicher’s (1986) determination of a conceptual continuum can be easily transferred to the illustration of the characteristic features of institutional talk and private talk. Table 7, therefore, constitutes the final representation of the characteristics of institutional talk and private talk transferred into a conceptual continuum and supplemented at respective positions with the features used by Koch and Oesterreicher (1986) to define spoken and written language.<sup>257</sup> (One such feature used by the authors but not given here is “Fremdheit der Partner” and “Vertrautheit der Partner”. These can be ascribed to the general nature of the speech strategies used in institutional talk and private talk respectively. That is, Koch’s and Oesterreicher’s (1986) “Fremdheit der Partner” reflects the tendency of institutional talk to include speech strategies that emphasize the social distance existing between agents and clients in the institutional discourse. Similarly, the authors’ use of “Vertrautheit der Partner” mirrors the tendency of

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<sup>253</sup> Talk among friends then constitutes what has been referred to here as private talk and administrative regulations are part of institutional processes featuring institutional talk. In fact, private and institutional talk are then also simply two different ways of conceptualizing language. The one conception is informal in character; the other is formal in character, in accordance with what Koch and Oesterreicher (1986) state about the nature of spoken and written language.

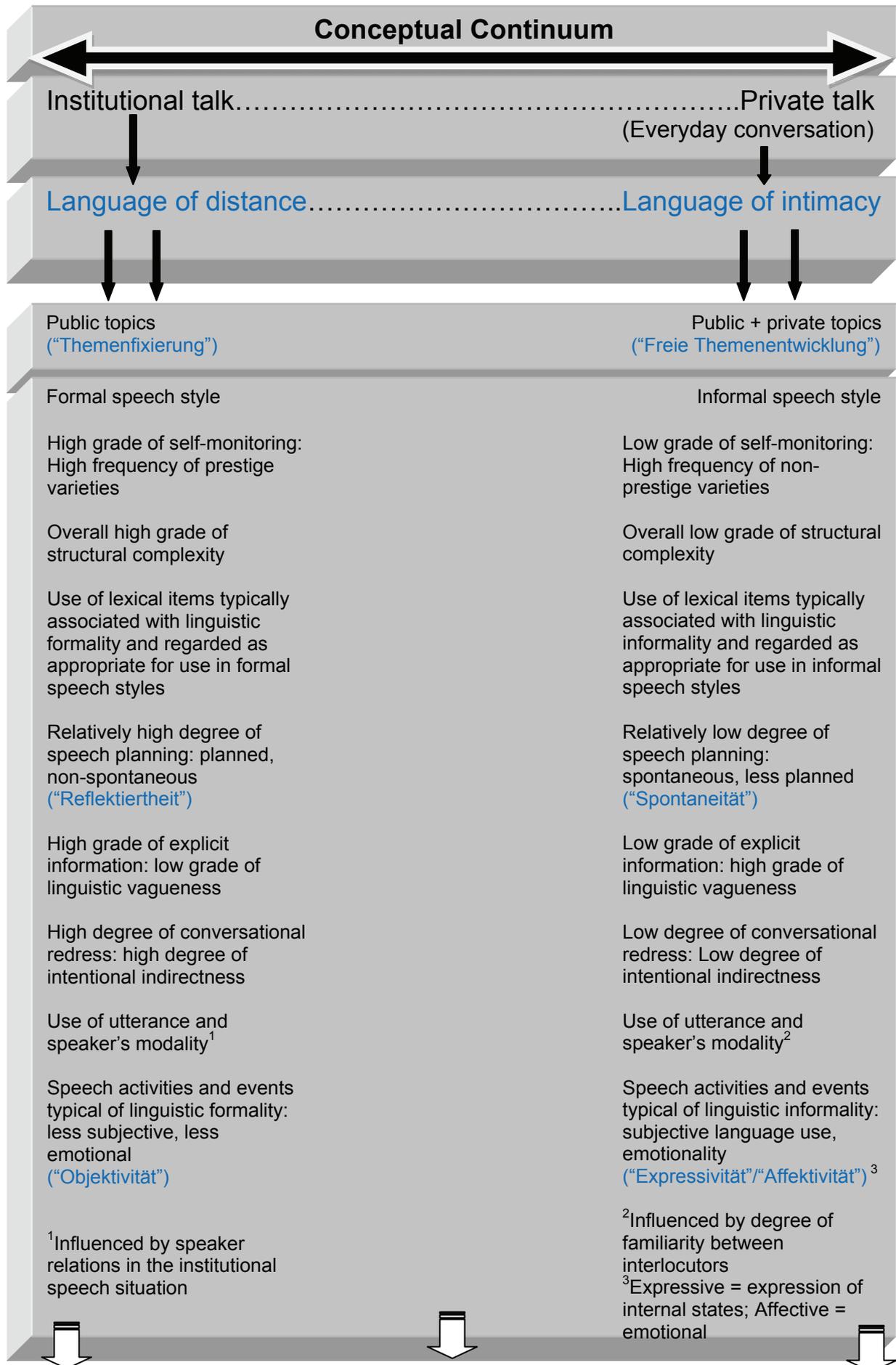
<sup>254</sup> Cf. Koch/Oesterreicher (1986: 19).

<sup>255</sup> In this connection the terms ‘intimacy’ and ‘distance’ may be described as denoting the physical and social intimacy or distance between interlocutors.

<sup>256</sup> This also includes those elements that have been determined as features specific to mass communication in the course of chapter 1.1. The reference to mass communication is explainable with the fact that the authors, in describing the characteristics of written language, even if unintentionally, focus on the features of mass communication. Considering the fact that written language can appear in the form of a letter, a book, a newspaper, etc., each constituting a single mass medium, the reference is a natural consequence. Among the listed communicative conditions those references include the non-existent personal contact between interlocutors (“raumzeitliche Trennung”) and the missing direct feedback (“Situationsentbindung”). The recipients are furthermore described as numerous and anonymous (cf. Koch/Oesterreicher, 1986: 20/23).

<sup>257</sup> Represented in blue print.

private talk to entail those speech strategies that emphasize the (degree of) familiarity existing between the interlocutors in informal social situations).



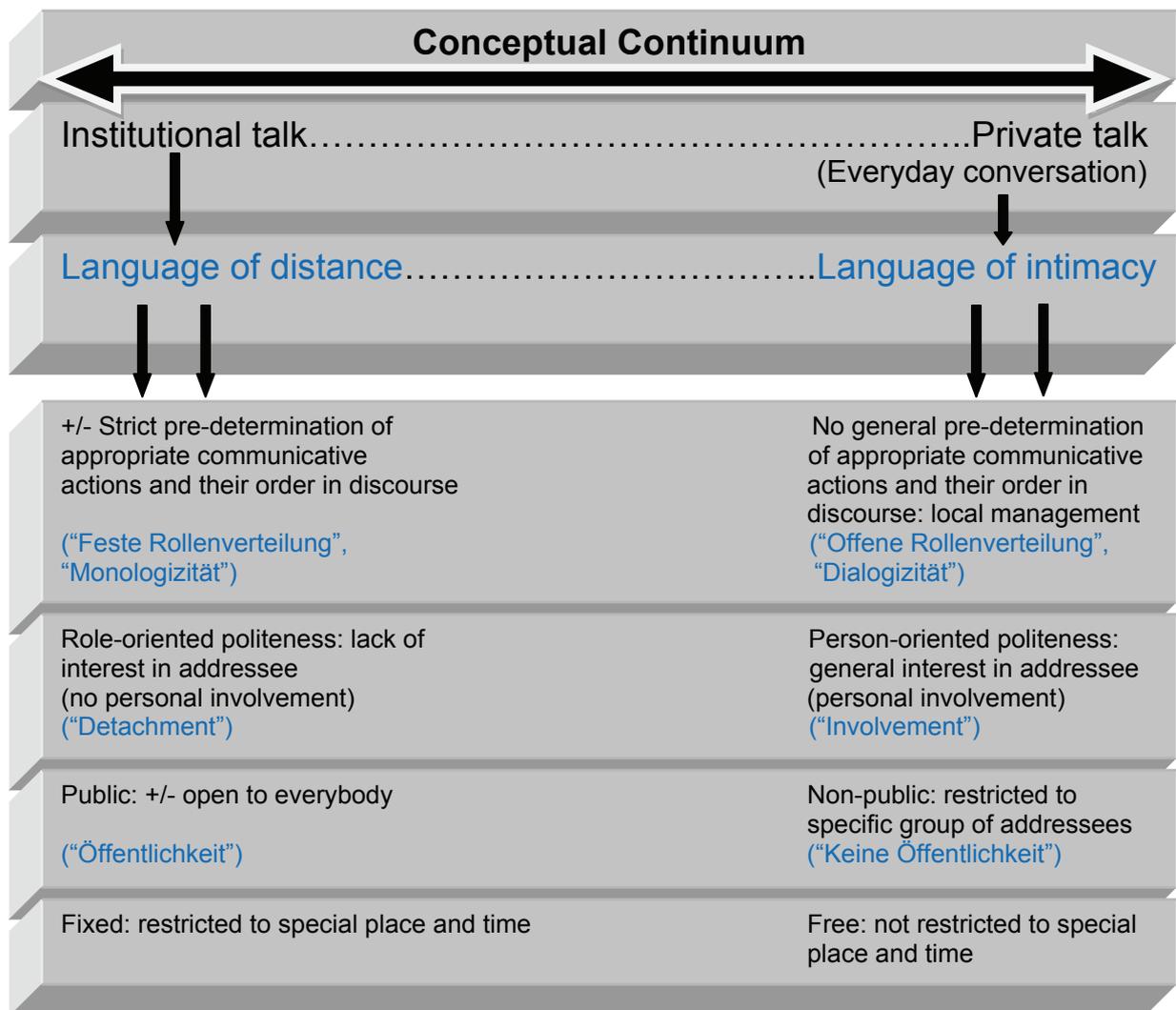


Table 7: Institutional and private talk as extreme positions within a conceptual continuum of language

The conceptual continuum as presented in table 7 now forms the final template for the analysis of television language in chapter 7. As television is, by definition, an institution, and hence we could naturally expect the occurrence of institutional talk (with all its defining characteristics), it is interesting to see how television actually makes use of language within its institutional settings, i.e. the television studio as the first frame of interaction, especially if we consider the initially stated tendency towards conversationalization that affects contemporary mass media: the linguistic process whereby media language tends to include with increasing frequency (features characteristic of) informal everyday conversation. It is easy to see that the presence of such a tendency is in conflict with the nature of the institutional frame that calls for the application of institutional talk suitable for occurrence in the public sphere. The central question, therefore, is not only where we can find conversationalization on television but also where we can find institutional talk, i.e. as appropriate form of talk to be applied within the institutional frame. Since television is after

all an institution, it is well legitimate to ask for the occurrence (and character) also of this form of talk within the institutional frame. The linguistic analysis performed in part III thus concentrates on the investigation of both conversationalization – the appearance of everyday conversation – and institutional talk with the underlying intention to illustrate the general language use by the mass medium television and to reveal the nature of this mass medium as a social institution.

### **Part III The language use of television between institutional talk and private talk**

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For the concrete analysis of television language in chapter 7 of this final part it is important to call to mind, on the one hand, the aspect of a social function underlying the establishment of an institution in society – such as jurisdiction in the case of law – and, on the other hand, connected to the fulfilment of this function in society, the application of function-specific (and hence institution-specific) forms of discourse.<sup>258</sup> Consequently, if we focus on television predominantly as an institution, then we have to ask for its social function and therefore also for the occurrence of function-specific talk within the institutional frame. We can explain the social function of the mass media in general by means of the political functions that are traditionally ascribed to the media in western societies. Among these functions are ‘information’ as the major one and ‘entertainment’ as a minor political function (cf. chapter 1.2). Given these functions we have to ask for function-specific talk within the first frame of interaction: forms of talk that are regarded as appropriate means for the fulfilment of either the function of information or the function of entertainment. In this connection the nature of talk on television in general is fundamentally defined by its occurrence in particular television formats such as the traditional ones of the news and the talk show which are so designed as to fulfil a particular communicative function: either information (= news) or predominant entertainment (talk show). In other words, a specific television format (e.g. the news format) fulfils a particular communicative function (= information) and we can assume that it is structured – linguistically and stylistically – in such a way as to fulfil this function in the best possible way. Consequently, when we investigate talk on television, language use within the institutional frame necessarily needs to be viewed always in connection with the individual communicative function that can be ascribed to a broadcast format since its overall conception can be expected to follow this function. With respect to conversationalization of contemporary television talk this means that the phenomenon must obviously be connected to a specific communicative function of the institution television that underlies the conception of a particular format and that hence allows this form of talk to take place or even triggers it for the sake of optimal function execution. The question is what this function might be and what format it is that fulfils this function. Referring to the dominant functions of information and entertainment to be fulfilled by the institution, this must be either of these two (with their associated formats, i.e. the news or the talk show). Again, the question is what is more likely. Does conversationalization, i.e. public language filled with elements of informal everyday conversation, optimally serve the function of information? That is, do we find (and expect) it in the news format that classically fulfills this communicative function? Or does conversationalization rather optimally serve the function of entertainment? In this case we should expect it in the talk show format (and its sub-type the daytime talk show) that

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<sup>258</sup> I.e. institution-specific communicative actions and their particular organization in the institutional discourse.

classically fulfills this communicative function. Thus, more generally, we need to ask what form of talk it is that can fulfill each communicative function in the most optimal way. In short, how does function-specific talk with respect to television look like?

In fact, institutional talk and private talk (everyday conversation) as illustrated in tables 3 and 6 can be determined to constitute two forms of talk each optimally appropriate for the fulfilment of one function: institutional talk for information and private talk for entertainment. That is, institutional talk is regarded here as the type of talk that fits best the task of objective information of the public. This type of talk thus represents what may be termed the 'ideal' public/institutional language used in the institutional frame by the institution television for objective information of the general public. In other words, the language used by television for the communicative function of information is in accordance with the character of institutional talk as previously defined. Since it is the news format that classically executes the information function of the institution, we should expect that it makes use of institutional talk as appropriate means for objective information. Likewise, in contrast to institutional talk, private talk (everyday conversation) is regarded here as the type of talk that constitutes the optimally appropriate means for the purpose of entertaining the public in the process of mass communication. Since it is the talk show format (including the sub-type of the daytime talk show) that classically performs the entertainment function of the institution, we should expect that it makes use of private talk (in the form previously defined) as appropriate, more subjective, means for entertainment. This means that if we are looking for conversationalization, i.e. as public talk that shows a tendency towards including elements of informal everyday conversation, then it is here that we should expect to find it.<sup>259</sup>

In fact, it is not difficult to assign the functions of information and entertainment to the news and talk show format respectively and if we take a look at the conceptual continuum presented in table 7 we see that we are talking here about two forms of language for the performance of these communicative functions that are located at the outmost ends of this continuum: institutional talk and private talk. Indeed, it is also interesting to see what can be found in-between. It is argued above that the conceptual continuum allows space for in-between forms of language conception that are located somewhere on the scale between the two extremes of institutional talk and private talk. The question is: do we find such forms of language use on television, that is, forms of language which are neither purely informative nor purely entertaining in function? As is a fact, we do actually find television formats that are neither pure information- nor pure entertainment-oriented but rather constitute some mixing between the two. Such formats accordingly have infotainment character.<sup>260</sup> Hence we should

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<sup>259</sup> Cf. in this connection also Fairclough (1995: 64f.) who speaks of “[d]iscursive practices” as being “functionally differentiated” leading to “different discursive practices for news, documentary [function of information], drama, quiz and ‘soap’ programs [function of entertainment].”

<sup>260</sup> For ‘infotainment’ see chapter 3. The fusion not only of communicative functions but also of established television formats is a characteristic of the contemporary production of television contents and it is expressed in

also expect language use in such formats to be of a mixed nature located somewhere between highly institutional and highly private. What formats are we talking about then? We need a conceptually versatile format that potentially allows various degrees of mixing information and entertainment on the level of communicative function. Such a format is the magazine format whose versatility is reflected – at least as concerns German television – in the large number of existing magazine types: e.g. news magazines, political magazines, economic magazines, health magazines, tabloid magazines. We can pre-specify particular tendencies and assume that, for example, the news and political magazine will be more information-focussed than the tabloid magazine with a strong entertainment focus and we can also expect that this focus will be reflected in language use, i.e. either more institutional or private in character.

The magazine format is all the more interesting for closer investigation of language use since its conception centrally involves the person of the presenter: an agent of the institution television whose communicative role as ‘presenter’ is not only that of a person that is identified with a particular magazine but also entails a commenting function and therefore also always invites subjective language use (see chapter 7.3.1).

The previous description of the communicative functions of the mass media as applied to television and the associated forms of function-specific language are illustrated below in table 8 together with relevant television formats.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Function-specific language</b>	<b>Format</b>
Information	Institutional talk	News
Entertainment	Private talk (everyday conversation)	Talk show (incl. daytime talk show)
Information/ Entertainment In-between form ("Infotainment")	Institutional talk Private talk In-between form	Magazine

Table 8: Selected mass media functions and their linguistic realization in combination with associated television formats

such labels as ‘dramedy’ (a blend of drama and comedy), or ‘docutainment’ (a blend of documentary and entertainment).

The analysis of language use on television in the following chapter 7 focuses on the selected functions of information and entertainment (as well as possible in-between forms) as represented by the three television formats ‘news’, ‘talk show’ (specifically the sub-type labelled ‘daytime talk show’) and ‘magazine’.

The news format can illustrate the appropriate form of talk to be applied within the institutional frame, i.e. the form of talk that should be used by the institution television with regard to its stated responsibility as resulting from the kind of public it creates. The use of institutional talk is then in accordance with the demands of the institutional frame for a type of talk suited to be broadcast to a mass audience. However, it should be called to mind in this connection that the process of tabloidization (and hence conversationalization) has been defined to actually affect all television formats including the news format (cf. Fairclough, 1995: 3, focussing on conversationalization in public affairs media such as news and documentary). Therefore, the association that is shown in table 7 between the news format and the occurrence of institutional talk should be regarded as the ideal case only.

The daytime talk show aptly illustrates the ways in which the institution television deviates from its general responsibility in using private talk (everyday conversation) that is in conflict with the theoretical demand for the application of institutional talk.

The main focus of linguistic analysis, though, lies on an investigation of the magazine format. The reasons for this are twofold: On the one hand, there are already numerous approaches to news and news language (especially the news interview) as well as to talk shows in general and the daytime talk show in particular,<sup>261</sup> although these are not directly concerned with questions of appropriate forms of talk within the institutional frame. (Hence they will also be investigated here). On the other hand, the magazine format as such is an interesting object of study because of the fact that it is so highly versatile with respect to its overall structural conception, that is, communicative function and featured contents (see chapter 6.2: *Linguistic modality in formal and informal television talk* and chapter 7.3). It is interesting to see what influence this conceptual versatility has on language use.

The aim of the linguistic analysis to be performed in chapter 7 is to reveal by means of the defining factors of institutional talk and private talk the specific linguistic characteristics of each television format. This will be done by means of investigating selected programs within each format. With the conceptual continuum as analytical matrix, the basic assumption in this connection is that different formats show an individual constellation of the defining factors within the conceptual continuum which create a particular format- or program-specific profile (as based on the overall conception of a format) whereby a format can be identified. That is, we can establish such profiles via analyzing the chosen programs that represent a particular format for the existence and particular ‘identity’ of each factor that has been described to

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<sup>261</sup> For relevant literature in this connection see the introduction to this work and the introductions of chapters 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3.

determine institutional and private talk and we can indicate this identity within the conceptual continuum. The resulting program- or format-specific factor-profile places the program (and hence the format) within the continuum either in the direction of institutional talk or private talk (everyday conversation) but possibly also somewhere in-between the two.

## **CHAPTER 7 Television formats and their use of language**

This chapter contains three sub-chapters each dedicated to the analysis of a single television format. Each sub-chapter will provide a short introduction to the relevant format including the selected programs for study within the format and present respective literature. This will be followed by the linguistic analysis guided by the defining factors of institutional and private talk.

### **7.1 The news format**

As mentioned in the introductory chapter to this work, within the study of print and broadcast media language the news have received striking attention in scientific investigation with respect to overall structural organization including language use. Relevant literature with respect to broadcast news includes, for example, Wittwen's (1995) excellent account of televisual news formats and the possible ways of structural news presentation via different journalistic text types. Wittwen argues on the basis of a seemingly hybrid nature of news as infotainment programs ranging somewhere between information and entertainment. Burger (2005) presents a more general approach to media language involving print and broadcast media (mainly radio and television). He devotes one chapter to broadcast news. Both works are repeatedly referred to in this account of television language.

When we talk about news on television, to speak of *the* news format as such is actually an overgeneralization. Strictly speaking, when the journalist, media scientist or linguist refers to 'broadcast news' (s)he uses a superordinate term that covers a range of different sub-formats that together establish what we call the superordinate 'news format'. These sub-formats are the speaker-based program featuring a news reader (or: speaker) ("Sprechersendung"), the news journal or magazine ("Nachrichtenjournal") featuring a presenter (on German television in combination with a news reader) and the news show, a typical American infotainment-oriented format, i.e. one that mixes information and entertainment (cf. Wittwen, 1995: 29ff. and Burger, 2005: 265ff.).<sup>262</sup> Thus, any mention and analysis of televisual news or the televisual news format respectively should take into account this three-part division. What is actually studied thus is usually a sub-format (for example in comparison with another sub-

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<sup>262</sup> Burger (2005: 265) with reference to Straßner (1982) classifies a fourth type labelled "Studiosendung" which, however, has merged by now with the magazine type.

format as is done here involving the speaker-based format and the news magazine) as one among several different presentational forms for structurally realizing the transmission of news on television.

The news sub-format focused on here for linguistic analysis is the traditional German public service news format *Tagesschau*.<sup>263</sup> The reason for straightforwardly choosing a public service program for linguistic investigation mainly lies in a formal educational mission that is ascribed to public service broadcasting in general and the expectations that correspondingly result from such a mission also as concerns the use of language. Hence we may not only associate the (fulfillment of the) function of information with the news format but we may also particularly associate this with public service broadcasting.

The editions of the German *Tagesschau* that are chosen for investigation in the next chapter are five prime time editions of the program broadcast from 18.07. to 22.07.2010 each at 8pm with an average length of 14 min. and 43 sec. A linguistic transcript of each edition is given in the appendix.<sup>264</sup>

### **7.1.1 News language**

#### (a) Some theoretical considerations

Since the news format classically fulfills television's information function, it is here that we would expect the application of institutional talk as the form of language that is appropriate for the objective information of the audience.

In this connection Grice's (1975) conversational maxims are especially helpful in describing the character of objective language. That is, they can be used to illustrate the requirements placed on objectively produced, strictly informative and therefore effective communicative acts for the (ideal) execution of the information function by the news format. Accordingly, Klein (1998: 103) points out that Grice's (1975) maxims can be transferred to (the conditions placed on) informative media talk as used by the news format. Originally established by Grice with reference to the cooperative and hence successful communication of personal intentions in everyday situations within an overall theory of action, the conversational maxims can be applied to language use within the institutional context of television. Here they can function to illustrate on the content level the 'ideal', i.e. objectively produced and purely informative, institutional language. Thus, according to Klein (1998: 103) the maxims denote the demands classically placed on the (successful) communication of information by journalists. Hence, transferred to communication by and within the mass media, we can view the conversational maxims prescriptively as instructions for proper

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<sup>263</sup> *Tagesschau*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste. (See the bibliography for complete bibliographic detail).

<sup>264</sup> The appendix contains linguistic transcripts of all the editions within the formats that are analyzed in the following.

informative journalistic action. Featuring the requirements placed on informative journalistic work according to Klein (1998), table 9 correspondingly illustrates how, following Grice's (1975) maxims, information should be ideally designed in institutional and non-institutional contexts so as to be communicatively most effective.

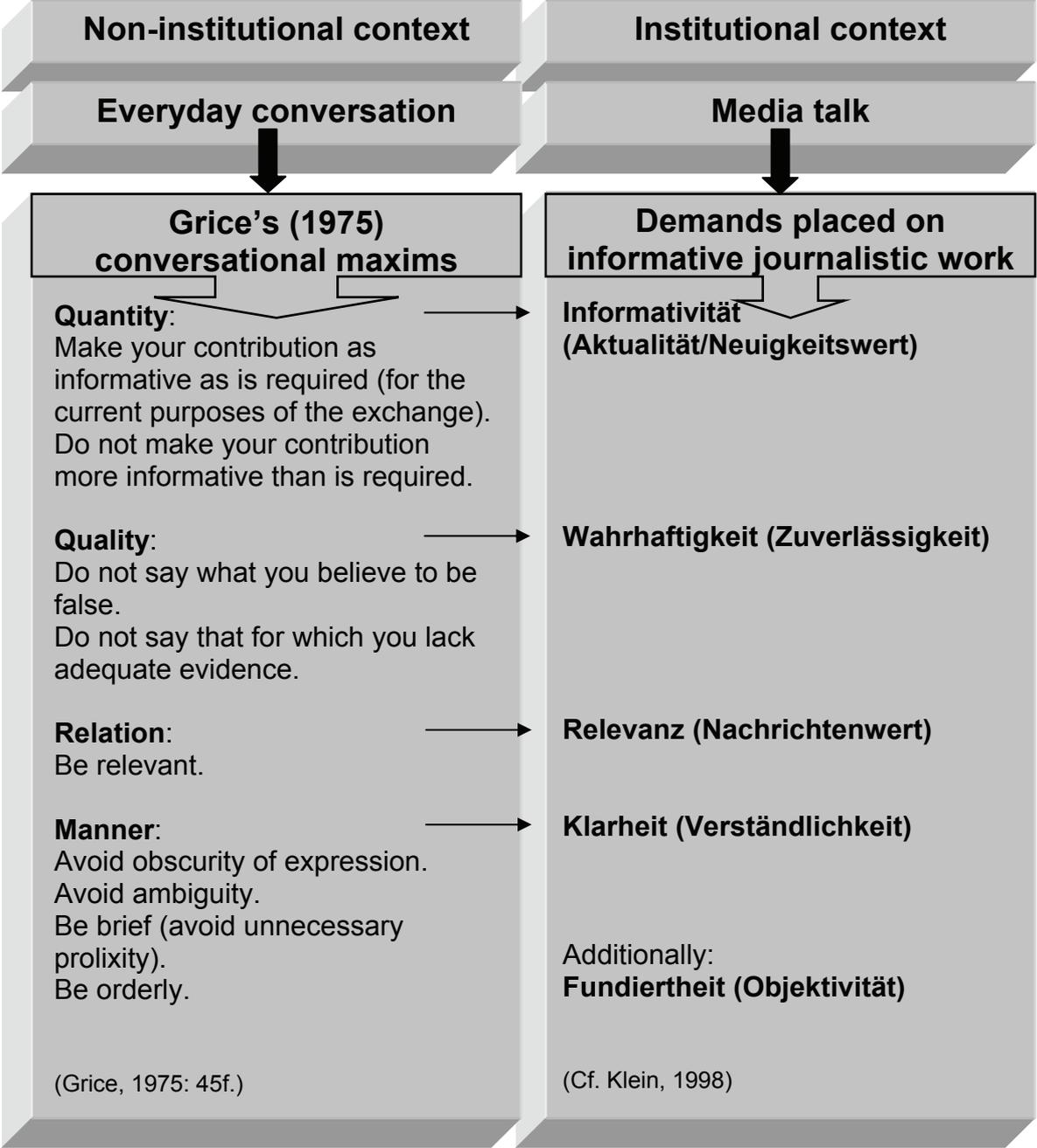


Table 9: Grice's conversational maxims and the conditions of informative media talk

The requirements placed on informative journalistic work according to Klein (1998) entail two terms that are seemingly very similar: on the one hand there is the demand for "Neuigkeitswert (Aktualität)" relating to the maxim of quantity; on the other hand there is the

condition of potential “Nachrichtenwert (Relevanz)” referring to the maxim of relation. Klein, however, remains imprecise as to what exactly the two terms denote and where their possible difference lies. They are both subsumed here under the prominent notion ‘newsworthiness’ – a term used within news journalism that defines the quality of a potential news story in terms of how interesting it is for media practitioners to be covered by the news media. The overall newsworthiness ascribed to a news story is defined on the basis of several criteria or ‘news values’ (e.g. negativity and unexpectedness). A potential news story can thus be regarded more newsworthy than another potential news story depending on its ascribed news values. It then achieves higher priority and is hence more likely to be featured in the news media.<sup>265</sup> Referring to Klein’s (1998) terms we can state that the maxim of quantity transferred to media talk as the demand for informativeness describes the demand for reporting about events that are as up-to-date as possible (cf. “Aktualität”), i.e. those events that are new and have not occurred before in the media and that are therefore newsworthy. Underlying this demand is the idea that only *that* information is potentially and truly ‘informative’ that is actually *new*. Information that is *not* new, on the other hand, cannot contribute to the accumulation of new knowledge and thus lacks the requested ‘informativeness’. Likewise, the maxim of relation transferred to media talk as the demand for relevance denotes that information is relevant – and consequently newsworthy – because it has been defined as being so on the basis of the aforementioned news values (whatever these may be in the concrete case). ‘Relevance’ then means ‘worthy to be broadcast’.

As in everyday conversation the maxim of manner, transferred to informative media talk as the demand for comprehensibility, addresses the overall linguistic presentation of the broadcast information (e.g. word choice and sentence structure) by the media practitioners that should be in such a way as to allow unhindered understanding on the part of the (large number of) addressees. Hence this is a matter of ‘recipient design’ (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974), that is of designing information linguistically according to the (assumed) communicative needs of the audience.

Recipient design is also strongly connected to the compliance with the maxim of quantity: be informative enough but be not too informative. Choosing the right amount of information to be transferred to the addressee fundamentally involves the assessment by the speaker of the addressee’s background knowledge: what can be assumed as given because it is generally accepted world knowledge? What is special knowledge and needs explicit formulation? In media talk this assessment of speaker (i.e. audience) knowledge by media practitioners is more problematic than it is in everyday conversation. This is fundamentally based on the nature of mass communication in general which shows a dislocation of space and time and the nature of the audience in the mass communication process in particular which consists of a

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<sup>265</sup> On newsworthiness and news values see, for example, Cotter (2010). A typical concomitant phenomenon of tabloidization affecting contemporary mass media is an assumed overall change in the topics that are regarded as being newsworthy by media practitioners.

large and heterogeneous number of addressees with potentially differing degrees of (shared) background knowledge and hence different communicative needs concerning the explicit formulation of information that is to be broadcast.<sup>266</sup> Media practitioners can never be sure whether their broadcast information is verbally so designed as to fulfill these communicative needs in each individual case. Television shows a general awareness of the communicative needs of its audience e.g. in the explanation of featured medical terminology in the health magazine. Chapter 7.3.2 on magazine language illustrates that different types of magazines indeed tend to explain particular terms within a ‘public register’ that are not presupposed by the communicator as shared knowledge.

‘Objectivity’, aiming at the unbiased presentation of information, is another demand placed on informative journalistic work according to Klein (1998), though it is one which not directly matches the Gricean conversational maxims.

To sum up, in theory the ideal institutional language for the performance of information by the media can be explained on the basis of the Gricean (1975) conversational maxims. As illustrated by Klein (1998), they can be transferred to media practice as demands placed on the communication of information. The compliance with these demands thus results into the ‘ideal’ type of informative (institutional) language. That is, a language which, reduced to the content level, is ideal in executing the communicative function of information in an objective, non-emotional way.

What about the practice? Does television make use of this kind of talk? As initially argued, it is the news format that traditionally executes television’s information function. Hence it is here that we would expect the occurrence of institutional talk as the appropriate form of language for the objective information of the audience. Since all programming within public service broadcasting is traditionally governed by a formal educational mandate (“Bildungsauftrag”) it is especially in public-service television that we should expect to find institutional talk. Consequently, following the theoretical pre-considerations in this section, section (b) is dedicated to a linguistic analysis of the German public-service news format *Tagesschau* (which, according to Burger (2005: 266), maintains the demand for pure transmission of information).

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<sup>266</sup> For the difficulties with recipient design in mass communication see also chapter 1.1.

(b) An example: the German *Tagesschau*

Country	Program	Channel	Type of Broadcaster	Date of Broadcast	Length
Germany	<i>Tagesschau</i>	Das Erste	Public Service	18.07. – 22.07.2010 (8pm, prime time edition)	18.07.: (15 min. 36 sec.); 19.07.: (14 min. 27 sec.); 20.07.: (12 min. 40sec.); 21.07.: (15 min. 35sec.); 22.07.: (13min. 57sec.)  ∅ (analysed editions): 14min. 43sec.

Table 10: The studied editions of the German speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* at a glance

As a speaker-based format, the German public service news format *Tagesschau* traditionally features a speaker or news reader – also defined as ‘talking head’<sup>267</sup> – reading out the news from a sheet of paper. Meanwhile the use of the teleprompter (or: autocue) in contemporary television supersedes the use of paper sheets and we find that only the prime time edition of the program still makes additional use of paper sheets while the daytime editions of the *Tagesschau* characteristically do not do so any more.

The talking head is presented sitting behind a news desk at the right side of the frame. The left side characteristically shows graphic images containing informative captions that support visually what is said. The talking head is shown solely in a distancing medium close-up<sup>268</sup>

<sup>267</sup> Cf. Wittwen (1995: 101).

<sup>268</sup> Cf. Wittwen (1995: 101). “Distancing” is used by the author in connection with other news formats that, in contrast to the classical public service program, present the talking head in a close-up thus creating a closeness

that conveys on the visual level the existing social distance between the news reader as a part of the public sphere in his/her institutional role as agent of the institution television and the viewer as a part of the private sphere. (For relevant screen shots see the transcripts provided in the appendix.)

All five investigated prime time editions of the program are composed of and restricted to three text types: broadcast reports (produced either by reporters or correspondents who are also shown in the reports) that feature a lead-in by the news reader, short news films with voice-over speakers and speaker announcements.<sup>269</sup> (One edition (broadcast 18.07.) additionally features a statement/commentary performed by a correspondent). These basic journalistic types of text are characteristically framed by (1) an opening section consisting of an intro – featuring a voice-over speaker – that serves as program identification followed by a greeting by the news reader and (2) a closing section with additional program announcement.

While opening and closing sections naturally follow a consistent ordering across all studied editions at the beginning and end of the program, the three main text types do not show a fixed order across the studied editions. That is, each edition does indeed make use of the same text types but characteristically shows a different arrangement and number of these types of text when compared. All investigated editions, though, begin with a broadcast report. The concrete occurrence of potentially relevant information within the news, the organization of this information into different text types and the varying arrangement of these text types within a program are subject to choices governed by journalistic decisions of newsworthiness and the existence/absence of suitable footage.<sup>270</sup> Hence, what is regarded as most newsworthy information of the day is likely to be the opener of the day's edition and since it is regarded as most newsworthy it is likely to be reported on in a more elaborate fashion within the time limits that determine the program. Thus, it seems not surprising that the opener is a broadcast report and not a short news film.

Resulting from the use of the text types in the studied editions of the program, what can be stated at this point is a seemingly program-specific composition of journalistic text types that immediately results from the communicative function of objective information underlying the programming of the format. That is, the traditional public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* chooses from a range of potential journalistic text types those that are the appropriate means for the objective information of the public. Thus, it characteristically includes the information-based speaker announcement, broadcast report and news film but at

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between the talking head and the audience. In general, a close-up – medium or not – is rather not distancing in character but always conveys a closeness between the viewer and the person within the frame.

<sup>269</sup> This corresponds to Burger's (2005: 271) results for an analysis of text types in a 2003 edition of the *Tagesschau*. The equivalent German terms are *Bericht*, *Nachrichtenfilm* (or: *NiF* = *Nachricht im Film*), *Sprechermeldung* (or: *Wortnachricht*). The terms are linguistic (and stylistic) adaptations to broadcast journalism of classically defined journalistic text types defined for the press. For the characteristics of *Bericht*, *Sprechermeldung* and *Nachrichtenfilm* see Wittwen (1995) and Burger (2005).

<sup>270</sup> See in this connection Wittwen (1995: 103).

the same time it characteristically excludes the opinion-based and therefore highly subjective commentary that formally contradicts the task of transmitting objective information. (Although the edition broadcast 18.07. seems to constitute an exception featuring a commentary-like statement – though not explicitly labelled as ‘commentary’ – by a correspondent).<sup>271</sup> Hence the traditional public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* shows a format-specific text type profile which is information-oriented by means of which it can be distinguished from other forms of news formats such as the news magazine which generally allows and typically shows a greater variety of text types including the opinion-based commentary (cf. chapter 7.3.2.1).

Turning away from journalistic text types and text type profiles, the aim of the linguistic analysis of the five editions of the *Tagesschau* that immediately follows is to reveal the linguistic characteristics of this public service news format on the basis of the factors that were described to define institutional and private talk. The constellation of these factors will finally lead to a program- or format-specific language profile that can be defined as institutional talk – which we would ideally expect as the form of language most appropriate for objective information – private talk or an in-between form. Accordingly, in order to illustrate the character of the language as used in the *Tagesschau* the defining factors of institutional and private talk will be addressed in chronological order as listed in tables 3 and 6.

The focus of the linguistic analysis in general, i.e. of all formats that are studied in the following, is on the language use of those persons – agents and clients – that are *immediately present* within the institutional frame, i.e. those who can be perceived by the audience as verbally (inter)acting within the institutional setting of the television studio. For the news format this means that only the language of the news reader will be of ultimate importance and hence institutionally pre-produced broadcast reports and news films will not be considered.

### **(1) Appropriate conversational topic: public topics versus private topics**

Table 11 lists all topics of the five studied prime-time editions of the *Tagesschau*. Leaving sports aside, there are 41 topics altogether. For the featured reports and speaker announcements these are listed according to the informative captions. The topics of the news films are representations of the spoken content. From the total of 41 topics featured in the selected editions of the program the majority of the topics (37 = 90.2 %) is restricted to

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<sup>271</sup> For an overview and discussion of the established journalistic text types see, for example, Burger (2005), Lüger (1995) or Straßner (2000). For the occurrence and design of journalistic text types within the news format on television see Burger (2005), chapter 9.2 and especially Wittwen (1995).

political, economic and social matters and they can hence be defined as ‘hard news’ (cf. chapter 3). Exceptions are the topics of the short news films (3 = 7.3 %): ‘Irak: Tote bei Anschlägen’ (18.07.), ‘Indien: Zugunglück’ (19.07.) and ‘Italien: Großeinsatz gegen Mafiaorganisation’ (21.07.), which can be classified as ‘spot news’ concerned with crime and catastrophes (cf. chapter 3). Interestingly, this news category, at least in the investigated editions, is exclusively restricted to the text type ‘news film’. Additionally, the cultural event ‘Volksfest auf dem Ruhrschnellweg’ (18.07.) may be classified as ‘soft news’ with human interest character (cf. chapter 3).

All featured topics, i.e. concerning Germany and abroad, though, can be defined as being of public interest and hence they are ‘public topics’ appropriate for occurrence in the public sphere. This is especially valid for the large amount of domestic topics concerned with political, economic and social matters which are of high public interest because they ultimately consider the workings of the political, economic and social system as a whole. Hence they are of significance for (the well-being of) society as a whole.

Date of broadcast	Topics
18.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• von Beust: Rücktritt angekündigt</li> <li>• von Beust: Reaktionen auf Rücktrittsankündigung</li> <li>• Zollitsch: Fehler im Umgang mit Missbrauchsfall eingeräumt</li> <li>• Merkel/Nasarbajew: Gespräche über wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit</li> <li>• (News film): Irak: Tote bei Anschlägen</li> <li>• Internationale AIDS-Konferenz in Wien</li> <li>• Volksfest auf dem Ruhrschnellweg</li> <li>• 14. Etappe der Tour de France</li> <li>• Gold bei Fecht-EM</li> </ul> <p><b>[7 topics + 2 sports-topics]</b></p>
19.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schulprojekt in Hamburg gescheitert</li> <li>• von Beust/Merkel: nach dem Rückzug des Hamburger Regierungschefs</li> <li>• Wirtschaft im Aufwärtstrend</li> <li>• Urteile gegen Terrorhelfer</li> <li>• Aussteigerprogramm für Islamisten</li> <li>• (News film): Kabul: Verschärfung der Sicherheitsvorkehrungen</li> <li>• Kampf gegen Ölpest</li> <li>• Betrüger-Bande zerschlagen</li> <li>• (News film): Indien: Zugunglück</li> <li>• 15. Etappe der Tour de France</li> </ul> <p><b>[9 topics + 1 sports-topic]</b></p>
20.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internationale Afghanistan-Konferenz in Kabul</li> <li>• Erinnerung an 20. Juli 1944</li> <li>• Beratung von Bankkunden</li> <li>• Beratungen über Pflanzen-Patente</li> <li>• ARD Online-Angebote</li> <li>• Löw bleibt Bundestrainer</li> </ul> <p><b>[6 topics]</b></p>

21.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Merkel: Zwischenbilanz der Regierungsarbeit</li> <li>• Merkel: Reaktion auf EU-Pläne für Kohlezechen</li> <li>• Schröder: Bericht zum Ausbau der Kinderbetreuung</li> <li>• zu Guttenberg: Diskussion über Truppenrückzug</li> <li>• Ramelow: Urteil zu Beobachtung durch Verfassungsschutz</li> <li>• Schäuble/Lagarde: Beratung über Euro und Schuldenkrise</li> <li>• Obama unterzeichnet Finanzmarktreform</li> <li>• (News film): USA wollen Druck auf Nordkorea erhöhen</li> <li>• Missbrauchsvorwürfe nach Ferienlager</li> <li>• Zollitsch: Ermittlungen eingestellt</li> <li>• Schmerzensgeld für Hitzeopfer</li> <li>• (News film): Italien: Großeinsatz gegen Mafiaorganisation</li> </ul> <p>[12 topics]</p>
22.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deutsche Bahn: Diskussion über Pannen an Klimaanlage</li> <li>• Kosovo: Internationaler Gerichtshof zu Unabhängigkeit</li> <li>• Tadic/Sejdiu: Echo auf Gutachten</li> <li>• Verdacht auf Steuerhinterziehung</li> <li>• Zeitarbeit und befristete Beschäftigung</li> <li>• Kik: Umgang mit Mitarbeitern</li> <li>• Nach Misshandlungen in Ferienlager</li> </ul> <p>[7 topics] <span style="float: right;">[Total: 41 topics excl. 3 sports-topics]</span></p>

Table 11: The topics featured in the five studied prime-time editions of the *Tagesschau*

## (2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style

Since the institutional role of the news reader involves the objective transmission of information, we should expect this objectivity to be reflected in the news reader's language use. Hence an analysis of the news reader's speech style on the basis of the formerly determined levels of distinguishing formal and informal speech styles shall reveal whether, and if so how, objectivity is expressed linguistically.

### (a) Self-monitoring: high grade or low grade of self-monitoring

It is important in this connection to call to mind that what the news reader does is in fact reading out institutionally pre-produced language, namely in the form of format-specific journalistic types of text that are the product of diverse editorial work processes. The activity of 'reading out something' naturally not only limits conversational spontaneity (i.e. 'stick to the text'), but also fundamentally requires the reader's full concentration on the act of reading. Especially if we take into consideration the fact that the reading process here centrally involves its broadcast to a large, unknown audience we can postulate a comparatively high amount of self-monitoring that underlies the news reader's use of language. This is all the more the case since the single text types often feature unusual lexical items – names of

persons and places – whose pronunciation affords the speaker’s utmost attention.<sup>272</sup> Though there are no comparably extreme examples in the studied editions of the *Tagesschau*, relevant items include the name of Kazakhstan’s capital Astana with word-final stress (T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30]) and the names of racing cyclists and places in connection with the Tours de France: *Riblon*, *Contador*, *Ax 3 Domaines* (T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: speaker announcement [13:38 – 14:09]).

In fact in the studied editions we specifically find self-monitoring reflected in characteristic stress patterns. That is, apart from language-specific forms of normal word stress, in all editions those words that are considered important because they convey important information are usually particularly stressed for rhetorical reasons (e.g. to emphasize a fact including a time span, a number, a year specification etc. or the fact that something *was* or *was not* done, *is* or *is not* the case).

An example of the latter is the use of stressed “nicht” across the studied editions (e.g. T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [7:00 – 7:32]: “Der Pfarrer wurde in den Ruhestand versetzt, die Staatsanwaltschaft aber *nicht* eingeschaltet.“ Furthermore, the correspondent in the same edition [6:01 – 7:00] points out: “Überraschend kam dieser Rücktritt für die Bundeskanzlerin *nicht*, [...] er war *keiner* aus der *engeren* Führungsreserve der CDU, *nicht* vergleichbar mit [...]. T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [0:12 – 0:35]: “Einen konkreten Termin für den Abzug ausländischer Truppen nannten sie *nicht*.” T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Speaker announcement [2:32 – 2:59]: “Dazu sagte Merkel, begeistert sei sie *nicht*.” T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: Lead-in [0:12 – 0:36]: “Abgeordnete kritisierten viele Fragen seien *ausweichend* oder *gar nicht* beantwortet worden.”

With reference to the former we find that in all studied editions specifications of years and numbers characteristically receive stress (e.g. T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [4:04 – 4:23]: “[...] der *sechste* Chef einer Landesregierung [...],” speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30]: “Kasachstan ist der *viertgrößte* Öllieferant Deutschlands,” lead-in [9:52 – 10:12]: “Bis Freitag beraten etwa *zwanzigtausend* Experten [...]. Weltweit haben noch immer bis zu *vierzehn* Millionen Menschen [...].” T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Speaker announcement [2:32 – 2:59]: “Diese Vereinbarungen sehen einen Ausstieg bis *zweitausendachtzehn* vor,” lead-in [2:59 – 3:23]: “Bis zum Jahr *zweitausenddreizehn* [...],“ speaker announcement [4:54 – 5:22]: “[...] bis Ende *zweitausendvierzehn* [...]“).

Self-monitoring is also mirrored in pronunciation. Throughout all investigated editions of the program the news speaker’s pronunciation of words in the reading out of written language is clear, understandable and standard in character. That is, the phenomena of connected speech that otherwise characterize spontaneous spoken language are missing. Correspondingly, we

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<sup>272</sup> A striking example in this connection is the eruption of the Icelandic volcano named Eyjafjallajökull in 2010 which severely disturbed international air traffic and which was reported on in the media including the *Tagesschau*. (See e.g. <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/islandvulkan102.html> [last access: 24.10.2010]).

do *not* find any reduction of forms. For example, “ist” is realized as formal standard [ɪst] and not more informally as [ɪs] (e.g. T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30]; T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: lead-in [0:12 – 0:38]). Likewise, the above mentioned frequently used “nicht” is constantly pronounced as standard [nɪçt] but not as reduced, informal [nɪç] that appears in spontaneous conversation. The standard pronunciation in this case can be ascribed to the fact that “nicht” characteristically receives stress (cf. above). (English examples in this connection, though they are not studied here, would be the absence of contracted forms such as “it’s” or “you’re” and pronunciation of word-final –ng which is otherwise often dropped in spontaneous everyday conversation (i.e. use of velar nasal /ŋ/ instead of alveolar nasal forms [n], [ɪn], [əɪn]). In short, what we find with respect to pronunciation is the general use of prestige, i.e. standard, varieties.

While standard pronunciation may be the result simply of the reading process and the assumed high degree of self-monitoring that underlies this process and that, as a consequence, triggers the use of prestige varieties, we need to see its occurrence also more specifically with respect to language use within media contexts. That is, we may define standard pronunciation/the use of prestige varieties as a linguistic phenomenon of (a kind of) media talk that is produced for and reduced to the objective transmission of information. The objective transmission of information naturally requires objectivity of language and this in turn requires that the agent sticks to his/her institutional role as news reader while the ‘private person’ steps in the background. That means the adoption of the institutional role of ‘news reader’ centrally involves the use of neutral, objective language, which implies the occurrence of neutral, i.e. standard, pronunciation. The adoption of this role thus also implies a necessary abandonment of linguistic features that in everyday situations characterize the identity of the speaker as individual. Clearly, in informative media talk as applied by the news reader in the public service news format *Tagesschau* speaker-dependent idiolects and sociolects are typically absent.

Additionally, we may view the occurrence of standard pronunciation also as a result of the conditions placed on informative media talk (cf. table 9). That is, we can see the use of prestige varieties as corresponding to a formal requirement of comprehensibility, which can also be determined to imply clear pronunciation.

To sum up, there are two major factors playing a role in the general determination of a high grade of self-monitoring that accompanies informative language in the speaker-based public service news format as exemplified by means of the German *Tagesschau*: (1) The simple act of reading out institutionally pre-produced language; (2) The particularities of the speech situation which is open to a large number of addressees due to a process of mass communication. Self-monitoring is expressed in particular stress patterns highlighting

important information and pronunciation patterns characterized by the use of prestige varieties. The latter are itself also reflections of objective language use.

(b) Structural complexity: assumed overall high grade or low grade of structural complexity

Interestingly, the sentence structure that characterizes the speech of the news reader is kept rather simple. That is, complex syntactic structures due to (multiple) sub-ordination of clauses (e.g. via frequently inserted relative clauses to present additional information) do not occur throughout the five investigated editions. Thus, instead of hypotaxis, parataxis – clause coordination – is generally preferred.<sup>273</sup>

Characteristically, the only structure enhancing linguistic features are those that are used by the institution in order to (1) refer to a source of reported information and to (2) specify the identity of persons that are reported on. Accordingly, what we frequently find are source attributions that accompany stated facts and emphasize the validity of these facts (e.g. T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [11:43 – 12:07]: “nach Schätzungen der Veranstalter;” T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: Lead-in [7:00 – 7:20]: “nach Überzeugung der Richter;” Speaker announcement [11:45 – 12:15]: “nach eigenen Angaben;” T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [4:12 – 4:39]: “nach Einschätzung der Stiftung Warentest;” Lead-in [8:28 – 8:55]: “nach Auffassung der Rundfunkräte;” T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: Lead-in [8:34 – 8:55]: “[n]ach Recherchen des ARD-Magazins Panorama”).

What we also find are modifiers – appositional noun phrases, attributive adjectives – that specify in more detail the identity of the persons who are presented in the news. Relevant examples include: T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [7:00 – 7:32]: Here, the referent named “Zollitsch” is more closely defined as “Der Vorsitzende der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, der Freiburger Erzbischof Zollitsch;” Speaker announcement: [9:04 – 9:30]: It is not only the president of Kazakhstan but the “autoritär regierende Präsident Nasarbajew;” T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Lead-in [5:22 – 5:48]: The person named “Ramelow” is specified as “[d]er Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow,” and again we find “den Vorsitzenden der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz Erzbischof Zollitsch” (speaker announcement [12:03 – 12:37]). Hence these persons are given explicit reference in this way and we can relate the use of this strategy to Biber’s (2001) complexity dimension of *Structural Elaboration of Reference* (cf. ch. 6.2.2.3) that expresses the level of referential elaboration – the degree to which (the identity of) a particular referent is specified more closely.<sup>274</sup>

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<sup>273</sup> Following Biber (2001) this is a feature associated with reduced linguistic complexity representing what he refers to as a ‘fragmented structure’ (cf. table 5).

<sup>274</sup> Although we are actually not speaking here about dependent clauses as Biber (2001) does. Yet there are examples of dependent clauses in the five editions which belong in this category (e.g. *that* complement clauses: For example: T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [4:04 – 4:23]; T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: Speaker announcement [11:45 – 12:15]; T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [2:15 – 2:43]; Lead-in [8:28 – 8:55].

In fact, such referential specification via appositional noun phrases and attributive adjectives can also be determined as a strategy used by television, and presumably by the media in general, in order to condense information. That is, such linguistic means of elaborate referent identification as presented above are of concrete importance on the level of information structure in so far as their users can create a high amount of information packed into their utterances/sentences. Biber (2001) refers to this as *Integrated Structure* – another complexity dimension – that results from the use of particular integrative features. Biber (2001: 233/223) defines such an “extremely dense use of [...] [these] features” which leads to “a relatively dense integration of information in a text” as a characteristic of written registers with an informational purpose (e.g. press reportage). As the object of investigation here is the ultimately and exclusively information-oriented type of news format, the use of such features seems anything but unexpected. This is all the more the case since the news reader actually engages in a process of reading out institutionally pre-produced *written* language.<sup>275</sup>

All these are features that are associated according to Biber (2001) with increased linguistic complexity. Nevertheless, the general absence of hypotaxis in the news reader’s speech – the sentences are predominantly short – all in all results in an overall perceived low grade of structural complexity.

The general absence of high structural complexity here can be ascribed to reasons of recipient design. That is, a simple syntactic structure is a necessary pre-condition for the (successful) cognitive processing of the spoken information on the part of the audience who cannot immediately ‘retrace’ verbally conveyed information as they could while reading a newspaper. Consequently, in the televised communicative process non-processed information is lost. The more structurally complex and hence the longer the spoken sentences, the higher is the processing effort and the higher is therefore the risk of reduced traceability of communicated information. Clearly, the more complex the spoken information, the easier we tend to forget relevant details. Therefore, the transmission of *spoken* information to the audience in the process of mass communication should ideally be done in the form of short, non-complex and thus comprehensible sentences so as to allow complete and correct processing of information which may otherwise be (partly) lost.

To sum up, there is a clear tendency towards reduced structural complexity in all studied editions of the program. This tendency is contrary to our expectations of the nature of institutional talk in this respect (cf. table 6) but it can be explained on the basis of recipient

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E.g. relative clauses: T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: Lead-in [0:12 – 0:38]; Speaker announcement: [8:58 – 9:30]). An exception in this connection is the language use of the correspondent [6:01 - 7:00] in T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010, which is more complex but not defined in more detail here.

<sup>275</sup> In this category also belong nominalizations (cf. T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [7:00 – 7:32]: “Der Vorsitzende der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, der Freiburger Erzbischof Zollitsch, steht wegen des Umgangs mit einem Missbrauchsfall in der Kritik“).

design that underlies the production of spoken language in the mass media for a process of mass distribution.

(c) Word choice: lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality or informality

The concrete choice of words by the news reader is immediately dependent on two aspects: (1) the execution of the ascribed institutional function of (objective) information that guides the fulfilment of the agent's institutional role as 'news speaker', i.e. as objective information transmitter. As argued above, objective language use in this connection implies that the identity of the speaker as private person steps in the background and with it consequently his/her subjective view on the world. This institutionally required reduction in subjectivity in turn involves three aspects: firstly, an absence of colloquial, i.e. informal, language that characterizes the speaker's subjective language use as a private person in informal everyday conversation applied in informal speech situations. This is the case since we are dealing here with another type of speech situation, namely one that is institutional in character, and such a type of speech situation, as we have seen, by definition requires a type of language that corresponds to the formality of this speech situation. Secondly, reduced subjectivity means reduced emotionality, i.e. the general absence of affective language that expresses the speaker's feelings (anger, despair, grief etc.).

According to Wittwen (1995), one outcome of tabloidization is linguistic emotionalization, which denotes the different linguistic strategies used by the communicator – the agents of television – to realize a type of language affective in character that emotionally moves the audience and by means of this is entertaining. Wittwen (1995:134) lists among other things the use of colloquial language and an affective, emotional lexicon as typical strategies to arouse emotions. As the institutional aim of the speaker-based public service news format though is not to arouse emotions but to objectively inform the audience, affective language is not desired and we should expect that it is consequently missing in the speech of the news reader. Indeed, the German *Tagesschau* is characterized by a general absence of those linguistic strategies. Colloquial terms are only, if ever, rarely applied entailing for example “spazieren,” “radeln” and “skaten” (T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [11:43 – 12:07]). Where affective words such as “jämmerlich” (T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [4:12 – 4:39]) or “verheerend” (T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Speaker announcement [4:54 – 5:22]) are used they are part of directly quoted speech and hence of speech that is attributed to a specific source – a person, a particular social institution – whereby it is marked as being of external origin, i.e. of origin other than the news reader or all those involved in the production of the read-out news contents.

Thirdly, reduced subjectivity and emotionality also entail the general absence of an expression of personal viewpoints and opinions. Therefore, we could expect that the public service news reader in his/her role as objective transmitter of information basically refrains

from making any personally motivated comments and valuating statements. Clearly, the demand for objectivity in theory necessitates the absence of speaker's modality. Whether this is actually the case is discussed in section (g) *Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker's modality* below.

(2) The concrete choice of words by the news reader is furthermore dependent on the type of topics dealt with in the program. The analysis of featured topics has shown the preponderance of 'hard news', namely of political, economic and social topics and this, of course, is reflected in word choice. Accordingly, what we find are words that can be defined as belonging to what may be described as a 'public register' used to address public affairs of political, economic and social nature within the public sphere. Relevant political and economic terms of this register include, for example:

(T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010): *Bürgerschaftswahl, Deutsche Bischofskonferenz, Koalition*

(T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010): *Verfassungsschutz, Bundeskriminalamt, Volksentscheid, Bundesbank, Finanzministerium*

(T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010): *Europäisches Parlament, Rundfunkräte, Dreistufentest*

(T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010): *EU-Kommission, Bundesfamilienministerin, Verteidigungsminister, Bundesfinanzminister, Finanzmarktreform, Gesundheitsreform, Bundesverwaltungsgericht*

(T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010): *Verkehrsausschuss des Bundestages, Internationaler Gerichtshof, Statistisches Bundesamt*

To sum up, we find that the institutional role of the agent as objective news reader is reflected in the objective character of the lexicon that, on the one hand, shows a general absence of linguistic informality and that also expresses a general absence of subjectivity and connected emotionality (including an expected absence of speaker's modality) and that, on the other hand, is restricted to a 'public register' that relates to featured political, economic (and social) topics. The treatment of these topics thus happens in the form of neutral statements (i.e. representatives in speech act terminology). We can therefore say that the language use of the news reader with regard to overall choice of words is generally formal in this respect and this formality can be determined as appropriate means for the fulfillment of the institutional demand for objectivity in the transmission of information within institutional discourse.

#### (d) Speech planning: relatively high or low degree of speech planning

In the discussion of this point two aspects need to be acknowledged: Firstly, the object of investigation – the language use of the news reader in the reading process – is

characteristically *monolog*-oriented. As a consequence, the demands of online production that may influence the concrete degree of speech planning in all (formal or informal) *dialog*-oriented, i.e. interactive, forms of verbal communication are correspondingly absent. This being so, we may potentially assume less pressure towards linguistic spontaneity here. It is in fact legitimate to speak of a complete absence of linguistic spontaneity with regard to the news reader. This absence can be attributed to the institutionally ascribed communicative role that consists in and at the same time is fundamentally restricted to the reading out of institutionally pre-produced language. Spontaneity is simply not a part of this communicative role and hence it is not an option within the reading process.

Secondly, institutional pre-production of language necessarily means a process of language pre-planning. The difference to everyday conversation in this connection lies in the fact that planning here does not happen in the course of the ongoing interaction but characteristically is a true pre-planning process that takes place exclusively within relevant editorial offices and that consequently precedes the actual process of language application by the news reader. In short, the news reader restricts himself/herself to reading out language that has been produced in advance and this reading process does not involve any online planning of speech.

Another aspect comes into play here: relevant institutional processes of pre-planning news contents are guided by the objectives of completeness and comprehensibility. Thus, a careful consideration of how to present media contents linguistically seems all the more necessary. If, however, we consider that television contents are broadcast to a large anonymous and heterogeneous mass of people, we see that the adherence to these objectives may be indeed problematic in practice. Clearly, as the diverse viewers are not known and their communicative needs may differ enormously, recipient design is a significant problem in this context. This naturally complicates comprehensive (and comprehensible) information of the audience which can only be treated in its entirety but not as consisting of single viewers with potentially different communicative needs. In trying to comply with these needs, detailed information provided by the media ideally includes the central “w”-questions (who? what? when? where? and why?).<sup>276</sup>

To sum up, the speaker-based public service news format *Tagesschau* can be determined to involve a relatively high degree of speech planning that consists in the advance production by the institution of language that appeals to the communicative needs of the audience and that is to be read out by the news speaker (in the form of format-specific text types) who is consequently limited in his/her linguistic spontaneity.

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<sup>276</sup> Cf. Wittwen (1995: 52), who mentions the “w”-questions in connection with the functions of headlines in news programs.

(e) Information structure: expected high or low grade of explicit information

Two aspects are of significance for the discussion of this level: (1) the communicative function of (objective) information that underlies the conception of the news format in general and that is expected to be mirrored correspondingly in language use. In this connection the actual execution of this function can be determined to be ultimately guided by the demands placed on informative media talk, namely to inform in a complete and comprehensible way (cf. table 9). We can therefore assume that this demand will have an immediate influence on the presentation of information in the news. (2) Complete and comprehensible information, however, is severely complicated by the nature of the mass communicative process that characterizes the way in which the institution television communicates with its addressees. Clearly, as indicated above, the broadcasting of produced contents towards a large, heterogeneous audience constitutes a factor which makes recipient design a complex task with respect to what knowledge can be presupposed as given information (i.e. shared background knowledge) and what must rather be seen as new information (i.e. special/expert knowledge) in the production of news texts within a given context. Thus, since audience members indeed potentially have different communicative needs in this respect the communicator is always faced with the problem of how to address these needs appropriately, i.e. how explicit or implicit to be in the overall presentation of information, and since the communicator can never exactly know these needs we may assume a general tendency towards elaborateness in the presentation of information.

Indeed, the five studied editions of the speaker-based news format that is at hand reveal a tendency towards a high grade of explicit information and consequently a low grade of linguistic vagueness. On the one hand, this especially concerns the *persons* that are reported on also including those that can be assumed to be generally known among the audience members. Accordingly, it is always “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel,” (T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30]), “Verteidigungsminister zu Guttenberg,” (T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [2:15 – 2:43]), “Bundesfamilienministerin Schröder,” (T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Lead-in [2:59 – 3:23]), or “US-Präsident Obama” (T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Speaker announcement [9:17 – 9:48]) instead of “Angela Merkel,” “zu Guttenberg,” “Kristina Schröder” or “Obama.” This is the general rule whenever the relevant persons are mentioned for the first time in a text type. Are they mentioned repeatedly in one and the same text type (or in a text type immediately following) referential specification is limited to the name of the person alone, i.e. without additional indication of their political function which is now given information, or to anaphoric reference via the use of personal pronouns (e.g. T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Lead-in [0:13 – 0:40]: “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel”/”Merkel;” Speaker announcement [4:54 – 5:22]: “Verteidigungsminister zu Guttenberg”/”Guttenberg;” Lead-in [7:22 – 7:47]: “Bundesfinanzminister Schäuble”/”Schäuble;” Speaker announcement [9:17 – 9:48]: “US-Präsident Obama”/”Obama;” Lead-in [2:59 – 3:23]: “Bundesfamilienministerin

Schröder”/”sie”).<sup>277</sup> This way of structuring information is aptly illustrated in T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010 where the lead-in [0:12 – 0:30] provides a specification of the identity of the person “von Beust.” (“[i]n Hamburg hat der Erste Bürgermeister von Beust [...]”). In the following lead-in to a broadcast report also concerned with von Beust [2:25 – 2:41] he is referred to first as “von Beust” and then anaphorically via the German 3<sup>rd</sup> person personal pronoun “er.”

Moreover, we find a high degree of explicit information expressed in what has been labeled *referential specification* in section (b) on structural complexity. Referential specification is more detailed with particular persons other than those constantly featured in the news such as the members of the cabinet. Accordingly, the modifying noun phrases that are mentioned in section (b) not only serve the density of information packed in a text type but are also used to present important background information about the identity of the persons “Zollitsch” (i.e. “[d]er Vorsitzende der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz, der Freiburger Erzbischof Zollitsch,” T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [7:00 – 7:32]) and “Ramelow” (i.e. “[d]er Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow,” T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: Lead-in [5:22 – 5:48]).

On the other hand, a high grade of explicit information also concerns *events* and *facts* that are reported on. In the investigated editions this concerns relevant background information that accompanies the presentation of these events and facts. One such event, for example, is the breakdown of the air conditioning system in German ICE trains that is a topic in two editions. Accordingly, in T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010 the end of the speaker announcement [12:37 – 13:02] provides additional background information giving the reason for why certain passengers receive compensation by German Rail (*Deutsche Bahn*): “Vor elf Tagen war es in einem ICE so heiß geworden dass Reisende auf dem Bielefelder Bahnhof von Sanitätern behandelt werden mussten.” Likewise, in T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010 the end of the lead-in to a following broadcast report [0:12 – 0:36] presents additional background information to the consequences of the breakdown of the air conditioning system in German ICE trains: “In den vergangenen Wochen waren in rund fünfzig ICE-Zügen Klimaanlage ausgefallen, Reisende mussten ärztlich versorgt werden.” In the same edition the lead-in to a following broadcast report concerned with the legitimacy of Kosovo’s declaration of independence [2:11- 2:31] presents relevant background information to this fact: “Das Kosovo hatte zweitausendacht seine Unabhängigkeit von Serbien erklärt. Neunundsechzig Staaten, darunter *Deutschland*, erkennen diese *bisher* an.“

Characteristically, also a term such as ‘Dreistufentest’ is explained (T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: Lead-in [8:28 – 8:55]) which can be considered as a term within a public register (cf. section (c)) whose proper understanding requires specific, i.e. expert, knowledge that, in contrast to the other examples mentioned here, goes far beyond a potentially shared

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<sup>277</sup> An exception in this connection is T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30] in which “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel” is used twice).

amount of world knowledge: “Die Prüfung sollte *sicherstellen* dass diese Angebote dem gesetzlichen Auftrag der *Grundversorgung* mit *Information, Bildung* und *Unterhaltung* entsprechen.”

In fact, such explicit verbalization of background knowledge as illustrated here for the speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* is immediately consistent with the journalistic objectives of complete and comprehensible information of the audience. To sum up, we can thus say that there is a high degree of explicit information in this format (both with respect to a potentially shared amount of world knowledge<sup>278</sup> and specific expert knowledge) that naturally means a low degree of linguistic vagueness. Explicit information is ultimately governed by the demands towards completeness and comprehensibility which are placed on informative journalistic work within the mass communicative process in consideration of the diverse communicative needs of large, heterogeneous audiences.

#### (f) Conversational redress: expected high or low degree of conversational redress

It is argued in chapter 5 that institutional discourse within the institutional frame will be characterized by its tendency towards a comparatively high degree of conversational redress – and therefore tend to entail a high degree of intentional indirectness – which is based on the nature of the social relationship between interacting agent(s) and client(s). As discussed, the relationship between both types of interlocutors is fundamentally defined by a relevant social distance as resulting from the specific constellation of the three sociological variables of power, distance and rate of imposition and from a restriction to role-oriented politeness in the institutional speech situation which expresses a lack of personal involvement and a lack of interest in the addressee. The linguistic expression of this social distance will then be an application of linguistic independence strategies consisting in an assumed high grade of conversational redress in the form of negative politeness (cf. chapter 5.2.3).

When we talk about this aspect with reference to television we necessarily have to consider the special nature of television as a social institution in comparison with the other traditional institutions of law, health and education that were focused on earlier. This characteristically concerns the particularities of the institutional speech situation (cf. chapter 5.2.2.1). That is, on the one hand the speech situation is characteristically televised: verbal communication taking place within the institutional frame is specifically produced for and in a process of mass communication broadcast to a large and heterogeneous audience which consists of members with potentially different communicative needs. The actual institutional frame, as a consequence, is split up into multiple frames involving a dual directedness of

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<sup>278</sup> E.g. referring to Merkel as “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel.” We could expect that her political function is generally known and therefore does not require explicit formulation. Nevertheless we find a tendency within this news format – and probably the news in general – to modify her identity in this way.

communication (cf. chapters 2.1 and 5.2.2.1). Thus, whenever we want give an account of the social relations between agents and clients with special regard to television we have to do so in due consideration of this duality that underlies *every* communicative process within the institution. Clearly, resulting from this duality is the fact that we actually have *two* types of clients: those located within the first frame of interaction directly engaging in interpersonal communication with the agent(s) plus the audience at home, i.e. those that are not directly located within the first frame of interaction but have an access to the verbal communication within the first frame which is enabled by mass communication. Which type of client the communicator is actually addressing fundamentally depends on the character of the verbal communication that takes place within the first frame of interaction, namely whether it is dialog-based featuring verbal interaction between agents and clients within the institutional setting (e.g. in the talk show) or whether it is monolog-based featuring a news reader as agent but typically lacking the direct presence of any client in the institutional setting of the television studio and hence lacking verbal interaction ‘on stage’ (e.g. in the type of speaker-based news format that is studied here). Thus, while the audience in front of the television set is a constant client in both cases because it is always addressed via mass communication, the institutional setting *itself* can be characterized by the absence of clients and hence by the absence of any true (verbal) interaction. This, in fact, constitutes a significant difference to the traditional institutions of, for example, law, health and education where institutional discourse necessarily requires the immediate presence of agents and clients in the institutional speech situation and, what is particularly important in this connection, it is exactly for these latter situations that the social relations between agents and clients in institutional discourse are determined in chapter 5.2.3 and repeated here. In other words, what has been stated about speaker relations in institutional speech situations has been done with respect to *true* face-to-face communication taking place within the institutional frame of traditional institutions (i.e. other than television). Hence, obviously we cannot unproblematically transfer the stated findings to the institutional speech situation of television unless we have a situation that features verbal interaction between agents and clients in the institutional frame. Only when there is indeed true face-to-face interaction within the televised speech situation do the stated findings concerning the social relations between agents and clients gain unrestricted validity. (When we take a look at the news format at hand, however, we find that it is characterized by the absence of interaction within the institutional frame).

This is the case at least theoretically for what comes into play here is another peculiarity of the institutional speech situation of television, namely the discussed relative unimportance of Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) three sociological variables and relationship-determining factors of power, distance and rate of imposition that are otherwise at the basis of the determination of a social distance between agents and clients in traditional institutions. This unimportance is connected to the fact that in correspondence to traditional institutions place and time of interpersonal communication within the televised speech situation are

characteristically determined in advance – a factor that distinguishes institutional discourse in general from everyday conversation.<sup>279</sup> As discussed in chapter 5.2.2.1 this predetermination of television talk though has wider implications in so far as it results in a reduced necessity for extensive management of interpersonal relations. This has consequences for the type of face-work that is applied in the institutional speech situation of television which can thus be determined as simulated or ‘staged’ in character reflecting the overall application of a type of politeness that is not person-oriented but role-oriented in character. Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) framework of interpersonal politeness, however, *does* illustrate a mechanism of linguistic politeness strategies whereby interlocutors manage their social relations and this mechanism, furthermore, is centrally based on the influence of the three sociological variables of ‘power’, ‘distance’ and ‘rate of imposition’. That is, it reflects a person-oriented politeness (as expressed in a general face-orientation and connected risk of face threat) with a type of face-work that expresses true relationship management in everyday situations.

These foregoing theoretical considerations complicate a simple transfer of conversational redress to television talk in general and to the speaker-based news format in particular lacking face-to-face interaction within the institutional frame. The question hence is *whether*, and if so *how*, we can nevertheless adhere to a general assumption of a comparatively high degree of conversational redress (involving a high degree of intentional indirectness) based on an existing social distance between the interlocutors in institutional discourse as stated initially.

We can indeed ascribe an existing social distance between agent(s) and client(s) – i.e. news reader and television audience – to the restriction to the communicative function of objective information which is executed by the news reader in his/her institutional role as objective information transmitter. This institutional role centrally involves that the identity of the news reader as private person with subjective viewpoints and an interest in the addressee steps in the background in favor of the objective transfer of information. Linguistically, this involves reduced emotionality and hence reduced affectivity and it contributes to a perceived social distance between news reader and audience.<sup>280</sup>

In other words, the social relationship between agent(s) and clients is fundamentally determined by the communicative function of (objective, complete and comprehensible) information that is to be fulfilled by the news format that is at hand. We can say that the communicative function of information both causes (and simultaneously reflects) the maintenance of a social distance between agent(s) and clients. In the speaker-based public

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<sup>279</sup> Cf. chapters 5 and 6 for a discussion of the factors ‘place’ and ‘time’ of conversation in institutional talk.

<sup>280</sup> In fact, the absence of the expression of speaker-dependent personal viewpoints then also means a general absence, or at least reduction, of a risk of face threat that otherwise accompanies the verbalization of any speech act. In other words, the execution of a communicative function of pure information by virtue of a restriction to objectivity characteristically involves the absence of any damage to face.

service news format *Tagesschau* this social distance is expressed linguistically in an objective language use that lacks the application of affective elements thus reflecting a ‘withdrawal’ of the speaker’s own personality and hence also a withdrawal of concrete face threat otherwise underlying the verbalization of speaker intentions. It is in this sense that we can speak of a high grade of conversational redress, i.e. in avoiding the risk of face loss almost altogether via purely objective language use, but, characteristically, this does not happen via an assumed high degree of intentional indirectness – this in fact would be contrary to the objective of comprehensibility – but via a restriction to the application of representatives (factual statements).

To sum up, if we want to make any statements about relevant grades of conversational redress within television talk, we have to do so in consideration of the peculiarities of the institutional speech situation. The general assumption of a given social distance between the interlocutors in institutional discourse which is expressed verbally in a comparatively high degree of conversational redress is valid for the speaker-based news format studied here in so far as it can be attributed to the institutional function of (objective) information that guides the conception of the format and determines the institutional role of the news reader. Linguistically, a high grade of conversational redress in this news format consists in the application of purely objective language via factual statements (Searle’s representatives) whereby the risk of face-threat is significantly reduced.

#### (g) Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker’s modality

It is argued in chapter 6.2.2.3 that institutional speech situations, as everyday situations, are characterized by the occurrence of linguistic modality, i.e. both of utterance *and* speaker’s modality. In concrete instances of institutional discourse, again as in everyday situations, this is influenced by the speaker relations in the institutional speech situation.

We should refrain, however, from simply transferring these results to the televised speech situation for what is important here is the communicative function that is to be fulfilled by the institution television in general and by an individual television format in particular and this, characteristically, is not simply a single consistent one but can alternate with different television formats between information, entertainment or an in-between form (‘infotainment’) and these functions can be expected to have a direct influence on language use within the institutional speech situation (and hence potentially also on the occurrence of linguistic modality). Table 8 illustrates this aspect presenting selected mass media functions in combination with associated television formats and appropriate function-specific language.

Accordingly, what we are doing here is discussing the characteristic features of the type of language that is used to execute the function of (objective) information as fulfilled by the speaker-based German news format *Tagesschau*.

We have seen at several points in the course of this discussion of the defining factors of institutional and private talk for this format that the communicative function of information governs the execution of the institutional role of the news reader as objective transmitter of information. Accordingly, we find linguistic objectivity reflected among other things in overall word choice (cf. section (c)). We have also seen that the institutionally required demand for objectivity consequently involves a reduction in speaker subjectivity in so far as the identity of the news reader as private person necessarily loses importance which is hence also valid for his/her subjective view on the world. In section (c) it is argued that reduced subjectivity entails three aspects: (1) the absence of colloquial, i.e. informal, language, (2) the general absence of affective language that expresses the speaker's feelings (e.g. anger, despair, grief), i.e. reduced emotionality, and (3) reduced subjectivity and emotionality together also entail the general absence of an expression of personal viewpoints and opinions. That is, we expect that the public service news reader in his/her role as objective transmitter of information basically refrains from making any personally motivated comments and valuating statements on reported facts and events. Clearly, (while utterance modality is generally unproblematic) the institutional demand for objectivity in theory fundamentally necessitates the absence of speaker's modality – the explicit expression of a speaker's subjective attitude towards what (s)he states in the proposition.

Table 9 shows objectivity/neutrality as a central condition of informative media talk. Based on Grice's conversational maxims table 9 also shows truthfulness/reliability as another significant institutional demand placed on informative journalistic work. Hence, a commitment by the mass media, i.e. not only television, to the information function necessarily involves a fundamental commitment both to objectivity/neutrality and truthfulness/reliability in news coverage and we can expect that this commitment will be reflected correspondingly in language use (e.g. in the mentioned absence of speaker's modality for objectivity/neutrality). The central question thus is how these theoretically required demands and the institutional commitment to these demands are practically expressed in our example.

In fact, in the information-oriented speaker-based news format that is at hand we find that the expected objectivity/neutrality and truthfulness/reliability are indeed attended to and expressed via particular linguistic means. That is, on the one hand, the institutional commitment towards objectivity/neutrality is characteristically illustrated in the studied editions via a general procedure of always ascribing valuating statements of any kind to institution-external sources, i.e. referred-to third persons – so-called 'news actors' as the persons featured and reported on in the news – or other institutions. For example, in T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010 the lead-in [4:12 – 4:39] states that “[p]rivate Anleger

werden von vielen Banken nach Einschätzung der Stiftung Warentest so wörtlich jämmerlich schlecht beraten.“ It is obvious that this constitutes a negative evaluation of an advisory activity executed by German financial institutions. Characteristically, though, in providing a relevant source attribution (‘nach Einschätzung der Stiftung Warentest’) for this evaluative statement it is clear that this subjective assessment as performed by means of the valuating adjective ‘schlecht’ and its intensification ‘jämmerlich’ is only a *reported* one but does *not* constitute the subjective viewpoint of the news reader and of all those of the institution television involved in the production of news contents. (Although as private persons they may, of course, share this opinion). Accordingly, the clients of the mentioned financial institutions receive such poor advice only according to the German *Stiftung Warentest* but characteristically *not* according to those involved in the production of the news (who restrict themselves to objective reporting of other-evaluated facts/events).

In the same manner, the speaker announcement [4:54 – 5:22] in T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010 does not state that a determination of the final withdrawal of NATO troops from Afghanistan would be disastrous and stupid according to the *news reader* but this subjective viewpoint is attributed instead to the German minister of defense via reported speech: “Guttenberg sagte der Neuen Osnabrücker Zeitung wörtlich das wäre verheerend und dumm, [...]”

The same is valid for the lead-in [4:13 – 4:35] in T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010. Here, the decision of the International Court of Justice is marked respectively as the personal opinion of the president of the Kosovo: “Der Präsident des Kosovo Sejdiu bezeichnete das Gutachten des Gerichtshofes als weise.”

Thus, speaker’s modality – the explicit expression of subjective speaker perspective – indeed *does* occur in the speech of the news reader. However, this never constitutes the news reader’s own perspective but always the one of a third person/external institution that is simply illustrated by the news reader.<sup>281</sup> This external subjective viewpoint is marked respectively via source attribution (often in combination with reported speech). That is, the occurrence of speaker’s modality in the speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* is fundamentally subjected to the demands placed on objective information. This objectivity in the transmission of information requires that news readers do not evaluate themselves but personal assessments are always ascribed to third persons/external institutions via source attribution. In this way personal viewpoints can be presented while at the same time the institution minimizes the psychological impact on the audience in attributing these viewpoints to others thus illustrating an absence of any attempt on the part of the institution to influence the audience in a particular direction.

Attributing personal assessments to external sources furthermore highlights the factuality of the presented news contents. That is, relevant source attributions turn facts and events that

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<sup>281</sup> Hence the responsibility of the personal evaluation is ascribed to an external source away from the institution itself.

are reported on into factual statements that are true: ‘x has said that y therefore it is/must be true’.<sup>282</sup>

Source attributions thus are also used to illustrate and emphasize the validity of uttered statements and this directly leads to the commitment towards truthfulness/reliability. That is, it is institutionally required that all those involved in the production of news contents (including the news reader) commit themselves to the truth while reporting on a state of affairs and hence this means that they commit themselves to the truth of what they state in the proposition. As previously mentioned this happens via source attribution – the presentation/citation of a source of information functioning as evidence for featured news contents – thus highlighting the factuality of what is reported on.<sup>283</sup> For example, while the speaker announcement [9:04 – 9:30] in T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010 illustrates the attribution of evaluative statements to external sources (president Nasarbajew and chancellor Merkel), it also reflects (a commitment to) the truth of what is stated by means of this attribution: “Bei einem Besuch von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel in der Hauptstadt Astana *nannte der autoritär regierende Präsident Nasarbajew Deutschland einen Schlüsselpartner bei der Modernisierung seines Landes. Bundeskanzlerin Merkel bezeichnete Kasachstan als wichtigsten regionalen Partner der deutschen Wirtschaft.*” Here, the news reader could have stated that Germany *is* a key partner in the modernization of Kazakhstan and that Kazakhstan *is* the most important regional partner of German economy. This, however, is not the case. In order to stick to the truth the source is given to which the statements are consequently attributed. These source attributions make each statement a factual and hence a true statement. In contrast to this, the statement immediately following is presented as a factual statement without any additional support via source attribution: “Kasachstan ist der viertgrößte Öllieferant Deutschlands.” Expecting the communicator’s commitment to the truth of what (s)he states in the proposition we, as the audience, are inclined to believe this even without such relevant support.

We are presented here with a figure. Indeed, source attributions are frequently used in the studied editions not only in connection with personal evaluations as illustrated above in order to retain objectivity but also more generally to highlight the validity of presented figures and facts. (Cf. for example T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: lead-in [11:43 – 12:07]: “Auf dem knapp sechzig Kilometer langen Autobahnabschnitt spazierten, radelten, oder skateten *nach*

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<sup>282</sup> Cf. in this connection especially the use of the adverb “wörtlich” (engl. literally) in the illustrated examples as additional element supporting the truth of what is being stated.

<sup>283</sup> This is also assessed in terms of evidentiality. Evidentials (e.g. particular verbs in English or German) present the source of information for what is stated in the proposition which thus also functions as a justification for propositional content. This involves *how* information is acquired. For example, in English the speaker may *see* or *hear* himself/herself that something has happened or (s)he may attribute this statement to another person (“he *said* that [...] has/had happened”). In the former case *see* and *hear* function as evidential verbs relating to the perception of the speaker; in the latter case the speaker (via evidential *say*) quotes a statement performed by another speaker (= reported speech). In both cases the source of information in the proposition differs. (On evidentiality in general see, for example, Aikhenvald (2004); for an account of evidentiality in English and German see Whitt (2009).

*Schätzungen der Veranstalter* etwa drei Millionen Besucher.” T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: speaker announcement [11:45 – 12:15]: “Sie [die Polizei] nahm in Deutschland *nach eigenen Angaben* sieben Männer fest.“ Lead-in [7:00 – 7:20]: “*Nach Überzeugung der Richter* haben die Männer Geld und Ausrüstung für Al-Kaida organisiert, [...]“ T03\_TA\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: lead-in [8:28 – 8:55]: “Alle siebenunddreißig Telemedien-Konzepte der Sender erfüllen *nach Auffassung der Rundfunkräte* den sogenannten Dreistufentest.“ T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: lead-in [0:13 – 0:40]: “*Nach ihrer [Merkel] Überzeugung* hat die Koalition aus Union und FDP gute Arbeit geleistet, [...]“ Speaker announcement [12:03 – 12:37]: “Gegen den Vorsitzenden der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz Erzbischof Zollitsch wird nicht weiter wegen des Verdachts der Beihilfe zum sexuellen Missbrauch ermittelt. *Die Staatsanwaltschaft Konstanz erklärte*, es fehle jegliche Grundlage für eine strafrechtliche Verantwortung Zollitschs.“ T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: speaker announcement [8:06 – 8:34]: “*Wie das Statistische Bundesamt mitteilte* gab es von fünfhundertsechzigtausend Zeitarbeitnehmern acht Komma fünf Prozent weniger als im Jahr zuvor.“ Lead-in [8:34 – 8:55]: “*Nach Recherchen des ARD-Magazins Panorama* hat Kik die Finanzen seiner Beschäftigten ausgeforscht um sich von ihnen zu trennen wenn sie finanzielle Probleme hatten“).

A commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition on the part of the news reader as institutional representative is furthermore especially evident in the use of lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings in the studied editions of the program. E.g. T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: lead-in [0:12 – 0:38]: “Das Ergebnis in Hamburg *könnte* auch die Bildungspolitik in anderen Bundesländern beeinflussen” (with respect to the result of a previous referendum). T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: lead-in [10:10 – 10:30]: “Bei einer Sommerfreizeit des Stadtsportbundes Osnabrück auf der niederländischen Insel Ameland *sollen* Jugendliche mehrere dreizehnjährige Jungen sexuell misshandelt haben. Die Mutter eines *mutmaßlichen* Opfers hatte Anfang dieses Monats Anzeige erstattet.“ Speaker announcement [12:03 – 12:37]: “Anzeige erstattet hatte ein *mutmaßliches* Missbrauchsopfer“ (with respect to abetment to sexual abuse). T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: lead-in [6:08 – 6:31]: “Deutschen Finanzbehörden ist erneut eine CD angeboten worden mit Daten *mutmaßlicher* Steuerhinterzieher.“ Lead-in [10:32 – 10:53]: “An den sexuellen Misshandlungen in einem Ferienlager auf der niederländischen Insel Ameland waren *offenbar* mehr Jugendliche beteiligt als bisher angenommen.“<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Another example in this connection is T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: lead-in [4:56 – 5:20]: “Der Aufschwung werde sich *wahrscheinlich* auch auf den privaten Konsum positive auswirken.” This, however, is a representation of an assessment as made by two external institutions (the German Federal Bank (*Deutsche Bundesbank*) and the German Ministry of Finance). The German modal adverb *wahrscheinlich* hence shows the degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition by these external institutions but not by the news speaker as representative of the institution television. That is, this constitutes an *external* opinion/evaluation of a future, yet uncertain, state of affairs that is only illustrated by the news reader. In this respect this example differs from the other ones presented above in so far as these represent propositional qualifications that can be ascribed directly to the institution television, i.e. to the news reader as its institutional representative.

As discussed in chapter 6.2 epistemic modality is a modal category within utterance modality whereby speakers express their degree of commitment to the truth of what they state in the proposition. Epistemic modality hence is fundamentally knowledge-oriented in character: If a speaker is absolutely sure about the truth of a state of affairs and if (s)he is therefore fully committed to its truth (s)he performs representatives that are factual statements. If a speaker, however, is uncertain about the truth of a state of affairs (s)he can modify the propositional content correspondingly via the use of lexical elements with epistemic modal meaning whereby the speaker restricts the factuality of the proposition and illustrates that (s)he is not fully committed to the truth of the proposition. That is, (s)he expresses his/her actual degree of commitment to what is stated in the proposition in terms of possibility, i.e. likelihood. In chapter 6.2 this is illustrated by means of the examples *He is at home* versus *He may be at home* (featuring the English modal auxiliary *may*).<sup>285</sup>

Differential degrees of commitment to the truth of a state of affairs expressed in this way can also be found in the studied examples of the news format that is at hand. Accordingly, the text types containing the examples of epistemic modality as represented above feature outright statements of facts, on the one hand, and statements whose factuality, on the other hand, is correspondingly restricted via lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings (given in *italics*). For example, in the lead-in [0:12 – 0:38] of T02\_TA\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010 the news reader states: “Der schwarz-grüne Senat in Hamburg *ist* (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person, present tense, indicative mood) mit dem Kernstück seiner Schulreform gescheitert.” This is a factual statement made by the news reader reflecting the institution’s full commitment to the truth of the propositional content. The same is true for the following “[i]n einem verbindlichen Volksentscheid *lehnte* (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past tense, indicative mood) eine Mehrheit das von allen Parlamentsparteien unterstützte Vorhaben ab, [...]“ In the last sentence, however, the factuality that characterizes the previous statements is reduced via the addition of a modal auxiliary illustrating an uncertainty on the part of the institution with respect to the actual future influence of the given results: “Das Ergebnis in Hamburg *könnte* auch die Bildungspolitik in anderen Bundesländern beeinflussen.” The results *could* have an influence but it is not yet clear whether they actually *do* have a concrete influence. Similarly, in T04\_TA\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: lead-in [10:10 – 10:30] the investigations of the district attorney’s office in Osnabrück are presented as a fact in “Die Staatsanwaltschaft Osnabrück *nahm* (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past tense, indicative) daraufhin die Ermittlungen auf.” The rest of the lead-in contains lexical elements with epistemic modal meaning which express a yet uncertain state of affairs and reduce the degree of commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition: German modal auxiliary *sollen* and the adjective *mutmaßlich*. While *mutmaßlich* is used here to denote that the status of the victim currently is only that of a putative one, the mother’s charge is a fact: “Die Mutter [...] *hatte* Anfang dieses Monats

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<sup>285</sup> Indeed the occurrence of epistemic modality also reveals a general orientation towards the Gricean maxim of quality.

Anzeige *erstattet*” (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past perfect, indicative). The same adjective with epistemic modal meaning is again used in the following speaker announcement [12:03 – 12:37]: There is no definite victim but still only a putative one, while the stopping of investigations is presented as a fact: “[...] *wird* nicht weiter [...] *ermittelt*” (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present tense, passive voice, indicative); “Die Staatsanwaltschaft Konstanz *erklärte*, [...]” (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past tense, indicative). Again, in T05\_TA\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: lead-in [6:08 – 6:31] we are presented with a Compact Disc containing data of putative though not definite tax evaders. In contrast to this, the confirmation by the German Ministry of Finance and the report by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* are illustrated as facts: “Das Bundesfinanzministerium *bestätigte* [...]” (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past tense, indicative) and “[d]ie *Süddeutsche Zeitung* *berichtete* [...]“ (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, past tense, indicative). Finally, in the lead-in [10:32 – 10:53] of the same edition the propositional content is modified via the German adverb *offenbar* with epistemic modal meaning: it is assumed but not proven yet that more youths are involved in the sexual abuse. Hence it cannot be stated as a fact while the further investigations on the part of the district attorney’s office are presented in this way: “Die Staatsanwaltschaft *prüft* nach eigenen Angaben [...]” (= 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present tense, indicative).

To sum up, the five investigated editions of the public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* feature instances of both utterance modality (i.e. epistemic modality) and speaker’s modality. The occurrence of both types of linguistic modality in this purely information-oriented television format though is fundamentally governed by the (institutionally required) commitment to objectivity/neutrality, on the one hand, and truthfulness/reliability, on the other hand. In order to adhere to the former, the overt expression of subjective speaker perspective is always ascribed to an external source via source attribution.<sup>286</sup> The use of lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings shows an overall compliance with the latter.

In fact, fulfilling their institutionally ascribed function of objective information – the transmission of information unbiased in character – news media in general are always

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<sup>286</sup> An exception in this connection is the correspondent’s contribution in T01\_TA\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010 [6:01 – 7:00]. In fact, it contains the correspondent’s subjective perspective (cf. “Für die Kanzlerin wird es langsam einsam an der Spitze der CDU, [...]. Das kann für die kommenden Landtagswahlen [...] nicht unwichtig sein. Der Union und der Kanzlerin stehen nach der Sommerpause ab September noch schwierige Monate bevor, [...]. Da hofft man auf [...]”). Hence his contribution – if we consider him as an agent of television – constitutes a subjective evaluation of facts on the part of the institution *itself* here, i.e. without attribution of this evaluation to an external source. Consequently, we seem to find here an actual deviation from the general procedure of source attribution in connection with speaker’s modality. Furthermore, this is not marked explicitly as a commentary (as it is always done in the news magazine (cf. chapter 7.3.2.1) ). This may be attributed to the fact that a commentary as such does not seem to be a concrete program-defining text-type, this being the case at least on the basis of the studied editions of the program which otherwise lack the contribution of a correspondent on a particular topic. However, the correspondent’s contribution here may be seen as that of an expert on the topic and not so much as an assessment by him as a private person. That is, with the correspondent acting in his role as institutional expert, we may still accept an orientation towards objectivity/neutrality.

confronted with the tense relationship between (the institutional demand towards) telling the truth (i.e. the fundamental commitment towards truthfulness/reliability as a condition placed on informative journalistic work) and concrete uncertainty at times about actually telling the truth. That is, often the status of information (e.g. especially with respect to catastrophes and crime) is initially unclear and hence it can be problematic sometimes to tell the truth since news media cannot be absolutely sure about what actually happened and how it happened.

The application of epistemic modality and simultaneous use of source attribution (also in such cases) are suitable means to express this commitment towards truthfulness/reliability while at the same time they effectively function to reduce the news media's responsibility for what is stated in the proposition or simply shift responsibility on external sources.

(h) Speech activities and speech events: speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality

The institutional speech situation here is characterized by the absence of any interaction within the institutional frame. The news reader's verbal actions are exclusively restricted to the process of reading out the news to an audience. Speaker actions are consequently limited to a particular activity. What we have here is in general a television-specific and in particular a format-specific, monolog-based speech activity that consists in the performance of format-specific text types by the news reader.

As has been argued, the institutional role of 'news reader' requires this performance to constitute an objective transmission of information that is in accordance with the institutional function of information to be fulfilled by the news format. It has also been argued that this role-based objectivity necessarily entails that the identity of the speaker as private person with his/her own subjective opinion steps in the background. Reduced subjectivity, in turn, involves reduced emotionality which, as shown in section (c), is immediately reflected in word choice, namely the general absence of affective language that expresses speakers' feelings (anger, despair, grief etc.). In fact, this absence then also reflects a lack in personal involvement into what is being talked about – an aspect whose presence so centrally characterizes everyday conversation and whose absence has been determined here as a characteristic feature of the social relations between the interlocutors in institutional discourse (cf. chapters 5.2.2 and 6.2.2.2).

Due to the reduction in personal involvement the speech activity of objective information transfer as performed by the news reader in the speaker-based German news format *Tagesschau* corresponds to those activities/events that are determined in the discussion of linguistic formality and informality in chapter 6.2.2.3 as appropriate within a formal speech style applied in a formal speech situation: e.g. discussions and debates that show a reduction in personal involvement. Language use here is typically less subjective in nature in so far as it lacks the emotionality that is found in informal speech activities and events within an

informal style which reflects the high degree of personal involvement given in informal everyday conversation.

To sum up, the language use of the news reader is characterized by the presence of a speech activity, i.e. a monolog-based form of talk. This speech activity consists in the process of reading out (institutionally pre-produced) format-specific types of text. Based on the institutionally required demand for objective information transfer this activity is executed by means of a form of language that shows a lack of personal involvement which is expressed in the general absence of affective talk. The overall nature of the reading process hence corresponds to those activities and events (e.g. discussions and debates) that have been determined as typical of linguistic formality showing a reduction in subjectivity and thus emotionality.

### **(3) Extent of speech regulation**

All media talk is by definition institutional talk in so far as it is produced within the institutional settings of the media, in this case television. The production of talk within the media fundamentally underlies more or less strict processes of institutional pre-planning. Accordingly, we find that the topics featured in the news and their concrete linguistic realization by the news reader in the format at hand are always the result of preceding institutional work processes within diverse editorial offices. That is, we find that speech, at least in the speaker-based public service news format *Tagesschau*, is highly regulated because it is unexceptionally pre-produced by the institution television. This regulation pertains to strict pre-determination of appropriate topics and their order according to journalistic criteria of newsworthiness including their overall linguistic presentation. Such communicative pre-determination thus leaves no space for any conversational spontaneity within the institutional frame.

### **(4) Predominant type of politeness: role-oriented versus person-oriented politeness**

The discourse featured in the institutional speech situation of the television studio is monolog-based with the talking head reading out the news to a large, heterogeneous television audience in a technical process of mass communication. The communicative situation hence is characterized by the absence of actual face-to-face interaction between agent and client within the institutional frame. Therefore, the concepts of role-oriented and person-oriented politeness need to be transferred to the mass communicative situation: the agent (news reader) addressing the clients (the audience). In his/her institutional role as news reader executing the information function of the mass medium television (s)he is consistently objectively communicating information to the audience independent of the type of news (s)he conveys.

This institutionally required objectivity of the news reader in the transmission of information naturally limits the occurrence of personal involvement into what is being talked about. As Burger (2005: 266) points out, the objective news reader “verliert Nachrichten, hält sich [aber] als Person vollständig aus dem Spiel.” The institutional role of ‘news reader’ thus is in the foreground and it is this role that ultimately determines appropriate agent action, namely action that is characterized by the absence of – or at least reduction in – personal involvement. In other words, the news reader exclusively acts in his/her role as institutional agent and this role centrally involves the task of objective information transfer. In combination the adoption of the institutional role ‘news reader’ and the demand for objectivity both necessarily cause the (expected) absence of personal involvement into what is being said. Indeed, apart from word stress used for text-structuring, i.e. rhetorical, reasons the language use by the news reader in the five studied editions of the *Tagesschau* shows no stress for affective reasons (e.g. expressing empathy, anger, outrage etc.) as would be featured in everyday conversation. Instead, words are characteristically read out in a neutral, uninvolved voice. That is, we find emphatic stress but characteristically no affective stress.

A lack of personal involvement (which reflects a lack of interest in the addressee) consequently means a lack of person-oriented politeness and hence we can determine this lack as part of a role-oriented politeness that necessarily accompanies the adoption of the institutional role of “objective news reader.” That is, we are speaking here of a type of politeness that is purely role-oriented and being so is fundamentally guided by the principle of objective information transfer.

In this connection a lack of interest in the addressee that is being talked to – in this case a heterogeneous audience – may also be regarded as the natural consequence of the formal social and physical distance existing between the agent (the news reader) and the audience as based on the indirect character of the mass communication process (cf. dislocation of space and time). The social distance between agent and clients is linguistically mirrored in the use of the neutral greeting formula “Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren” that stands at the beginning of every studied edition. This greeting is not aimed at creating a closer relationship between the news reader and the audience.

Based on the character of mass communication, the asymmetrical social relationship between both types of interlocutor that is generally present in institutional communication gains a new quality in this context in so far as the roles between news reader as agent and audience as client(s) in the communicative process involve a strict ascription of communicative activities: The news reader, enjoying unquestioned institutional authority in fulfilling the information function, is the one who speaks while the audience views and listens (without direct feedback possibility).<sup>287</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Cf. in this connection Koch’s and Oesterreicher’s “feste Rollenverteilung” (1986: 19).

As concerns unquestioned institutional authority, see, for example, Meyn (2001: 174) mentioning that traditional public-service news programs are usually accredited with neutrality and reliability by the audience.

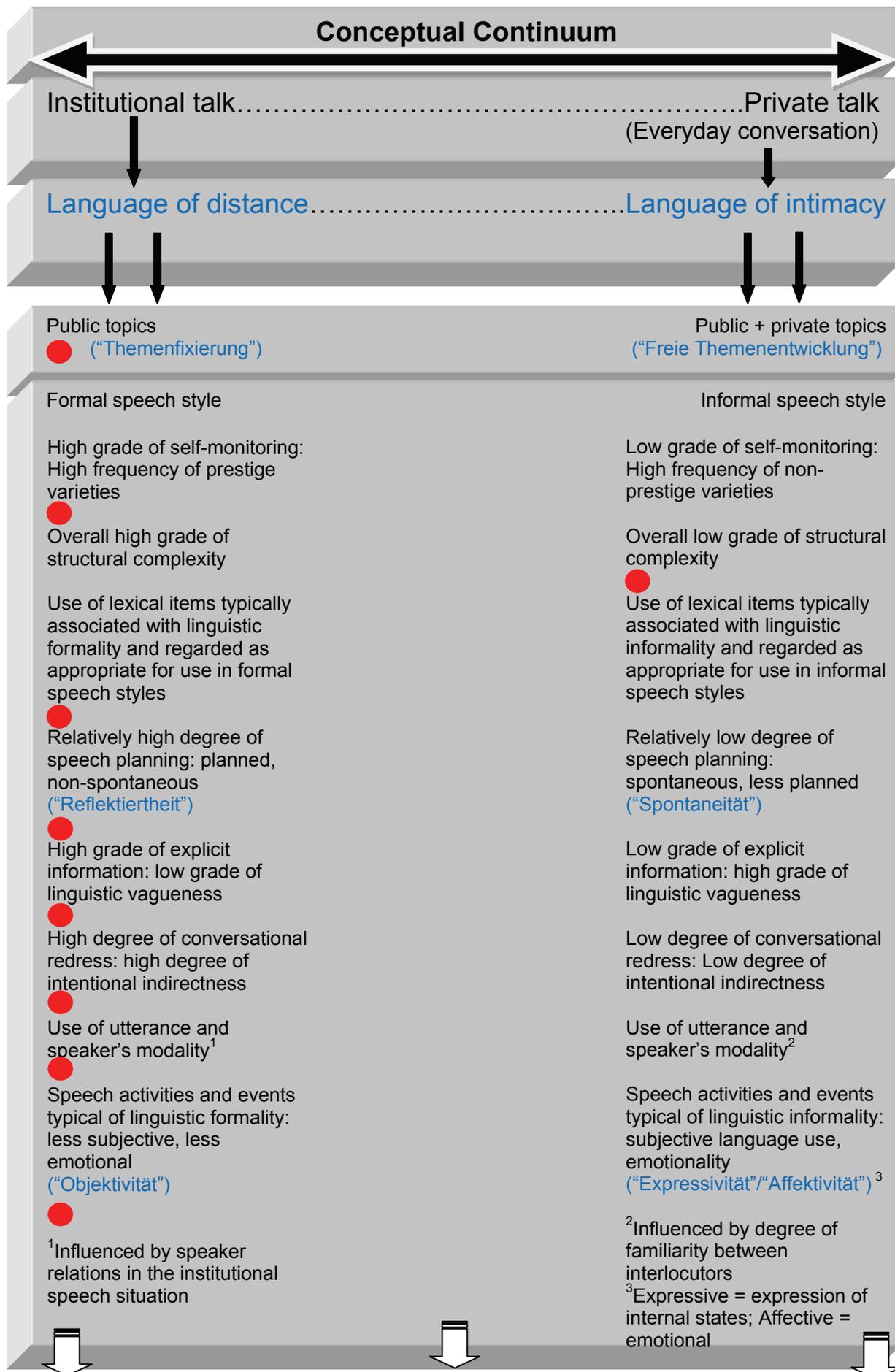
**(5) Access to the speech situation: public or non-public**

As argued in chapter 1.1 and 2.1, mass communication is public communication. In technically sending television contents to a large and heterogeneous audience, the institution television offers potentially unlimited access to verbal interaction taking place within the institutional frame whereby it creates a special kind of public access and public communication in comparison with the traditional social institutions of law, health and education which usually limit access to a certain degree. In the case of television the institutional speech situation can be accessed by everybody who is in possession of relevant (analog or digital) technology for receiving the audio-visual television signal and consequently it is a public speech situation with (nearly) unrestricted, i.e. public, access.

**(6) Place and time of conversation: fixed or free**

All television formats discussed here – news, talk shows and magazines – are produced within the institutional setting of the television studio and all programming on television is generally subject to scheduling. Hence the program studied here and thus the language that is applied within the studio as the first frame of interaction are both restricted to a special place and a special time.

When we transfer the results to the conceptual continuum (cf. the red dots in table 12 below) we see that a particular constellation of the factors that determine institutional and private talk emerges, which can be said to define a program- or format-specific factor profile for language use. (It should be noted though that this profile is only of unrestricted validity for the particular speaker-based public service format *Tagesschau*. Other news formats – e.g. the news magazine (see chapter 7.3.2.1) and especially more entertainment-based ones – may well yield other results.)



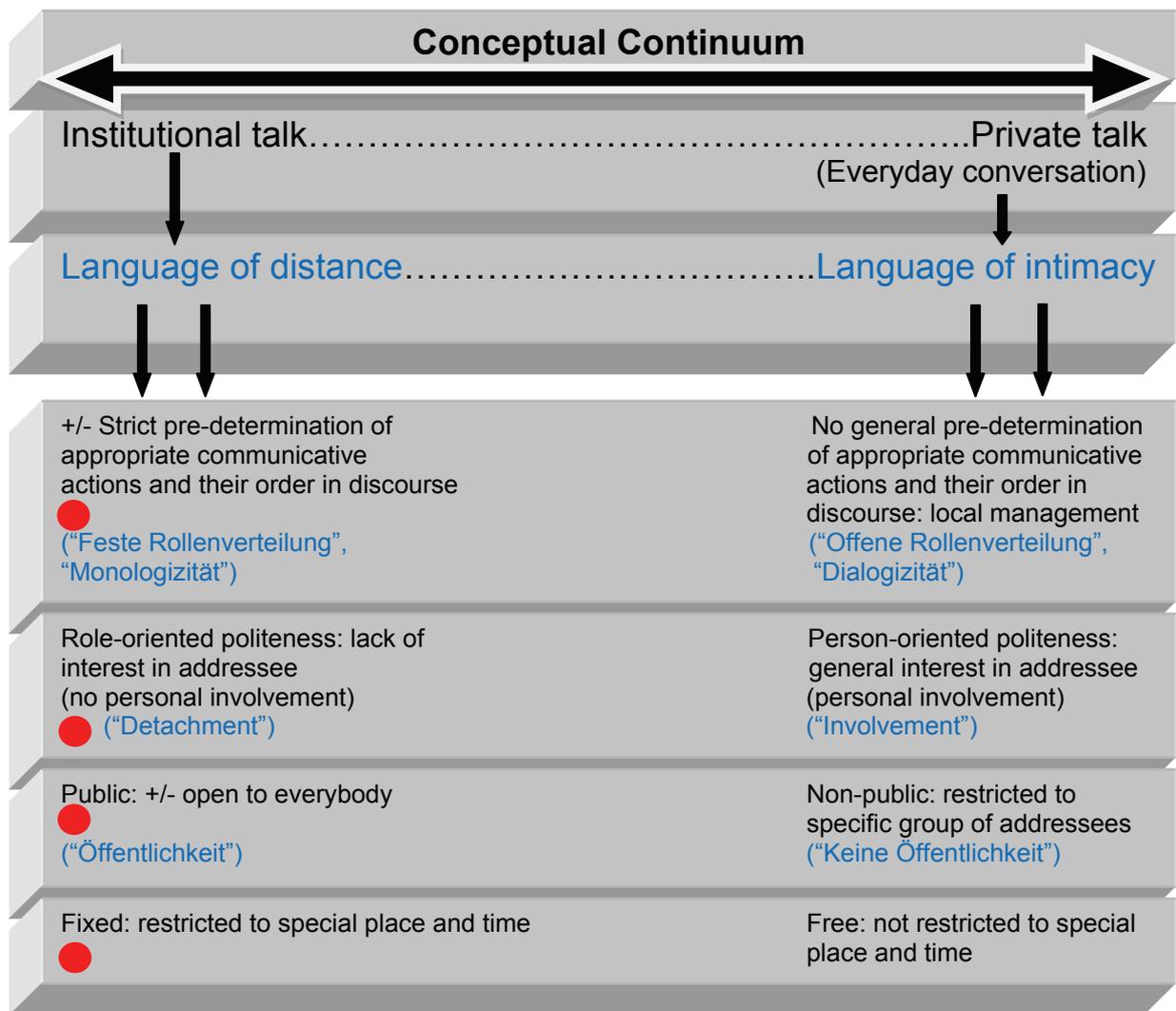


Table 12: The factor profile of the speaker-based public service news format *Tagesschau* within the conceptual continuum of language<sup>288</sup>

Table 12 illustrates a constellation of the style-determining factors that indeed yields the initially expected results. We find that the institutional demand for objective transmission of information as a central part of the institutional role of the news reader is indeed reflected in his/her overall language use. Clearly, the format-specific factor profile as represented here on the basis of the previous discussion of each factor shows that the traditional public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* in objectively informing the audience all in all clearly makes use of institutional talk, i.e. a form of talk that has been referred to by Koch/Oesterreicher (1986) as ‘language of distance’, which involves the use of a formal speech style. That is, though we cannot speak of a high degree of intentional indirectness for this format we can nevertheless state a high degree of conversational redress for reasons

<sup>288</sup> The red dots indicate the constellation of each factor as previously determined. In the course of this linguistic analysis the table will be supplemented with the results for the other formats and programs that are studied here.

explained above and although the constellation of the factor ‘structural complexity’ for this format deviates from our expectations about the character of institutional talk we can nevertheless find a confirmation of our expectations when we take a look at the other factors. Moreover, the presence of an overall low grade of structural complexity for this factor is explainable on the basis of the special character of the mass communicative situation affording a special kind of recipient design that is oriented towards a mass audience.

Determining the presence of institutional talk as the typical form of talk characterizing the German public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* then consequently involves the following as based on the previously determined characteristics of institutional talk in general: Firstly, restriction of verbal action by means of institutional regulation does take place. This also means that, secondly, the talk used within the format is highly organized and, featuring a formal speech style, is, thirdly, also in accordance with the obviously high grade of formality of the speech situation. Fourthly, using institutional talk means that the format uses a type of talk that is in accordance with the demands of the institutional frame for public talk, i.e. for a language suited to be broadcast to a mass audience and thus suited for the occurrence in the public (sphere).

Due to market pressures tabloidization more or less pervades all television formats including the traditionally informative ones, referred to by Fairclough (1995) as ‘public affairs media’ such as news, documentary and magazine programs. Hence a similar linguistic investigation of other news formats than the traditionally speaker-based ones (e.g. the news show) therefore may well lead to other results than those presented here and reveal a deviation from strict institutional talk towards a more conversationalized form which then not only stands in contrast to the demands placed on informative media talk (e.g. objectivity) but also is in conflict with the demands of the institutional frame for public talk. The deviation from institutional talk can be seen in connection with a movement towards entertainment in the, by definition, informative formats.<sup>289</sup>

The next chapter switches from the communicative function of information towards that of entertainment. Clearly, the investigative focus is on analyzing the language use of a format that can be defined as having a clear entertainment function: the talk show with its related sub-type the daytime talk show. While table 8 illustrates institutional talk as the appropriate form of talk for the fulfillment of television’s information function, it also shows private talk (everyday conversation) as the suitable form of talk for the execution of television’s entertainment function. The general hypothesis therefore is that a linguistic analysis of language as featured in the daytime talk show should ideally reveal the application of private

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<sup>289</sup> See in this connection Wittwen (1995).

talk (everyday conversation). It will be shown in chapter 7.2.1 whether this is actually the case.

## 7.2 The talk show format

Similar to the news also the talk show format has a long history on television. More recently especially the daytime talk show has been of high scientific interest.<sup>290</sup> The format has been successfully adopted from the USA. According to Semeria (1999: 23/26) the daytime talk show is a sub-genre of the traditional talk show genre, with ‘genre’ denoting social practice (“kulturelle Praxis”) and thus conventions (“Genrekonventionen”) that are known and adhered to in production by communicators and that are likewise known and assumed by the audience in the reception of such shows.<sup>291</sup> Wittwen (1995) describes the daytime talk show as a form of reality-TV that was “invented” in the United States and that aims at the televised presentation of life as it really is which is itself a variant of infotainment in mixing fact and fiction (cf. Wittwen, 1995: 19f.). The format as such is differently referred to either in a highly evaluative or in a more neutral way. Accordingly, popular references include ‘Trash-TV’ (Wittwen, 1995) – a term that alludes both to the kind of discourse topics that are dealt with and to the ways in which these topics are dealt with, ‘affect-talk’ (Fromm, 1999) – a term that denotes the present emotionality involved in the verbal treatment of private/intimate topics as a format-specific type of discourse topics (cf. chapter 7.2.1),<sup>292</sup> and more neutral terms such as ‘audience participation show’ (Livingstone and Lunt, 1994) – which points out the possibility for the audience to participate in the verbal discourse taking place on stage – or ‘daytime talkshow’ (cf. Semeria, 1999) which is also used in this work emphasizing the time-slot characterizing the broadcast of the shows.<sup>293</sup>

Speaking about genre conventions, as any other television format also the daytime talk show shows constitutive structural features that are specific to the format:

- The program – i.e. a particular show that belongs within this format – is **broadcast daily**, usually Monday to Friday.

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<sup>290</sup> For relevant literature on talk shows (including the daytime talk show) and their structural organization including language use see the introduction to this work.

<sup>291</sup> In fact, such genre conventions – i.e. format-specific types of structural program conception – can also be assumed in general for any television format hence including the speaker-based news format and the diverse magazine formats that are investigated here. In this work, however, the term ‘format’ instead of ‘genre’ is preferred.

<sup>292</sup> It is here that we may assume the occurrence of affective language.

<sup>293</sup> In Germany the spelling ‘Talkshow’ is commonly used in the literature. However, in contrast to Semeria, in this work the spelling ‘talk show’ is preferred in accordance with most U.S.-sources.

For a definition of the different time-slots in the U.S.A., which are now used also for German programs, see Bachem (1995: 68). Accordingly, the ‘daytime’ is referred to as the time from 10:00 a.m. to 04:30 p.m. characterized by soap operas, talk shows and TV-series.

- Each show is characteristically named after the **presenter**, i.e. the **host**, as the agent of the institution television who presents the show and its featured talk.
- In his/her institutional role as presenter of the show the **host** often **moves freely in the institutional setting** – the television studio – in the space between a **present studio-audience** and a number of **invited guests** sitting next to each other and facing the present audience.
- The **studio-audience** is usually given the chance to **comment** on what the guests say.
- In contrast to the classical, personality-based talk show (i.e. mostly celebrities) the talk in the daytime talk show is **topic-oriented** featuring a number of **ordinary persons** usually inexperienced within the public sphere of television who conversationally contribute to a particular institutionally pre-determined **private/intimate topic**.
- Such contributions mostly include **the revelation of personal everyday problems** which are lured out by the host often inducing **controversial verbal discourse** illustrating **oppositional standpoints**. Accordingly, the shows are **confessional** and/or **confrontational** in character (cf. Semeria, 1999: 32).<sup>294</sup>
- Focusing on the **everyday problems of ordinary people** it is often not of true interest what these people say – the content has mostly no real informative value – but it is often rather the **exposure** of individuals and their seemingly negative character traits that accompanies their conversational contributions and that appeals to the audience who becomes a **voyeur** of the private lives of others.
- The **speech style** applied by the invited guests in addressing discourse topics is the one traditionally used in the private sphere, i. e. **informal everyday conversation**, which is usually simply transferred to the public sphere of television production (cf. chapter 7.2.1). Its application can also be seen as being based on the (predominant) media-inexperience of the guests.

These structural aspects of the daytime talk show format are valid generally for both German and U.S. talk shows, also for those that are discussed in the following. For example, Semeria (1999: 32f.) lists the identical constitutive features typical of the shows of both countries. According to the author the only exception is to be seen in the form of production of German and U.S. shows.<sup>295</sup> As the structural features are the same in both countries, German, U.S. (and British) sources that have been referred to here so far are valid for continental and trans-continental shows in the same manner.

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<sup>294</sup> For the characteristics of daytime talk shows as illustrated here see apart from Semeria (1999) for example Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 39).

<sup>295</sup> U.S. shows are usually not produced by the big networks ABC, CBS, or NBC but are independently produced and then sold to independent TV-stations and network affiliates for broadcast, i.e. stations with limited broadcast range (cf. Semeria, 1999: 40). This type of production is called *syndication*. Due to syndication the broadcast of American daytime talk shows is not limited to one network but differs locally. (For more detailed information on syndication see e.g. Bachem, 1995).

The linguistic analysis that follows in the next chapter takes into consideration a comparatively large corpus of 136 broadcast daytime talk shows altogether. Of these shows 121 are German and 15 are American (see table 13 below).<sup>296</sup> However, not every single show will be the subject of detailed linguistic analysis. This would go far beyond the scope of this work. Rather in the analysis the German shows predominantly function to illustrate the discourse topics characteristic of the format. In order to do so the shows featured on German television were taped for a period of time and their topics were listed (see chapter 7.2.1). The U.S.-shows are mainly the basis for an illustration of the language use of the format in general according to the style determining factors of institutional and private talk. These will again be addressed in chronological order with the underlying aim to establish a final format-specific factor profile of language use valid for both continental (German) and trans-continental (American) daytime talk shows.

The single programs within the format taken into consideration are the following:

Country	Program	Channel	Type of Broadcaster	Length	Broadcast
U.S.A.					
	Jerry Springer	SYN*	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Maury	SYN	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Montel	SYN	Private/commercial	60 min.	---
	Oprah	SYN	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Ricki	SYN	Private/commercial	60 min.	---
*Syndication					
Germany					
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	Public-service	60 min.	Daily Monday – Thursday
	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday

<sup>296</sup> For full bibliographic detail of each show see the bibliography. Apart from *Britt – Der Talk um eins*, *Jerry Springer* and *Maury* none of the shows is broadcast any longer.

	Arabella	ProSieben	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	Private/commercial	60 min.	Daily Monday – Friday

Table 13: The American and German daytime talk shows chosen for linguistic investigation

### 7.2.1 Talk show language

Let us start with some theoretical pre-considerations first. On the one hand, it has been previously hypothesized that private talk (everyday conversation) constitutes the appropriate form of talk for the fulfillment of the communicative function of entertainment. Therefore, since we can attribute this function to the daytime talk show format, private talk (everyday conversation) is the appropriate form of talk to be used within this format. On the other hand, it is argued in chapter 5.2.2.1 that the institutional speech situation of television is both institutional *and* public in character at the same time as television provides potentially unlimited access to the discourse taking place within the institutional frame (cf. Mühlen, 1985: 11). In her early view of talk show talk Mühlen (1985) correspondingly views this aspect of the institutional speech situation of television as a factor that effectively restricts the occurrence of spontaneous everyday conversation within the institutional frame.<sup>297</sup> It is further argued in chapter 5.2.2.1 that this particularity of the speech situation consequently also involves a special status of the communicative actions taking place within this situation, namely that they are also both simultaneously of institutional *and* public character in being mass communicatively distributed. This aspect was determined as strongly supporting and increasing the demand for public/institutional talk within the institutional frame.

Consequently, private talk/everyday conversation and institutional talk are two hypothesized complementary ways of talking appropriately within the institutional frame.

<sup>297</sup> “Ein [...] spontaneitätshemmender Faktor ist bei Mediengesprächen zweifelsohne die massenkommunikativ erweiterte Zuhörer- und Zuschauerschaft, welche die Sprecher ihre Äußerungen im [Voraus!] und während des Gesprächs kalkulieren läßt. [...] Die Praxis zeigt, daß ein spontanes Geplauder in diesem Rahmen (fast) unmöglich ist“ (Mühlen, 1985: 70/71).

While the former is in accordance with the institutional function of entertainment (but contradicts the institutionally required use of a public language), the latter corresponds to the special institutional and public character of the institutional speech situation. These two types of talk are evidently in conflict with each other though both seem justified as forms of talk complying with particular institutional demands.

The linguistic analysis that is to follow will show whether we can actually speak of the application of private talk (everyday conversation) in the daytime talk show following the constellation of our style-determining factors.

### **(1) Appropriate conversational topic: public topics versus private topics**

Since the daytime talk show format potentially allows a great variety of discourse topics, it is helpful to consider a larger corpus of these shows in an attempt to define preferred types of topics and to be able to state general topical tendencies. Accordingly, in order to illustrate the discourse topics generally featured in the daytime talk show format, the German shows were studied for their topics over a period of five weeks (12/17/03 – 01/22/04).<sup>298</sup> All titles and respective contents were classified into different categories representing the range of topics characteristic of the investigated shows. The content analysis of all 121 German shows accordingly leads to the classification of contents into nine categories. The results are given in table 14 below together with the relevant criteria for categorization.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> See the appendix. Here all 121 German shows and their featured titles are listed in chronological order. The titles of the analyzed U.S.-shows are also given here.

<sup>299</sup> Since the aim here is to present an overview of featured discourse topics of the format in general a detailed listing of exactly which shows were put into which category is deliberately not given at this point. In order to reflect the spread of discourse topics typical of all shows these were not studied independently of each other for present topics but were considered all together. However, in order to provide an insight into the way that categorization was done, what is given here are the relevant criteria for categorization illustrating the type of content that defines a category.

Shows and Topics (Total): 121	
<b>Categories:</b>	Relationship.....70 (57.85%)
	Lifestyle.....19 (15.7%)
	Family.....8 (6.6%)
	Other.....8 (6.6%)
	Health.....7 (5.78%)
	State/Society.....4 (3.3%)
	Sex.....3 (2.47%)
	Death.....1 (0.82%)
	Spiritualism.....1 (0.82%)
	Total: 121
Private topics: 74 (61.16%)	
Public topics: 19 (15.7%)	
(Not included: 'Lifestyle', 'Other', 'Spiritualism'): 28	

**Criteria for Categorization**

Categories and entailed contents:

**Relationship:** in general: social relations between interlocutors in the widest sense, social conflicts of every kind, (preferred topic: cheat on sb.).

**Lifestyle:** (1) way of living in the widest sense: attitude to life, personal points of view (prejudices etc.), (2) everything conc. fashion, the body, beauty, i. e. "lifestyle" in its actual sense.

**Family:** family fates: search for family members, adoption, education.

**Health:** physical & psychological health.

**State/Society:** Influence of state/society on persons (bureaucracy...) & demands of persons from the state/society (child allowance...).

**Sex:** sex as obvious, exclusive topic.

**Death:** death as obvious, exclusive topic.

**Spiritualism:** the extraordinary, supernatural.

Table 14: Distribution of discourse topics in 121 German daytime talk shows including the criteria for categorization

In chapter 7.1.1 the topic choice characterizing the news format was determined as being based on journalistic decisions about newsworthiness according to ascribed news values as governed by an overarching communicative function of objective information. Hence we can assume that the (predominant) function of entertainment ascribed to the daytime talk show format will have a similar influence on the general occurrence of discourse topics, namely that only those will tend to occur with high frequency that indeed can be determined to serve this function.

When we take a look at the distribution of topics across the investigated 121 German shows we find that the categories defined here reveal an overall diversity with respect to featured types of topics that characterize the shows. Based on this categorization of *actually occurring* discourse topics we may therefore state that the format as such seems to be open to a great variety of *potential* discourse topics (although these are of course always pre-determined by the institution). When we consider the distribution of topics with respect to the

single categories we see that the majority of topics belong to what is determined as ‘relationship’ (57.85%). Obviously, in aiming at the entertainment of the audience, the institution television seems to prefer discourse topics that fundamentally concern everyday problems of ordinary persons in their ordinary lives. Characteristically, these problems mostly constitute social conflicts of any kind. In this connection the most preferred topic is cheating on another person. Consequently, it is the ‘everyday’ – but strikingly not the extraordinary – that dominates the talk show talk. Accordingly, the proportion of topics that might be considered extraordinary – intimate or taboo topics such as ‘sex’ and ‘death’ – is only of minor significance (2.47% and 0.82% respectively).<sup>300</sup>

Referring in this connection to the notion of ‘public’ and ‘private’ topics, all three types of discourse topics – ‘relationship’, ‘sex’ and ‘death’ – can be determined as private topics since they all address the interlocutors’ private sphere and, doing so, they, in fact, appear less suitable for occurrence and discussion within the public sphere. This is especially the case if we consider the two highly sensitive intimate and/or taboo topics ‘sex’ and ‘death’ which can be seen as extreme forms of private topics with a clear restriction to the private sphere.<sup>301</sup> (Hence an application of such topics within the institutional frame of television and consequently also within the public sphere fundamentally runs contrary to our expectations of what should be discussed within this sphere, namely public topics. The occurrence of such topics within the institutional frame accordingly is of significance in so far as the institution television turns these – by definition – private topics into public ones that are appropriate even for public discussion.

The categories ‘health’, ‘family’ and ‘state/society’ can be regarded as including discourse topics that are appropriate for use not only in the private sphere, for mostly discussed contents here are rather predominantly informative and of general public interest than purely entertaining. Hence these contents are rather public than exclusively private in character, i.e. they may be defined as ‘public topics’. Interestingly, it is the German public-service show *Fliege – Die Talkshow* which features the highest amount of (public) topics labeled ‘health’ (6 topics), ‘family’ (4 topics) and half of the topics labeled ‘state/society’ (2 topics). This results

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<sup>300</sup> Why this is the case cannot be explained with certainty at this point. It is, however, obvious that especially a taboo topic such as ‘death’ involves a high amount of sensitivity in its treatment and, using the terminology of Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory, the weight of imposition connected to such a topic is likely to be rather high. Therefore, ‘death’ is probably not the best topic for the entertainment of a mass audience part of which may feel uneasy and it is obviously not the best topic for the entertainment of the stressed viewer simply wanting to relax while watching television.

On the distribution of discourse topics in German daytime talk shows see also Fromm (1999: 85ff.) in this connection.

<sup>301</sup> This is assumed since especially the familiarity factor (Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) sociological variable of ‘social distance’) is an important pre-requisite for the discussion of these two extremely private categories among interlocutors. Topics pertaining to these categories always involve a high risk of potential face threat (to be noticed in interlocutors’ feelings of uneasiness when confronted with such topics). Consequently such topics are avoided by communicatively competent speaker/hearers in conversations with total strangers (in the public sphere) and are only in the center of conversation between (close) friends within the private sphere.

into 12 topics featured in the public-service program that are determined as ‘public’. When we consider that the studied period of time covered a total number of 17 shows and topics featured in *Fliege – Die Talkshow*, we see that the majority of all discourse topics here is of public character. With reference to all investigated shows this means that daytime talk shows with discourse topics of public character are mostly produced by public-service television and they exceed the number of those shows produced by commercial broadcasters which tend to produce shows featuring discourse topics that are predominantly private in character. As can be seen in table 14, public topics in general are less significant than private topics (15.7% for public topics compared to 61.16% for private topics).<sup>302</sup> It is obvious that private topics (e.g. the high frequency of ‘relationship’) concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary persons dominate the format, i.e. a format which almost exclusively seems to aim at the entertainment of the audience.

These results are also valid for the 15 studied U.S. shows (three editions of *Jerry Springer*, *Maury*, *Montel*, *Oprah* and *Ricki*).<sup>303</sup> Accordingly, of the discourse topics featured in the American daytime talk shows only five (= 33.33%) can be considered public in character and are featured exclusively in *Montel* (all three studied shows) and *Oprah* (two of three studied shows; an exception is constituted by the show of 12/09/03 categorized as “lifestyle”). Two of these shows with public character are classified as a new category of ‘crime’ (*Montel*: 02/24/04 and *Oprah*: 12/08/03<sup>304</sup>). The remaining shows are labeled ‘lifestyle’ (*Montel*: 02/23/04), ‘spiritualism’ (*Montel*: 02/25/04), and ‘health’ (*Oprah*: 12/10/03). Otherwise private discourse topics dominate the format (= 66.67%). That is, apart from *Oprah*: 12/09/03 all the considered editions of the shows *Jerry Springer*, *Ricki* and *Maury* include private topics that can be classified as relationship-oriented and are concerned with different social conflicts (9 shows altogether). The predominant reason for conflict here is cheating on another person (*Jerry Springer* and *Ricki*). In this connection *Maury* includes one sensational and probably taboo topic (*The secret is out...I’m married to a 14 year old boy!*).

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<sup>302</sup> Even if the other categories (‘lifestyle’, ‘other’ and ‘spiritualism’) were integrated here and they all were public topics, this would result into 19 public topics plus additional 28 public topics (= 47 topics, i.e. 38.84%) and hence still mean a predominance of private topics.

<sup>303</sup> See the appendix for dates of broadcast and the titles/topics of the shows.

<sup>304</sup> Topic: “Air Force Academy rape scandal.” The topic could also be regarded as taboo topic, which was previously defined as extreme form of private topic. Because of its accredited high informative value it is labeled ‘public’ though.

<b>Shows and Topics (Total):</b>		<b>15</b>
<b>Categories:</b>	Relationship.....	9 (60%)
	Lifestyle.....	2 (13.33%)
	Crime.....	2 (13.33%)
	Health.....	1 (6.67%)
	Spiritualism.....	1 (6.67%)
		<b>Total:</b>
	Private topics:	10 (66.67%)
	Public topics:	5 (33.33%)

Table 15: Distribution of discourse topics in 15 U.S. American daytime talk shows

To sum up we can say that the daytime talk show format as a sub-type of the traditional talk show features both public *and* private discourse topics but it shows a striking preference for private topics concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary persons. This is valid in general for both continental (i.e. German) and trans-continental (i.e. U.S.-American) shows. When we ask why this is the case all we can do is to refer to the communicative function of entertainment that is ascribed to the format. That is, we may view the dominant application of private discourse topics within the format as an appropriate means in order to serve this entertainment function and hence to provide for the entertainment of the audience. It should be noted that we are talking here about two aspects of entertainment: firstly, a communicative function that is ascribed to the mass media (as is information) and, secondly, an actual effect on the audience, namely a feeling of ‘being entertained’. This second aspect is hard to define and will not be focussed on here in closer detail.<sup>305</sup>

Especially in connection with the daytime talk show format it turns out that an objective scientific classification of discourse topics into ‘public’ and ‘private’ is, in fact, difficult to realize in practice. As is argued in chapter 4.2 the basic distinction between a public and a private topic lies in their degree of general social acceptance. Thus, while the former – regarded as highly socially significant and therefore attributed with high public interest – is suitable for occurrence in both the public and the private sphere, the latter – though being

<sup>305</sup> Entertainment here may be connected to the voyeuristic aspect of experiencing the private life of others and their personal problems and social conflicts which may produce a feeling of relief since there is always a person ‘who suffers more than I do’. On the definition of ‘entertainment’ see also Burger (2005: 24).

significant for the individual speaker but less for society as a whole – is restricted to the private sphere. This is largely a matter of social convention. It is, however, only largely so because characteristically such decisions about the appropriateness of a topic in either or the other social sphere are not only based on general social convention alone but are also always subject to an individual speaker's personal point of view – moral values – about what can be said in public and what should better be restricted to the private sphere. The classification into public and private topics made here follows the social convention that would hold in German society. Which character a discourse topic actually receives is, however, nowhere codified and 'social convention' as a term is not defined properly and it cannot satisfactorily be determined here. Also what comes into play in this connection is the 'public opinion'. That is, when we speak about decisions concerning the public or private nature of discourse topics as being based on social convention we also do this with reference to the dominating public opinion. Clearly, what is considered public or private is modelled on the dominating public opinion, which according to Meyn (2001: 39) reflects non-codified laws about what is appropriate and what is not. Delhaes (2002: 57) describes public opinion as (1) the totality of the opinions communicated by the mass media and (2) the prevailing consensus of opinion within a society at a certain point in time. ("Öffentliche Meinung beschreibt den zu einem bestimmten Zeitpunkt vorherrschenden Meinungskonsens in einer Gesellschaft"). However, it is questionable whether the 'consensual', i.e. *the*, public opinion really does exist. That is to say, similar to social convention, the public opinion does not include all opinions represented in a society and thus it has to be treated as an ideal type. In reality it is always accompanied by the individual opinion that can fundamentally differ from the prevailing so-called public opinion. Consequently, in principle, the suitability of a specific discourse topic for occurrence in the public sphere can never be determined in advance. What is considered by one person as public may be regarded by another one as belonging to the private sphere only.

Therefore, *because* they can potentially deviate from the prevailing public opinion, it seems that the existence of different opinions within a society justifies the production of daytime talk shows predominantly concerned with any kind of social conflicts for they feature – according to some opinions – topics that are indeed ascribed with public suitability. According to Fromm (1999) the television appearance of daytime talk show guests then aptly reflects that what is intimate and what is suited to be published is a matter of individual subjective decision (cf. Fromm, 1999: 33). Also Livingstone and Lunt (1994: 24) speak of the existence of oppositional opinions leading to an "oppositional public sphere." Consequently, they negate the existence of *the* public sphere which is an ideal construction. Accordingly, the authors point out the legitimation of "plural public spheres" characterized by a corresponding diversity of opinions rather than a "unified consensus" (1994: 34) as mirrored in the term 'public opinion'. Hence we can hypothesize that what contemporary television does via producing daytime talk shows is simply representing the plurality of public spheres and their corresponding plurality of (public) opinions characterizing a society.

Assuming the existence of different opinions within plural public spheres concerning the public or private nature of discourse topics it can be difficult for the researcher to determine whether a discourse topic within a daytime talk show is public or private in character. For example, 'sex' as a conversational topic may be viewed as 'intimate' or even as 'taboo' but probably also as 'public' and in fact it is the last view mentioned here that is illustrated via its appearance in the daytime talk show format. Clearly, contemporary television can be described as transporting those topics traditionally regarded via social convention as 'private' to the public sphere thus turning them officially, i. e. through broadcasting, into public topics. The significance of this lies in the fact that what contemporary television does in applying those formerly private topics within its institutional frames is deliberately blurring the traditionally assumed boundaries between the public sphere (of institutional processes) and the private sphere (of personal matters in private life). The public sphere then becomes the place of intimate conversation. In the daytime talk shows considered here this intimacy is formally visible in the frequent occurrence of private topics labeled 'relationship' concerned with everyday problems/social conflicts or ordinary persons.

It is interesting to see whether, and if so, how this topical intimacy with the treatment of mostly private topics is expressed linguistically. That is, if the public sphere becomes the place of intimate conversation it is interesting to see how this intimacy is actually reflected in conversation. Thus, when we find that intimate conversation takes place within the institutional frame of television (which, as we have seen, is in conflict with the demands of the institutional frame for institutional talk) we should be able to define the characteristics of intimate conversation and if we consider that intimate conversation is a form of everyday conversation we should expect to find that it shows the characteristics of everyday conversation. Consequently, we should find the characteristics of intimate conversation to lie at the side of private talk within our conceptual continuum of language and if it indeed shows the features of private talk then it is in fact in perfect correspondence with the previously stated characteristics of function-specific talk for the fulfillment of television's entertainment function (cf. table 8). Hence the following linguistic analysis of the style-determining factors will reveal whether the nature of this intimate conversation is as expected here.

## **(2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style**

Let us take up this idea on communicative function and function-specific talk for a moment and begin again first with some general pre-considerations concerning the degree of formality/informality that can generally be expected within the daytime talk show discourse. As previously stated, we can define entertainment as the predominant communicative, i.e. institutional, function that is associated with the daytime talk show format. Similar to the function of information, the function of entertainment involves the use of function-specific

talk that appropriately serves this function, namely private talk, i.e. everyday conversation. Since the availability of discourse topics constitutes the basis for any verbal interaction, they can be seen as fundamental part of function-specific talk. As we have seen, the studied editions of both German and U.S.-American daytime talk shows illustrate a clear preference for private topics. Nevertheless, also public topics do occur. This leads to the following hypothesis: In chapter 6.2 a correlation is assumed between the formality/informality of the speech situation and the formality/informality of the speech style appropriate for use in this situation. A similar correlation is made here with reference to the linguistic realization of private and public discourse topics within the studied shows: The discussion of private topics, forming the vast majority of all featured topics, will be complied with by a speech style that corresponds to the private/intimate nature of these topics. That is, an informal speech style will be used that is in accordance with the overall informality of the discourse topic. Likewise, it is assumed here that the treatment of public discourse topics will proceed via a speech style that is less informal in character corresponding to the overall formality of these topics which can be determined to consist in their conversationally overall high weight of imposition (e.g. ‘rape’ as discourse topic in *Oprah* 12/08/03). This weight of imposition demands a linguistic sensitivity that will be reflected in the use of an appropriate, i.e. formal, speech style. For example, both *Oprah* and *Montel* as the only shows featuring public topics make use of communicative strategies – questions for information<sup>306</sup> – aimed at the comprehensive information of the audience. In their institutional role as hosts of the show they have to fulfill the (sometimes difficult) task to elicit, in these cases, intimate information that is based on drastic personal experiences. This elicitation process hence centrally involves the host’s orientation towards saving the guests’ face and keeping an afforded distance from intruding too much into their private sphere. As is obvious the task demands a high amount of sensitivity on the part of the host. Consequently, we can expect that (s)he will use a rather formal style of speech that is not only in accordance with the seriousness of the discussed topic but that also simultaneously saves the guests’ face.

It would indeed be interesting to see whether we can actually determine linguistic differences *across* the investigated shows with respect to the use of formal and informal speech styles. That is, it would be interesting to see whether those editions that have been defined here to feature public topics also feature a formal speech style and whether those editions that have been determined here to focus on private topics also feature an informal speech style. With respect to our conceptual continuum, the result would be a more detailed format-specific factor profile for language use within the format that separates the shows and even single editions of one and the same show according to their topical nature featuring both a formal

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<sup>306</sup> E.g. in *Oprah* (12/08/2003, *Air Force Academy rape scandal*): “And for you, Sharon your goal always was to be a fighter pilot, right?” “And your mom’s in military and your stepfather’s in military...you were raised in the military and this was your big dream?” “Tell us what happened, Laura,” “And Keira, what was your situation?”

*and* an informal speech style. In fact, what comes into play here is also always the formal conception of a daytime talk show. That is, a conceptual focus on confrontation, confession, or information (e.g. *Oprah* 12/08/2003) is likely to influence overall topic choice and the linguistic treatment of discourse topics in a particular direction of either formality or informality.<sup>307</sup>

Such a detailed investigation, however, lies beyond the scope even of this work and it will be left here as it is: a theoretical pre-consideration as to what might happen verbally in the discussion of different discourse topics in different shows. What *will* be done though is the following: Since the vast majority of featured topics is private in nature, the analysis of the style-determining factors that is to follow (predominantly) focuses specifically on the linguistic realization of these types of topics. In this connection the language use of both host and guest(s) will be considered. Consequently, with reference to the above stated pre-considerations we will see whether we can speak of an informal speech style that can be said to be in accordance with the overall informal nature of the private topics featured in the shows.

#### (a) Self-monitoring: high grade or low grade of self-monitoring

When we want to determine the degree of self-monitoring within the daytime talk show format on the basis of the shows investigated here we have to take into consideration the overall communicative nature of the talk that is featured within the institutional frame. The basic structure of talk applied within the first frame of interaction is that of a talk show interview between host and guest(s) often with inserted sequences of local management between the guests.<sup>308</sup> It is in these sequences of the guests managing their turns at talk locally that their communicative actions gain the character of everyday conversation which, as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have shown, is a speech exchange system organized by local management between interlocutors. Two aspects in this connection in fact speak for a low degree of self-monitoring in the speech of the interlocutors in the studio. Firstly, it is argued in chapter 6.2.2.3 that the demands of online production in (spontaneous) everyday conversation affect the degree of possible speech planning. Understandably, this also involves possible degrees of self-monitoring one's speech in everyday conversation and required conversational spontaneity hence is likely to produce a rather low degree of self-monitoring. In the same chapter it is furthermore explained that, according to Labov, a high degree of self-monitoring correlates with a high frequency of using prestige varieties while a low degree of self-monitoring correlates with a high frequency of using non-prestige varieties.

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<sup>307</sup> The appendix contains a detailed description of the formal conception of the U.S.-American daytime talk shows considered here as based on the fifteen investigated editions.

<sup>308</sup> For more detailed information see section (h) on speech activities and speech events and factor (3) on the extent of speech regulation.

Indeed, when we take a look again at speech sample number 1 (local management between two guests in *Jerry Springer*) we see conversational spontaneity (and hence reduced self-monitoring) reflected in the frequent instances of overlapping talk in the locally managed passage. Overlapping talk as the expression of underlying conversational spontaneity and reduced speech monitoring here is immediately based on the high personal and emotional involvement of the conflicting parties into the discourse topic – the second significant aspect here. Put differently, we may view a speaker's personal and emotional involvement as the reason for reduced planning (i.e. with regard to degrees of speech monitoring and spontaneity) which finds its immediate verbal expression in the occurrence of overlapping talk.

This involvement, however, does not only lead to simultaneous talk but it also triggers the occurrence of affective language, as we can see in the conversational example. Now, if we want to characterize the nature of the affective elements that are applied by the guests with respect to prestige or non-prestige varieties we clearly find these elements to be located at the non-prestige end within a scale of social evaluation of language varieties (cf. *slut*, *bitch*, *drunk*, and technical bleep signalling the worst cases in the example). Considering that Labov's original description of self-monitoring and speech styles within the sociolinguistic interview was based on phonological variables, we also find this valid here on the phonological level. That is, conversational spontaneity and reduced self-monitoring are also mirrored in the interlocutors' frequent use of contracted forms as a phenomenon of connected speech (e.g. "I've," "I'm," "your'r," "don't," "gonna," "wanna" (speech sample 1), "she's," "I've," "what's," "you're" (speech sample 2)). Since contraction is an unmistakable sign of linguistic informality and non-standardness it lies at the non-prestige side of the scale. The same is true for variable (ng) here whose verbal realization can vary between the use of the (non-standard) alveolar nasal [ɲ] and the (standard) velar nasal [ŋ]. In the speech samples we often find the non-standard variant (e.g. "watchin'," "somethin'," (speech sample 1), "goin'," "movin'," "datin'," "cheatin'," "feelin'," (speech sample 2)).<sup>309</sup>

Thus, similar to Labov we find a low grade of self-monitoring in combination with the use of non-prestige varieties – lexically and phonologically – though the reason for actually using those varieties has to be seen rather socially-based in the high personal and emotional involvement of the speakers into the social conflict and is not immediately based on the low degree of self-monitoring itself.

Since most of the daytime talk shows under consideration feature the public execution of their guests' social conflicts we can transfer these results to the other shows.

What about the hosts then? The hosts' grade of self-monitoring can be generally determined as equally low. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, it is connected to the fact that the shows are based on interactive speech events, i.e. question-answer sequences

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<sup>309</sup> This is also sometimes referred to as 'g-dropping' because the spelling of the words ending in *-ing* shows an absence word-final letter <g>.

with inserted instances of local management by the guests. Interaction necessarily means that interlocutors' verbal actions are always subject to the demands of online production. This is valid for the guests in local management sequences, as argued above, but also for the hosts though officially leading the talk in question-answer sequences. That is, the host's institutional authority within the verbal discourse on stage involves his/her linguistic spontaneity in the structuring of talk e.g. via asking, evaluating, interrupting within the basic interview structure. On the other hand, we do not have here any *reading* out of institutionally *pre-produced* language, i.e. neither by the host nor by the guests. This is a central difference to the news format previously discussed where it was argued that the reading process as such of pre-produced language naturally influences a speaker in such a way that (s)he will monitor his/her speech to a greater extent which means a decrease in linguistic spontaneity which, however, is required by the interactive nature of the speech event here.

To sum up, we can determine the grade of self-monitoring within the daytime talk show format as generally low on the part of both guests and host and it occurs in combination with a high frequency of non-prestige varieties used by the quarrelling guests. The low degree of self-monitoring is connected to several aspects: (1) the interactive nature of the verbal actions on stage. Interaction means online production of speech and online production demands linguistic spontaneity; (2) the absence of reading out language that has been institutionally pre-produced; (3) the high personal and emotional involvement of the guests into the discourse topic.

(b) Structural complexity: assumed overall high grade or low grade of structural complexity

Let us begin with some theoretical pre-considerations and see whether we find these illustrated in the three speech samples presented in the discussion of factor (3): *extent of speech regulation*. (1) A concrete definition of the expected grade of structural complexity in the daytime talk show discourse is fundamentally dependent on the fact that we are talking here about spoken discourse, i.e. verbal interaction between a host and several guests, and verbal interaction as such is always subject to the demands of online production for linguistic spontaneity of those participating in the interactive process (cf. chapter 6.2.2.3). Accordingly, it is argued in section (d) that exactly these demands of online production do have a significant influence on the actual degree of speech planning possible in spoken discourse in general and hence also in daytime talk show discourse where planning of speaker intentions happens 'online' as speech progresses thus resulting in a relatively low degree of pre-planning of speech affecting the speech of both host and guests.

As a consequence, we can assume a relevant correlation between a particular degree of speech planning and a particular degree of structural complexity in such a form that a low degree of speech planning, as affected by the interactive requirement towards linguistic

spontaneity, will result into a low degree of structural complexity and that a high degree of speech planning, relatively unaffected by this requirement, will allow a high degree of structural complexity. Clearly, since daytime talk show talk reveals a relatively low degree of speech planning it is highly likely that it will also show a low degree of structural complexity as a direct reflection of a reduced possibility for elaborate pre-planning on the level of syntactic structure. That is, the interactants in the institutional speech situation simply have no time for higher levels of speech planning and hence for structural elaboration. In the speech samples reduced speech planning is indeed evident in the instances of talk that are locally managed by the guests (cf. section (d); for local management see factor (3) *extent of speech regulation*). This is where another factor comes into play that can be determined to ultimately influence not only the degree of speech planning but also the degree of structural complexity in daytime talk show talk, namely (2) the guests' execution of a social conflict on stage and their high personal and emotional involvement into this conflict. This involvement, understandably, will have an immediate influence on the actual degree of structural complexity present in the speech of interlocutors in so far as it will frequently lead to a spontaneous eruption of emotion characterized by the application of bald on record strategies with a strong capacity for face threat (cf. speech sample 1, "You're a slut," "You bitch" in the local management passage between the guests) and such an explicit and spontaneous verbalization of emotion via affective language is a factor that fundamentally reduces the grade of structural complexity. (We may say that an interactional importance in the speech situation for speakers' mutual verbalization of subjective viewpoints, internal states and emotions is in the foreground and effectively functions to suppress higher degrees of structural complexity).

Let us now take a closer look at the speech samples. When we speak about a high grade of structural complexity we mean a subordination of clauses (e.g. via inserted relative clauses) that results into structural hypotaxis. When we assume the previously stated low grade of structural complexity for daytime talk show discourse this consequently means an absence of such subordination and a presence of syntactic coordination that results into structural parataxis (e.g. via coordinating conjunctions). With respect to Biber's (2001) framework for describing the linguistic complexity of different registers we would thus expect a predominance of those features that he associates with reduced complexity: structural reduction, less specified reference and a fragmented structure (cf. table 5).

On closer inspection of the speech samples especially two aspects are evident: (1) The utterances of both host and guests are characterized by frequent utterance break-offs and restarts (e.g. speech sample 3, line 4: "We need- We're dying to hear your story;" speech sample 3, line 53: "I don't remember y'all con- I don't remember y'all ever *conversatin'* about it").<sup>310</sup> Such break-offs are effective mechanisms that inhibit structural complexity – the

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<sup>310</sup> For more examples see section (d) on speech planning.

construction of hypotactic structures – simply because they interrupt the utterance in the midst of production and hence they also significantly disturb the possibility for structural elaboration within this utterance.

(2) The utterances of the guests in the locally managed parts of the talk show discourse are characterized by frequent repetitions of the same syntactic structure and propositional content (e.g. speech sample 1: “She’s a slut” (line 26) reappears as “You’re a slut” in lines 33, and 35; “she’s (still) a drunk” (line 25/26) reappears as “You’re a drunk” in lines 37 and 39; “She’s still the same person” (line 25), reappears as “You’re still the same person” in line 61; Speech sample 3: repetitions are a characteristic feature of Tim’s speech who uses an extremely high frequency of “you know (what I’m saying)” often in combination with “I mean” (cf. line 25f.: “I mean you know I’m saying it’s like you know it’s two sides to everything you know what I’m saying but I mean I [...]”). Structural repetitions like these result into an overall low grade of structural complexity. If we consider in this connection Biber’s (2001) account of the surface features associated with increased linguistic complexity, we find that such repetitions, on the lexical level, contribute to a reduced lexical specificity with regard to type/token ratio, i.e. the number of different words used in a text in relation to the total number of words featured in this text (cf. Biber et al., 1999: 52) and therefore they also contribute to a reduced complexity (cf. table 5).

All speech samples furthermore illustrate the highly frequent use of contractions – a phenomenon of spontaneous speech (e.g. speech sample 1: “I’ve,” “I’m,” “that’s,” “it’s;” speech sample 2: “she’s,” “what’s,” “I’ve,” “you’re;” speech sample 3: “we’ve,” “it’s,” “we’re,” “I’m”).<sup>311</sup> Contractions, according to Biber (2001), are linguistic features that constitute structural reduction (cf. table 5).

Especially speech sample 1 also illustrates clause coordination (via the coordinating conjunction “and”) – a feature that Biber (2001) refers to as establishing a fragmented structure (cf. table 5). (Cf. Tara in line 4ff.: “I’m twenty years old *and* she’s been in not my life all the time (.) *and* I finally reacquainted with her like four months ago (.) *and* I just always had a thing for older men. *And* they have been married for a year *and* have a child together [...]”) In a similar manner Nicky coordinates clauses in speech sample 2, line 21ff.: “*And* (.) he couldn’t make his mind up between her and his ((bleep)) has a kid with ‘im. *And* since he couldn’t make his mind up he dropped her off on our door *and* we nicely said you can crash here for a couple of nights *and* then she end up datin’ ((bleep)) for (.) well five- six- five months, almost five months now. *And* then (.) she end up movin’ in [...]” It is also a characteristic feature of Tim’s speech in speech sample 3 (cf. line 56ff.: “Me and her talk *and*

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<sup>311</sup> A relevant exception in this connection is the locally managed part in speech sample 1. In the conflict between mother and daughter there are instances where we might expect contraction but there is no performed (e.g. line 28: “I am your mother;” line 29: “You are not my mother;” line 33: “You are a slut;” line 34: “I am a slut?” The reason may be seen in the high emotional involvement of both mother and daughter into the conflict which leads to affective stress and hence to full, non-contracted forms. (For the difference between affective and emphatic stress as denoted here see section (c) on word choice).

the girl was over to Ashley. She asked her *and* she was like was those your boots? *And* she was like yeah, *and* she was like was you over here? *And* she was like yeah I was over here”).

Both contractions and clause coordination are linguistic features that Biber (2001) associates with reduced linguistic complexity. Together with the above mentioned utterance break-offs, restarts and structural repetitions they express an overall low grade of structural complexity in the speech samples which may be extended to daytime talk show talk in general. Indeed all three speech samples are characterized otherwise by a general absence of complex syntactic subordination via dependent clauses which, comprising different clause categories, constitute a major feature contributing to an increased complexity according to Biber (2001).<sup>312</sup>

Additionally, low structural complexity in the question-answer sequences can, in fact, also be triggered by the type of question that is posed by the host. Correspondingly, yes/no-questions can be applied by talk show hosts in order to yield a certain response that is restricted in length as it can be provided by a minimal “yes” or “no.” That is, according to Penz (1996: 113), “[y]es-[n]o questions invite the respondent to either confirm or deny the underlying proposition expressed by the interviewer.” Hence the result are relatively short and therefore structurally non-complex answers as based on the formal interview strategy used by the host. For example, in speech sample 3, the host Ricki Lake applies a yes/no question in line 60 that is answered by the addressee Teneka with a minimal “no.” Also in speech sample 2 Jerry Springer applies three yes/no-questions (lines 8, 11, 30 and 38) that can potentially be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” (though they are not answered in this manner here).

Speech sample 3 is furthermore interesting in this connection in so far as it illustrates speakers of African-American English (AAE), a linguistic variety that significantly differs in structure from Standard American English and forms of non-standard American English. One of its most striking characteristic features, the absence of copula ‘be’, is also illustrated in the guests’ speech (cf. Tim in line 36: “I here to say”).<sup>313</sup> Although this structural particularity does not reduce the grade of overall structural complexity as such, it nevertheless affects it in

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<sup>312</sup> There are a few exceptions, although these do not constitute instances of *complex* subordination: (1) speech sample 3 contains a conditional sentence with the subordinating conjunction “if” produced by the host Ricki Lake (line 21). This corresponds to Biber’s (2001) *conditional adverbial subordination*. In the same speech sample (line 38ff.) Tim makes use of the subordinating conjunction “because” (cf. Biber’s (2001) *causative adverbial subordination*). Again in speech sample 3 (line 62f.) the host Ricki Lake uses a *that*-complement clause (cf. Biber’s (2001) ‘*that*’ complement clauses to verbs). (2) Speech sample 1 (line 58f.) also contains a conditional sentence with the subordinating conjunction “if” performed by the guest Tara. In the same speech sample (line 69) Tammy uses a *that*-complement clause. (3) Finally speech sample 2 (lines 2f., 21) features two instances of *wh*-relative clauses (cf. Biber’s (2001) ‘*wh*’ relative clauses on object position). The same speech sample contains two *that*-complement clauses to the verbs “is” and the idiomatic “get it through his head.” (For all categories according to Biber (2001) see table 5). These instances of syntactic subordination across the speech samples, however, contrast with and are outweighed by the relative high frequency of clause coordination as illustrated above.

<sup>313</sup> For the structure of African-American English see, for example, Green (2002). For the structure and history of African-American English consider, e.g., Mufwene et al. (1998), Rickford (1999), or Wolfram and Thomas (2002).

such a way as to express a general structural informality – an assessment which is supported by other linguistic features such as existential ‘it’ (line 25; another feature typical of AAE), the use of lexical items non-existent in both Standard American English and non-standard varieties of American English (lines 44 and 53: “conversate;” see in this connection section (c) on word choice), the formation of the past participle without “have” (line 28), a mixing of tenses (line 42f., line 47) and the use of “ain’t” for negation (lines 15 and 39) involving double negation (line 15).

To sum up, all three speech samples illustrate an overall low grade of structural complexity on the part of the speech of both guests and hosts. Low structural complexity involves the predominance of syntactic coordination and a general absence of complex subordination of clauses which is immediately connected to (1) the demands of online production which can be assumed to affect the level of possible pre-planning of speech and hence also the level of possible structural complexity. (2) Reduced structural complexity is based on the emotional involvement of the guests into the topic at talk effectively inhibiting such complexity. A low grade of structural complexity is immediately reflected in (1) utterance break-offs and restarts, (2) repetitions of syntactic structures, (3) frequent use of contractions, (4) frequent use of coordinating conjunction “and,” (4) the application of yes/no-questions by the host and (5) structural particularities that contribute to an overall structural informality.

#### (c) Word choice: lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality or informality

Since the shows investigated here reveal a predominance of private topics it is the character of the lexical items used in the discussion of exactly these topics that is of interest here. The central question in this connection is whether the private, informal nature of the discourse topics is actually mirrored in concrete use of lexical informality.

When we take a closer look at the words used by the hosts and guests of the shows in both question-answer sequences and those sequences characterized by local management in the three speech samples (cf. factor (3) on the extent of speech regulation below) we find that their use ranges from informal, colloquial ones such as “mom,” “dump (somebody up)” (speech sample 1), “crash” (speech sample 2, meaning “to sleep”), “nail” and “my foot” (used to express disagreement, speech sample 3), over informal idiomatic expressions such as “have a thing about somebody/something” (Tara in speech sample 1 using “for” instead of “about”), “lay one’s cards on the table” (Jerry Springer in speech sample 2) and “dying to do something”<sup>314</sup> (Ricki Lake in speech sample 3) to highly informal, offending use of language such as the slang term “skank”<sup>315</sup> in speech sample 2 or “slut” used several times in speech

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<sup>314</sup> Cf. *American Idioms Dictionary* (Spears, 1994: 291 and 91).

<sup>315</sup> According to Thorne’s (1997: 351) *Dictionary of Contemporary Slang*, “skank” is used in the United States as a noun or adjective meaning “something or someone unpleasant or disgusting. The word seems to have arisen

sample 1 which is additionally intensified in meaning (and also in its capacity for face threat) by the valuating adjective “bad-boned.” Other such terms include “bitch” and “drunk.” In this connection also belongs the word “hell” which is not per se informal but gains informal quality as an expression of emotion by Tammy in line 63 of speech sample 1 (“The *hell* I am”). Other lexical items used by the conflicting parties are so highly informal and offending that they are treated as taboo words that are considered unsuitable for occurrence in the public. Accordingly, they are censored by the institution via a technical bleep.<sup>316</sup>

As these examples illustrate, there is indeed a tendency towards lexical informality of differing degree in the treatment of discourse topics with private, informal character. (That is, this result is valid for the considered editions of *Jerry Springer*, *Ricki*, and *Maury* in the first place which exclusively feature private topics). Why is there so much linguistic informality on the lexical level, i.e. especially on the part of the guests? The answer is, in fact, an obvious one: we have to see linguistic informality – which here covers the wide range of colloquial terms, slang expressions as extreme forms of informality and taboo words – as a direct reflection of the speakers’ high personal and emotional involvement into the discourse topic. This involvement finds its expression in the execution of the social conflict on stage. Clearly, it must be seen as a significant factor triggering the verbalization of internal states and the occurrence of affective language within the conflict which involves highly offensive linguistic terms (e.g. (bad-boned) *slut*, *skank*, *drunk*). It is in this way that the guests give vent to their feelings and show their personal involvement in the social conflict.

Yet, although we may see personal/emotional involvement in the topic at talk as a speaker’s prime reason for lexical informality of different nature, we may also view this informality simply as a natural concomitant of using an everyday, informal style of speaking within the institutional frame. That is, the guests – mostly inexperienced within the media – ‘act’ as private persons within the institutional setting of the television studio. Doing so, they transport the social conflict that is normally executed within the private sphere of private matters to the public sphere of television production. With the transference of the conflict for execution within the public sphere the guests simply apply the kind of language they would use if it was executed in the private sphere, namely (informal) everyday conversation. It is very likely that this also pertains to word choice. That is, only those words are used that are also typically featured in informal everyday conversation as featured in informal everyday contexts of interaction. In this category also belongs the interesting case of “conversate” (speech sample 3, lines 44 and 53), a verb derived from the noun “conversation” with the

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in black speech [sic!], but its etymology is uncertain. Skank is sometimes used specifically to denote an immoral woman or prostitute.”

<sup>316</sup> See also Semeria (1999: 123f.) on the use of the bleep-signal. According to the author the application of the bleep indicates the authentic character of the talk employed by the guests. As speech sample 2 shows, the bleep-signal is also used for reasons of data protection (e.g. line 21).

meaning “to have a conversation” or “to converse.”<sup>317</sup> In contrast to “converse” though it is not listed in current English dictionaries and is therefore actually ungrammatical in Standard American English. However, it seems to constitute a lexical expression specifically used within African-American English (AAE) and hence it seems to be grammatical in this particular sociolect.<sup>318</sup>

We also find lexical informality reflected in pronunciation. In section (a) on self-monitoring it is argued that conversational spontaneity and reduced self-monitoring are significant factors promoting the use of (1) contraction as a phenomenon of connected speech and an unmistakable sign of linguistic informality and non-standardness (e.g. ”I’ve,” ”I’m,” ”your’r,” ”don’t,” ”gonna,” ”wanna” in speech sample 1; “she’s,” ”I’ve,” ”what’s,” ”you’re” in speech sample 2) and of (2) ‘g-dropping’, i.e. the frequent preference for non-standard variant [ɪn] – the alveolar nasal – of variable (ng) instead of standard velar nasal [ŋ] (e.g. “watchin’,” ”somethin’,” in speech sample 1; “goin’,” ”movin’,” ”datin’,” ”cheatin’,” ”feelin’,” in speech sample 2). (3) We also find a form of linguistic reduction as the result of rapid speaking in connected speech that is similar to g-dropping in the presented conversational excerpts. It affects the conjunction “because” and the personal pronoun “him” which lack clear pronunciation and are correspondingly reduced to “‘cause” and “‘im” in lines 22 and 28 of speech sample 2. That is, “with him” in fast speech is contracted and phonetically realized as [wɪðɪm] instead of [ˈwɪθ ˈhɪm] featuring a voiced (inter)dental fricative for word-final -th and a loss of word-initial t-. Yet, interestingly, in speech sample 1, the social conflict between mother Tammy and daughter Tara, contraction does not always take place. For example, in line 28 “I am” is used by Tammy instead of the contracted form “I’m”. In this particular case we may attribute absent contraction to Tammy’s high emotional involvement into the discourse topic which leads her to emphasize her social role and current indignation concerning her daughter’s evaluation of her personality. The “I” in “I am” hence receives affective stress.<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> E.g. *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (5<sup>th</sup> impr. 2006), or Oxford Dictionaries Online (via: <http://oxforddictionaries.com>): “converse<sup>1</sup>: engage in conversation.”

<sup>318</sup> The internet is a place of lively discussion here that refers to “conversate” as part not only of AAE but it is also often derogatively viewed as a word that does not exist and is therefore considered “bad English.” (See, e.g., the wiki-based free online dictionary *Wiktionary* (<http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Talk:conversate>, last access: 15.03.2011). For more information on AAE and relevant bibliographical sources see the foregoing section on structural complexity.

<sup>319</sup> In all the transcriptions of agent and client speech that are the basis of the linguistic analysis performed here a difference is made whenever relevant between what is termed here ‘emphatic stress’ and ‘affective stress’. ‘Emphatic stress’ relates to the pure content level of speech involving language-specific stress patterns including those for rhetorical reasons (e.g. the stressing of “nicht” by the news reader in the German speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* in order to emphasize that something – also contrary to expectation – was not the case or did not happen). “Affective stress,” on the other hand, refers to an additional relationship level reflected in stress patterns apart from pure emphatic stress. That is, the nature of the social relations between any two or more interlocutors in interaction (e.g. disturbed by the existence of a conflict) will have an immediate influence on word stress in so far as the use of affective language will be accompanied by the use of additional affective stress

To sum up, we can say that the discussion of private, informal discourse topics involves lexical informality, i.e. the use of lexical items varying in their degree of informality from colloquial over highly informal to extreme informal taboo words. Consequently, those lexical items are used that are typically associated with linguistic informality and that correspond to the informality of the discourse topic. This informality also pertains to the phonological level in several respects as previously illustrated. In this connection (the extent of) lexical informality is immediately based primarily on the high personal and emotional involvement of the conflicting parties into the discourse topic and secondarily on the fact that the language applied within the institutional frame is also the one traditionally used by the guests in the private sphere of (informal) private everyday matters which is simply transported to the public sphere of television production. This transfer naturally includes the choice of words.

(d) Speech planning: relatively high or low degree of speech planning

Since the institutional speech situation that characterizes the daytime talk show features the host and several guests, both types of interlocutors need to be considered in a proper discussion of speech planning.

Let us start with some theoretical pre-considerations concerning the demands of online production in this speech situation. It is characterized by verbal interaction between the host and the guests that is determined by an overarching interview structure that reserves a particular type of conversational turns (=questions) for the host and another type of conversational turns (= answers) for the guests. Characteristically, these question-answer sequences are often split up by inserted sequences of talk in which the guests manage (the order of) their conversational turns locally, i.e. without intervention by the host (cf. factor (3) on the extent of speech regulation). Since we are talking here about verbal discourse we could assume that it is generally subject to the demands of online production towards linguistic spontaneity that are valid as soon as two or more interlocutors participate in talk. However, we should be careful not to overgeneralize here. That is, these demands are less significant in those parts of the verbal discourse that proceed in interview style because, in contrast to locally managed everyday conversation, we find here a clear allocation of conversational turns to host and guests which consequently inhibits a mutual ‘fight for the floor’ as the current right to speak in interaction and consequently reduces linguistic spontaneity in this respect. Only in those parts that are locally managed by the guests do we find a ‘floor management’ that corresponds to spontaneous everyday conversation. In short, when we take a look at the interactional form of the discourse that characterizes verbal interaction within the

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– indicated in the transcripts via underlining – that expresses the interlocutor’s underlying emotional involvement. In short, ‘affective stress’ indicates a speaker’s high level of emotionality present in case of a social conflict. Not surprisingly, ‘affective stress’ can be typically found in daytime talk show talk featuring the public execution of social conflicts on stage.

daytime talk show we need to acknowledge a difference in demanded linguistic spontaneity between those parts that proceed in interview style between host and guests and those parts between the guests that are locally managed to the exclusion of the host. While a pre-allocation of turns in the talk show interview can be determined to reduce the degree of necessary linguistic spontaneity, an absence of such pre-allocation in the locally managed parts of the conversation can be said to increase the degree of necessary linguistic spontaneity in order to achieve the right to speak. This is in so far significant since we fundamentally only have *one* conversational activity— an overarching talk show interview – (cf. section (h) on speech activities and events) that is performed in the first frame of interaction which yet reveals differential degrees of assumed linguistic spontaneity. In terms of (the possibility for) speech planning this means that the clear attribution of speaker turns to host and guests within the interview generally reduces the pressure to talk, i.e. the interactive pressure to take the turn, and in doing so implies greater interactive space for speech planning. (We are talking here about the adjacency pair ‘question-answer’ and such a structure – as any adjacency pair construction – is always accompanied by interlocutors’ mutual expectations of performing first pair parts and second pair parts. That is, whenever the host performs a question an answer is immediately relevant and (s)he expects that answer to be performed by the addressee. Likewise, the addressee knows that the host expects him or her to perform this answer (as determined by social convention). This mutual expectation of the occurrence of an answer will then reduce the addressee’s interactive pressure to take the turn since it is expected that (s)he will do so. This expectation thus allows the addressee the space for greater speech planning that is absent in those parts that are locally managed by the guests who are driven by exactly that interactive pressure to take the turn that characterizes local management in everyday conversation).

Consequently, what can we say about degrees of speech planning as determined here in the considered U.S.-American shows? How is speech planning/absence of speech planning expressed in the speech samples? Is it expressed at all? Let us start with the question-answer sequences by the host and his/her guests. To begin with, a fundamental difference to the speaker-based public service news format examined in chapter 7.1.1 is that mostly we cannot speak of institutionally pre-produced language here since most of the time – with a few exceptions – the host does not simply read out institutionally pre-produced language in the way that the news reader does. When we take a look at speech samples 2 and 3 we find that the host starts with an introduction of his/her guest (lines 1 – 3 in speech sample 2; lines 1 – 3 in speech sample 3) which is followed by the actual talk show interview. We may consider this linguistic introduction as pre-produced, i.e. planned, and simply read out from the teleprompter. The fundamental discourse structuring speech event though is the talk show interview (cf. section (h) in this discussion) and even if particular questions may be read out by the host the actual ways in which the content of the discourse proceeds are characteristically not pre-determined but discourse develops rather spontaneously based on

the content of the answer given by the guest which induces the content of the next question posed by the host. For example, in speech sample 2 the host Jerry Springer introduces his guest Nicky and ends his introduction with an open question addressing her problem (line: 3: “Nicky, what’s goin’ *on*?”). This is followed by Nicky’s answer in which she formulates her problem. The following two questions by the host are not pre-determined in any way but immediately refer to and hence are the sole result of Nicky’s previous answer. Accordingly, Jerry Springer asks “[a]nd you’re taking care of *all* the kids?” (line 8) in reaction to Nicky’s answer “[w]e have a total of *five* kids” (line 6) which is followed by his question “you been together *eight years* you said?” (line 11) orientating at Nicky’s statement in her previous answer. Likewise, in speech sample 1, line 3: “[w]hy? How did *that* start and *why*?” Jerry Springer does not read out a pre-produced question – maybe he had it in mind anyway but obviously it is not written down – but formulates it in direct response to his guest Tara’s statement in lines 1 – 2. Hence, although the discourse topic is generally institutionally predetermined and implies the application of topically relevant communicative actions and although the basic interview structure prescribes the type of communicative actions to be performed by the host and the guests, i.e. question and answer, the actual topically related content of the discourse within the institutional frame is a mutual and spontaneous construction by the host and the guests with the guests answering the questions by the host whose questions themselves spontaneously develop from the answers given by the guests (e.g. next question for information or request for clarification). We cannot therefore speak of institutionally pre-produced language here both on the part of the host and the guests and there is consequently a relatively low degree of speech planning, i.e. in the sense of a true pre-planning.

When we take a look at both the hosts’ questions and the guests’ answers in the speech samples we find speech planning reflected in the ongoing production of talk by the guests via different means: (1) the application of several discourse markers such as “well” (speech sample 1, lines 1, 4, 14 and 41; speech sample 2, lines 4 and 27; speech sample 3, lines 5, 8 and 43), “you know (what I’m saying)” (used with high frequency by Tim in speech sample 3; speech sample 1, line 14), “I mean (you know),” (speech sample 3, lines 20, 25, 26 and 28), “like” (speech sample 1, lines 7, 16 and 20; speech sample 3, lines 25 and 57 – 58) each with a particular pragmatic function within the discourse. Accordingly, “well” occurring at the beginning of a speaker turn is used as a turn taking signal indicating the speaker’s willingness to take the turn while its intra-turn occurrence is a hesitation marker indicating the search for the appropriate words (cf. speech sample 2, line 27; speech sample 3, line 43). An exception in this connection is speech sample 1, line 14 where Jerry Springer’s utterance-initial use of “well” may be seen as incorporating a commenting function. “You know (what I’m saying)” as used by Tim in speech sample 3 is a discourse marker that checks for understanding while “I mean (you know)” is again a hesitation marker expressing the speaker’s search for words (speech sample 3, e.g. line 20, 25). In contrast to this, Jerry

Springer's use of "you know" in speech sample 1, line 14 may be viewed rather as a discourse marker that indicates speaker evaluation of a state of affairs (i.e. in this case Tara's behaviour). Finally, "like" may be viewed differently either also as a hesitation marker filling in a pause and indicating that the speaker is thinking about what to say in the following (e.g. speech sample 1, line 16), or as an introductory element to the speech attributed to another person. That is, "like" introduces sequences within the discourse in which the speaker repeats, i.e. simulates, direct speech that was performed by another person (cf. speech sample 1, line 20; speech sample 3, line 57ff.). "Like" in this use can be seen as a rhetorical means for dramatization. Additionally, it constitutes a linguistic expression that corresponds to the meaning of "roughly" (speech sample 1, line 7).<sup>320</sup>

(2) There are frequent utterance break-offs and restarts – instances of conversational repair – that illustrate linguistic spontaneity and reflect speech planning as discourse progresses. (E.g. speech sample 2, line 6: "Fro- uh two from me and two- uh three from his ((bleep)),", line 13: "No:w (.) how did this u:h other woman- you said she's a skank?," line 27ff.: "[...] for (.) well five- six- five months, almost five months now. [...] And then (.) she end up movin' in with him into our house 'cause she's- they both [...];" speech sample 3, line 4: "We need- We're dying to hear your story," line 41: "Ok, but the girl with the boots, that- that happened?," line 53: "I don't remember y'all con- I don't remember y'all ever *conversatin' about it*").

The examples from speech sample 2 given here aptly illustrate two other features relevant for speech planning in daytime talk show talk: (3) the existence of intra-turn pauses. Accordingly, in line 27ff. of speech sample 2 the two pauses in "[...] for (.) well five- six- five months, almost five months now. [...] And then (.) she end up movin' in with him into our house 'cause she's- they both [...]" reflect a short time span that is needed to think about what to say next. With respect to the first intra-turn pause this also implies considerations about correctness as indicated by the discourse marker "well." Especially also speech sample 1 is interesting in this connection. We may see lines 4 – 13 as one conversational turn performed by Tara which features several intra-turn pauses which constitute a point – clearly a transition relevance place – at which the host Jerry Springer backchannels with "yes" and "yeah." The same is true for lines 16 – 22. Intra-turn pauses are to be found in the speech of both hosts and guests and typically these pauses are no rhetorical pauses but they constitute a cognitive mechanism whereby speakers 'plan' what to say next. Interestingly, though, if we take a look at the distribution of intra-turn pauses in the question-answer sequences and in those sequences that are locally managed by the guests, we find that there is a tendency for such pauses to occur more frequently in the former type of sequences, those where the guests

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<sup>320</sup> For elaborate discussions of discourse markers, their use and function in discourse see, for example, Schiffrin (1988) who focuses exclusively on English entailing a discussion of "well," "y'know" and "I mean," or, with a broader focus, Jucker and Ziv (1998). For an approach to the use of discourse markers within corpus linguistics see Aijmer (2002).

re-tell their experiences, than in the latter ones. This is evident in speech sample 1 where we may see the guests' high personal and emotional involvement as a reason that triggers linguistic spontaneity – evident in overlapping talk – and that as a consequence seems to inhibit the occurrence of high degrees of intra-turn pauses.

(4) Lexical elements such as “ah” and long “a:h” or “uh” that function to express a speaker's hesitation within his/her conversational turn. (E.g. speech sample 2, line 6: “Fro- uh two from me and two- uh three from his ((bleep)),” line 17f.: “No, a:h, so ah (.) how long has she been with ah your your boyfriend?,” line 21: “She was a:h *datin'* a friend of ours ah who lives in ((bleep)),” speech sample 3, line 17: “And ah she came over you know what I'm sayin' to:: [...]”).<sup>321</sup> These particles again occur in both the hosts' and the guests' speech and again, interestingly, they are featured in question-answer sequences by host and guest but characteristically not in sequences of local management between the guests (cf. speech sample 1).

(5) Speaking about local management, the locally managed parts of conversation between the guests in speech sample 1 are characterized by many verbal repetitions of the same structure and propositional content already introduced in the question-answer sequences (e.g. “She's a slut” (line 26) reappears as “You're a slut” in lines 33, and 35; “she's (still) a drunk” (line 25/26) reappears as “You're a drunk” in lines 37 and 39; “She never did anything” (line 20/21) reoccurs as “She's never done anything for me” in line 22 and as “you don't know anything” in line 49/50; “dumped me off” (line 21) reoccurs as “You dumped me off” in lines 30 and 47ff.; finally “she's still the same person” (line 25), reappears as “You're still the same person” in line 61). In this connection, the occurrence of these repetitions can be interpreted in two ways. On the one hand, they express a high emotional involvement of the speaker into the social conflict on a relationship level. On the other hand, they also reveal a lack of speech planning on a cognitive level that results from this emotional involvement which leads speakers to give full vent to their feelings. (The repetitions presented here are performed by one and the same speaker. There are even more structural repetitions if the addressee's speech use is considered (e.g. lines 30 – 32: “You dumped me off when I was two [...]” (Tara). “I dumped you off when you were two Tara because I loved you” (Tammy); lines 68 – 69: “It's about time you learned somethin'” (Tara). “It's about time that I learned that you're out of my life” (Tammy)). On an additional discourse structural level these repetitions also represent the production of coherent talk with one speaker drawing on the propositional content of the previous speaker).

Repetitions are also a characteristic feature of Tim's language application in speech sample 3 who uses an extremely high frequency of “you know (what I'm saying)” often in

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<sup>321</sup> Although “ah” can also be used as an interjection, it is not used here in this way but as a discourse particle it exclusively marks the speaker's hesitation within a speaker turn. The speech samples, however, also illustrate the use of interjection “oh” by the host with an affirmation and clarification function (e.g. speech sample 2, lines 15 and 33) and by the guests with an assertion function (speech sample 1, line 20). (For interjections “oh” and “ah” see Aijmer (2002), chapter 3).

combination with “I mean” (cf. line 25f.: “I mean you know I’m saying it’s like you know it’s two sides to everything you know what I’m saying but I mean I [...]”). Also this may be treated as an instance of online speech planning as discourse progresses.<sup>322</sup>

To sum up, the three speech samples illustrate particular discourse features (discourse markers, utterance break-offs and restarts, intra-turn pauses, hesitation markers and propositional content repetition) which are direct reflections of the degree of speech planning in the ongoing verbal discourse on stage. Accordingly, all listed discourse features are immediate expressions of online speech planning as discourse progresses; they are expressions of their speakers trying to ‘plan’ speech while producing it. Their application by the interlocutors illustrates that there is no elaborate pre-planning of speech taking place but that speech is spontaneously produced. All features hence are also reflections of an underlying linguistic spontaneity and they form the central elements of spontaneous talk. In short, the degree of speech planning with respect to both hosts and guests is relatively low; an elaborate pre-planning does not seem to take place.

(e) Information structure: expected high or low grade of explicit information

A determination of the expected grade of explicit information in the daytime talk show discourse necessarily needs to involve both the hosts’ and the guests’ use of language. The guests have two potential types of addressees, namely the host in the regular question-answer sequences and other guests in the locally managed parts of conversation. Let us start with the locally managed parts of conversation between the conflicting guests. Characteristically, the guests that immediately participate in the execution of the social conflict on stage and that are ultimately personally and emotionally involved in the conflict are familiar with each other. (So are Tara and Tammy in speech sample 1 and so are also Tim, Teneka and Renita in speech sample 3). Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) familiarity variable is a significant factor that influences the degree of explicit background information deemed necessary for successful communication within verbal discourse. Clearly, the familiarity between two interlocutors will reduce the need for providing a high grade of explicit background information since there is mutual expectation of shared background knowledge beyond more general world knowledge (cf. chapter 6.2.2.3). Since the conflicting parties on stage generally show a relatively high grade of familiarity and since they are so highly personally and emotionally involved into the conflict, we should expect that they show a relatively low grade of explicitly verbalizing information because they consider it shared background information. (Cf. speech

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<sup>322</sup> Since Tim seems to be a speaker of African-American English (see section (b) on structural complexity) it is left open here whether his extremely frequent use of “You know what I’m saying” constitutes a true idiolectal feature only, i.e. a discourse marker used by Tim to serve a particular pragmatic function within the current discourse, or whether it may not also constitute a typical feature of this particular sociolect.

sample 3, line 47: “When we sit in the front row you was like what you *doin’* over here?” The interlocutors know which “front row” is meant here but for the audience this is unclear; line 56: “Me and her talk and the girl was over to Ashley.” Tim introduces the name “Ashley” but does not directly indicate who Ashley is. The referent thus remains unclear at least for the audience, though we may assume that it is the girl with the boots.). In a similar manner Nicky in speech sample 2, line 4ff. does not explicitly introduce the person named “Scott” as her partner in life via e.g. “My friend’s name is Scott and I have been with Scott for six and a half years,” but simply presents the name: “I’ve been with Scott for six and a half years.” Likewise, the woman in question causing the problems in Nicky’s relationship is introduced into the discourse as “she:” “She’s managed to turn him completely against his family [...].” Again, the referent initially remains unclear to the audience and we find a high grade of linguistic vagueness in Nicky’s speech at this point.

This is exactly where the mass communicative situation comes into play. That is, the discourse produced on stage within the first frame of interaction is produced in the first place for a television audience and what is shared knowledge among the conflicting parties is as a rule not so with respect to the larger audience which may be in need of more explicit information. In such cases it is a part of the institutional role of the host to elicit in the question-answer sequences that piece of information that is deemed necessary for a proper understanding on the part of the audience and, probably also, on the part of the host himself or herself. It is at such points where the host typically performs a request for clarification addressing the guest that points to an insufficient grade of transmitted background information or, more positively, indicates a present and relevant difference in information status between guest(s) and audience (and host, respectively). (E.g. *Oprah* (12/08/03), topic *Air Force Academy rape scandal*: Who is “they”? Who tells you?; Explain what the four-degree system is). In other words, the institutional role of the host involves a recipient design orientation that correspondingly takes into account the (assessed) communicative needs of the audience. As argued in chapter 1.1 the television audience is characteristically a disperse one which is a significant factor that in practice complicates the appropriate degree of background information relevant for all audience members. Hence anything that goes beyond what can be considered basic world knowledge can be expected to be explicitly verbalized by the communicator – in this case elicited from the guests by the host as agent of the institution – in an attempt to serve the communicative needs of all recipients of television discourse. This is indeed necessary since predominantly the audience cannot be familiar with the private problems of those discussing these problems on stage. The discussion of these problems originally happens within the private sphere and consequently knowledge about these problems is also restricted to the persons within the private sphere who are directly involved in or at least are informed about the problem. That means, as soon as a social conflict that is originally restricted to the private sphere and that implies a restriction of relevant background knowledge about the conflict to a limited group of persons is transferred for discussion to the

public sphere of television production then this necessarily always requires an explicit verbalization of (assumed relevant) background details for a large, heterogeneous and, characteristically, anonymous audience that is unfamiliar with this conflict. The host is responsible for the guests' performance of such explicit verbalization by means of selective questions in the form illustrated above. However, such questions, in fact, not only relate to questions for clarification in a particular case of uncertainty but more generally refer to the elicitation of a speaker's personal experience and hence they ultimately trigger the presentation of elaborate detail right from the beginning. Indeed, when we take a look at speech sample 1 we see that the assumption of a generally low grade of explicit background information provided by the guests actually constitutes an oversimplification. Accordingly, Tara in speech sample 1 tells her story – the reason for the conflict with her mother – and she does so in a relatively detailed manner (lines 1 – 22) with the host mainly backchannelling than (truly) demanding clarification. Hence, Jerry Springer's question in line 3 ("Why? How did *that* start and *why*?") is not actually a request for clarification but simply leads Tara's answer in a particular direction, namely to provide more detail. When we consider Tara's first turn (line 1f.), however, we see that it ends with a pause after an elongated "and" indicating that Tara's turn is not finished yet and we may assume that she might have given the relevant information even without Jerry's question.

What about the host's own degree of explicitly presenting background information? When we take a look at speech samples 2 and 3 we see that the hosts' use of language shows a relatively high grade of explicit information at those points in the discourse that serve as introductions to the overall discourse topic and to the single guests and their particular social conflict. This is only understandable since – calling to mind recipient design – the viewers at home need to know 'what the show is about', simply speaking. In introducing the viewers to the show's topic and guests the hosts allow a 'classification' of topics and interlocutors on the part of the audience and, not to be forgotten, such introductions are also always a means of attracting viewers and of tying them to the program. Accordingly, Jerry Springer's welcome address in speech sample 2, line 1ff. does not only pertain to "Hey, welcome to the show. Please meet Nicky!" but it introduces the central concern of the guests. In the same manner, Ricki Lake in speech sample 3, line 1ff. presents a reintroduction into the topic after a commercial break and welcomes her next guest in this context instead of simply continuing with "Tim, come on out". It is for these introductory actions that we can speak of a rather high grade of explicit information on the part of the host.

To sum up, when we think about what is *expected* on the level of information structure as concerns language use of both hosts and guests, we can state an overall low grade of expected explicit information with regard to the guests whose degree of familiarity correspondingly reduces the need for the presentation of elaborate background information. In the mass communicatively expanded speech situation this, however, collides with the communicative

needs of a disperse television audience towards explicit presentation of elaborate background information. This is typically indicated by the host via request for clarification in case of which the guest provides more detailed background information. We should be careful though not to overgeneralize the communicative behaviour of the guests in this respect, for especially speech sample 1 has shown that the guests in the question-answer sequences between guest and host can also present detailed illustrations of their personal experiences that do not lack relevant background information and hence do lack clarification questions on the part of the host. All in all, for the guests we may therefore determine a middle-position for the grade of explicit information that is neither extremely low nor extremely high. That is, it *can* be low in interaction with another guest involved in the conflict and it *can* be high in the question-answer sequences between host and guest either induced by requests for clarification or performed even without such clarification requests based on an initial question for elicitation of information by the host (e.g. "What's goin' on?").

The same middle-position must be determined here for the host as based primarily on his/her institutional role which involves the responsibility for a shared information status between guests and audience. Accordingly, the host's grade of explicit information *can* be rather high in those sequences where the host introduces the audience to the discourse topic and the guests and it *can* be rather low in the question-answer sequences with the guests where the main task of the host is to elicit information including the verbalization of an appropriate degree of background information via specific questions aimed at such verbalization but not necessarily to produce such verbalization himself/herself. Clearly, the host provides for the guests' informational explicitness where needed but needs not to be explicit himself/herself simply because it is not a part of his/her institutional role which centrally involves other-elicitation of information but characteristically no immediate self-presentation of this information.

(f) Conversational redress: expected high or low degree of conversational redress

Since the situational context of interaction is characterized by two types of interlocutor – host and guests – a proper determination of conversational redress should refer to both. Let us begin with some theoretical pre-considerations. (1) As argued in the previous section on information structure, the guests are highly personally and emotionally involved in the social conflict and its execution on stage and they are typically familiar with each other (cf. speech samples 1 and 3). The familiarity factor is not only of significance in so far as it reduces the degree of explicit background information required for successful communication between interlocutors, but it also formally reduces the degree of conversational redress deemed necessary for successful interaction (cf. chapter 6.2.2.3 on information structure and conversational redress ). What is even more important in this connection is that the underlying emotionality will probably be the predominant reason for why any two or more conflicting

parties will reduce their degree of conversational redress. That is, they simply give vent to their feelings via affective language regardless of any risk of face threat in the speech situation. Clearly, the use of affective language here is characterized by politeness strategies according to the politeness framework by Brown and Levinson (1987) that do for the most part not compensate for the threat to face. That is, the conflicting guests often apply highly face-threatening acts directed at each other without any redressive action corresponding to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) bald on record strategy. An apt example of this use of language by the guests is indeed Tara's and Tammy's conflict in speech sample 1 characterized by frequent verbal insults: "you're a drunk," "you're a slut," "you bitch." In a similar manner, though not insulting, Teneka in speech sample 3 questions Tim what exactly he was doing repeatedly using the bald on record form "some things like what?" (line 31ff.) instead of, for example, a more indirect negatively polite "Would you please tell me what you mean by 'doing some things'!"

(2) The host's use of language in this respect can be said to be dependent on two aspects: On the one hand, it is immediately influenced by the demands of the institutional role as host which entails the above mentioned recipient design orientation, i.e. an acknowledgment of the communicative needs of a disperse audience in the mass communicatively expanded institutional speech situation. This acknowledgement will then supposedly have an influence on the type of politeness strategy that is preferred by the host. That is, with respect to Brown's and Levinson's (1987) distinction into five major types of politeness strategies, we may assume that on-record strategies are more likely to occur than off-record strategies since the latter characteristically produce a verbal indirectness that, especially with regard to the disperse nature of the addressees, must be seen as undesired because of its inherent ambiguity, i.e. a potential openness to several interpretations.<sup>323</sup> Among the on-record strategies, bald on record ones and both positive and negative politeness are thinkable, though positive politeness is more likely since it constitutes the most direct verbal strategy below 'bald on record'. The assumed preference for positive politeness and thus for relative conversational directness here can again be explained on the basis of the institutional role of the host as agent of the institution television who is responsible for the successful fulfillment of the institutionally ascribed entertainment function of the daytime talk show format. That is, for the sake of entertainment, the host typically presents himself/herself not in the first place as a person incorporating institutional authority – what (s)he definitely has – but rather as an ordinary person in correspondence with his/her guests. This simulated 'social ordinariness' characteristically involves the use of an overall informal style of speech that is mostly positively polite or bald on record. (E.g. speech sample 2, line 3: "Nicky, what's goin' on?" line 20: "How did that *happen*?" Speech sample 3, line 3f.: "Tim, come on out. [...] Hi Tim. We need- We're dying to hear your story. What's your sight of things?"). In this way the (by

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<sup>323</sup> Cf. in this connection Thomas' (1995) notion of 'intentional indirectness' discussed in chapters 4.1.1 and 6.2.2.3 on linguistic politeness.

definition existing) formal social distance between agent and client of the institution is significantly reduced and substituted for an artificial social closeness – an actually non-existing familiarity between host and guest(s) on stage – which in turn promotes the guests' own linguistic informality in interaction with the host: mutual/symmetrical convergence in terms of speech accommodation.<sup>324</sup> (Cf. speech sample 2, line 4 (Jerry Springer's guest Nicky begins to tell about her problem): "Well Jerry, I've been with Scott for six and a half years [...]"). In other words, the fact that the host tends to use speech strategies that incorporate a relatively high level of informality makes it well understandable that as a consequence the guests' utterances directed at the host are as informal as the ones used by the host towards the guests.

However, the linguistic informality of the guests in this connection may also be seen not only as a reaction, i.e. linguistic adaptation, to a particular communicative behaviour of the host but also as a natural consequence of transferring informal everyday conversation in the discussion of private topics on stage to the public sphere of television production. The linguistic informality – here with regard to degrees of conversational redress – is then maintained independently of the person that is being talked to hence also including the host. In this respect, the communicative behavior of the guests is not convergent but constitutes the maintenance of a familiar everyday form of communication.

Speaking about discourse topics, the host's degree of conversational redress can be assumed to vary also depending on the private or – less often – public nature of the topic. That is, while the informality of private topics may foster a low degree of conversational redress in the form of positive politeness or bald on record strategies, the formality of public topics may result into a higher degree of conversational redress via at least negative politeness strategies that ultimately acknowledge the addressee's desire for freedom from imposition and express the host's sensitivity in view of the topic and its underlying high rate of imposition. For example, in *Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*, we could also imagine Oprah Winfrey eliciting information via the more negatively polite "Would you tell us how the rape occurred?" However, instead of this, in the presented speech samples she uses the more direct "Tell us what was your situation. How did the rape occur?"

To sum up, we can determine a comparatively low degree of conversational redress for both hosts and guests within daytime talk show discourse which consists in the preference for bald on record and positive politeness strategies. This correspondingly means a low degree of linguistic indirectness. As concerns the guests, the preference for more direct speech strategies can be based (1) on their high degree of familiarity and (2) their fundamental personal and emotional involvement into the discourse topic. Alternatively, it may also simply

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<sup>324</sup> The seemingly informal social relation between host and guests is especially evident in the German shows where the host characteristically uses the informal second person singular pronoun "Du" instead of the more formal "Sie" which is typically reciprocated by the guests.

be viewed as a natural consequence of transferring informal everyday conversation to the public sphere. As concerns the host, the preference for more direct speech strategies can be ultimately related to his/her institutional role as agent acting on behalf of the institution television, striving to fulfill the entertainment function ascribed to the format. This involves the creation of a social closeness between host and guests via verbal means of linguistic directness which are reciprocated by the guests.

This linguistic informality expressed in positive politeness and bald on record strategies is, in fact, in conflict with the actually existing social distance of host and guests in the institutional speech situation which consequently should imply the use of a higher degree of conversational redress/intentional indirectness, i.e. one that corresponds to the unfamiliarity of the interlocutors. Since typically this does not happen in the daytime talk show discourse this may be explained with an orientation towards entertainment.

#### (g) Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker's modality

Since we have two types of interlocutors interacting within the institutional frame – the host as agent and the diverse guests as clients of the institution television – the discussion of linguistic modality here needs to include both host and guests. Let us start with the guests. As previously illustrated, the majority of the discourse topics featured in the daytime talk show format is private in nature concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary persons who execute their social conflicts publicly on stage. Since the persons are always directly involved in the social conflict they are consequently also always so emotionally. This involvement is likely to be reflected in speech. The three speech samples presented in the discussion of factor (3) (*extent of speech regulation*) illustrate that the guests' personal and emotional involvement in the discourse topic is expressed via (1) frequent passages of talk that deviate from the basic question-answer structure via inserted sequences of talk in which speaker turns are managed locally by the guests without interference by the host; (2) the increased occurrence of simultaneous talk in the locally managed passages by the guests; (3) what is most important in this connection, the verbalization of internal states ("I thought you were a really good person" (speech sample 1)) and the application of affective language, i.e. baldly<sup>325</sup> verbal insults that range from cases of extreme linguistic informality (e.g. "she's a drunk," "she's a slut," "you're a bad-boned slut," "you bitch" (speech sample 1), "she's a skank" (speech sample 2)) to extreme informal and taboo language (indicated via a technical bleep).

Consequently, what the guests do here is they express their own subjective perspective in the public execution of the social conflict and it is understandable that they do so because they characteristically are so highly personally and emotionally involved in that conflict. Clearly, speaker's modality – as the explicit expression of subjective speaker stance – is an essential

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<sup>325</sup> In terms of Brown's and Levinson's (1987) bald on record strategy (cf. section (f) on conversational redress).

element of the guests' language within the discussion of the discourse topic on stage that naturally results from a high degree of personal and hence emotional involvement which often leads to speakers' spontaneous eruption of emotion.

However, the expression of subjective speaker perspective here can also be explained simply by the fact that the guests in transporting a social conflict originally a part of the private sphere for discussion into the public sphere also transport (informal) everyday conversation as the most basic form of talk within the private sphere to the public sphere of television production. As discussed in chapter 6.2.2.3, both formal and informal everyday conversation are characterized by the occurrence of speaker's modality (next to utterance modality) as influenced by the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors. Consequently, the occurrence of speaker's modality in the public sphere of television production is then simply the natural result of transferring everyday conversation to the public sphere. If this is valid for speaker's modality, then it is true also for utterance modality. In fact, in speech samples 1 and 2 we find "about" (line 1, speech sample 1 and line 19, speech sample 2), "almost" (line 28, speech sample 2), "apparently" (line 12, speech sample 1) and "maybe" (line 58, speech sample 1) as lexical elements with epistemic modal meaning whereby the guests express their degree of commitment to the truth of what they state in the proposition. In all conversational examples listed here the speaker modifies the propositional content and restricts the factuality of the proposition via the use of the named lexical element by means of which she expresses that she is not fully committed to the truth of the proposition. For example, in line 58 in speech sample 1 Tara does not produce a factual statement ("if you would have spent more time with me than X would be the case") but restricts factuality via the modal adverb "maybe" whereby she expresses her actual degree of commitment to what she states in the proposition in terms of possibility, i.e. likelihood. In the same manner Tara states in line 1 that she has not been sleeping with her stepfather for *exactly* three and a half months but only roughly did so.

If we take a look at the host, we have to take into consideration both his/her acting in the ascribed institutional role as host (implying role-oriented politeness) and the identity of the host as private person (implying person-oriented politeness) for we have to acknowledge the possibility that the host may step out of his/her institutional role from time to time. In fact, both communicative roles allow the expression of subjective speaker perspective. With the host acting as private person this is understandable but also the institutional role of the host centrally involves not only a mere structuring of talk and pure elicitation of information but also the evaluation of states of affairs and (perceived intolerable) guest behaviour. (The host and the audience tend to form a community of consensus representing a shared public opinion. Deviation from this opinion may be indicated respectively in both comments performed by the host and the studio audience). Hence this ultimately implies the occurrence of speaker's modality, be it a role-based one or not. Accordingly, in section (h) on speech activities and events the speech activities of commenting on and evaluating guest behaviour

are presented as central ones incorporated in the host's institutional role (cf. *Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*: "We are all just civilians but we think that's pretty sick!"). In the speech samples respective instances of such evaluative acts performed by the host that can be treated as either role-based or personally motivated expressions of speaker perspective can be found in speech sample 1: *Jerry Springer* (12/10/2003), topic: *I'm sleeping with my stepfather*, line 14-15: "[...] Ok but you know (.) it's your mother and he's married to her, did you feel a little bit *bad* about that?" At first sight, this could be assessed as a simple question for information only by the host. However, the lexical element "you know" may be seen as a discourse marker here that in combination with the conjunction "but" and a following short pause expresses a subjective speaker perspective, i.e. a personal evaluation of guest behavior, that accompanies the elicitation of information. A similar case is Ricki Lake's evaluation of her guest's attitude in speech sample 3: *Ricki*, (12/08/03), topic: *You can't trust your mate*, line 21 – 22: "And if she *is* friendly enough to be with her boots off in your house at four in the morning, why wasn't she doin' *your* laundry instead of your *girl* doin' it?" Here, the addition "[a]nd if she is friendly enough" with emphasis on "is friendly" constitutes a subjective undercurrent of a question of information that could have been produced otherwise as "why wasn't she doin' *your* laundry instead of your *girl* doin' it?" In the same speech sample the host performs another comment that illustrates the consequences of her guest Teneka's behaviour: "Do you *realize* by *staying* with him and by just gettin' all *mad* and then gettin' *over* it, that is sending a signal to *him* that that is acceptable to you and that he can do that *again* to you" (line 62 – 63).

On the part of the host all three speech samples do not satisfactorily show utterance modality. Clearly, there are no instances of epistemic modality though we may expect that also the host illustrates a general commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition as a fundamental part of his/her institutional authority/integrity. As concerns the action-oriented deontic type of modality, we may view Jerry Springer's use of the verb "need" (with infinitive) in line 1 of speech sample 2 (*Jerry Springer*, (12/09/2003), topic: *Love...Hillbilly style*): "My guests today say that their lovers need to lay their *cards* on the table [...]" as a lexical element that expresses obligation on the part of his guests. (A similar case of deontic modal meaning represented by the verb "need" is Tim's statement in line 39 of speech sample 3 (*Ricki*, (12/08/03), topic: *You can't trust your mate*): "[...] there's some things I did and some things that she need to just leave alone because that ain't *happen*").

To sum up, the three speech samples illustrate the occurrence of speaker's modality in the daytime talk show format on the part of both hosts and guests. While the former's use of this type of modality can be attributed to the high degree of personal and emotional involvement into the social conflict and to a simple transfer of everyday conversation to the public sphere of television production, the latter's use of speaker's modality is connected to the speech activities of commenting on and evaluating speaker behaviour that are ascribed to the host in

the structuring of talk. Also epistemic modality – as a type of utterance modality – is used by the guests in order to show the degree of commitment towards what they state in the proposition. Deontic modality in the three speech samples is not a significant feature in the talk of the guests. The same is true for the hosts. In contrast to the guests, the hosts in the speech samples do not apply lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings. Nevertheless, similar to the guests, we may expect their occurrence as an expression of the hosts' degree of commitment to the truth of the proposition and we may view this as a direct reflection of their integrity as institutional agents. Consequently, although the speech samples do not always yield satisfying results we may expect the general occurrence also of utterance modality.

#### (h) Speech activities and speech events: speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality

The general determination of (monolog-based) speech activities and (interactive) speech events within the daytime talk show format involves two aspects: Firstly, we need to take into consideration the conception of the format as such. That is, we can expect that the daytime talk show, similar to the previously discussed public service speaker-based news format, reveals a format-specific text type profile which is mostly entertainment-oriented by means of which the format can be clearly identified. In section (a) within this discussion of a formal or informal speech style it is mentioned that the basic discourse structure characterizing verbal interactions within the institutional setting of the daytime talk show is that of an interview structure, i.e. question-answer sequences with a clear attribution of questions to the host and answers to the guests, featuring frequently inserted instances of local management by the guests which are predominantly based on their high personal and emotional involvement into the topic at talk. Clearly, when we talk about an 'interview structure' here we talk about the text type 'interview', i.e. specifically about the 'talk show interview' that is to be distinguished structurally from the 'news interview'. The latter has been illustrated to be typically characterized by the neutral stance of the interviewer refraining from making personally motivated comments and evaluations of speaker actions or states of affairs within the interview.<sup>326</sup> The former, however, is different in this respect in so far as it can (but need not necessarily) involve the host's – either role-motivated or personally motivated – evaluation of speaker actions and states of affairs (cf. *Oprah* (12/08/2003), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*: "We are all just civilians but we think that's pretty sick"). That is, while the 'news interview' is (ideally) characterized by the absence of what is defined here as speaker's modality (which may be seen in connection with an ultimate restriction to objective information), the 'talk show interview' is typically characterized by the occurrence of this

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<sup>326</sup> Cf. Greatbatch, 1998 and Heritage/Greatbatch, 1993. An example in this connection is the purely information-oriented short interview with the correspondent in the news magazine T01\_TT\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010, running time: [6:32 – 7:49].

type of modality potentially by the host but definitely so by the guests which is immediately based on their personal and emotional involvement into the discourse topic (cf. section (g) on linguistic modality). Consequently, when we speak about a format-specific text type profile for the daytime talk show format we speak about the talk show interview highly subjective in nature and governed by the host in question-answer sequences which allows the occurrence of locally managed parts of verbal discourse between the guests without interference by the host in the ways as presented in the discussion of factor (3) (*extent of speech regulation*) below.

Secondly, since the talk show interview as described here constitutes *the* format-defining text type, it forms the interactional frame for *every* communicative action performed by the interlocutors within the institutional setting of the television studio. That is, all communicative actions – and therefore all speech activities and events – are immediately located within and hence subject to an overarching interview structure that ultimately assigns questions to agents (= hosts) and answers to guests (= clients). Consequently, by definition, it should be within the question-part that we find the communicative actions (e.g. questions for further information, requests for clarification) of the hosts and it should be within the answer-part that we find the communicative actions of the guests (e.g. retelling personal experiences in personal narratives). The occurrence of local management by the guests in this connection hence would constitute a deviation from this determination of communicative actions since the process is not only restricted to the answer-part but spreads to the question-part originally reserved for the host to the exclusion of the host.

The central question here concerns (1) the types of speech activities and events to be found within the daytime talk show format but predominantly also (2) the nature of those activities and events in so far as we can define them as typical of linguistic formality or informality.

The talk show interview itself as the dominant format-defining text type and overarching mechanism for structuring discourse in the format is necessarily based on interaction – posing questions and giving answers – and is therefore itself a speech event that forms the basis of each show. The communicative actions of the host within this speech event are relatively unaffected by the actual character of the discourse topic. Clearly, no matter whether a show features a private or public topic the institutional role of the host centrally involves the same, namely elicitation of information which includes:

- Questions for (further) information, also those that invite a personal narrative:
  - And for you, Sharon, your goal always was to be a fighter pilot, right?
  - And your mom's in military and your stepfather's in military...you were raised in the military and this was your big dream?
  - Tell us what happened, Laura.
  - And Keira, what was your situation?

(*Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*)

- Requests for clarification and for concrete detail:

- Who is “they”? Who tells you?
- Explain what the four-degree system is.
- And you believe you were drugged?
- So, every one of you told nobody immediately?

(*Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*)

- Summarizing/clarification by the host:

- So what I’m trying to get everybody else to understand, those of us who have not been a part of the military, is that you’re in a system that says that you are inferior to your superiors, that you do what your superiors say no matter what. And that is enforced from the day you arrive, correct?

(*Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*)

- O:h, so she and her boyfriend are living in your house and she is sleeping with your boyfriend now for at last [...]

(*Jerry Springer* (12/09/03), topic: *Love...Hillbilly style*)

- Commenting/evaluating (guest) behavior:

- We are all just civilians but we think that’s pretty sick!

(*Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*)

- Do you realize by staying with him and by just gettin’ all mad and then gettin’ over it, that is sending a signal to him that that is acceptable to you and that he can do that again to you.

(*Ricki* (12/08/03), topic: *You can’t trust your mate*)

- (Re)directing talk performed by a guest:<sup>327</sup>

- Cf. speech sample 2:

27 N: and then she end up- oh ye:a:h, (.) and then she end up datin’ ((bleep)) for (.) well five- six- five  
28 months, almost five months now. And then (.) she end up movin’ in with him into our house ‘cause

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<sup>327</sup> This happens in an attempt to avoid dysfunctional speech. That is, whenever a guest misses the point and deviates from telling the important facts, the host guides the guest’s conversational contribution into a particular direction as desired by the host. In this case the host indicates the occurrence of such dysfunctional speech via interruption of the guest which aims at changing, i.e. redirecting, the guest’s conversational contribution into functional speech. As Penz argues (1996: 95), “[i]nterruptions are frequently employed by all talk show hosts [...] to get them [i.e. the guests] to focus on the main events by asking a focused question.”

29 she's- they both | came to the,  
30 JS: | Ok, she moved *in* to your place?  
31 N: Yeah, they moved in with us (.) ...

(Jerry Springer (12/09/2003), topic: *Love...Hillbilly style*)

These communicative actions define the host's institutional authority as 'global planner' of the talk show talk with the foremost right to pose questions and to get these questions answered. Particularly with regard to a show's temporal limitations this authority also pertains to fit questions and answers into the pre-determined time limit of the show as a whole and especially also into those time limits that are set to each sub-topic (cf. factor (6) on place and time of conversation).

When we talk about the guests the character of the discourse topic is indeed an important factor that influences the occurrence of speech activities and events and since private topics are the dominant ones in the format it is these topics that are focused on here. As argued in the discussion of factor (1), private topics in the shows are concerned with the everyday problems and social conflicts of ordinary persons that are discussed publicly on stage. The social conflict thus is transferred from the private sphere of private matters to the public sphere of television production and so are the linguistic ways of dealing with this conflict. That is, the transfer to the public sphere of a social conflict that is normally executed within the private sphere by means of using informal everyday conversation also involves the transfer of (informal) everyday conversation to the public sphere since the guests still 'act' as private persons (cf. section (c) on word choice). Clearly, the social conflict that is executed within the institutional setting is an interactive speech event that seems to be preferred by the format and that is originally a part of informal everyday conversation within the private sphere and, as a consequence, it is a speech event that is typical of linguistic informality, i.e. also because it fundamentally involves speakers' subjective use of language due to their high personal and emotional involvement (cf. section (g) on linguistic modality).

More generally, since we find informal everyday conversation transferred to the public sphere we should expect to find on the part of the guests speech activities and events within the institutional frame that are also typically used within informal everyday conversation. One such speech event is the mentioned social conflict. A non-interactional speech activity typical of linguistic informality that can be found in the daytime talk show is the telling of personal narratives which are also characterized by their teller's high personal and emotional involvement. Personal narratives mostly occur after explicit request via the host, i.e. as a second part of the adjacency pair question-answer (cf. *Oprah* (12/08/03), topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*: "Tell us what happened, Laura." "And Keira, what was your situation?"). The execution of social conflicts on stage often constitutes a break with the actual question-answer structure of the host questioning and the guests answering. As

discussed in (3) (*extent of speech regulation*) below, the discourse on stage often includes conversational parts that are more spontaneous and locally managed instead of turns that are allocated by the host.

The following are examples of personal narratives occurring in different shows:

(1) *Ricki*      Date: 12/08/03      Topic: *You can't trust your mate*

**Contextual information:** Tisha thinks that her best friend's boyfriend Angel is cheating on her:

Ricki: So, Angel what about this naked girl? You admit that you were in bed with this woman?

Angel: Yes, I do. I admit it. You know...you know, we was all drinking having a party at my cousin's birthday. So, you know, I went in the bedroom, you know what I'm saying, in my room in the hotel...and I went to take me a shower, you know...and as I come out there's a girl naked in my bed.

(2) *Maury*      Date: 02/24/04      Topic: *I had sex with 2 cousins...who's my baby's daddy?*

**Contextual information:** Shanel tells the story of the birth of her premature twin girls. Three months after the birth one of the twins died.

"I met Buggy when I was fourteen years old. [...] We was so in love with each other. I was sixteen when I found out that I was pregnant with twins. He wanted me to go ahead with the pregnancy. Since I was so in love with him I wanted to do anything to make him happy. When I had the twin girls it was a very trying time for us because of the fact that, you know, I had the girls three months early so I knew there was gonna be complications. It was one pound baby. It was a very hard thing to deal with to see them there like that. Buggy and myself did lose one of the twin girls which was very devastating."

(3) *Montel*      Date: 02/24/04      Topic: *Surviving a lover's attack*

**Contextual information:** Montel is interviewing his guest Dayna who has survived a deadly attack by her husband. Now Dayna is retelling her personal experience:

"My children and I had moved and we got an apartment and I had got a job and it was the first time I really got to do anything with my kids. And we went away for the weekend. And I had an apartment on the downstairs and upstairs there was another lady and her two children. She knew that I wasn't home. My truck wasn't there. She had actually called 911 for me because somebody was in my house and she heard them. And it was *him*. And they actually came to the house and they arrested him because of being in my *home* and playing *music*."

(4) *Oprah*      Date: 12/08/03      Topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*

Oprah: Tell us what was your situation. How did the rape occur?

"I was raped by my cadet mentor. I was in a filled training program called "global engagement" And he had been stalking me from out the program, oppressing me, asking me out to movies, what my favourite color was, you know, and I seriously dropped hints at this guy that I wasn't interested. And I couldn't just blow him off because he was in a position of authority over me. He was the program super-intendant. It was his signature that went under my papers. And so I tried to be as tactful as I could not accepting his invitations. Finally he got me alone. He told me that there was something very important that he needed to talk to me about. He told me to meet him, you know, after the duty day in my tent. By that time I was trying to see him anyway. I went to bed. I woke up at four o' clock in the morning, he was standing over my cot and he woke me up and it was the creepiest thing I had ever felt. [...]"

Examples (1) and (2) occur within a show featuring a private topic. The narratives are part of a social conflict executed in the public. The other two narratives (3) and (4) featured in *Montel* and *Oprah* are part of the discussion of a public topic. In contrast to (1), narratives (2) – (4) are much more drastic personal experiences and therefore are more likely to include the expression of internal states as is done correspondingly by the women in (2) and (4) evaluating their experiences with the words: “which was very devastating” and “it was the creepiest thing I had ever felt” thus reflecting their high emotional involvement into the conversational topic.<sup>328</sup>

In order to increase the authenticity of the events and likewise the emotional movement of the audience the shows of *Montel* and *Oprah* feature parts shot in documentary style. In *Montel* every sub-topic<sup>329</sup> dealt with on stage is preceded by a re-enactment of the event with voice over featuring each woman retelling her personal experience. In *Oprah* the story behind the individual rape of the women is given in documentary style partly shot in black and white including shots of each woman commenting on the event.

To sum up, the daytime talk show format features the talk show interview as its central interactive speech event. It is the format-defining text type and overarching mechanism for structuring discourse in the format. Characteristically, in the daytime talk show the talk show interview is open for inserted sequences of local management by the guests that break up the basic question-answer structure which is due to their high personal and emotional involvement into the discourse topic. Two of the most prominent communicative actions in the daytime talk show are (1) the execution of social conflicts as interactional speech events and (2) the telling of personal narratives as non-interactional speech activities. Both can be defined as communicative actions typical of linguistic informality since they are originally parts of informal everyday conversation within the private sphere (of private matters) that are transferred for discussion to the public sphere (of television production) from where they re-

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<sup>328</sup> See in this connection also Toolan (1988/2001), chapter 5 (1988 ed.) or chapter 6 (2001ed.) for a sociolinguistic approach to the characteristic structure of personal narratives of personal experience as based on Labov. Accordingly, an integral part of a narrative that is characterized by its subjectivity is constituted by the evaluation of events functioning to justify the telling of a narrative (cf. Toolan, 1988: 156f.). The author lists five other elements structuring a personal narrative: (1) the ‘abstract’ as a short summary of the event, (2) the ‘orientation’ as defining the persons and the setting, i. e. place and time, (3) the ‘complicating action’ denoting the sequence of events, i. e. what actually happened, (4) the ‘resolution’ as the termination of the sequence of events, and (5) the ‘coda’ signalling the end of a narrative (cf. Toolan, 1988: 152ff.). In the sample narratives (1) – (4) given here, ‘abstract’ and/or ‘orientation’ are also to be found, namely “we was all drinking having a party at my cousin’s birthday,” (with orientation function, sample (1)), “I met Bugsy when I was fourteen years old,” (with orientation function, sample (2)), “my children and I had moved and we got an apartment and I had got a job,” (with orientation function, sample (3)), “I was raped by my cadet mentor. I was in a filled training program called “global engagement”” (with first sentence as abstract and second one as orientation, sample (4)).

<sup>329</sup> The titles of the shows’ editions usually denote the central or ‘macro’ topic dealt with in that edition. Each of the invited guests usually contributes to the central topic by an individual sub-topic that is in accordance with the central topic of the day.

enter the private sphere via television consumption. Since speakers are always personally deeply involved in both types of communicative action – they participate in the social conflict and they retell a personal experience – these actions also constantly entail speakers' high emotional involvement.

### **(3) Extent of speech regulation**

As argued in chapter 5.2, depending on their degree of formalization via institutional regulations institutions can effectively regulate institution-specific discourse that takes place within the institutional frame with respect to a pre-determination of appropriate communicative actions and their order in that discourse. This is a fundamental difference to everyday conversation where topic choice is generally free and which, as Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) have illustrated, is a local management system where turns at talk are characteristically not determined in advance but managed locally on a turn-by-turn basis via a specific mechanism of techniques for next speaker selection. Everyday conversation thus reveals a relative freedom of verbal action in this respect that is characteristically absent in institutional talk.

When we take a look at the extent of speech regulation within television's daytime talk show format we find that the institution television here behaves as other institutions with respect to pre-determination of appropriate communicative actions as such while at the same time it behaves fundamentally differently with respect to how linguistic realization of these topics actually proceeds. Clearly, as argued in connection with the news format, the production of talk within the media always involves more or less strict processes of institutional pre-planning. Accordingly, topic choice in the daytime talk show format is not arbitrary but generally follows the conception of the show (e.g. controversial, confessional) with an underlying aim of entertainment and, doing so, it is concretely determined in institutional pre-production processes within relevant editorial offices. These topics are illustrated in the title of each show's daily edition (e.g. *Maury*, 02/23/2004: *I'm devastated...I heard you cheated with over 50 women!* *Britt – Der Talk um eins*, 01/16/2004: *Lügner: Heute fliegt Deine Affäre auf!*). They form the edition's conversational frame and hence they determine the range of appropriate communicative actions within the institutional speech situation, namely in this case those that are exclusively concerned with cheating on another person.

While the discourse topics underlying the talk show talk and hence also the range of appropriate communicative actions within the institutional frame is subject to institutional pre-determination, the concrete linguistic realization of these topics is characteristically not defined in advance. That is, although the talk show talk is generally governed by interview style which involves a clear attribution of communicative actions to interviewer and interviewee – question posed by the host (as agent) and answer given by the guest(s) (as client(s)) – large parts of discourse within the daytime talk show proceed via local

management as in everyday conversation (cf. speech samples 1 - 3 below). It is here that the institution television significantly deviates from the features of institutional talk.

Why is there local management? Firstly, this is simply a matter of the number of guests within the institutional speech situation. Daytime talk shows characteristically feature several guests that are together on stage contributing to the edition's discourse topic. Hence all guests are potential interlocutors. That is, the simple fact that they are located together in the same speech situation naturally increases the possibility for local management of speaker turns among the guests engaging in the same topic which makes all potential addressees. Secondly, this is also a matter of the character, i.e. the conception, of a particular show. Since many of the shows featuring private topics are controversial in character they are based on the confrontation between different guests with opposing viewpoints. This aspect effectively triggers the spontaneous occurrence of comments made by one or more guests on the subjectively evaluated intolerable behavior of one or more other guests. In those shows that are confessional in character, a guest's revelation of social misbehavior often leads to conflict talk – the verbal and sometimes physical (e.g. *Jerry Springer*) execution of social conflicts on stage. Thirdly, what is important especially in this connection and what is probably the most significant reason for the occurrence of local management is the high personal involvement of the guests on stage into what is being discussed. High personal involvement includes high emotionality and this emotionality naturally fosters the occurrence of affective talk and hence also of conflict talk. Emotionality implies the speaker's spontaneous and unrestricted expression of emotions; emotionality is when speakers give vent to their feelings. Emotionality hence is an effective mechanism whereby local management is likely to occur.

Local management in the shows is generally twofold in character. On the one hand, two persons carrying out a conflict on stage engage in dyadic conversation that breaks up the basic interview structure between host (interviewer) and guest(s) (interviewee(s)). For example, in *Jerry Springer* a first guest is introduced by the host Jerry Springer and the following verbal discourse is characterized by question-answer sequences that elucidate the background of the conflict. With the introduction by the host of the second guest and his/her appearance on stage the interview structure gives way to the locally managed execution of the verbal conflict between the two guests that typically ends in physical execution of the conflict. (In the show, the conflicting parties are usually joined by additional guests engaging in the conflict. Structurally, the basic interview structure is repeatedly broken up by the guests' conflict talk consisting in sequences of local management. In fact we could even say that the show's structural conception is that of the guests' conflict talk that is occasionally broken up by inserted interview sequences!)<sup>330</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Cf. the appendix which presents the structural conception of one of the *Jerry Springer* shows investigated here according to featured sequences of communicative actions.

The following is an example of local management in *Jerry Springer* preceded by question-answer-sequences between the host Jerry Springer and his first guest Tara:

*Jerry Springer*

Date: 12/10/2003

Topic: *I'm sleeping with my stepfather*

JS = Jerry Springer  
T = Tara  
Ta = Tammy

**Contextual information:** existing conflict between mother (Tammy) and daughter (Tara). The relationship between both is unstable. The daughter is sleeping with her stepfather.

- 1 T: Well, *I've* been sleeping with my stepfather about *three* and a half months now ((studio audience  
2 boos)) (..) *a:nd* (..)  
3 JS: Why? How did *that* start and *why*?  
4 T: Well, I *never* knew my *mum* my whole life. I'm *twenty* years old and she's been in not my life all  
5 the time (.)  
6 JS: Yes.  
7 T: And I finally reacquainted with her like *four* months ago. (.)  
8 JS: Yeah.  
9 T: And I just always had a thing for older men. And they have been married for a *year* and have a  
10 child together, I have a little sister that's *three*. (.)  
11 JS: Yeah.  
12 T: But I would just always walk around the house, half *naked* *a:nd* never wear any *bra* and apparently  
13 he *liked* it.  
14 JS: Well (..) ((studio audience laughs)) *dha:::* ((more laughter, applause)) (..) ok but you know (.) it's  
15 your mother and he's *married* to her, did you feel a little bit *bad* about that?  
16 T: *No*, not at *all*. Like (.) *I* don't consider her my mother. Like my whole life, (.)  
17 JS: Yeah.  
18 T: she would call me on my *birthday*, (.)  
19 JS: Yeah.  
20 T: and like Tammy o:h I'm gonna come get you I'm gonna come get you and *never* show up. She  
21 *never* did anything. She *carried* me for nine months, *dumped* me off when I was *two* to live with  
22 my *grandparents* for the rest of my life, she's *never* done *anything* for me an' [((unintelligible))  
23 JS: [ Why did you get  
24 back into her life then?  
25 T: *I* thought I want to have a *relationship* with her but I realized she's still the same person, she's still a  
26 *drunk*, she's a *slut*. She has five kids with four different *guys*.  
27 JS: Yeah (.) Here she *is*, here's Tammy. ((applause))  
28 Ta: (..) *I* am your *mōther*. (.) *Why* would you *do* this to me?  
29 T: ((fast)) You are *nō:t* my *mōther*. How can you even say you're my *mō:im* when you used to call me  
30 *all* the *tīme*. You *dumped* me off when I was *two*. You have *ōther* kids to take *care* [of.  
31 Ta: [ I dumped you  
32 off when you were two Tara bec [ause *I* *loved* you.  
33 T: [ You *are* a *slut*.  
34 Ta: [ *I* am a *slut*?  
35 T: [ You'r a *slut*.  
36 Ta: [ I am *married*.  
37 T: [ Yer a *drunk*.  
38 Ta: I'm [married with a little *girl*▲ by this *guy*. And I'm taking ca [re of my own kids and I finally=  
39 T: [ You'r a *drunk* ((unintelligible)) [ ((unintelligible))  
40 =grew up in my life gave birth when I was *seventeen*. [ And *you* could just take him to *be:d*?  
41 T: [ Well you know what? You dumped *me* (.)  
42 and now it's time for me to dump *you*.  
43 Ta: Sounds that *you* are the *slut*. I thought you were better than *tha:t*▲((applause)) (..)

44 Ta: I thought you were a really good person. How could you do this? Don't ya know he's your  
45 stepfather? How about your little sister you love so much and straight? You don't care about her  
46 or your brothers?  
47 T: I do care about her but you don't care about me obviously. Look what you did to me. [You=  
48 Ta: [ Why::?▲((begins to cry)) [ No::  
49 =dumped me off when I was two. You never called me in my whole life. You don't know  
50 anything. You don't know when I start my period, when I lost my virginity,=  
51 Ta: =Did you ever call ((bleep))  
52 T: ((unintelligible, bleep))  
53 Ta: Did you ever call me? You [ had a phone number.  
54 T: [ ((unintelligible)) You're my mother, you're supposed to call me.  
55 Ta: O:h I was supposed to call up 'n se excuse me can I talk to Tara? Wanna [ know if she started her =  
56 T: [ I am your daughter.  
57 =period. Do you think they would have told me?  
58 T: Maybe if you would have spent more time with me then you wouldn't have to call and ask  
59 questions you wouldn't know.  
60 Ta: Tara, I wrote you ten page letters and I [ phoned you and you never returned my phone [ calls.  
61 T: [ You're still the same person. [ Now=  
62 =you want me in your life [ ((unintelligible))  
63 Ta: [ The hell I am.  
64 T: What you did.=  
65 Ta: =I don't want you in my life [ you're a bad-boned slut.  
66 T: [ You're out to the bars▲ and I'm watching my brothers and sisters.  
67 Ta: Yeah, watchin' your brothers and sisters, sleepin' with your stepfather, not watchin' your brothers  
and sisters, slut.  
68 T: It's about time you learned somethin'.  
69 Ta: Yeah? Yeah. I'm sure it is Tara. It's about time that I learned that you're out of my life. (.) You  
70 know what, when we get home the ((bleep)) is out [ and you stay out of my life. Go back to your=  
71 T: [ Yes, you're right ((unintelligible)) and you=  
72 =((unintelligible))  
73 =money anyway.  
74 Ta: That you stole you bitch 'cause you don't keep a jo:b.  
((studio audience boos))  
...

Speech sample 1: Local management between two guests in *Jerry Springer*

Tara and Tammy's verbal (and physical) argument is an apt example of typical conflict talk characterizing the *Jerry Springer Show*. When we take a look at the conversational excerpt we find that the high personal (and therefore emotional) involvement of the conflicting parties into the discourse topic is indeed reflected in their overall use of language which is, on the one hand, highly subjective in nature characteristically featuring the expression of speakers' internal states and evaluation of other-speaker behavior. This centrally involves the application of affective language – the use of lexical elements that express the speaker's underlying emotional involvement (cf. factor (2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style, sections (b) and (f) on word choice and linguistic modality).

The example also illustrates that the present emotionality, on the other hand, is a factor that not only triggers local management of speaker turns between Tara and her mother Tammy – without Jerry Springer intervening – but also leads to frequent overlapping talk in those

conversational sequences that are locally managed by the conflicting guests. The occurrence of overlaps here also means a conversational spontaneity that is characteristically absent in those parts of the institutional discourse that feature question-answer sequences by Jerry Springer and a guest (cf. speech sample 2). When we take a look at the instances of simultaneous talk within speech sample 1 we see that the verbal management of a social conflict on stage entails the conflicting parties' fight for the floor – the current right to speak in conversation. That is, neither Tara nor Tammy is willing to give up the floor. They continue speaking simultaneously without acknowledgement of relevant transition relevance places. (In the transcript this aspect results into several instances of talk that are unintelligible).

The following speech sample 2 from *Jerry Springer* is a sequence of question-answer pairs between the host (Jerry Springer) and his guest (Nicky) that again features affective language by the guest (“she’s a skank,” “she’s number *one*”) reflecting an underlying personal and emotional involvement (cf. sections (b) and (f) in the discussion of factor (2)) but it characteristically lacks the high degree of emotionality (and resulting frequent simultaneous talk) that accompanies the conflict talk in speech sample (1). (Hence there is no additional underlining).

*Jerry Springer*

Date: 12/09/2003

Topic: *Love...Hillbilly style*

JS = Jerry Springer

N = Nicky (guest)

**Contextual information:** The host Jerry Springer welcomes the audience, introduces them to the topic of the day and interviews his first guest Nicky who was left by her boyfriend eight months ago.

- 1 JS: Hey, welcome to the show.▲My guests today say that their lovers need to lay their cards on the table  
2 and make some decisions in their relationships. Please meet Nicky. She's here to confront the  
3 woman who has turned her relationship into a disaster. Nicky, what's goin' on?  
4 N: Well Jerry, I've been with Scott for six and a half years until eight months ago (.) a:nd the skank  
5 terrors came between me and him and she's managed to turn him completely against his family, his  
6 friends, even all of his kids. We have a total of five kids. Fro- uh two from me and two- uh three  
7 from his ((bleep)).  
8 JS: And you're taking care of all the kids?  
9 N: No, just two of 'em. [Our two daughters. [ ((unintelligible))  
10 JS: [ Just the two, ok. [ And you been together for eight years?  
11 JS: Ok. (.) you been together eight years you said?  
12 N: No, six and a ha:lf.  
13 JS: Six and a half years, I'm sorry. Ok. No:w (.) how did this u:h other woman- you said she's a skank?  
14 N: She's a skank.= ((studio audience laughs))  
15 JS: =Oh. (.) [ u::hm.  
16 N: [ She's number one.  
17 JS: How long has she been a skank? No, a:h, so ah (.) how long has she been with ah your your  
18 boyfriend?  
19 N: About eight months now.  
20 JS: How did that happen?  
21 N: She was a:h datin' a friend of ours ah who lives in ((bleep)). And (.) he couldn't make his mind up  
22 between her and his ((bleep)) has a kid with 'im.  
23 JS: Yeah.  
24 N: And (.) since he couldn't make his mind up he dropped her off on our door and we nicely said you  
25 can crash here for a couple of nights and,  
26 JS: ((unintelligible)) did she crash.  
27 N: and then she end up- oh ye:a:h, (.) and then she end up datin' ((bleep)) for (.) well five- six- five  
28 months, almost five months now. And then (.) she end up movin' in with him into our house 'cause  
29 she's- they both [ came to the,  
30 JS: [ Ok, she moved in to your place?  
31 N: Yeah, they moved in with us (.) with her boyfriend which was ((bleep)). A:nd the thing is that (.) he  
32 couldn't get it through his head that she was cheatin' on him with my man.  
33 JS: O:h, so she and her boyfriend are living in your house and she is sleeping with your boyfriend now  
34 for at last /  
35 N: They kept running off and /  
36 JS: How did you find out that this is goin' on?  
37 N: I had a funny feelin' about what was goin' on because / every-  
38 JS: Did you ever catch him?  
...

Speech sample 2: The absence of local management in *Jerry Springer* in question-answer sequences between host and guest

In the investigated shows local management furthermore occurs when several guests are on stage as potential addressees within the same speech situation. As previously mentioned, the presence of several guests together on stage naturally increases the possibility of local management. The institutional speech situation thus can be that of a multiparty conversation managed locally on a turn by turn basis in which all speakers are potential addressees. In correspondence with the turn-taking rules of everyday conversation (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) next speaker selection can proceed via a guest's spontaneous self-selection e.g. to provide a comment on another guest's subjectively evaluated intolerable behavior thus deviating from the basic interview style that attributes questions to the host and reserves answers for guests.

The following is a conversational excerpt from *Ricki* that illustrates the occurrence of local management also between three guests on stage.

*Ricki*

Date: 12/08/2003

Topic: *You can't trust your mate*

R = Ricki Lake  
T = Tim (guest)  
Te = Teneka (guest, girlfriend of T)  
Re = Renita (guest, friend of Te)

**Contextual information:** Teneka's friend Renita suspects Teneka's boyfriend Tim to having cheated on her.

1 R: Our guests today have taken a *tough* stand. They suspect someone they love has been cheated on and  
2 they want to see the *cheater nailed* once and for all with our lie detector test. We've already heard  
3 from Renita and her cousin Teneka. Now it's time for *Tim* to do some talkin'. Tim, come on *out*.

((Tim enters stage, studio audience boos))

4 R: *E::y*. Hi *Ti:m*▲(.) We need- We're dying to hear your story. What's your sight of things? (.) [Those=  
5 T: [ Well,=  
6 =first of all  
7 = *boots* were *yours*, weren't they?  
8 T: Well, the *boots* were of some *friend* of mine. You know, [she was the *ex*.  
9 Te: | ((unintelligible))  
10 Re: | Yeah, whatever Tim, ] [whatever Tim.=  
11 R: [ An *ex*, An *ex* ]  
12 T: [ The *ex*, yeah.  
13 R: =She a *baby mama* *too*?=  
14 Te: =You're *ri::ght*.  
15 T: No, she *ain't* no *baby mama*.=  
16 R: =Okay.  
17 T: You know what I'm sayin', she somebody I was datin' before her (.) you know. (.) And ah she came  
18 over you know what I'm sayin' to: ((unintelligible)) you know (.) I told the *truth*.  
19 R: So what was she doin' with her *boots* off at four in the morning in your *house*? ((applause)) (.)  
20 T: I mean you know, (..) [((unintelligible))  
21 R: [ And if she *is* *friendly* enough to be with her *boots* off in your house at four in  
22 the morning, why wasn't she doin' *your* *laundry* instead of your *girl* doin' it? ((applause)) (.)  
23 T: You got a *point*, you got a *point*. (?)  
24 R: Instead of *that* Tim, you do your *own* *laundry*.=  
25 T: =*True*, *true*, *true*. (.) I mean you know I'm saying it's like you know it's *two sides* to everything  
26 you know what I'm saying but I mean I /  
27 R: Have you been *cheating* on her? (.)  
28 T: I mean *I* been *doin'* some things (.) *I* been *doin'* some things.=  
29 Te: =Some things.  
30 T: [ I hold *out*  
31 Te: [ Some things like *what*?  
32 T: I hold *out* [((unintelligible)) ]  
33 Te: [ Some things like *what*?]  
34 T: *I- I- I* here /  
35 Te: Some things like *what*?  
36 T: *I* here to *say*- no, hold on baby. [ *I* here to *say* ] *I* here to *say* you know what I'm saying =  
37 Te: [ Now hold on my *foot*.]

38 T: =I'm not saying anythin' than that 'cause I'm not you know what I'm saying there's some things I  
 39 did and some things that she need to just leave *alone* because that ain't *happen*, you know what I'm  
 40 saying 'cause *that's* what I'm here for.  
 41 R: Ok, but the girl with the *boots*, that- *that happened*?  
 42 T: *That happened*, you know what I'm saying because she came over that *day* and we are *talkin'* and  
 43 she was like, well (.) /  
 44 Te: *We are?* I didn't *conversate* with her.  
 45 T: You *did*. Yes you *did*.  
 46 Te: *Whe:n?*  
 47 T: When we sit in the front row you was like what you *doin'* over here? Was you [over here?  
 48 Te: [But that was *after*=  
 49 =the fact. That was *after*.  
 50 T: But we still *talked* about that.  
 51 Te: Oh my *Jesus*.  
 52 T: We still- [we're-  
 53 Re: [I don't remember y'all con- I don't remember y'all ever *conversatin'* about it. I heard  
 54 that [((unintelligible)).]  
 55 Te: [((unintelligible)]  
 56 T: [No, we talk- ] Me and her *talk* and the girl was over to Ashley. She *asked* her and she  
 57 was like was those your *boots*? And she was like *yeah*, and she was like was you *over* here? And  
 58 she was like *yeah* I was *over* here. And being (.) you know that's all. To *me*: you know what I'm  
 59 saying *that's* like (.)  
 60 R: Teneka, is that *acceptable* to you?  
 61 Te: *No*. (.)  
 62 R: Do you realize by *staying* with him (.) and by just getting' all *mad* and then gettin' *over* it, that is  
 63 sending a signal to *him* that that is acceptable to you and that *he* can do that *again* to you.  
 ((applause))  
 ...

Speech sample 3: Local management between three guests in Ricki

In speech sample 3 we find that the basic question-answer interview structure between the host Ricki Lake and a particular guest repeatedly features inserted instances of local management between the guests on stage involving either two or all three of the guests (cf. lines 29 – 40 and 44 – 52 for two-party talk; lines 53 – 59 for three-party talk). Also here local management between the conflicting parties via the spontaneous application of comments expresses their personal and emotional involvement into the conversational topic and again we find frequent instances of overlapping talk as overt expressions of an underlying emotionality. The following is a schematic illustration of this speech sample's overall discourse structure as determined by both interview style *and* local management:

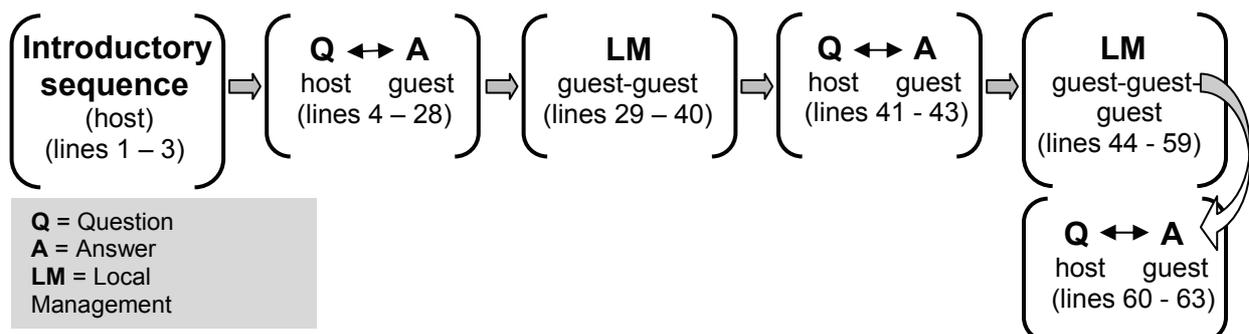


Figure 10: The discourse structure of speech sample 3 illustrating inserted instances of local management

To sum up we can say that language use in the daytime talk show format is indeed characterized by a relative freedom of verbal action in so far as the general possibility for local management is concerned. It is in this respect that discourse within the daytime talk show is similar to, though not the same as, everyday conversation.<sup>331</sup> A restriction of verbal action consequently does only partially take place. That is, the institution television strictly pre-determines relevant discourse topics *as such* and hence defines appropriate communicative actions to be applied within the institutional frame but it characteristically refrains from *completely* determining in advance the *order* of appropriate communicative actions within the discourse. As we have seen by means of the previous speech samples, the question-answer sequences between host and guest(s) with a clear attribution of communicative actions to either host (=question) or guest(s) (= answer) can be split up via inserted sequences of talk in which guests manage speaker turns locally as in everyday conversation based on their high personal and consequently emotional involvement into the discourse topic. Put differently, since social conflicts are presented publicly on stage the emotional involvement is correspondingly high among all conflicting parties. As a consequence, the basic interview structure is often disturbed via instances of self-selection by the guests managing great parts of verbal discourse locally. Daytime talk show discourse therefore is highly regulated with regard to topic choice but characteristically less so with regard to overall verbal realization of chosen topics. We may consequently refer to this as a global planning, i.e. one that pre-determines discourse topics but characteristically does not strictly pre-specify the verbal course of conversation in the discussion of these topics which is thus characterized by individually differing successions of question-answer pairs and spontaneously applied locally managed parts of conversation.<sup>332</sup> The application of affective language frequently structured via a system of local management can thus be determined to constitute one of the significant discourse structural elements of daytime talk show talk and local management may be seen as an effective means desired by the institution television whereby the sensational character of talk on stage and eventually also its entertaining effect can be increased, i.e. in favor of the amusement of both a studio and television audience.

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<sup>331</sup> Everyday conversation is exclusively locally managed by its participants. Talk show discourse, however, although it leaves space for the occurrence of locally managed parts of discourse, is after all fundamentally based on interview style (cf. the talk show interview in section (h) on speech events and activities) as discourse determining speech event.

<sup>332</sup> In contrast to everyday conversation, both topic choice and verbal treatment of chosen topics in daytime talk show discourse are fundamentally also governed by the overarching temporal restrictions affecting the broadcast editions of each show. It is in this sense only that we can speak of a true strict pre-organization of topics and their verbal realization: a necessary one that fits both into the temporal course of a show, i.e. mostly sixty minutes. (See also factor (6) on place and time of conversation).

#### **(4) Predominant type of politeness: role-oriented versus person-oriented politeness**

The concrete determination of a predominant type of conversational politeness existent in daytime talk show discourse as based on the shows considered here in fact implies two aspects. Firstly, politeness is a matter of the overall conception of a particular show. As previously argued, individual shows within one and the same format of the daytime talk show can be confrontational, confessional or, with the discussion of public topics, also informative in character. We can assume that this will also have an impact on the self-image of the host as agent of the institution television representing the show since (s)he has to provide for its confrontational, confessional or informative character. Clearly, we can expect that an individual show's overall conception in this respect will influence the ways in which an agent sees himself/herself in his/her role as a host. That is, while this role centrally implies the elicitation of topically relevant speech it also involves the host's (ascribed) institutional identity, depending on the conception of the show, as a mediator, advisor, annotator, evaluator etc. or 'social distance keeper' who elicits information while centrally refraining from mediating, commenting, evaluating. We can then interpret such communicative behaviour as important part of the host's institutional role and hence as part of role-oriented politeness that, being so, fundamentally only simulates personal interest in the addressee (e.g. via giving advice). For example, at the end of speech sample 3 (local management between three guests in *Ricki*) the host Ricki Lake comments on Teneka's behavior – one of her guests – with "Do you realize by staying with him (.) and by just gettin' all mad and then gettin' over it, that is sending a signal to him that that is acceptable to you and that he can do that again to you." This is followed by the approval of the present studio audience which, together with the host, forms a community with a consensual public opinion. (For this aspect see the conception of the show in the appendix). Evaluating a guest's behavior in the way presented here the host illustrates an effective mechanism for sanctioning assumed non-consensual behaviour and she is supported in this action by the studio audience. In contrast to this, apart from eliciting information the host's missing communicative intervention in this respect is mirrored in *Jerry Springer* where, for the sake of confrontation, verbal fights on stage characteristically culminate in physical violence. (Only at the end of an edition Jerry Springer closes the show with his 'final thought' commenting on the show's topic).

We should be careful, however, to attest the host the application of a type of interpersonal politeness only that is exclusively role-oriented in character. Any host can of course potentially step out of his or her institutional role and demonstrate real interest in the addressee. That is, (s)he may actually apply person-oriented politeness. It can be difficult therefore at times to distinguish whether a host shows role-oriented detachment via the application of role-oriented politeness (that also involves judging, evaluating, commenting) or person-oriented involvement via true person-oriented politeness that turns the host's identity away from that of an institutional agent towards that of a private person judging, evaluating or commenting. When we take a look at *Oprah*, for example, we find that the host Oprah

Winfrey makes use of the inclusive 'we' in her communicative actions (e.g. 12/08/2003, topic: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*: "We are all just civilians but we think that's pretty sick," "I think it's very difficult for civilians, those of us and for the millions who are watching to understand why you wouldn't tell immediately," "So what I'm trying to get everybody else to understand, those of us who have not been a part of the military, is that you're in a system that says that you are inferior to your superiors, that you do what your superiors say no matter what"). What Oprah does here is presenting herself not in the first place as the celebrity host of her show – that she definitely is – but rather predominantly as a part of the audience with which she shares a consensual public opinion: "We are all just civilians but we think that's pretty sick." Her evaluation thus may be the simple expression of her institutional role as host of the show in case of which it would constitute an instance of role-oriented politeness but it will also be, and maybe predominantly so considering the character of the discourse topic, that of the private person Oprah Winfrey, who shows empathy and verbalizes a public opinion shared with the audience. In this case, we may speak of true person-oriented politeness reflecting personal interest in the addressee. This example shows that it can be difficult sometimes to determine whether a host's communicative actions are truly those of a host whose institutional role incorporates institutional empathy as part of a role-oriented politeness system or whether the host momentarily steps out of his/her ascribed role and 'acts' as a private person showing empathy as an expression of a real interest in the addressee. Probably we may attest Oprah a little bit of both.

The discussion of the type of interpersonal politeness in the daytime talk show format here so far has only included the person of the host but not the guests. Thus, secondly, when we talk about different types of politeness in the format we necessarily have to do so also with respect to different types of interlocutors within the institutional frame. As we have seen it can be difficult to speak of role-oriented politeness alone on the part of the host. When we consider the guests, however, a clear determination of a type of politeness they use is much easier to do. Characteristically the typical guest of a daytime talk show is an ordinary person that is as a rule inexperienced in the media context and that consequently 'acts' as a private person on stage. This is all the more the case since we are dealing here with the (public) execution of social conflicts. That is, what happens here is a simple transfer of a conflict occurring within the private sphere (of private matters) to the public sphere (of television production). The nature of the social relations between the conflicting parties in the private sphere is therefore also valid in the public sphere. Clearly, the presence and execution of a social conflict necessarily implies the high personal and emotional involvement of the conflicting parties into the conflict matter and this also means that a general interest in the addressee is given. Acting as a private person on stage with high personal and emotional involvement and interest in the addressee thus involves the application of person-oriented politeness.

Though this type of politeness is formally the basic politeness system that is relevant for the guests, it should be noted that the use of affective language here in connection with private discourse topics is characterized by the use of politeness strategies that do generally not compensate for the threat to face. That is, the conflicting guests frequently apply highly face-threatening acts without any redressive action (cf. speech sample 1 (local management between two guests in *Jerry Springer*): “you’re a drunk,” “you’re a slut,” which correspond to Brown’s and Levinson’s (1987) bald on record strategy).<sup>333</sup>

To sum up, we can say that when we intend to define the character of interpersonal politeness applied within the institutional frame of the daytime talk show we have to do so with respect to the two types of interlocutor, namely host and guest(s). Since a host can potentially step out of his/her institutional role and ‘act’ as a private person, we need to acknowledge both the application of role-oriented politeness *and* person-oriented politeness on the part of the host. Since a guest always ‘acts’ as a private person who is personally involved in a social conflict and transfers this conflict for public discussion into the public sphere of the television studio we can determine the use of person-oriented politeness on the part of the guests. All in all, it is hard to speak of a general predominance of person-oriented politeness or role-oriented politeness for the format *as such*. We can only do so when we consider the types of interlocutors in isolation and, in fact, we can only do so with certainty with regard to the guests but characteristically not with respect to the host. The character of interpersonal politeness used within the daytime talk show format as such therefore lies somewhere between (role-based) detachment and (person-oriented) involvement.

However, speaking about politeness in the institutional frame, what should not be forgotten in this connection is the assumed reduced interactional need for doing face work in the televised speech situation. As argued in chapter 5.2.2.1, this is based on the temporal restrictions of broadcast conversations which are part of a show that is itself limited in duration. Together with the often present unfamiliarity of the guests in talk show talk this was stated as an aspect that fosters the interactional irrelevance of the three sociological variables of power, distance, and rate of imposition within television talk that are of so fundamental significance in everyday speech situations. The assumed result was described as a *simulation* only within the institutional frame of television of face work applied in everyday conversation. Consequently, we may more appropriately refer to this as ‘simulated person-oriented politeness’. Since, however, the social relations between the guests in the daytime talk show are indeed characterized by their high degree of familiarity and since it has been argued here that they simply transfer everyday conversation to the public sphere of television production – and therefore also the person-oriented type of politeness that characterizes

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<sup>333</sup> See in this connection factor (2) (*appropriate speech style: use of formal or informal speech style*), section (f) on the degree of conversational redress.

everyday conversation – we may understandably question the formerly stated simulation of face work and instead argue for a true person-oriented politeness in this case.

**(5) Access to the speech situation: public or non-public**

Here the same is valid as has been stated in chapter 7.1.1 in connection with the German speaker-based public service news format *Tagesschau*. Accordingly, since mass communication is public communication the institutional speech situation of television can be accessed by everybody who is in possession of relevant technology for receiving the audio-visual television signal. It is therefore a public speech situation with almost unrestricted, i.e. public, access.

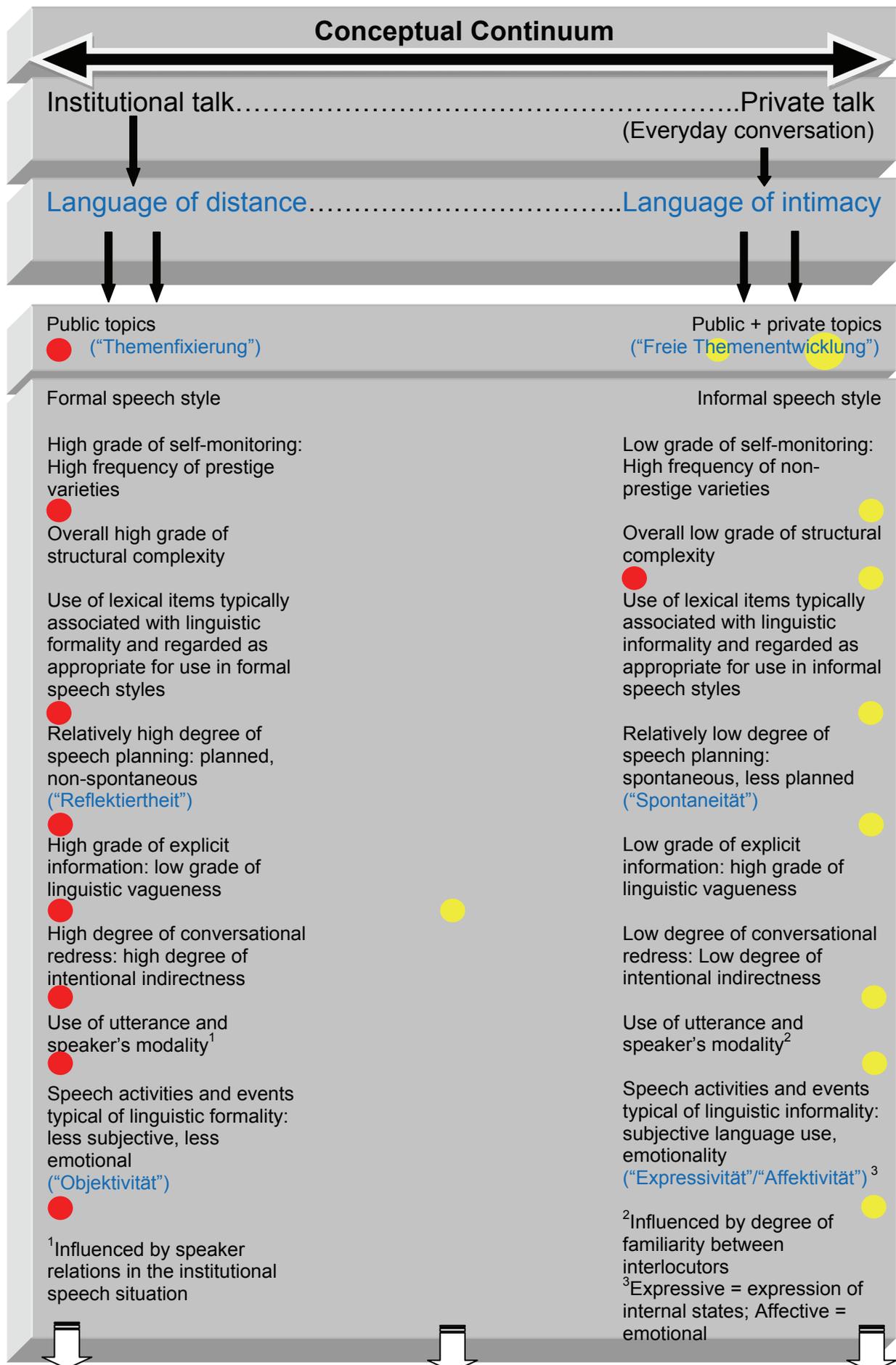
**(6) Place and time of conversation: fixed or free**

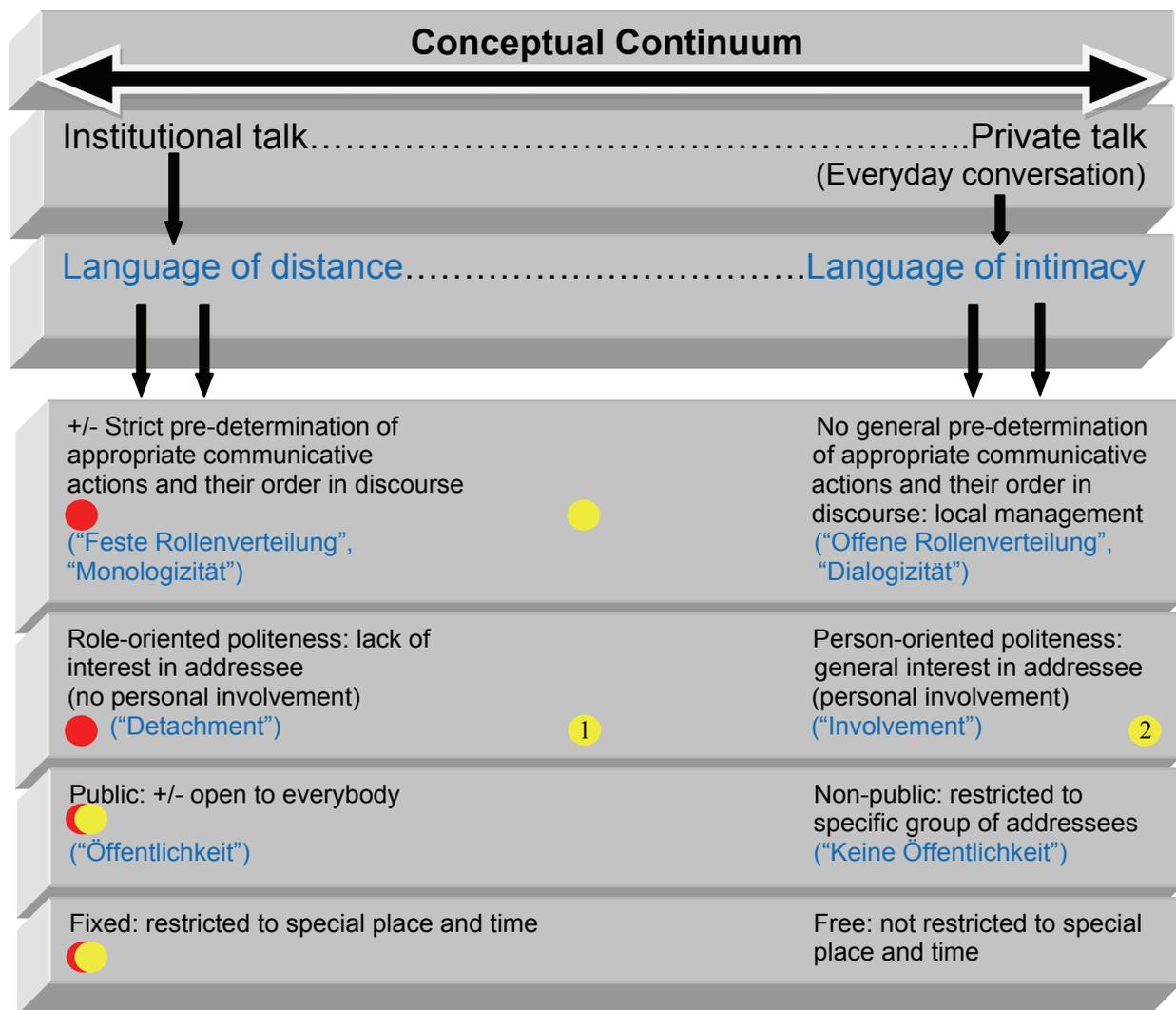
As previously argued, all television formats discussed here are produced within the institutional setting of the television studio and all programming on television is generally subject to scheduling. Hence the daytime talk shows and their featured talk are both restricted to a special place and a special time.

Especially the temporal limitations are far reaching since they do not only define the starting point of a particular show but also its end point – usually after some sixty minutes – and although the daytime talk show format characteristically reveals a relative freedom as concerns the overall verbal realization of discourse topics, this concrete realization is necessarily also determined by these temporal restrictions that require a pre-organization of both discourse topics and the ways of dealing with these topics via question-answer sequences (including local management), i.e. one that appropriately fits these sequences into the temporal course of a particular show. In short, such necessary temporal restrictions constitute a significant factor to be considered in the structuring of daytime talk show talk by the host. Clearly, given a show's duration of about sixty minutes, a show's discourse topic of the day and several featured connected sub-topics (relating to individual problems of different guests) are all subject to this time limit of sixty minutes. Consequently, each discussion about a sub-topic is necessarily limited in duration by the institution so that all topics appropriately fit into this limit. To give an example, the appendix contains a transcript of the structural conception of a selected edition of *Jerry Springer* according to featured sequences of contents, i.e. communicative actions. The transcript includes time references for each type of defined communicative action. Transcripts such as this one are indeed highly useful in giving an insight into the overall (temporal and conceptional) structure of a show with respect to show-specific types of communicative actions and their order in daytime talk show discourse. Accordingly, the presented edition of *Jerry Springer* contains two sub-topics altogether including various guests. The discussion of each sub-topic is characterized by a general

introduction on the part of the host to the topic of the day, which is followed by the introduction and interview of the first guest. With the introduction of a second (and possibly third and fourth) guest the verbal conflict is set in motion and characteristically the verbal fight culminates into a physical fight. The discussion of a sub-topic is interrupted several times by commercial blocks which are followed by a re-introduction into the topic via the host.

When we transfer the results to the conceptual continuum (table 16 below) we see that a particular constellation of the factors that determine institutional and private talk emerges for the daytime talk show (as it did for the news format), which can be said to define the program- or format-specific factor profile for language use. Table 16 presents the results for the daytime talk show format in combination with those for the speaker-based news format.





● = *Tagesschau* (German speaker-based public service news format)

1 = host

2 = guests

Table 16: The factor profile of the daytime talk show format within the conceptual continuum of language<sup>334</sup>

Table 16 aptly illustrates that the particular constellation of the factors defining institutional and private talk for the daytime talk show format results into a factor profile that, with a few exceptions, characterizes the format's language use as private talk (everyday conversation) and hence as language of intimacy – a form of language that we would expect to be restricted to the private sphere (of private matters) as it is in conflict with the demands of the institutional frame for institutional talk. Since the majority of the discourse topics featured in the format is private/intimate in character – indicated in the table via a large yellow dot – we can speak of a correspondence between the nature of the topic and the nature of the language that is used to discuss this topic: an informal speech style as a part of an overall language of

<sup>334</sup> The yellow dots indicate the constellation of each factor as previously determined.

intimacy.<sup>335</sup> In other words, as the public sphere becomes the place of intimate conversation this intimacy is expressed in the characteristics of private talk (everyday conversation) as represented in table 16. This language of intimacy within the institutional frame thus is in perfect correspondence with the previously stated characteristics of function-specific talk for the fulfillment of television's entertainment function that can be ascribed to the format (cf. table 8).

The few exceptions indicated in the table that deviate from ultimate private talk are explainable with (1) the particularities of the institutional speech situation of television, i.e. the impact that television as an institution has on the verbal discourse that takes place within the institutional frame. This impact is the same in all the social institutions referred to here, i.e. including those of law, health and education. Accordingly, the last two factors in the table – *Access to the speech situation* and *Place and time of conversation* – show a constellation that defines these clearly as institutional talk in this respect: potentially unrestricted access to the speech situation and relevant restriction of verbal discourse to a special place (i.e. the institutional frame) and a special time.

In this category also belongs the middle position defined for the factor *extent of speech regulation*. In accordance to other institutions television shows a strict pre-determination of appropriate communicative actions, i.e. discourse topics, but, characteristically, within daytime talk show talk it also allows a relative freedom of communicative actions as concerns the overall verbal realization of these topics in so far as the basic interview structure can be split up by inserted sequences of talk that are locally managed by the guests without intervention by the host. As a consequence, verbal discourse here can be said to be necessarily globally planned which also involves a restriction to a special place and time of discourse.

It should be noted, though, in this connection that Koch's and Oesterreicher's (1986) determination of a free development of conversational topics ("freie Themenentwicklung") might be misleading here. Clearly, we can speak of a free development of discourse topics here in so far as daytime talk show discourse *basically* allows the occurrence of both public *and* private topics and is not restricted exclusively to either one or the other – although it prefers private topics as we have seen. Nevertheless, the *concrete* choice between a public and a private topic is always regulated in advance by the institution and is not determined by the interlocutors. Hence what we find here with regard to actual topic choice, both public and private, is a relevant pre-determination, i.e. a fixation, of a discourse topic which corresponds to Koch's and Oesterreicher's (1986) "Themenfixierung,"

(2) The remaining two middle positions in the table are explainable with the distinction of the interactants in the institutional frame into agents (= hosts) and clients (= guests) of the

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<sup>335</sup> Cf. in this connection also Fromm (1999: 35) mentioning that the private/intimate character of conversational topics makes the occurrence of private talk, i.e. a language of intimacy, expectable as it is the familiar form of communication about such topics in the private sphere. Thus, private talk also characterizes the treatment of private topics in the public sphere of television production.

institution television. The adoption of these communicative roles is accompanied by particular rights and obligations in talk that can have an influence on the actual form of discourse, i.e. here with respect to *Information structure* and *Predominant type of politeness*. Accordingly, as concerns the latter, while the clients cannot do anything else than to apply person-oriented politeness, the agents can step out of their institutional role and move from applying role-oriented politeness to person-oriented politeness and, doing so, turn from role-based detachment to person-oriented involvement. As concerns the former, the middle position here is based (a) on the nature of the social relations between the guests whose familiarity constitutes a factor that effectively reduces the formal need for the presentation of elaborate background information. Since this, however, collides with the communicative demands of a large television audience towards more explicit presentation of such information, it is the task of the host in interaction to elicit more elaborate background information in case it is not provided by the guests. Yet, as the speech samples have shown, the guests indeed do provide detailed illustrations of their personal experiences in the question-answer sequences with the host. This results in the above determined middle position for information structure on the part of the guests. On the part of the host this middle position results from (b) his/her institutional role centrally involving an audience orientation in interaction, i.e. a responsibility for a shared information status between guests and audience. This role entails the elicitation of elaborate background information whenever necessary but it centrally does not imply such informational explicitness by the hosts themselves.

In fact, the overall informality of this language of intimacy is also reflected in the construction of the shows' titles for featured discourse topics. Indeed, for the titles of German daytime talk shows Fromm (1999: 90) mentions a realization that is modeled on informal everyday conversation. Accordingly, the titles of the investigated shows characteristically feature colloquial expressions such as "Deutsche Frauen bringen es nicht" (*Die Oliver Geissen Show*, 01/19/04), "fremdgepoppt" (*Britt*, 12/17/03) and "Flittchen: Lass die Finger von meinem Kerl" (*Britt*, 01/09/2004). The underlying emotionality that characterizes the daytime talk show talk between the guests is, in fact, also an important element already in the construction of the show's titles that frequently include affective elements and exclamation marks (e.g. "Schockierende Wahrheiten" (*Britt*, 01/20/04), "Furchtbare Erkenntnis" (*Franklin*, 01/13/04), "Skandalös!" (*Franklin*, 01/14/04), "Mistkerl!" (*Franklin*, 12/22/03), "Abgebrühtes Dreckstück!" (*Franklin*, 01/20/04)).

The significance of using such linguistic informality in the construction of daytime talk shows lies in the creation of a linguistic familiarity in so far as it effectively simulates the language use within the private sphere and, doing so, also corresponds to the linguistic experiences of a large and disperse audience.

The discussion of predominantly private topics via the application of informal everyday conversation in the form illustrated above, in fact, also contributes to an overall informal character of the institutional speech situation. This perceptual informality is indeed also reflected in a concrete informality of the studio setting. That is, often the studio decoration in the daytime talk show establishes a characteristic living-room atmosphere. As Semeria (1999: 97) points out with reference to the US-American shows, “[d]ie meisten US-Daytime Talkshows symbolisieren und reproduzieren [...] den reinen und intimsten Ort der Kommunikation: die Wohnung, das Zuhause und dabei oft den zentralsten Raum – das Wohnzimmer.“ Such a creation of a familiar social environment (where the guests shall feel comfortable) is then also likely to promote the use of an informal and familiar style of speech on the part of the guests.

It is because of their characteristic establishment of linguistic (and social) informality that daytime talk shows are referred to by Fromm (1999: 19) as “intimate format.” The significance of this lies in the fact that as contemporary television and thus the public sphere becomes the location of private talk originally restricted to the private sphere – i.e. as intimacy is made public – a blurring occurs of traditional boundaries drawn between the public and the private sphere (cf. part IV *Summary and conclusion*).

The linguistic analysis so far has concentrated on the two institutional functions of information and entertainment and the ways in which these functions are dealt with linguistically in two television formats each associated either with information (= news) or entertainment (= daytime talk show). As we have seen, the resulting format-specific language profiles for the two investigated formats (closely) correspond to the previously stated function-specific language of institutional talk and private talk as appropriate forms of talk for the fulfillment of information and entertainment respectively.

In an attempt to localize the possibility of in-between forms of language use ranging somewhere between institutional talk and private talk the next chapter switches to an investigation of the magazine format. The underlying idea in this connection is that because of the high structural versatility of the format with regard to communicative function, featured contents and their form of presentation, the language use of the format *as a whole* will change with an individual magazine type (e.g. news magazine versus political magazine) and with the communicative function that can be ascribed to this type. Especially interesting cases are those types of magazines that lack a clear predominant information or entertainment focus and can be determined to lie somewhere in-between in their institutional function (e.g. tabloid magazines). It can be assumed that this in-between status of communicative function (‘infotainment’) will also be reflected in language use. That is, it will be accompanied by a corresponding in-between status form of language lying somewhere between institutional talk and private talk (cf. table 8). Clearly, the investigative focus in the next chapter is on analyzing the language use of a television format that is conceptually open for fulfillment of

different institutional functions and it is interesting to see which impact this openness has on language use within the format as such.

Chapter 7.3 *The magazine format* begins with a short introduction to the use of the term ‘magazine’ and the magazine format on television including relevant literature. Chapter 7.3.1 *The magazine format and the concept of the presenter* then shortly focuses on the person of the presenter. As institutional agent the role of the presenter in the magazine format within the broadcast media is important for a linguistic analysis in so far as it does not only involve the presence of a person that is typically identified with a particular magazine but also centrally entails an interpretive function which fundamentally invites subjective language use. This is followed in chapter 7.3.2 *Magazine language* by a linguistic analysis of several broadcast editions of selected programs within particular types of German magazine formats which constitute the basis for an illustration of the language use of each magazine type in particular and, we will see whether this is possible, also of the format in general.

### 7.3 The magazine format

The term ‘magazine’ is used within the print media where it now refers to a particular type of journal (e.g. the German news magazines *Spiegel* and *Focus* or the U.S.-American *Time Magazine*). It has been adopted by the broadcast media – first by radio and later by television – to refer to a magazine ‘format’ that is on the content level typically characterised by permitting the succession of a diversity of different topics – an aspect that establishes the conceptual openness of the format (cf. Wegener, 2001: 54ff.; Kreuzer, 1988: 9).<sup>336</sup>

Within the television format labelled ‘magazine’ this conceptual openness specifically relates to (1) institutional function – information or entertainment or a relevant mixture of both: ‘infotainment’ – and to (2) featured contents – i.e. type of news/topic (= hard news, soft news, spot news) – and their form of presentation (= featured journalistic text types). Clearly, the televisual magazine format as such is fundamentally free both in its choice of topics (including their arrangement) and in the concrete audio-visual realization of these topics. The format’s conceptual openness in this respect on the content and presentational level is prominently referred to as “Baukastenprinzip” (cf. Wegener, 2001: 55f.; Kreuzer, 1988: 10), a term that denotes the ‘construction’ of the magazine from single and thematically highly diverse modules, i.e. topics, which can be freely arranged within the program:

Die innere Struktur der Magazinsendung ist durch verschiedene, voneinander unabhängige Beiträge bestimmt, die sich insgesamt zu einem Ganzen zusammenfügen. Die

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<sup>336</sup> The electronic magazine originates in 1930s American radio (cf. Wegener, 2001: 60f.). The first German television magazines were introduced in the early 1960s and are directly modelled on Anglo-American versions (cf. Kreuzer, 1988: 9 and Hicketier, 1988: 97).

Gestaltungsformen der Beiträge sind dabei vielfältig und können ein großes Repertoire an Darstellungsformen umfassen. So befinden sich unter den Bausteinen der Magazine nahezu alle journalistischen Form-Elemente, wie Nachricht, Kommentar, Glosse, Interview, Statement, Trickfilm oder Reportage. (Wegener, 2001: 55)

In a similar manner Kreuzer (1988: 10) argues in this connection with respect to communicative function: “Ihr [i.e. of magazine programs] ‚Format‘ dient als ‚Baukasten‘ für persuasive<sup>337</sup> und informierende wie für bildende und unterhaltende Sendeteile.“ In fact, this implies that the above mentioned conceptual openness on the (macro-) level of institutional function is actually twofold in character. That is, on the one hand, it refers to the predominant communicative function that can be ascribed to an individual magazine type *per se* within the superordinate magazine format (such as information for the news magazine). However, on the other hand, as indicated by Kreuzer (1988), it also relates on a (micro-) level of thematic construction to a mixture of topics with different communicative intention within *one and the same* magazine type. Kreuzer’s (1988: 10) statement “[d]ie vorgeschriebenen Funktionen des öffentlich-rechtlichen Fernsehens – Information, Bildung, Unterhaltung – lassen sich im Magazin teils vermischen, teils direkt verbinden“ hence can mean ‘infotainment’ both on the level of institutional function and of thematic construction within one magazine type via a succession of topics varying in their communicative intention.<sup>338</sup> This can be problematic for a description of a magazine type’s overall communicative intention because a given institutional function of information, for example, does not *per se* exclude the occurrence of topics with a stronger entertainment focus (e.g. soft news, especially also in news shows which themselves are located somewhere between ‘information’ and ‘infotainment’).<sup>339</sup>

Kreuzer (1988: 10) somewhat restricts the format’s conceptual openness speaking of a thematic openness that is framed by stable elements (“thematische Offenheit bei festem äußerem Rahmen”). Such elements characteristically include a magazine’s visual style (e.g. with reference to its title design) and title theme. In this category of stable elements also belongs the person of the presenter – the second characteristic feature next to conceptual openness that establishes the magazine format. The presenter is important in the magazine in so far as (s)he formally provides for the unity of a program otherwise characterized by the succession of heterogeneous topics and forms of presentation. In other words, the conceptual openness of the format can lead to overall structural heterogeneity on the thematic and presentational level and therefore the presenter is typically accredited with a structuring function (see chapter 7.3.1) whereby topics are connected thus turning the diffuse mass of

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<sup>337</sup> Typically associated with advertising it can be determined here as referring to the text type ‘commentary’.

<sup>338</sup> This first aspect of underlying institutional function is characteristically not entailed in relevant descriptions of the format’s conceptual openness in the literature referred to here. Since the superordinate format is indeed not limited to the fulfillment of a particular institutional function only the flexibility of the format in this respect is considered as an important structural aspect that adds to the format’s general conceptual openness on the thematic and presentational level.

<sup>339</sup> For the ‘news show’ see Wittwen (1995).

different topics into a structurally unified entity (cf. Burger, 2005: 307, 311; Wegener, 2001: 54 and 57ff.).

The conceptual openness of the magazine format is a significant factor for why we find so many contents presented on German television in magazine style: e.g. news magazines, political magazines, economic magazines, health magazines, tabloid magazines and other subgenres of the format.<sup>340</sup>

It is in its conceptual openness that the magazine format fundamentally differs from the other television formats studied here. That is, firstly, both the (speaker-based) news format and the daytime talk show format can be determined to fulfill predominantly *one* institutional function only, namely that of information or entertainment respectively.

Secondly, while the magazine format *per se* potentially allows a *range* of different types of contents and a *range* of different journalistic forms for presentation of these contents, the studied speaker-based news format, for example, characteristically restricts this potential range to the occurrence of particular types of contents (i.e. preference for hard and spot news) and particular forms of presentation only (e.g. general absence of news interviews and commentaries; preference for broadcast reports and news films). Put more negatively, the format's conceptual openness in this respect means that it is indeed problematic to clearly determine which content type and presentation form the magazine format as a whole prefers (e.g. in the way that the speaker-based news format does prefer hard and spot news realized as broadcast reports and news films). A relevant preference structure can only be defined for individual magazine types viewed in isolation.<sup>341</sup>

Thirdly, although the host in the daytime talk show format can also be seen as the 'presenter' of the show, the concept of the 'presenter' in the magazine format involves a clear attribution of particular communicative functions in the institutional discourse taking place within the institutional frame that does not exist for the host of the (daytime) talk show. In short, while the functions of the presenter in the magazine format have been described in relevant literature on the topic (e.g. Burger, 2005) those of the host in the daytime talk show have not been determined in similar and concrete detail.

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<sup>340</sup> Cf. Kreuzer (1988: 10): "[D]as Magazin [ist eine] Fernsehgattung, die sich nach Urhebern (ZDF-Magazin), Distribution (Morgenmagazin), Adressaten (Jugend-Magazin), Inhalten (Buch-Magazin) und Funktionen (Information, Lebenshilfe, Unterhaltung usw.) klassifizieren läßt, so daß sich im Prinzip ‚zahllose‘ Subgenres ausdifferenzieren ließen." (See in this connection also Wegener, 2001: 55f.).

<sup>341</sup> It should be noted though that this is valid only in comparison with the given limitation to the investigated speaker-based news format which itself is only a particular type of news format that exists among other news formats such as the news magazine to be investigated in chapter 7.3.2.1. (For a classification of different news formats see chapter 7.1; see also Burger, 2005: 265ff.). Viewed as a whole, also the news format can therefore be expected to show a similar conceptual openness with respect to featured contents and their form of presentation. Yet, this does not refer to its dominating communicative function which is that of information.

The linguistic analysis to be performed in chapter 7.3.2 concentrates on particular German magazine types. Interestingly, research into the television format ‘magazine’ reveals the existence of German literature on the topic referring to the German format and individual types of German television magazines but there is no Anglo-American literature on the topic (at least known to the author), i.e. with reference to an explicit, particular British or American televisual magazine format, although the format’s origins formally lie in 1950s American television (cf. Wegener, 2001: 61).<sup>342</sup> The term ‘magazine’ seems to be restricted here to the particular type of a print medium (‘journal’) but it does generally not imply the audiovisual mass medium television.

Comparatively recent accounts of the televisual magazine format consider (the characteristics and specific developments within) individual magazine types such as political magazines (Wegener, 2001; Hoffmann, 1990), political and cultural magazines (Kreuzer and Schumacher, 1988) and, more generally with a focus on communicative function, entertaining magazines (Rosenstein, 1995). Wegener (2001) and Kreuzer (in Kreuzer/Schumacher, 1988) furthermore provide a short general introduction into the characteristics of the magazine format as such.<sup>343</sup> This introduction also relates to what has been referred to here as the format’s conceptual openness on the content and presentational level. A short introduction to the news magazine within television and especially to the concept of the presenter in the magazine format is provided in Burger’s (2005) more general account of media language. (See chapter 9.1.2 and 9.2.1 on news magazines and chapter 10 on the concept of the presenter). The concept of the presenter is also the focus of interest in the following chapter.

### 7.3.1 The magazine format and the concept of the presenter

As institutional agent the person of the presenter<sup>344</sup> is one of the central characteristics that establish the magazine format. Burger (2005) highlights the importance of the presenter in the magazine describing three central communicative functions that are associated with the institutional role of the ‘presenter’ in ‘presenting’ relevant topics. Accordingly, these functions incorporate:

- (1) **A structuring function** (“Die strukturierende Funktion”)
- (2) **An interpretive function** (“Die interpretierende Funktion”)
- (3) **A para-social function** (“Die parasoziale Funktion”)

(cf. Burger, 2005: 311f.)

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<sup>342</sup> Among the earliest magazines on German television are the political magazines *Panorama* (since 1961) and *Monitor* (since 1965). See Wegener (2001: 62ff.) for a detailed history of these magazines.

<sup>343</sup> Cf. Wegener (2001), chapter 3.1 and Kreuzer (1988: 9ff.).

<sup>344</sup> The term corresponds to the German term ‘Moderator’. Hence the English ‘presenter’ presenting topics becomes the German ‘Moderator der moderiert’, i.e. engaging in a linguistic activity of topic presentation (= ‘Moderation’). (For ‘Moderation’ see also Wegener, 2001: 57ff.).

(1) Necessitated by the format's conceptual openness and its resulting structural heterogeneity, the **structuring function**, as introduced above, concerns any action performed by the presenter towards organizing the variety of different topics featured in a magazine program whereby (s)he provides for the unity of these topics and hence also of the program as a whole. Relevant structural actions include (a) pre-structuring (of topics/a following topic), i.e. providing first, orientating information, (b) connection between the topics featured in a program and (c) termination of featured topics.<sup>345</sup> We may add to this the action of providing relevant background information to presented topics (probably also as a part of pre-structuring activities).<sup>346</sup>

This function also mirrors the communicator's orientation towards the recipients (and their communicative needs) in view of a format characterized by the heterogeneity of featured topics. Indeed the presenter's formal organization of these topics via the mentioned structural activities also expresses a para-social function (see (3) below) that involves the presenter as a stable reference point within the format providing for the unity of the diverse topics.

(2) The **interpretive function** addresses the presenter's function of interpreting events and actions of those reported on in the magazine type. For an analysis of agent language especially this function is of significance in so far as the action of interpreting also potentially involves the presenter's action of evaluating (cf. Burger, 2005: 311) and evaluation means the application of speaker's modality – the expression of subjective speaker perspective – which in turn means a movement away from institutional objectivity in the presentation of contents. It is interesting to see whether and if so how intensely the individual magazine types investigated do actually make use of interpretive action and speaker's modality respectively on the part of the presenter. As Burger (2005: 311) points out, “[e]s hängt vom Typ der Sendung ab, wie stark diese Funktion ausgeprägt ist bzw. sein darf,” stating a difference in this connection between news magazines and political magazines. Be that as it may, it seems that with a function of interpretation that is explicitly ascribed to the presenter in the magazine speaker's modality is integrated as an important component in the institutional role of the presenter.

(3) The **para-social function** denotes the presenter's status as a reference point for the audience within a magazine program that is fundamentally characterized by a number of heterogeneous – and possibly confusing and unclear – topics and various presentational

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<sup>345</sup> Cf. Burger (2005: 311): “Vorstrukturierung, Verknüpfung der Elemente der Sendung und Beendigung gehören zu diesen strukturellen Funktionen.“

<sup>346</sup> See in this connection Wegener (2001: 57): “Die Aufgabe der Moderation bzw. des Moderators liegt darin, den Zuschauer durch die Sendung zu führen, den formalen Ablauf der Sendung durch überleitende Elemente zwischen disparaten Sendeteilen zu strukturieren und schließlich durch An- und Abmoderation einzelner Beiträge sowie der gesamten Sendung Anfangs- und Schlußpunkte zu markieren. Der Moderator ist somit für einen reibungslosen Sendeablauf verantwortlich.“ This involves what is referred to as the presenter's narrative function (ibid.): “Er strukturiert, ordnet, liefert Orientierungen, leitet ein und schließt ab.“ (For the presenter as narrator see also Burger, 2005).

forms. It is via the person of the presenter and his/her para-social actions that the magazine becomes ‘personalized’ and is indeed often identified with the familiar person of the presenter. As Burger (2005: 312) argues, the magazine “wird nicht nur durch die textlinguistischen Leistungen [cf. structuring function] eines (beliebigen) Moderators zusammengehalten, sondern auch – und in vielen Magazinen primär – durch die individuelle Persönlichkeit gerade dieses Moderators, der sich auf seine ganz spezifische Weise an sein Publikum wendet.“ As a consequence, the presenter becomes a ‘linking element’ between the social spheres of television production and television consumption: “Der Moderator wird damit zur verbindenden Instanz zwischen Sender, Sendung, Elementen der Sendung, Sendungsumfeld und Publikum“ (Burger, 2005: 312). In American television the presenter is therefore also typically referred to as ‘anchor’ (cf. terms such as ‘news anchor’, ‘anchorman’) who locates, i.e. ‘anchors’, events that are reported on in time and space thereby providing for stability and order in a format characterized by a seemingly diffuse accumulation of largely heterogeneous topics and journalistic forms of presentation. The anchor is the stable, recurring element (of identification) in a format of constantly changing topics. Accordingly, journalistic-oriented descriptions of the presenter state:

Zweifelsfrei ist der Moderator in Magazin-Sendungen bis heute unverzichtbar. Er stellt den personalen Bezug zwischen Programm und Publikum dar: Durch ihn kommt eine Sendung ins Haus; er ist das erkennbare, wiederkehrende „Menschliche“ in einer Sendung voll unterschiedlicher Informationen, wechselnder Bilder und Beiträge. Er tritt mit dem Zuschauer zwar nicht in einen Dialog, aber er wird dennoch wie ein angenehmer Gesprächspartner empfunden oder wie ein ungebetener Gast geschmäht. (Buchwald in Schult/Buchholz, 2002: 206)<sup>347</sup>

Correspondingly, the para-social function is among other things typically expressed in the presenter’s linguistic actions of directly addressing the audience (e.g. greeting, saying goodbye in closing sections, including the use of the German 2<sup>nd</sup> person personal pronoun “Sie” – the negatively polite, deference-oriented and social distancing equivalent, i.e. honorific, of 2<sup>nd</sup> person singular “Du” and 2<sup>nd</sup> person plural “Ihr” – and its versions “Ihrer” (genitive), “Ihnen” (dative) and “Sie” (accusative)).<sup>348</sup>

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<sup>347</sup> See in this connection also Schumacher (in Kreuzer/Schumacher, 1988: 131).

<sup>348</sup> For more aspects of para-social interaction see, for example, Sielker (in Kreuzer/Schumacher, 1988). By means of a concrete example of a cultural magazine Sielker determines the components of para-social interaction. Based on the uses-and-gratifications approach in media (effects) research, he defines para-social interaction as one type among other forms of entertaining gratifications to be achieved by the action of presentation (“Gratifikationen der Moderation”). Relevant components of para-social interaction include, e.g. already any appearance of presenter, reporters or team-members including interviews featuring the presence of reporters on the screen; above mentioned direct addressing of the audience which also refers to, for example, advice giving or rhetorical questions; talking about own experiences; expressing own attitudes (via irony, smiling to oneself); relating to a shared communicative history between communicator and audience (referring to contents of previous editions: “Vielleicht erinnern Sie sich...?”). (Cf. Sielker, 1988: 168f.).

### 7.3.2 Magazine language

In accordance with the news and daytime talk show format what follows here is a linguistic analysis of agent language as featured in the magazine format. The linguistic analysis involves an investigation of several broadcast editions of specific programs that can be assigned to a particular type of German magazine format – news, political and tabloid. These are the basis for an illustration of the language use of each considered sub-format in particular and, ideally, of the magazine format in general. The linguistic analysis of magazine language covers 11 broadcast editions altogether of selected programs within 3 selected magazine types:<sup>349</sup>

Country	Magazine type (Program)	Channel	Type of Broadcaster	Date of Broadcast	Length
Germany	<b>News</b> ( <i>Tagesthemen</i> )	Das Erste	Public Service	18.07. – 22.07.2010	18.07.: (18 min. 17 sec.); 19.07.: (27 min. 57 sec.); 20.07.: (27 min. 34 sec.); 21.07.: (29 min. 25 sec.); 22.07.: (28 min. 32 sec.) ∅ (analysed editions): 26min. 29sec.
Germany	<b>Political</b> ( <i>Panorama</i> )	Das Erste	Public Service	01.07 and 22.07.2010	01.07.: (28min. 28sec.); 22.07.: (28min. 52sec.);

<sup>349</sup> For complete bibliographic detail see the bibliography.

	(Monitor)			17.06. and 08.07.2010	17.06.: (29min. 29sec.); 08.07.: (28min. 27sec.)
Germany	<b>Tabloid</b> (Brisant)	Das Erste	Public Service	07.06. and 08.06.2010	07.06.: 39min. 19sec.); 08.06.: 39min. 38sec.)

Table 17: The selected magazine types and programs used for linguistic analysis

In order to make possible a comparison of agent language use between the speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* and its corresponding news magazine *Tagesthemen*, which is also broadcast daily, the linguistic investigation within the sub-format of the news magazine here also considers five broadcast editions.

In the following all sub-formats are again studied according to the style determining factors of institutional and private talk which will be considered in chronological order once again with the underlying aim to construct a final (sub-)format-specific factor profile of language use. Each of the following four sub-chapters also starts with a short introduction into the particular program that is analyzed representing the individual type of German magazine format.

### 7.3.2.1 The news magazine

The German news magazine *Tagesthemen*<sup>350</sup> is the daily supplement to the public-service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau*. Each edition is broadcast later in the evening after the prime time edition of the speaker-based news format and all editions are characteristically longer than the corresponding news program. (The average length of the *Tagesschau* is 14min. 43sec. compared to 26min. 29sec. for the news magazine). Consequently, the format of the news magazine offers space for more detailed news coverage especially also with respect to more detailed background information. Since the news magazine, as the speaker-based program, is a sub-format of the superordinate news format (cf. Burger, 2005; see also chapter 7.1), we can ascribe to it a predominant information orientation. That is, also the news magazine can be determined to fulfill the institutional function of information and we can

<sup>350</sup> *Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste.

assume the same objectivity (in language use) that is assumed – and has been illustrated – for the speaker-based program here. Whether the demanded neutral stance of the institutional agent is actually reflected in his/her language use will be investigated in the following.

Assuming objectivity it is interesting to see how the presenter makes use of his/her interpretive function which, as argued in chapter 7.3.1, centrally involves the expression of speaker stance. Since such expression is in conflict with the demands towards institutional objectivity in news coverage including language use we may hypothesize the absence or at least a significant reduction by the agent in the expression of subjective viewpoint. That is, we may expect that the execution of the interpretive function in this respect will be minimized in favor of objective and complete news coverage and that interpretation will fundamentally only pertain to the presenter's actions of providing more detailed background information that enables the audience to interpret, i.e. to understand, events and news agent actions as featured in the news. Indeed, Burger (2005: 311) points out that different types of magazines vary in the extent to which they make use of the interpretive function generally associated with the presenter in the magazine: "Es hängt vom Typ der Sendung ab, wie stark diese Funktion ausgeprägt ist bzw. sein darf." As concerns the news magazine, a reduction in the interpretive function as required by formal demands towards objectivity consequently also involves an absence/significant reduction of criticism performed by the presenter since criticism is always an expression of speaker perspective. In this aspect the news magazine differs from the political magazine which not only informs in more detail but can also uncover and, doing so, fundamentally criticize poor conditions within the social and political system – an aspect that contradicts the news magazine's formal restriction to objective information:

Trotz einer gewissen Subjektivität, die toleriert ist, sollen sie [i.e. the presenters in the news magazine] sich mit Meinungen zurückhalten. Es ist nicht ihre Aufgabe, ihr Engagement hervorzukehren, Zensuren zu verteilen [...]. Sachlichkeit und Nüchternheit der Präsentation sind auch hier geboten. Demgegenüber zeigt der Moderator in politischen Magazinen sein Engagement, er bezieht Stellung [...]. (Buchwald in Schult/Buchholz, 2002: 208/209).<sup>351</sup>

The central question thus is: do we find the formal requirement towards (linguistic) objectivity reflected in the presenter's language use within the news magazine as it was found to be reflected in the studied speaker-based news format? The following linguistic analysis will show whether this is the case or not.

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<sup>351</sup> See in this connection also Burger (2005: 311f.) and Wegener (2001: 54). It should be noted that the conditions posed to the presenter's talk here are those as featured in journalistic handbooks defining appropriate journalistic work. The current author's own determination of the presenter's (linguistic) objectivity derives solely from the fulfillment of the information function, which has obvious linguistic consequences, but it has nothing to do with descriptions of 'proper' journalistic work.

**(1) Appropriate conversational topic: public topics versus private topics**

Table 18 illustrates all topics featured in the five studied editions of the news magazine *Tagesthemen*. Leaving sports aside, there are 54 topics altogether (compared to 41 topics featured in the speaker-based news format *Tagesschau*). In accordance with the speaker-based news format, the majority of these topics in the selected editions of the news magazine covers political, economic and social matters (47 topics = 87 %). Thus, they are ‘hard news’. There are two topics (= 3.7 %) that can be categorized as ‘spot news’ concerned with crime and catastrophes: ‘Irak: Tote bei Anschlägen’ (18.07.) and ‘Italien: Großeinsatz gegen Mafiaorganisation’ (21.07). These topics are restricted to the inserted blocks of news in brief. Furthermore, each investigated edition features one topic that can be determined as ‘soft news’ with human interest character (five topics = 9.2 %): the cultural event ‘Autobahn-Umnutzung’ (18.07.), ‘Hitzewelle in Deutschland’ (19.07.), ‘Löw verlängert Vertrag’ (20.07.), ‘Sommeraufschwung’ (21.07.; economic topic with soft news character) and ‘Film-Preview: Eichmanns Ende’ (22.07.). Interestingly, in each edition the soft news topic always ends the program.

The totality of these topics pertaining to Germany and abroad can be defined as being of public interest and consequently they are ‘public topics’ appropriate for occurrence in the public sphere. As in the speaker-based news format, this is especially also valid for the large amount of domestic topics concerned with political, economic and social matters (36 topics = 66.6 %) which are of high public interest because they ultimately consider the workings of the political, economic and social system as a whole. Hence they are of significance for (the well-being of) society as a whole.

Date of broadcast	Topics*
18.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rücktritt von Beust</li> <li>• Volksentscheid Hamburg</li> <li>• Rücktrittswelle CDU</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zollitsch: Umgang mit Missbrauchsfall</li> <li>• Merkel/Nasarbajew: Gespräche über wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit</li> <li>• Golf von Mexiko: Bohrloch weiterhin geschlossen</li> <li>• Irak: Tote bei Anschlägen</li> <li>• Internationale AIDS-Konferenz in Wien</li> <li>• 14. Etappe der Tour de France</li> <li>• (Broadcast report): Fecht-Europameisterschaften in Leipzig</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autobahn-Umnutzung (i.e. Volksfest auf dem Ruhrschnellweg)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[9 topics + 2 sports-topics]</b></p>

19.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hamburger Regierung</li> <li>• Führungskrise in der CDU</li> <li>• Bildungspolitik</li> <li>• Volksentscheide</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wirtschaft im Aufwärtstrend</li> <li>• Börsenkurse</li> <li>• Börsendaten</li> <li>• Kampf gegen Ölpest</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zentralrat der Juden</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Koblenz: Urteile gegen Terrorhelfer</li> <li>• Bill Clinton: Internationale AIDS-Konferenz in Wien</li> <li>• 15. Etappe der Tour de France</li> <li>• (Broadcast report): Fecht-Europameisterschaften in Leipzig</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitzewelle in Deutschland</li> </ul> <p><b>[12 topics + 2 sports-topics]</b></p>
20.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Afghanistan Konferenz</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beratung von Bankkunden</li> <li>• Britischer Premierminister: Antrittsbesuch bei Obama</li> <li>• Börsendaten</li> <li>• Börsenkurse</li> <li>• Beratungen über Pflanzen-Patente</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gesundheitspolitik</li> <li>• Gedenken NS-Widerstand</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online-Angebote der ARD</li> <li>• 16. Etappe der Tours de France</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Löw verlängert Vertrag</li> </ul> <p><b>[10 topics + 1 sports-topic]</b></p>
21.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sommerbilanz der Bundesregierung</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ramelow: Urteil zu Beobachtung durch Verfassungsschutz</li> <li>• Schröder: Rechtsanspruch auf Kinderbetreuung</li> <li>• Schäuble/Lagarde: Beratung über Euro und Schuldenkrise</li> <li>• Börsenkurse</li> <li>• Börsendaten</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kampf gegen Aids</li> <li>• Fusionspläne bei NPD-DVU</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missbrauchsvorwürfe nach Ferienlager</li> <li>• Zollitsch: Ermittlungen eingestellt</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schmerzensgeld für Hitzeopfer</li> <li>Italien: Großeinsatz gegen Mafiaorganisation</li> <li>Sommeraufschwung</li> </ul> <p>[13 topics]</p>
22.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backofen Bahn</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Kosovo: Internationaler Gerichtshof zu Unabhängigkeit</li> <li>Verdacht auf Steuerhinterziehung</li> <li>Börsendaten</li> <li>Börsenkurse</li> <li>FDP Baden-Württemberg</li> <li>UN-Ferienlager</li> </ul> <p><b>[Inserted news in brief]</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nach Misshandlungen in Ferienlager</li> <li>Haftstrafen wegen Brandanschlag auf Polizeiauto</li> <li>17. Etappe der Tours de France</li> <li>Film-Preview: Eichmanns Ende</li> </ul> <p>[10 topics + 1 sports topic]</p> <p>[Total: 54 topics excl. 6 sports-topics]</p>
	<p>*All topics are represented here as listed in the ARD-Archive:  <a href="http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2416.html">http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2416.html</a>  <a href="http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2418.html">http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2418.html</a>  <a href="http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2420.html">http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2420.html</a>  <a href="http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2422.html">http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2422.html</a>  <a href="http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2424.html">http://www.tagesschau.de/multimedia/sendung/tt2424.html</a></p> <p><u>Inserted news in brief:</u> All topics are represented as featured in informative captions. The topics of the news films, broadcast reports and speaker announcements with off-speaker are representations of the spoken content.</p>

Table 18: The topics featured in the five studied editions of the German news magazine *Tagesthemen*

The predominance of hard news and the classification of all featured topics into public topics are the two central respects in which the investigated speaker-based news format and the news magazine conform to each other. On closer inspection, however, the two types of news format significantly differ from each other in several other respects:

- (1) **Running time.** The five editions of the studied speaker-based news format have an average running time of 14min., 43sec. compared to an average running time of 26min., 29sec. for the five editions of the news magazine.
- (2) **Number of topics.** The five editions of the speaker-based news format altogether feature 41 topics compared to 54 topics for the five editions of the news magazine.

The greater number of topics formally results from the greater running time of the magazine. Characteristically, it can also be ascribed to the fact that each edition of the news magazine (except 18.07.) features two blocks of inserted news in brief which significantly increase the number of potential topics. (However, we may also see a tendency towards more detailed background information on featured topics as a factor that reduces the formal number of discussed topics in favor of more elaborate coverage of few topics only involving the use of different text types (see also (4) ).

(3) **Character of topics.** The five editions of the news magazine each feature a topic that can be defined as ‘soft news’. Except for one topic, the speaker-based news format does not feature ‘soft news’ content.

(4) **Range of journalistic text types.** All five prime time editions of the investigated speaker-based news format are restricted to three text types ‘broadcast report’, ‘news film’ and ‘speaker announcement’ which, in varying arrangement, establish its program-specific text type profile that immediately results from the communicative function of objective information that underlies the programming of the news format as such. That is, the studied traditional public-service speaker-based news format chooses from a range of possible text types those that are considered appropriate means for the objective information of the public.

When we take a look at the journalistic text types featured in the chosen editions of the news magazine we find that it makes use of a greater range of text types in news coverage than the speaker-based format. Clearly, the news magazine also includes ‘broadcast report’, ‘speaker announcement’ and ‘news film’ but it characteristically also features topic-based news interviews (with a correspondent or a news actor) and, always present, the opinion-based ‘commentary’ (performed by an external journalist or ‘expert’ respectively). Since the ‘commentary’ is a journalistic text type that involves the expression of subjective speaker perspective, it is understandably absent in the traditional speaker-based news format that restricts news coverage to objective information and doing so, as we have seen, applies institutional talk as appropriate means for performing this task. The occurrence of the ‘commentary’ in the news magazine is therefore interesting since the format also basically follows a predominant information function and the question arises whether we would expect this text type at all as its underlying subjectivity formally contradicts the task of transmitting objective information. (For more detailed discussion of this aspect see factor (2) on speech style, section (g) *linguistic modality*).

The higher range of text types in the news magazine may be formally related to the greater running time of the program which grants more space for more detailed background information which is thus provided via additional news interviews and also includes commentaries.

In the public service news magazine *Tagesthemen*, the different text types ‘broadcast report’, ‘speaker announcement’, ‘news film’, ‘news interview’ and ‘commentary’ together establish the format-specific text type profile by means of which it can be distinguished from the traditional public service speaker-based news format *Tagesschau* (cf. chapter 7.1.1).

Characteristically, the investigated German public service news magazine *Tagesthemen* features both a presenter with his/her associated institutional functions of structuring talk, interpreting events/actions and performing para-social interaction (chapter 7.3.1), and a news speaker reading out the news in inserted blocks of news in brief. Each edition (except 18.07.) is framed by (1) an opening section featuring a spoken intro and a signature tune which is followed by a topic overview and (2) a closing section featuring the presenter’s further program announcement. The topics are dealt with via the mentioned journalistic text types that are arranged in varying order across each edition.

Turning away from journalistic text types, let us take a look at the linguistic characteristics of this other type of public service news format starting with an account of the speech style.

## **(2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style**

Since the news magazine focused on here is characterized by the presence of two institutional agents – a presenter and a news speaker – both types of institutional representative have to be considered in an analysis of general language use by the agent within the format. For the news speaker in the news magazine, whose appearance is restricted to reading out the news in the inserted blocks of news in brief, apply the same conditions as they do for the news speaker in the speaker-based format simply because both belong to the same category of institutional agent whose role centrally involves an obligation towards (ultimate) institutional objectivity in the transmission of information. We should therefore expect to find the neutral stance of the news speaker in the studied speaker-based program reflected also in the language use of the news speaker in the magazine format that is at hand.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Indeed the inserted blocks of news in brief in the magazine format show the same visual style as in the speaker-based format (e.g. use of informative captions and distancing shots of the speaker) so that we may treat them actually as a micro-*Tagesschau* within a macro-format of the news magazine that is formally structured by a presenter. Consequently, we may then also assume a similar language use than in the speaker-based news format proper.

(a) Self-monitoring: high grade or low grade of self-monitoring

- **The news reader/speaker:**

As argued in chapter 7.1.1, the news speaker reads out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of format-specific journalistic types of text that are the product of diverse editorial work processes. The reading process, it was argued, not only limits conversational spontaneity but also demands the reader's full attention towards the act of reading. In connection with a broadcast of agent language to a disperse audience we can assume a comparatively high degree of self-monitoring performed by the news reader.

As in the speaker-based program, the passages of news in brief within the news magazine aptly reveal the speaker's self-monitoring also in (1) the existence of characteristic patterns of emphatic stress. Accordingly, in all investigated editions – apart from language-specific forms of normal word stress – those words that are considered important because they convey important information are usually specifically stressed for rhetorical reasons (e.g. to emphasize a fact including a time span, a number, a year specification etc. or the fact that something *was* or *was not* done, *is* or *is not* the case). Also here an example of the latter is the use of stressed “nicht” (e.g. T01\_TT\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: Lead-in [12:25 – 12:51]; T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: Lead-in [11:50 – 12:09], [13:12 – 13:33]). Furthermore, specifications of dates and numbers characteristically receive stress (e.g. T01: News film [13:39 – 14:01], news film [14:01 – 14:30]; T03\_TT\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: News film [9:03 – 9:26], [10:38 – 10:59]).

(2) The speaker's high degree of self-monitoring is also reflected in pronunciation. That is, in all inserted instances of news in brief the news speaker's pronunciation of words in the reading process is clear, comprehensible and standard in character; the phenomena of connected speech within spontaneous everyday conversation are missing. Accordingly, we do *not* find any contractions or reduction of forms but general use of prestige, i.e. standard, varieties (e.g. in case of “ist” [ɪst] and “nicht” [nɪçt]).<sup>353</sup>

- **The presenter:**

When we take a look at the presenter's language use we find that it is characterized, on the one hand, by the existence of monologic speech activities of reading out institutionally pre-produced language mostly in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports. On the other hand, as argued in the discussion of factor (1) above, the text-type profile of the news magazine typically involves the performance of news interviews either with correspondents or particular news actors. In this case, the presenter engages in a dialogic, i.e. interactive, speech event that potentially *allows* more space for linguistic spontaneity than the strict and limited process of reading out predetermined language and that at the same time also *requires* a higher degree of

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<sup>353</sup> For the significance of using prestige varieties in this connection see the discussion of self-monitoring by the news reader in chapter 7.1.1.

linguistic spontaneity as based on the demands of online production working towards interactive spontaneity. Consequently, any serious statements about the presenter's assumed grade of self-monitoring in the studied news magazine have to be made in consideration of either his/her performance of a non-interactive speech activity of reading out language (from a teleprompter) or participation as an interviewer within the interactive speech event of the news interview.

In case of the former we can assume the same comparatively high degree of self-monitoring that is stated here for the news reader since we are dealing with the same reading activity pertaining to institutionally pre-produced language. Accordingly, we find the same typical patterns of emphatic stress and, with some infrequent exceptions, the general absence of reduced and contracted forms in favor of standard phonetic varieties as based on the same underlying assumption of fulfilling a predominant institutional function of objective information.

In case of the latter, however, we can assume a reduction in self-monitoring performed by the presenter as influenced by interactive demands towards linguistic spontaneity in the news interview. As argued in the previous discussions of self-monitoring in this work, required conversational spontaneity in verbal interaction is a factor that significantly reduces the degree of conscious attention that can be paid to speech. Yet, strictly speaking, we have to consider (1) those news interviews characterized by the presenter as interviewer and a correspondent as interviewee where questions are presumably pre-determined and pre-arranged, i.e. agreed upon by interviewer and interviewee. In this case we may have a higher degree of self-monitoring (i.e. due to reading out pre-produced questions from the teleprompter) than in (2) those news interviews that are characterized by the presenter as interviewer and a particular news actor other than a correspondent as interviewee. Here, particular questions posed by the presenter are presumably also pre-determined and read out but characteristically the answers given by a news actor are also generally unforeseeable. That is, sometimes answers provided by news actors may be dysfunctional in so far as they only inappropriately relate to the presenter's question. In such cases the presenter can use his/her structuring function and repeat/reformulate the initially posed question in an attempt to redirect news actor speech and make it one that is functional for the current purpose. That means, the presenter's questions can also result spontaneously and directly in reaction to answers presented by news actors. This interactive spontaneity naturally implies the presenter's reduction in self-monitoring of his/her speech deviating from the act of reading out pre-produced questions. ((S)he can be determined to pay conscious attention though to the interviewee's speech as a requirement for being able to spontaneously react to given answers).

The potential uncertainty underlying presented answers is an aspect that distinguishes the news interview with a news actor from that with a correspondent. Those interviews with news actors are generally less planned, i.e. more spontaneous, in this respect.<sup>354</sup>

So much for the theory. Let us take a look at the news interviews to be found in the chosen editions of the news magazine and see whether we can say anything about the hypothesized grades of self-monitoring on the part of the presenter in the interview. T01\_TT\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010, [6:32 – 7:49] features a short news interview with a correspondent characterized by two presumably pre-arranged and read out questions posed by the presenter. T04 (21.07.), [3:44 – 7:43] and T05 (22.07.), [5:16 – 9:58] contain a news interview featuring a news actor. T04 aptly mirrors the participants' conversational spontaneity. Firstly, right in the beginning the presenter formally greets his interviewee which is reciprocated by the interviewee's greeting of the presenter via direct address. This in turn is commented by the presenter with a smile and a silent "n'kay" – a spontaneous reaction to a seemingly unusual direct addressing of the presenter via the news actor. Secondly, the presenter is interrupted once by his interviewee who provides a comment. The presenter spontaneously reacts to this comment via agreement followed by a reformulation of his original speech intention in formulating his next question. Both conversational contributions by the presenter are spontaneous reactions to directly preceding contributions by the news actor and as such they reflect a reduced grade of self-monitoring in the speech of the presenter who does not read out language but has to adapt to the demands of online production.

The presenter's reduced grade of self-monitoring in the course of the interview is furthermore expressed in pronunciation via the occurrence of (1) reduced phonetic varieties ("is" [ɪs], "ne" [ne], "n" [n], [ən], "jetz'" [jets], "hab'" [ha:b] for "ist" [ɪst], "eine" [aɪnə], "ein" [aɪn], "jetzt" [jetst], "habe" [ha:bə]; "dran" (colloquial form of "daran"); "was" (colloquial form of "etwas") in connection with "rauskommen" (colloquial for "herauskommen"),<sup>355</sup> "raushören" (colloquial for "heraus hören"). (2) Reduced self-monitoring is also visible in the existence of the contracted forms "gibt's" and "wir's." All these are rather informal phonetic varieties. (This presenter shows a slight tendency to use such informal phonetic varieties also in lead-ins (e.g. [12:49 – 13:29], [15:58 – 16:42], [28:56 – 29:25]), i.e. in those speech activities that otherwise are predominantly characterized by the presenter's use of standard varieties in the reading process as an expression of a comparatively high grade of self-monitoring).

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<sup>354</sup> A factor that has a significant influence on the difference between news interviews featuring correspondents and those featuring diverse news actors is constituted by different communicative aims of correspondent and news actor in the interview. Accordingly, the correspondent as institutional agent contributes to objective information of the audience while the news actor is not an agent of the institution and hence does not act on behalf of the institution but rather follows his/her own communicative aims and intentions in the course of the interview (e.g. self-presentation in the media). The communication of subjective aims and intentions is characteristically absent in correspondent interviews.

<sup>355</sup> Cf. "[...] da *kommt* manchmal *was raus* wo man seinen Wunsch doch nicht erfüllt bekommt."

T05 also reflects reduced self-monitoring on the part of the presenter via the same linguistic means of reduced phonetic varieties (“jetz” [jets], “nich” [niç], “was,” “ne,” “passiern” [pasi:ən], “ihrn” [i:an], “kom” [kom] (as informal varieties of “passieren” [pasi:rən] or [pasi:ren], “ihren” [i:ren], “kommen” [komen])). The speech sample does not contain contractions on the part of the presenter.

All reduced and contracted forms as used by the presenters in the speech samples are typical phenomena of connected speech in spontaneous verbal interaction. Consequently, with a few exceptions, they are characteristically missing in those instances where the presenter engages in the activity of reading-out pre-produced language.

To sum up, in describing relevant degrees of self-monitoring we have to distinguish between the language use of the presenter and that of the news reader/speaker as the two institutional agents characterizing the studied news magazine.

As concerns the news reader in the inserted blocks of news in brief, his/her language use can be determined to illustrate a high grade of self-monitoring as based on three aspects: (1) formally on the simple process of reading out language that has been pre-produced; (2) in more concrete terms on the existence of characteristic stress patterns; (3) on pronunciation patterns characterized by the use of standard phonetic varieties.

As concerns the presenter, his/her language use with respect to self-monitoring is text type dependent and can be defined to illustrate a middle position between a comparatively high grade of self-monitoring in monolog-oriented speech activities of reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of lead-ins – the verbal means reflecting self-monitoring correspond to those found for the news reader/speaker – and a reduced grade of self-monitoring in dialogic speech events constituted by news interviews with particular news actors. Verbal expressions of reduced self-monitoring are the use of informal phonetic varieties: contractions and reduction of forms.

(b) Structural complexity: assumed overall high grade or low grade of structural complexity

- **The news reader/speaker:**

In accordance with the news reader in the speaker-based format the language of the news reader in the news magazine shows a comparatively simple sentence structure that lacks the structural complexity resulting from (multiple) sub-ordination of clauses (e.g. via inserted relative clauses). That is, also here the coordination of clauses is generally preferred: parataxis instead of hypotaxis – a feature that Biber (2001) associates with reduced linguistic complexity.

Again, the predominant structure enhancing language features are typically those that are used by the news reader in order to denote either a source of reported information or to specify the identity of the persons that are reported on. Hence we find source attributions that accompany stated facts and that highlight the validity of these facts (e.g. T01: speaker announcement [13:12 – 13:39]: “nach Angaben von BP;” T03: lead-in [21:28 – 21:52]: “nach Auffassung der Rundfunkräte;” T04: lead-in [9:30 – 9:53]: “[n]ach Auffassung der Richter;” speaker announcement [10:58 – 11:22]: “[n]ach ihrem Zwischenbericht”).

Again, we also find attributive adjectives and appositional noun phrases as modifiers that specify in more detail the identity of the persons that are featured in the news. Relevant examples are: T01: news film [12:51 – 13:12]: “autoritär regierende[r] [Präsident] Nasarbajew;” T03: news film [9:03 – 9:26]: “[d]er neue britische Premierminister Cameron” for attributively used adjectives and T04: lead-in [9:30 – 9:53]: “[d]er Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow;” speaker announcement [24:18 – 24:49]: “[d]er [Vorsitzende] der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz Erzbischof Zollitsch“ for appositional constructions. The news actors are given explicit reference in this way. As argued in connection with the speaker-based format, we can relate the use of this strategy to Biber’s (2001) complexity dimension of *Structural Elaboration of Reference* that denotes the level of referential elaboration, i.e. the degree to which (the identity of) a particular referent is specified more closely. (According to Biber (2001) though what belongs into this category in the first place are several types of dependent clauses such as *wh*-relative clauses and *that*-relative clauses (cf. table 5). There are only a few such modifications: T02: news film [23:20 – 23:50] shows a referent modification via a relative clause corresponding to an English *wh*-relative clause: “Der Microsoft-Gründer Gates, *der eine gemeinnützige Stiftung leitet*, sprach sich für mehr Investitionen [...] aus.” Another such modification can be found in T04: speaker announcement [24:18 – 24:49]: “Der Vorwurf, als Personalreferent habe Zollitsch neunzehnhundertsiebenundachtzig die Anstellung eines Priesters mit verantwortet *der bereits Kinder missbraucht hatte*“ and in T05: speaker announcement [13:33 – 13:57]: “Die Süddeutsche Zeitung hatte berichtet die CD enthalte Daten deutscher Anleger *die insgesamt etwa ein halbe Milliarde Euro nach Liechtenstein geschafft hätten*“).

As in the speaker-based format, other types of dependent clauses are used by the news reader in the studied editions of the news magazine (e.g. frequent use of *that* complement clauses: T01: speaker announcement [13:12 – 13:39], T02: speaker announcement [22:56 – 23:20], news film [23:20 – 23:50], T03: lead-in [21:28 – 21:52], T04: news film [11:22 – 11:46], speaker announcement [24:49 – 25:15], T05: speaker announcement [13:33 – 13:57]).

Also, as argued in connection with the speaker-based format, referential specification in the form of appositional noun phrases and attributive adjectives can be classified on the level of information structure as a strategy to condense information. Clearly, such linguistic means of detailed referent identification create a high amount of information packed in an

utterance/sentence. They correspond to Biber's (2001) *Integrated Structure*, a complexity dimension that results from the use of particular integrative features whose "extremely dense use" leads to "a relatively dense integration of information in a text" (Biber, 2001: 233/223).

All these are features that are associated according to Biber (2001) with increased linguistic complexity. Nevertheless, the general absence of complex subordination in the news reader's speech results in an overall perceived low grade of structural complexity on the part of the news reader also within the news magazine. As argued in connection with the speaker-based format, we can attribute the general absence of high structural complexity in the news reader's language to reasons of recipient design in mass communication (cf. page 215).

- **The presenter:**

Since understandably the presenter's language is subject to the same demands of recipient design in mass communication we can assume that his/her language on the level of syntactic complexity will mirror that of the news reader in the news magazine and show a general tendency towards parataxis, i.e. clause coordination. Let us see therefore, similar to the news reader, whether we can find any structure enhancing language features in the speech of the presenter.

In fact, one central difference to the language use of the news reader in this respect concerns the use of adverbs and predominantly the use of conjunctions, both subordinating and coordinating but also correlative ones. The presenter indeed makes frequent use of different adverbs and conjunction types. The five studied editions of the news magazine contain among other things:<sup>356</sup>

- **Adverbs:** *dann, bisher, schließlich, dabei, allerdings*

Erst der Rücktritt des *lange* Zeit beliebten Bürgermeisters Ole von *Beust*, dann die *Ablehnung* der geplanten Primarschule durch einen Volksentscheid,[...].

(T02: lead-in [0:35 – 1:16])

Bisher waren *alle* Vorsitzenden *Überlebende* des Holocaust.

(T02: lead-in [18:04 – 19:08])

Schließlich wollen sie *insgesamt* auch mehr Verantwortung übernehmen.

(T03: lead-in [0:38 – 1:30])

Dabei hätte die *Kanzlerin* viel *mehr* Gründe *zermürbt* zu sein als die meisten *schwarzen* Spitzenpolitiker der *Länder*.

(T04: lead-in [0:29 – 1:13])

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<sup>356</sup>All following examples represent the original notation according to the transcripts.

Allerdings ist die Immunschwäche-Krankheit inzwischen nicht *immer* automatisch *tödlich*.

(T04: lead-in [12:49 – 13:29])

- **Coordinating conjunctions:** *denn, und, aber*

Ob die Koalition darüber in die *Knie* geht das wird in *ganz* Deutschland beobachtet denn es ist eine ganz besondere Koalition.

(T02: lead-in [0:35 – 1:16])

*Jetzt* gehören zum Beispiel die Grünen *selbst* zum Establishment und die Bürger werfen *ihnen Knüppel* zwischen die Beine wenn es ihnen *zu* schnell geht.

(T02: lead-in [11:45 – 12:22])

Nach der *Sommerpause* da müsse man *Wichtiges anpacken*. Unter anderem die *Energiepolitik* und die *Gesundheitsreform*. Aber gerade *dort* hatte es besonders *heftigen* Streit zwischen CSU und FDP gegeben.

(Original notation according to the transcript; [...Gesundheitsreform, aber...])

(T04: lead-in [0:29 – 1:13])

- **Subordinating conjunctions:** *als, da, wenn, ob*

Als *heute* zum *Jahrestag* des Attentats mehr als *vierhundertzwanzig* *Rekruten* vereidigt wurden da hielt *neben* Verteidigungsminister zu Guttenberg *auch* der *letzte* noch lebende *Mitverschwörer* eine Rede.

(T03: speaker announcement and lead-in [17:54 – 18:45])

Da wir Deutsche gerne Probleme *grundsätzlich* angehen geht's auch beim Streit um bessere *Schulen* vor allem um das bessere Schulsystem.

(T02: lead-in [6:54 – 7:37])

*Jetzt* gehören zum Beispiel die Grünen *selbst* zum Establishment und die Bürger werfen *ihnen Knüppel* zwischen die Beine wenn es ihnen *zu* schnell geht.

(T02: lead-in [11:45 – 12:22])

Ob der seinen *Vertrag* als *Teamchef* der Fußballnationalmannschaft verlängern würde das war ja nicht erst seit dem Ende der WM sondern schon seit *Februar* *unklar*.

(T03: lead-in [23:36 – 24:08])

- **Correlative conjunctions:** *nicht nur...sondern (auch), weder...noch*

[...] dann hätte Ole von Beust nicht nur die erste schwarz-grüne Regierungskoalition auf Landesebene geschmiedet, sondern er wäre mit zehn Jahren im Amt auch als der am längsten regierende erste Bürgermeister Hamburgs in die Geschichtsbücher eingegangen.

(T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22])

Mit ihm ist ihr nicht nur innerhalb eines Jahres der sechste CDU-Ministerpräsident abhanden gekommen, sondern auch noch der Dritte der relativ freiwillig seine Koffer packte.

(T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28])

Solange es weder einen *Impfstoff* gibt noch ein *Gegenmittel* so lange *bleibt* das Hauptziel *möglichst nicht anstecken*.

(T04: lead-in [15:58 – 16:42])

Some linguistic examples show that especially in combination they effectively contribute to an increase in structural complexity:

Erst [**adverb**] kassierte Landeschefin Birgit von Burger bei Ihrer Wiederwahl am letzten Wochenende ein *katastrophales Ergebnis*, und [**coordinating conjunction**] dann [**adverb**] nahmen sich auch noch Freie Demokraten die Freiheit nicht nur aus der Partei auszutreten sondern [**correlative conjunctions**] im Stadtrat von Öhringen gleich eine neue Fraktions-Gruppe zu gründen.

(T05: lead-in [15:06 – 15:50])

[N]ur noch [**adverb**] anderthalb Jahre hätte er durchhalten müssen, dann [**adverb**] hätte Ole von Beust nicht nur die erste schwarz-grüne Regierungskoalition auf Landesebene geschmiedet, sondern [**correlative conjunctions**] er wäre mit zehn Jahren im Amt auch als der am längsten regierende erste Bürgermeister Hamburgs in die Geschichtsbücher eingegangen.

(T01: Lead-in [0:26 – 1:22])

Characteristically, this diversity of adverbs and conjunctions is absent in the speech of the news reader in the news magazine. When we ask why this is the case we can argue on the basis of the presenter's interpretive function. Clearly, in contrast to the news reader, who restricts himself/herself exclusively to the transmission of objective information, the presenter's institutional role in the news magazine additionally also entails the interpretation/evaluation (cf. chapter 7.3.1) of events and states of affairs reported on in the news magazine and we can assume that this function will have a significant influence on language use in so far as it involves an argumentative structure that essentially includes the use of conjunctions (coordinating, subordinating and correlative) and adverbs in the form illustrated above. Interpretation/evaluation centrally involves the presenter's linguistic activities of providing relevant background information, explaining relationships and posing resulting questions and these conjunctions and adverbs are effective linguistic means whereby these activities are achieved.

Apart from these linguistic characteristics that specifically define the speech of the presenter only, his/her language also features those structure enhancing linguistic means that have been shown to characterize the language of the news reader in the news magazine: source attributions (e.g. T03: lead-in speaker/news reader [8:31 – 8:42]: "Nach Einschätzung der Stiftung Warentest;" T04: lead-in [19:15 – 19:51]: "Die DVU sei eigentlich am Ende, *sagen Verfassungsschützer*;" T05: lead-in [18:52 – 19:43]: "Kinder und Jugendliche haben ein Recht auf ein Lächeln in Ihrem Gesicht. *Findet der Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen Ban Ki Moon*"), attributive adjectives (e.g. T02: lead-in [0:35 – 1:16]: "de[r] lange Zeit [beliebte] [Bürgermeister] Ole von Beust") and appositional noun phrases (e.g. T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22]: "Ole von Beust, erster Bürgermeister von Hamburg;" lead-in speaker/news

reader [12:12 – 12:25]: ”[der] Freiburger Erzbischof Robert Zollitsch, de[r] [Vorsitzende] der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz;” T04: broadcast interview [3:44 – 7:43]: “de[r] [Fraktionsvorsitzende] der Grünen im Bundestag, Jürgen Trittin;” T05: lead-in [18:52 – 19:43]: “der Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen, Ban Ki Moon”). In this category of referential elaboration also belongs the referent specification in T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22] as represented above: “der am längsten regierende erste Bürgermeister Hamburgs.“

Furthermore, relative clauses can also be found – the particular type of dependent clauses that make up this complexity dimension according to Biber (2001). An apt example is T03: lead-in [10:59 – 11:36] featuring referent modification via relative clauses corresponding to English *wh*-relative clauses:

Aber nicht nur die *Hausärzte* sind sauer, die *Kritik* gegen Gesundheitsminister Philip *Roesler*, sie kommt inzwischen von *allen* Seiten. Von der *Opposition* sowieso, von *Lobbyisten* die in dieser Branche sehr präsent sind, von *Versicherten*, die zusätzlichen Beiträgen entgegensehen, und sogar vom *Koalitionspartner* der die *Kopfpauschale* ablehnt.

In accordance with the news reader, other frequently used dependent clauses are *that* complement clauses (e.g. T02: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30], lead-in [6:54 – 7:37], lead-in [11:45 – 12:22]).

When we take a closer look though at that obvious structural complexity of the presenter’s language in comparison with that of the news reader in the news magazine we find that it is in fact sometimes relativized by intonation. That is, although we cannot deny that there is indeed structural elaboration, at times the presenter also tends to show an intonation pattern that is characterized by falling intonation signaling the end of a sentence/utterance that otherwise could have been continued. In this way structural complexity is reduced as sentences/utterances are structurally simplified. Two examples shall illustrate this:

T04: lead-in [0:29 – 1:13]: Nach der *Sommerpause* da müsse man *Wichtiges* anpacken. Unter anderem die *Energiapolitik* und die Gesundheitsreform. Aber gerade *dort* hatte es besonders *heftigen* Streit zwischen *CSU* und *FDP* gegeben.

(Original notation according to the transcript)

Transformed into a sentence in written language this excerpt could have been like that:

Nach der *Sommerpause* da müsse man *Wichtiges* anpacken, unter anderem die *Energiapolitik* und die Gesundheitsreform, aber gerade *dort* hatte es besonders *heftigen* Streit zwischen *CSU* und *FDP* gegeben.

Following the original notation of the transcript, the presenter’s use of language is characterized by falling intonation that precedes the use of the lexical expression “unter anderem” and of the German coordinating conjunction “aber” otherwise used to link two main clauses (represented via underlining). This reduces the structural complexity of an otherwise rather complex sentence in written language. That is, if we treat the coordinating

conjunction as fulfilling its grammatical ‘purpose’ the result – in written language – is a complex sentence in which two main clauses – the first being modified by two noun phrases linked via the German coordinating conjunction “und” – are connected via the coordinating conjunction “and.” The connection is signaled respectively by means of a comma in writing.

In the reading process, however, the presenter reduces the actual structural complexity of this excerpt via a characteristic intonation pattern that separates the main clauses.

T03: lead-in [23:36 – 24:08]: Ob der seinen Vertrag als *Teamchef* der Fußballnationalmannschaft verlängern würde das war ja nicht erst seit dem Ende der WM sondern schon seit Februar *unklar*. Und manche im DFB sahen eine kulturelle *Kluft* zwischen den klassischen *herben* Kickerbetreuern und der *smarten* Truppe um Joachim Löw.

(Original notation according to the transcript)

Transformed into a sentence in written language this excerpt would be as follows:

Ob der seinen Vertrag als *Teamchef* der Fußballnationalmannschaft verlängern würde das war ja nicht erst seit dem Ende der WM sondern schon seit Februar *unklar und* manche im DFB sahen eine kulturelle *Kluft* zwischen den klassischen *herben* Kickerbetreuern und der *smarten* Truppe um Joachim Löw.

Again, when we take a look at the original notation according to the transcript we see that the presenter in the reading process reduces the structural complexity by means of falling intonation that precedes the German coordinating conjunction “und” whereby he separates the two clauses.

To sum up, as concerns language use by the news reader in the news magazine, there is a clear tendency towards reduced structural complexity in all studied editions of the format. This tendency, as in the speaker-based format, can be explained on the basis of recipient design that underlies the production of language in the mass media for a process of mass distribution.

Since the language use of the presenter in the news magazine can be determined to be influenced by the same demands we can expect the same general tendency towards reduced complexity on the syntactic level. As was illustrated, however, the language use of the presenter, in contrast to the news reader, is characterized by particular linguistic means – frequent use of adverbs and different types of conjunctions – that contribute to an increase in structural complexity. Their application can be explained on the basis of the presenter’s ascribed role of interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs reported on in the news magazine. Consequently, the language of the presenter in the news magazine is structurally more complex than that used by the news reader and this aspect is accounted for in the conceptual continuum (cf. table 22) via a middle position that denotes a higher degree of subordination for the presenter than for the news reader but yet lacks ultimate structural complexity due to an assumed recipient design orientation in mass communication.

(c) Word choice: lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality or informality

• **The news reader/speaker:**

In accordance with the news reader/speaker in the speaker-based news format investigated earlier the choice of words by the news reader/speaker in the news magazine is influenced by two aspects, namely his/her institutional role as “objective information transmitter”, which involves the institutionally required minimization of expressing subjective viewpoints, which, in turn, triggers both an absence of colloquial, i.e. informal, language in favor of one that corresponds to the formal character of the institutional speech situation and an absence of affective language as an expression of reduced emotionality.

Indeed the studied five editions of the German news magazine are typically characterized by a general absence of colloquial terms on the part of the news reader. T03\_TT\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010 contains one instance of an affective word – the same that is featured in the corresponding edition of the speaker-based format: “jämmerlich” (speaker announcement [8:42 – 9:03]) which is again part of directly quoted speech and hence of speech that is attributed to a specific source – a person, a particular social institution – whereby it is marked as being of external origin.

Also for the news reader/speaker in the news magazine we can expect that (s)he in his/her role as objective transmitter of information will basically refrain from making any personally motivated comments and valuating statements. Clearly, the demand for objectivity in theory necessitates the absence of speaker’s modality. Whether this is actually the case is discussed in section (g) *Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker’s modality* below.

Not surprisingly, as in the corresponding speaker-based news format that each edition of the news magazine focused on here relates to, the concrete choice of words by the news reader is additionally dependent on the type of topics featured in the program. The analysis of featured topics has shown the dominance of ‘hard news’, namely of political, economic and social topics and this is understandably reflected in word choice. Accordingly, also here we find what may be labelled a ‘public register’ used to address public affairs of political, economic and social nature within the public sphere. Respective political and economic terms of this register include, for example:

(T02\_TT\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010): *Internationaler Währungsfond, Notkredite, Oberlandesgericht*

(T03\_TT\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010): *Verbraucherschützer, Premierminister, Krisenmanagement, Patentamt, Rundfunkräte, Dreistufentest*

(T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010): *Bundesverfassungsgericht, Bundesfamilienministerin, Bundesfinanzminister, Deutsche Bischofskonferenz*

(T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010): *Völkerrecht, UN-Vollversammlung, Internationaler Gerichtshof, Bundesfinanzministerium, Landgericht*

- **The presenter:**

The presenter fulfills the same role of “objective information transmitter” as the news reader in the news magazine (cf. factor (4) on politeness). What is valid for the news speaker is therefore also generally valid for the presenter: minimization of subjectivity and connected absence of colloquial/informal and affective language.

The minimization in subjectivity stated here will also be addressed in section (g) on linguistic modality.

Indeed the five chosen editions of the format do not feature the presenter’s use of affective language, as is expected here. As concerns colloquial/informal language, however, this is different. That is, characteristically, in lead-ins to broadcast reports the presenter makes use of colloquial idiomatic expressions and figurative language – linguistic metaphors – that are fundamentally absent in the language of the news reader. For example, T01\_TT\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28] makes frequent use of colloquial expressions such as *aus der Reihe tanzen* and *am Stuhl kleben*; Most of these expressions refer to ‘leaving’ or ‘giving up’: *von Bord gehen, das Handtuch werfen, seine Koffer packen*; Dealing with the same topic, T02\_TT\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30] entails the same reference: *den Stuhl räumen*. The same edition features *Beine machen*, and *Knüppel zwischen die Beine werfen* (lead-in [11:45 – 12:22]), *auf gepackten Koffern sitzen* (lead-in [18:04 – 19:08]). In the same edition (lead-in [0:35 – 1:16]) a comparison with a boxer is made: “[W]äre die Landesregierung in Hamburg ein *Boxer* dann hätte sie gestern erst eine *Linke* in die Magengrube und gleich hinterher einen *rechten Kinnhaken* eingesteckt.“ In T03\_TT\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010 the German healthcare system is described as a jungle: “Stattdessen wird der *Dschungel* dann immer undurchdringlicher“ (lead-in [13:53 – 14:28]). In T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: lead-in [19:15 – 19:5] extreme right-wing parties are referred to as *Braune Allianz*. Likewise, in T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: lead-in [23:58 – 24:52] the presenter uses *braune Vergangenheit*. In the same edition (lead-in [15:06 – 15:50]) the presenter uses the metaphor of a fortress to refer to the German political party FDP: “Selbst in Zeiten als Freidemokraten in den Parlamenten der Bundesländer fast als Exoten gefeiert wurden stand die *gelbe Trutzburg* festgemauert im Stuttgarter Landtag. Doch nun *stürmen* Politiker aus den eigenen Reihen die *Festung*.“

Other informal lexical items include: *Chefin* (T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28]), *Blechlawine* (T01: lead-in [15:19 – 16:02]), *Kickerbetreuer* (T03: lead-in [23:36 – 24:08]), and with alliteration and anglicism *peinliche Performance* (T05: lead-in [15:06 – 15:50]).

We may ask why the presenter makes use of such linguistic means, for we may state an influence of those means on the requirement towards objectivity, on the one hand, and

ultimate comprehensibility, on the other hand. Clearly, the use of colloquial idiomatic expressions and especially of figurative language happens in order to liven up the language whilst retaining an overall serious tone. That is, especially figurative language is a linguistic means that serves entertainment in so far as it makes language more interesting and by means of this has an entertaining effect. It is here that language gains infotainment character since (objective) information receives an “entertaining preparation.”<sup>357</sup> Whether this preparation actually means a movement away from purely objective information of the audience cannot be answered here.

Furthermore, the use of linguistic metaphors, in the worst case, also happens at the expense of clarity, i.e. comprehensibility, because they are expressions of linguistic indirectness and therefore per se semantically ambiguous. This ambiguity is risky since potentially the use of linguistic metaphors involves the risk of not being understood in the way as intended (even though this is presumably not the case here).

In accordance with the news reader, the presenter in the news magazine uses a topic-based ‘public register’ used to address public affairs of political, economic and social nature. For example:

- T02\_TT\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: lead-in [18:04 – 19:08]:
- Topic: Central Council of Jews in Germany: *Holocaust, Zentralrat*
  
- T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: lead-in [15:06 – 15:50]:
- Topic: political party FDP in Germany: *Liberale Parteiführer, Freidemokraten, Parlamente der Bundesländer, Landtag, Stadtrat, Fraktions-Gruppe*

To sum up, the institutional role of the news reader as “objective information transmitter” in the news magazine is reflected in the objective character of the lexicon that shows a general absence of linguistic informality and affective language expressing a general absence of subjectivity and connected emotionality. The lexicon is restricted to a ‘public register’ that relates to featured political, economic (and social) topics. The treatment of these topics happens in the form of neutral statements. While affective language is also absent from the language of the presenter it does indeed show instances of linguistic informality in the form of colloquial idiomatic expressions and linguistic metaphors presumably in an attempt to increase the entertaining effect of the language.

We can therefore say that the language use of the news reader with regard to overall choice of words is generally formal in this respect and this formality can be determined as appropriate means for the fulfillment of the institutional demand for objectivity in the

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<sup>357</sup> Cf. in this connection Wittwen’s (1995) notions of entertaining information (‘unterhaltende Information’) versus informative entertainment (‘informierende Unterhaltung’).

transmission of information within institutional discourse. The deviation by the presenter in the direction of using more lexical terms that are colloquial and hence informal in character is indicated respectively in the conceptual continuum (table 22) with a slight right-ward position accounting for the occurrence of informal idiomatic expressions and linguistic metaphors.

(d) Speech planning: relatively high or low degree of speech planning

- **The news reader/speaker**

Since the news reader engages solely in a monolog-based reading activity, the demands of online production towards (increased) linguistic spontaneity that are relevant in interactive speech events (such as the news interview performed by the presenter) are characteristically absent as concerns the news reader in the news magazine. In fact, we can assume a complete absence of linguistic spontaneity – which implies a relatively high degree of speech planning – on the part of the news reader also in the news magazine whose activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language does not differ from the one performed by the news reader in the investigated speaker-based format. As argued in chapter 7.1.1, institutional pre-production of language here necessarily denotes a concrete process of external language pre-planning within relevant editorial offices, which precedes the actual reading activity as performed by the news reader. Consequently, this activity does not require the reader's online planning of speech, who exclusively restricts himself/herself to reading out language that has been produced in advance. In other words, detailed pre-planning of speech is relevant but relates to processes of advance planning by the institution which permits an absence of or at least a significant reduction in online speech planning on the part of the news reader in the reading process. It is in this respect that we can speak of a high degree of speech planning.

- **The presenter**

A determination of the presenter's degree of speech planning in the news magazine needs to be done in view of his/her participation in either the monolog-based speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language (mainly) in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports or the dialog-based news interview with a correspondent or a news actor (cf. factor (h)).

In case of the former, the presenter engages in the same activity as the news reader in the news magazine: reading out language that has been produced in advance by the institution. As a consequence, also the presenter's language use here can be determined to show a reduction in necessary online speech planning. Yet the detailed and strict institutional pre-planning of speech to be read out by the presenter and the news reader means an overall high degree of speech planning as such, that is, one that precedes the actual reading process.

In case of the latter, the demands of online production regain validity in the first place simply because what we have here is a media-specific type of speech exchange system that is

based on interaction involving an interviewer (with the ultimate right to pose questions) and an interviewee with an interactional obligation to answer these questions. That is, even if communicative roles of participants – in contrast to everyday conversation – are clearly determined, the interactive nature of the speech event renders their spontaneity an important aspect within the interview process and this spontaneity, as is assumed here, will effect a reduction in the degree of speech planning on the part of both interviewer (= presenter) and interviewee (= correspondent; news actor) in so far as there is no possibility for (elaborate) pre-planning of what to say next. An apt example of such interactive spontaneity and the verbal expression of a reduced grade of speech planning in this connection can be found in the news interview in T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010, [3:44 – 7:43] which has also been focused on in section (a) on self-monitoring: In the interview the presenter is interrupted by the interviewee. As a spontaneous reaction to this the presenter agrees to the conversational contribution by the interviewee and reformulates his original speech intention in a new question. His turn entails two instances of the hesitation marker “äh” which can be determined to reflect online speech planning, i.e. planning as speech progresses. They are verbal expressions of the speaker’s cognitive process of thinking about what to say next. That is, serving as “cognitive place holders,” they indicate both a lack of elaborate pre-planning and (an attempt at) subsequent referent specification.

To sum up, in accordance with the investigated speaker-based news format the news magazine can be defined to involve a relatively high degree of speech planning *per se* that consists in the advance production of language by the institution in relevant editorial offices. This concerns all speech activities performed by the news reader and all speech activities performed by the presenter in the news magazine. Both are as a consequence limited in their linguistic spontaneity. As concerns the presenter, however, we have to make an important refinement in this respect as concerns his/her involvement in news interviews: Although we may accept a general pre-specification of questions to be posed within the interview, the presenter’s participation in this type of interactive speech event is also characterized by a low degree of speech planning due to relevant demands of online production towards interactive spontaneity of those participating in the speech event. In the conceptual continuum (table 22) this is indicated correspondingly with a right-hand position of this factor for the presenter in the news interview (though not completely right-hand due to possible pre-arrangement of questions).

(e) Information structure: expected high or low grade of explicit information

In the discussion of this aspect in connection with the speaker-based news format it is argued that the demands placed on informative media talk towards completeness and comprehensibility of information (cf. table 9) will affect the presentation of information in the

news. It is also argued there that complete and comprehensible information of the audience is problematic because the communicator can never exactly know the communicative needs of this disperse audience: what can be presupposed as given information, i.e. shared background knowledge, and what must be seen as new information, i.e. special/expert knowledge, within a given discourse context. Consequently, since the communicator can never know how explicit or implicit to be in the presentation of information to be broadcast we can assume a general tendency rather towards elaborateness in that presentation in order to be on the safe side.

- **The news reader/speaker:**

Indeed also the five investigated editions of the news magazine illustrate a tendency towards a high grade of explicit information and thus a low grade of linguistic vagueness on the part of the news reader. Again, this especially concerns the persons that are featured in the news including those that can be assumed to be generally known among the audience members. Accordingly, we find “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel” (T01\_TT\_Das Erste\_18.07.2010: news film [12:51 – 13:12], “UN-Generalsekretär Ban Ki Moon” (T01: news film [14:01 – 14:30]) instead of simply “Merkel,” “Ban Ki Moon;” We find “der frühere US-Präsident Clinton” and “Microsoft-Gründer Gates” (T02\_TT\_Das Erste\_19.07.2010: news film [23:20 - 23:50]) instead of “Bill Clinton” and “Bill Gates;” We find “der neue britische Premierminister Cameron” and “US-Präsident Obama” (T03\_TT\_Das Erste\_20.07.2010: news film [9:03 – 9:26]) instead of “Cameron” and “Obama;” We find “Bundesfamilienministerin Schröder” (T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: speaker announcement [10:58 – 11:22]) and “Bundesfinanzminister Schäuble” (T04: news film [11:22 – 11:46]) instead of “Schröder” and “Schäuble;” We find “Bundes-Außenminister Westerwelle” and “US-Außenministerin Clinton” (T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010: speaker announcement [13:12 – 13:33]) instead of “Westerwelle” and “Clinton.” Again this is the general rule whenever the relevant persons are introduced in a text type. Are they mentioned repeatedly in one and the same text type (or in a text type immediately following) referential specification, as in the speaker-based program, is limited to the name of the person alone without role specification or to anaphoric reference via the use of personal pronouns (e.g. T01: news film [12:51 – 13:12]: “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel”/”Merkel;” T03: news film [9:03 – 9:26]: “Der neue britische Premierminister Cameron”/”Cameron;” T04: news film [11:22 – 11:46]: “Bundesfinanzminister Schäuble”/”er”).

Furthermore, there is a high degree of explicit information expressed in referential specification (cf. section (b) on structural complexity). As in the speaker-based news format, referential specification in the news magazine is more detailed with specific persons other than those constantly featured in the news such as the members of the cabinet, for example. Thus, the modifying noun phrases that are given in section (b) not only serve the density of information packed in a text type but are also used to present important background

information about the identity of the persons “Zollitsch” (i.e. der “Vorsitzende der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz Erzbischof Zollitsch” and “Ramelow” (i.e. der “Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow,” (T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010: speaker announcement [24:18 – 24:49] and lead-in [9:30 – 9:53]).

Similar to the speaker-based format, a high grade of explicit information also concerns events and facts that are featured in the news. In the studied editions this relates to relevant background information that accompanies the presentation of these events and facts. Also here one such event is the breakdown of the air conditioning system in German ICE trains: the presenter provides additional background information giving the reason for why certain passengers receive compensation by German Rail (*Deutsche Bahn*): “Vor elf Tagen war es in einem ICE so heiß geworden dass Reisende auf dem Bielefelder Bahnhof von Sanitätern behandelt werden mussten” (T04: speaker announcement [24:49 – 25:15]). The same edition features additional background information concerning investigations into Zollitsch’s involvement in sexual abuse: “Anzeige erstattet hatte ein mutmaßliches Missbrauchsoffer. Der Vorwurf, als Personalreferent habe Zollitsch neunzehnhundertsiebenundachtzig die Anstellung eines Priesters mit verantwortet der bereits Kinder missbraucht hatte“ (speaker announcement [24:18 – 24:49]); It contains background information concerning investigations into sexual abuse at a holiday camp: “Anfang des Monats hatte die Mutter eines mutmaßlichen Opfers Anzeige erstattet“ (lead-in [23:04 – 23:24]). T05: news film [23:23 – 23:46]: provides background information concerning an arson attack at a police car: “Die zur Tatzeit sechzehn, achtzehn und dreiundzwanzigjährigen hatten im Januar in Greifswald zwei Beamte unter einem Vorwand in einen Hinterhalt gelockt.“

Characteristically, also the term ‘Dreistufentest’ (T03: lead-in [21:28 – 21:52]) is explained here – a term within a public register whose understanding requires expert knowledge: “Die Prüfung sollte *sicherstellen* dass die Online-Angebote dem *gesetzlichen* Auftrag der *Grundversorgung* mit *Information, Bildung* und *Unterhaltung* entsprechen.”

- **The presenter:**

Since the presenter has the same institutional role of “objective information transmitter” than the news reader in the news magazine and since we can assume that his/her actions will also be governed by complete and comprehensible information of the audience, we should expect the same explicit verbalization of background knowledge on the part of the presenter that is illustrated here for the news reader.

Indeed, the language use of the presenter in the monolog-based speech activities of lead-ins to broadcast reports illustrates a similar though not completely identical tendency towards a high grade of explicit information and thus a low grade of linguistic vagueness. Also here this especially refers to the *persons* that are featured in the news including those whose political function can be presupposed as shared knowledge. (E.g. T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22]:

“Ole von Beust, erster Bürgermeister von Hamburg;” T02: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30]: “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel;” T03: lead-in [0:38 – 1:30]: “NATO Generalsekretär Rasmussen,“ “UNO-Chef Ban Ki Moon,“ “der schwedische Außenminister Bildt;” Lead-in [10:59 – 11:36]: “Gesundheitsminister Philip Roesler;” Speaker announcement and lead-in [17:54 – 18:45]: “Verteidigungsminister zu Guttenberg;” T05: lead-in [18:52 – 19:43]: “der Generalsekretär der Vereinten Nationen Ban Ki Moon”). As in the case of the news reader, this happens generally whenever the relevant persons are mentioned for the first time in a text type. Are they mentioned repeatedly (in one and the same text type or in a text type immediately following) referent specification is restricted to the name of the person alone without additional specification of political function or to anaphoric reference via personal pronouns. (E.g. T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22]: “Ole von Beust, erster Bürgermeister von Hamburg”/“er“ and following lead-in [4:01 – 4:38]: “Ole von Beust;” Lead-in news reader [12:12 – 12:25]: “Freiburger Erzbischof Robert Zollitsch“ and following speaker announcement [12:25 – 12:51]: “Zollitsch;” News film [12:51 – 13:12]: “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel”/“Merkel;” T03: lead-in [10:59 – 11:36]: “Gesundheitsminister Philip Roesler”/“Roesler“).

Yet, there are deviations from this general procedure. That is, in contrast to the news reader, there are instances where a connection between person and political or social function is not directly made but has to be inferred from context. For example, in T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28] the presenter begins with a referent identification via naming her political function only “Kaum ist die *Kanzlerin* außer Landes” which is later followed by an identification by name “als *Merkel* heute aus Kasachstan zurückkehrte.” Both terms denote the same referent, yet this connection is not immediately made. A similar example is T03: lead-in [23:36 – 24:08]. The social function is mentioned first, followed shortly later by more detailed referent specification via name: “Wir sind *Bundestrainer*. So könnte morgen eine Schlagzeile lauten. Auf jeden Fall haben wir einen *Bundestrainer*, nämlich den alten. [...] und der smarten Truppe um *Joachim Löw*. Wie auch immer. Seit der WM wollten alle *Löw* und der sagte heute ja.” In fact, these examples reduce the grade of explicit information towards a higher grade of – at least initial – linguistic vagueness to be resolved shortly after. Yet, they are not the dominant means of referent specification here; they are few exceptions that can be seen as another structural attempt at livening up language.

Indeed, in accordance with the news reader, there is a high degree of explicit information again expressed in referential specification which is more detailed with particular persons other than those constantly featured in the news. Accordingly, the modifying noun phrases “der Fraktionsvorsitzende der Grünen im Bundestag, Jürgen Trittin” (T04: broadcast interview [3:44 – 7:43]) and “Es gibt erneut Kritik am Freiburger Erzbischof Robert Zollitsch, dem Vorsitzenden der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz” not only serve the density of information packed in a text type but are also used to present important background information about the identity of the persons “Trittin” and “Zollitsch.”

Similar to the news reader, a high grade of explicit information also pertains to events and facts that are reported on in the news magazine. Again this also refers to relevant background information that accompanies the presentation of these events and facts. (E.g. T03: speaker announcement and lead-in [17:54 – 18:45]: “Heute vor sechshundsechzig Jahren explodierte eine Bombe im sogenannten Führerhauptquartier. [...] wurden später hingerichtet.” This is an introduction to a following broadcast report explaining relevant background information concerning the unsuccessful assassination attempt on Hitler. T04: lead-in [15:58 – 16:42]: “War in Kenia in den neunziger Jahren jeder zehnte HIV-positiv so sank die Rate bis heute um fast die Hälfte auf sechs Prozent.“ This constitutes background information to a following report on AIDS prevention in Kenia. T05: lead-in [23:58 – 24:52]: “[D]er Mann der vom Schreibtisch aus den Holocaust organisiert und rund sechs Millionen europäische Juden in die Vernichtungslager der Nazis geschickt hatte konnte endlich vor Gericht gestellt werden.“ This provides relevant background information to the person Adolf Eichmann. Directly following this is a description of how Eichmann was able to escape to South America: “Entkommen war Eichmann nach Kriegsende über eine der sogenannten Rattenlinien. Das waren von gut bezahlten Helfern organisierte Fluchtrouten nach Südamerika wo niemand groß nach der braunen Vergangenheit fragte.“ This is an example of the explanation of a term (“Rattenlinie”) within a public register whose understanding can be said to require expert knowledge and is not presupposed as shared background knowledge.

To sum up, the language use of both news reader and presenter in the news magazine illustrates a general tendency towards explicit verbalization of background knowledge that is immediately consistent with the journalistic objectives of complete and comprehensible information of the audience. Consequently, the format shows a high degree of explicit information with respect to specific expert knowledge but also with regard to a presumably shared amount of world knowledge (e.g. “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel” versus “Merkel”) and this in turn means a low degree of linguistic vagueness.

The identical ways of presenting information can be ascribed to identical institutional roles of news reader and presenter as “objective information transmitters.” This role is also the reason for the correspondence in language use between the news reader in the speaker-based format and the news magazine.

(f) Conversational redress: expected high or low degree of conversational redress

- **The news reader/speaker:**

In the discussion of this aspect in connection with the speaker-based news format it is illustrated that a determination of conversational redress for agents and clients is not unproblematic in view of the nature of television as an institution and the particularities of the

institutional speech situation (cf. chapter 7.1.1). Nevertheless, it was argued, similar to an assumed social distance between agent(s) and client(s) in social institutions other than television, we can define a relevant social distance between news reader and television audience in the speaker-based news format. We can ascribe this distance to the news reader's restriction to fulfilling an institutional role of "objective information transmitter" which implies that, in favor of objectivity, the identity of the news reader as private person with subjective viewpoints and a personal interest in the addressee steps in the background. Since the news reader in the news magazine focussed on here does not differ (in the execution of his/her institutional role) from the news reader in the speaker-based format investigated earlier, we can also accept the social distance between news reader and audience at home. This distance will be mirrored lexically in an objective language use via reduced emotionality and hence via a lack of affective language that expresses the speaker's 'withdrawal' of his/her own personality. (See in this connection section (c) on word choice). Linguistic objectivity also implies a significant reduction of concrete face-threat that otherwise especially also accompanies the verbalization of emotions. The result is a high grade of conversational redress in this respect that is not expressed via a high degree of intentional indirectness but it denotes a general avoidance of face threat rather by purely objective language use in the form of factual statements.

- **The presenter:**

In accordance with the news reader in the news magazine we can also determine a relevant social distance between the presenter and the television audience since we can assume the same institutional role of "objective information transmitter" with its associated consequences of minimizing the expression of personal viewpoints. The role-required neutral stance of the presenter will thus also be expressed linguistically in the application of objective language in the form of factual statements that minimize the risk of face threat. We can assume its relevance for the presenter's participation in both monolog-based speech activities of reading out institutionally pre-produced language mainly in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports and in the format-specific interactive speech event of the news interview. Consequently, *all* verbal actions performed by the presenter in the course of the news magazine are based on the fulfillment of an institutional role that essentially requires the presenter's objectivity. Therefore, also expressions of a seemingly subjective viewpoint by the presenter in the news interview featuring the German 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun "Ich" (e.g. T04\_TT\_Das Erste\_21.07.2010, [3:44 – 7:43]: "[I]ch hab' da `n bisschen rausgehört, weil ja aus der etwas längeren Antwort dass es *nicht* so *ganz* Ihrem Geschmack entspricht") are always performed on behalf of an institutional role of "news presenter" which involves the communicative task of interpretation (cf. chapter 7.3.1). Hence they do generally not express a true subjective viewpoint by the presenter as private person. Yet, when we take a look at the news interview in T05\_TT\_Das Erste\_22.07.2010, [5:16 – 9:58] we can see a face threat potential in the

presenter's critical inquiries, but since these are to be seen as concrete parts of an ascribed institutional role they are not personally motivated and this aspect significantly reduces the actual threat to face that is performed. (Moreover, the news actor addressed by the presenter usually is aware of the presenter's potentially critical questions).

The stated social distance between presenter and television audience is also in the news magazine mirrored linguistically in the use of the socially distancing greeting formula "Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren." This way of directly addressing the audience – as a form of para-social interaction – is not aimed at establishing a closer relationship between presenter and television audience and, as a rather formal means of greeting, it reflects a comparatively high degree of conversational redress.<sup>358</sup>

To sum up, if we attempt to make any statements about relevant grades of conversational redress in the news magazine, we have to do so in consideration of the particularities of the institutional speech situation. As in the speaker-based news format, we can (1) determine the role of the presenter and of the news reader/speaker as that of an "objective information transmitter" and we can (2) state a general social distance between agent (= presenter, news reader/speaker) and clients (= television audience) in the news magazine. These two aspects result verbally in a comparatively high degree of conversational redress which consists in the application of purely objective language via factual statements whereby the risk of face-threat is minimized.

(g) Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker's modality

As argued in the discussion of factor (4) on politeness, news reader and presenter in the news magazine can be determined to fulfill an institutional role that is oriented at the objective transmission of information in news coverage. This shared role of "objective information transmitter" naturally affects language use in so far as it requires an absence – or at least significant reduction – in the expression of subjective speaker perspective and therefore we should not expect the occurrence of speaker's modality (e.g. via personally motivated comments and valuating statements) which is ultimately in conflict with the assumed neutral stance of both news reader and presenter in the news magazine. In other words, we can assume that the role-required neutral stance of news reader and presenter in the news magazine will be mirrored linguistically in the application of objective language (in the form of factual statements) that is characterized by the absence of speaker's modality – the explicit expression of a speaker's subjective attitude towards what (s)he states in the proposition.

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<sup>358</sup> An exception in this connection is the more elaborate and personal greeting performed by the presenter in T05: "Einen schönen guten Abend meine Damen und Herren. Willkommen zu unserer Sendung heute mit diesen Tagesthemen."

- **The news reader/speaker:**

Indeed, section (c) on word choice has illustrated linguistic objectivity on the lexical level as concerns the news reader. There it is also argued that objectivity (or: reduced subjectivity), as in the speaker-based format, entails typical aspects, namely the absence of colloquial, informal language and affective language (as expression of reduced emotionality).

In accordance with the investigated speaker-based news format, the news reader's expected objectivity/neutrality in the news magazine is reflected in the same general procedure of ascribing valuating statements of any kind either to institution-external sources (= news actors as the persons featured and reported on in the news magazine) or to other institutions. For example, T03: speaker announcement [8:42 – 9:03] includes the same negative evaluation of an advisory activity executed by German financial institutions: "Die Verbraucherschützer haben Testbesuche in einundzwanzig Geldinstituten durchgeführt. Das Resultat sei so wörtlich jämmerlich." This evaluation ("jämmerlich") is a quotation of an opinion that is ascribed to an external source ("Verbraucherschützer") and thus does not express the news reader's subjective impression of that advisory activity. Likewise, in T01: news film [12:51 – 13:12] the view that Kazakhstan is Germany's most important economic partner is explicitly attributed to the German Chancellor Merkel: "Merkel bezeichnete Kasachstan als wichtigsten Partner der deutschen Wirtschaft in der Region." Thus, also here speaker's modality – the explicit expression of subjective speaker perspective – *does* occur in the speech of the news reader but, characteristically, it is never the news reader's own perspective but indicated via relevant source attribution (e.g. "Merkel bezeichnete") as a subjective viewpoint of an external source.

It is argued in the discussion of modality in connection with the speaker-based format that such source attributions are also effective linguistic means in order to highlight the validity, i.e. factuality, of uttered statements ('x has said that y therefore y must be true'). Thus, while the news film [12:51 – 13:12] features the attribution of an evaluative statement ("wichtigster Partner der deutschen Wirtschaft in der Region") to an external source (Merkel) it also reflects by means of using this attribution the news reader's commitment to the truth of what he states in the proposition. That is, he does not simply state that Kazakhstan is the most important partner of German economy in that region but explicitly names the source according to which this is the case thereby turning the statement into a factual and therefore true statement that reflects the news reader's degree of commitment to the truth of what he says. As in the speaker-based format the following statement is presented as a factual statement, i.e. without any additional support by means of source attribution: "Die frühere Sowjet-Republik ist Deutschlands viertgrößter Öl-Lieferant."

Also here relevant source attributions are generally often used in the investigated editions to emphasise either the above mentioned validity of presented *facts* (e.g. T01: speaker announcement [13:12 – 13:39]: "Aus dem defekten Bohrloch im Golf von Mexiko strömt *nach Angaben von BP* weiterhin kein Öl ins Meer;" T03: lead-in [21:28 – 21:52]: "Alle

siebenunddreißig Telemedien-Konzepte der ARD erfüllen *nach Auffassung der Rundfunkräte* den sogenannten Dreistufentest;“ T04: lead-in [9:30 – 9:53]: “*Nach Auffassung der Richter* gibt es in der Linkspartei Anhaltspunkte für verfassungsfeindliche Bestrebungen“) or *figures* (e.g. T04: speaker announcement [10:58 – 11:22]: “*Bundesfamilienministerin Schröder* hält am Rechtsanspruch auf Kinderbetreuung fest. *Nach ihrem Zwischenbericht* zum Kita-Ausbau gibt es in Deutschland inzwischen für durchschnittlich *zwanzig Prozent der Ein- und Zweijährigen* einen Krippenplatz“).

Furthermore, the news reader’s degree of commitment to the truth of what (s)he states in the proposition is reflected also in the use of lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings such as “mutmaßlich” (T04: speaker announcement [24:18 – 24:49], T05: speaker announcement [13:33 – 13:57]), “wahrscheinlich” (e.g. T02: speaker announcement [15:12 – 15:31]), “offenbar” (T02: lead-in [16:45 – 17:00]), “sollen” (T04: lead-in [23:04 – 23:24], T05: speaker announcement [23:01 – 23:23]). All these elements are used by the news reader to account for the possibility, i.e. likelihood, of presented events and states of affairs.

- **The presenter:**

We have seen that the news reader in the news magazine behaves identically to the news reader in the speaker-based format as concerns linguistic modality in order to account for the expected institutionally required objectivity and truthfulness. Since the presenter fulfills the same institutional role of “objective information transmitter” we should expect that (s)he applies the same linguistic means in order to serve this role. Clearly, (s)he will refrain from making any personally motivated comments and valuating statements (that go beyond his/her institutional role as presenter). Yet, when we want to talk about the general language use of the presenter on the level of linguistic modality we should do so taking into consideration especially the institutionally ascribed interpretive function that is associated with the fulfillment of the role as presenter and this function, by definition, is in conflict with the assumed requirement of institutional objectivity since, as discussed in chapter 7.3.1, this function involves the presenter’s evaluation of events and states of affairs that are reported on in the magazine (cf. Burger, 2005: 311) and evaluation implies the occurrence of speaker’s modality, i.e. the expression of subjective speaker perspective. However, it is also argued there that the concrete manifestation of this function in the communicative actions of the presenter is highly dependent on the magazine type (cf. news magazine versus political magazine). Thus, we may assume that the underlying aim of objective information governing the production of the news format as such will have an influence on the actual extent to which interpretation, i.e. evaluation, and hence the application of linguistic modality by the presenter takes place.

How then does the presenter make use of his/her institutionally ascribed interpretive function, i.e. especially in lead-ins to broadcast reports? When we take a look at the five editions of the news magazine that were chosen for linguistic investigation we find that the

presenter's interpretive function characteristically involves the following aspects: (1) it consists in the presentation and evaluation of additional background information in the lead-ins to following broadcast reports. (E.g. T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28] on Ole von Beust: “Im Mai während ihrer [chancellor Merkel] Reise durch die Golfstaaten ging Roland Koch überraschenderweise von Bord, als Merkel heute aus Kasachstan zurückkehrte hatte Ole von Beust das Handtuch geworfen. *Mit ihm ist ihr [German chancellor Merkel] nicht nur innerhalb eines Jahres der sechste CDU-Ministerpräsident abhanden gekommen, sondern auch noch der Dritte der relativ freiwillig seine Koffer packte;*“ T03 speaker announcement and lead-in [17:54 – 18:45]: background information concerning the unsuccessful assassination attempt at Hitler is used as an introduction to a following broadcast report: “Heute vor sechshundsechzig Jahren explodierte eine Bombe im sogenannten Führerhauptquartier. [...] *Dieser soldatische Ungehorsam gegenüber einer bösen Macht war und ist ein Orientierungspunkt der Bundeswehr, der Armee des demokratischen Deutschland;*” T04: lead-in [12:49 – 13:29]: includes background information concerning AIDS: “Jeden Tag stecken sich auf der Welt siebentausend Menschen mit dem Aids-Virus an. [...] *Allerdings ist die Immunschwäche-Krankheit inzwischen nicht immer automatisch tödlich.* Mediziner können das Ausbrechen eindämmen und die Symptome lindern. So leben Menschen die sich angesteckt haben inzwischen oft noch sehr lange. *Aber auch das is` nich` einfach;*“ T04: lead-in [15:58 – 16:42] on AIDS prevention in Kenia: “War in Kenia in den neunziger Jahren jeder zehnte HIV-positiv so sank die Rate bis heute um fast die Hälfte auf sechs Prozent. *Das ist auch den vielen kenianischen Aufklärungsteams zu verdanken die genau wissen wo die brenzligen Orte in ihrem Land liegen;*“ T05: lead-in [23:58 – 24:52]: provides background information to Adolf Eichmann: “Als Adolf Eichmann Anfang neunzehnhundert sechzig in Argentinien's Hauptstadt Buenos Aires von Geheimdienst-Agenten des Mossad aufgespürt und nach Israel entführt wurde *war die Erleichterung gewaltig,* der Mann der vom Schreibtisch aus den Holocaust organisiert und rund sechs Millionen europäische Juden in die Vernichtungslager der Nazis geschickt hatte *konnte endlich vor Gericht gestellt werden*“).<sup>359</sup> As these examples illustrate, relevant background information provided by the presenter characteristically contains (or is followed by) an evaluation of this information (given in italics).

(2) The presenter's interpretive function further involves commenting on immediately preceding broadcast reports either in the form of a concluding remark to that report or as part of a lead-in leading over to another broadcast report (e.g. T02: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30]: “Der Rücktritt von Ole von Beust bedeutet also zunächst vorerst keinen Machtwechsel in Hamburg;” lead-in [6:54 – 7:37]: “Soweit die Parteipolitik. Nun zum Inhalt, [...]”; T03: lead-in [13:53 – 14:28]: “Tja die Gesundheit gehört zu den Bereichen in Deutschland wo sich die Kosten bisher einfach nicht eindämmen lassen;“ [21:16 – 21:22]: Concluding remark to a preceding report: “Ein Mosaikstein in der Erinnerung an den zwanzigsten Juli

<sup>359</sup> See in this connection section (e) on information structure.

neunzehnhundertvierundvierzig“). This also aptly illustrates the presenter’s structural function of connecting the topics within the editions.

(3) It entails the formulation of obvious or resulting questions (e.g. T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28]: “Gibt es also immer weniger CDU-Politiker die an ihrem Stuhl kleben komme was da wolle? Oder kommen sie möglicherweise nur nicht mit dem Führungsstil ihrer Chefin klar;“ T02: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30]: “Ist die Situation jetzt Chance oder Krise für die CDU;“ T04: lead-in [0:29 – 1:13]: “Solches Gezanke sei Vergangenheit sagte die Kanzlerin. Ein Urlaubswunsch?”).

(4) It includes the frequent use of figurative language as an element that not only livens up language in the process of discussing events and states of affairs but also lends an evaluative, i.e. critical, undercurrent to that discussion (cf. section (c) on word choice. T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28] contains expressions that refer to ‘leaving’ or ‘giving up’; T05: lead-in [15:06 – 15:50] features the presenter’s use of a fortress as a metaphor to refer to the German political party FDP. Right at the beginning of the same edition (lead-in [0:29 – 1:06]) the presenter compares the heat in German ICE trains due to collapse of the air conditioning system to the process of cooking).

(5) A similar evaluative undercurrent is also reflected in the presenter’s use of “tja,” a German interjection that can be viewed as a discourse particle fulfilling a commenting function (e.g. T02: lead-in [6:54 – 7:37]: “Tja, die liebe Schulform;” T03: lead-in [4:00 – 4:37]: “Tja und Deutschland nimmt die neue Abzugsperspektive jetzt besonders aufmerksam zur Kenntnis [...]” Lead-in [13:53 – 14:28]: “Tja die Gesundheit gehört zu den Bereichen in Deutschland wo sich die Kosten bisher einfach nicht eindämmen lassen“).

(6) One of the most important aspects, however, concerns the use of source attributions and epistemic modality, for it is here that a central difference in use occurs between the presenter and the news reader in the news magazine. Clearly, also the presenter indeed makes use of source attributions and epistemic modality in order to illustrate factuality and to show the degree of commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition. Accordingly, epistemic modality is expressed, for example, in the use of the German adverbs “offenbar” (T01: lead-in [0:26 – 1:22]), “voraussichtlich” (T02: lead-in [18:04 – 19:08]) and “vermutlich” (T05: lead-in [18:52 – 19:43]). Characteristically though (s)he shows a tendency towards frequently performing factual statements also without additional qualification via source attribution. That is, (s)he does so in a higher frequency than the news reader, stating something as a fact where the news reader may have used an additional source attribution in order to highlight factuality. Two examples shall illustrate this aspect here. Thus, what follows is a reproduction of (1) T02: lead-in [0:38 – 1:30] and (2) T04: lead-in [0:29 – 1:13]:

(1)

Die Afghanen sind stolz. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Zum ersten Mal seit Jahrzehnten findet eine große internationale Konferenz über ihr Schicksal in ihrem eigenen Land statt. (**Factual statement**)

Und das ist kein Zufall. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Schließlich wollen sie insgesamt auch mehr Verantwortung übernehmen. Für die Hilfgelder und ab zweitausendvierzehn auch für ihre eigene Sicherheit. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Und damit gibt es jetzt ein Zeitfenster. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Die USA beginnen in genau einem Jahr mit ihrem Abzug. (**Factual statement**)

Und drei Jahre später sollen und wollen die Afghanen dann das Sagen haben. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Das heie aber nicht dass dann alle auslndischen Truppen das Land verlassen haben werden, das betonte NATO Generalsekretr Rasmussen. (**Reported speech: factual statement via source attribution**)

Wie gefhrlich die Lage immer noch in Afghanistan ist zeigte sich heute wieder. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

UNO-Chef Ban Ki Moon und der schwedische Auenminister Bildt wurden wegen Raketenangriffen auf den Kabuler Flughafen umgeleitet und mit Hubschraubern zur Konferenz eingeflogen. (**Factual statement**)

(2)

Sie komme nach dem Urlaub wieder sagte Angela Merkel heute bei ihrem Auftritt vor der Bundespressekonferenz, (**Reported speech: factual statement via source attribution**)

eine kleine Anspielung auf die Serie der Rcktritte ihrer Parteifreunde. (**Interpretation/evaluation**)

Dabei htte die Kanzlerin viel mehr Grnde zermrbt zu sein als die meisten schwarzen Spitzenpolitiker der Lnder. (**Factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Die Umfragewerte sind im Keller. (**Factual statement**)

Der Eindruck ist was die Regierung heute auf die Beine stellt steht morgen meist schon wieder auf dem Kopf. (**Interpretation/evaluation**)

So schaute die Kanzlerin vor allem nach vorn. Nach der Sommerpause da msse man Wichtiges anpacken. Unter anderem die Energiepolitik und die Gesundheitsreform. (**Interpretation/evaluation, reported speech**)

Aber gerade dort hatte es besonders heftigen Streit zwischen CSU und FDP gegeben. (**factual statement, interpretation/evaluation**)

Solches Gezanke sei Vergangenheit sagte die Kanzlerin. (**Reported speech: factual statement via source attribution**)

Ein Urlaubswunsch? (**Interpretation, evaluation**)

As can be seen T02 contains only one statement whose factuality is highlighted by additional source attribution which indicates that this is an evaluation performed by an external news actor. The rest are factual statements without source attribution thus often reflecting the presenter's own interpretation/evaluation of a state of affairs (e.g. "Die Afghanen sind stolz").

Likewise, T04 contains three statements that are ascribed to an external news actor via source attribution. The rest are again either factual statements without such attribution that most of the time mirror the presenter's interpretation/evaluation or they are direct interpretations/evaluations of a state of affairs (e.g. "Ein Urlaubswunsch?").

Consequently, the presenter, in contrast to the news reader in the news magazine, does not only *reproduce* valuating statements made by others using source attribution but *produces* valuating statements himself/herself. Yet, we should be careful to treat such evaluations as true expressions of subjective speaker perspective since evaluation is necessarily involved in the institutionally ascribed function of interpreting events and states of affairs and consequently we can treat it as a fundamental part of the institutional role of being a presenter. We could argue therefore that via evaluation, i.e. via the application of speaker's modality, the presenter does nothing more than simply fulfilling his/her institutionally ascribed role and hence such evaluation should not be seen as the expression of the presenter's own subjective viewpoint as private person. As a consequence this means that the use of speaker's modality by the presenter is respectively relativized and hence is still in line with an overall demand for objective information of the audience.

Indeed when we take a closer look at *how* the presenter actually evaluates we can see a tendency here towards reduced subjectivity in that evaluation. That is, the presenter *never* uses the German first person personal pronoun "ich" that otherwise explicitly expresses the speaker's subjective viewpoint. An apt example in this connection is provided in T04 as reproduced above: "*Der Eindruck ist* was die Regierung heute auf die Beine stellt steht morgen meist schon wieder auf dem Kopf." Characteristically, the presenter does not say "I have the impression that [...]" but he uses a more indirect and impersonal strategy beginning with a noun phrase (in italics) that lacks the use of any personal pronoun, definite or indefinite (e.g. "man"). Other such examples include:

T02: lead-in [3:49 – 4:30]: Aber *der Eindruck bleibt* dass der Kanzlerin die Männer weglaufen. (**Indirect/impersonal evaluation via noun phrase**)

T01: lead-in [7:49 – 8:28]: Kaum ist die Kanzlerin außer Landes tanzen die CDU-Männer aus der Reihe, *könnte man jedenfalls meinen*. (**Explicit evaluation with indefinite German pronoun "man"**)<sup>360</sup>

T02: lead-in [24:41 – 25:09]: Aber *sein wir ehrlich*, wenn's darum geht die Haare zu waschen oder das Geschirr sauber zu bekommen dann nutzt wohl doch *jeder* gern den Luxus des warmen Wassers und zwar direkt aus der Leitung. (**Explicit evaluation with German personal pronoun "wir" (first person plural) and German indefinite pronoun "jeder"**)<sup>361</sup>

T03: lead-in [13:53 – 14:28]: *Besonders schwer zu begreifen* warum ein und dasselbe Medikament bei uns wesentlich teurer verkauft wird als in anderen Ländern. (**Indirect/impersonal evaluation via adverbial phrase**)

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<sup>360</sup> The evaluation here also functions to express the presenter's degree of commitment towards the truth of what is stated in the proposition. Hence, the German modal verb "könnte" is used to express epistemic modal meaning whereby the presenter reduces the factuality of the statement.

<sup>361</sup> Via use of the pronouns "wir" (we) and "jeder" (everybody) the presenter presents himself as a member of the audience he addresses. Thus, we can see the application of "wir" as corresponding to an 'inclusive we' with a "you and I" meaning that involves the totality of a disperse audience and the person of the presenter.

All examples listed here lack the German first person “ich” in the evaluation of states of affairs (even though “wir” actually includes “ich”). Consequently, we can define the absence of the German first person personal pronoun “ich” in interpretation/evaluation by the presenter as another aspect that characterizes the presenter’s execution of the interpretive function and we can define it as reflecting reduced subjectivity in that evaluation.

Indeed the general orientation towards objective information is particularly evident in the format-specific text type of the ‘commentary’ entailed in each edition of the chosen news magazine. The commentary is an exclusively opinion-based journalistic text type and therefore by definition always involves the expression of subjective speaker perspective. Characteristically, the commentary is never performed by the presenter but always by an external journalist or ‘expert’ on the topic. Therefore, the presented opinion is formally indicated as that of the person performing the commentary but never as the one of the presenter. This is also demonstrated in the presenter’s action of framing the commentary with an opening section introducing the person performing the commentary (“Dazu jetzt ein Kommentar von x”) and a closing section denoting the end of the commentary (“x kommentierte”). In this way the presenter makes use of his/her structuring function and separates a highly opinion-based text type from the other information-oriented text types in the news magazine. (“This is a commentary and does not reflect my position,” i.e. the position of the presenter as institutional agent acting on behalf of the news magazine with an ascribed function of objective information). The significance of this procedure lies in the fact that the news magazine can illustrate a (truly) subjective viewpoint and by means of this – performing the media’s control function – can effectively criticize current events and states of affairs while at the same time obeying a formal, overarching institutionally ascribed function of objective information including the perception of a presenter with an overall neutral stance. That is, due to its indication as other-performed opinion the highly subjective commentary as such does not contradict the news magazine’s function of transmitting objective information.

To sum up, both the news reader and the presenter in the news magazine can be determined to fulfil the institutional role of an “objective information transmitter”, which will influence their language use in so far as it requires the absence of or significant reduction in speaker’s modality – the expression of subjective speaker perspective.

The language use of the news reader in the news magazine mirrors that of the news reader in the speaker-based format in this respect. Accordingly, it features both utterance modality (i.e. epistemic modality) and speaker’s modality which are governed by the institutionally required objectivity. Thus, the overt expression of subjective speaker perspective is typically ascribed to an external source via source attribution.

The language use of the presenter in the news magazine is determined by the fulfillment of an institutionally ascribed function of interpretation/evaluation. Interpretation/evaluation of

events and states of affairs by the presenter is characterized by particular linguistic strategies: (1) presentation and evaluation of additional background information, (2) commenting on immediately preceding broadcast reports, (3) formulation of questions, (4) frequent use of figurative language, (5) application of discourse particle “tja” with commenting function, (6) frequency of statements with/without source attribution, (7) absence of German first person personal pronoun “ich.”

The concrete execution of this function also reveals a general orientation at the objective transmission of information in accordance with the ascribed institutional role. Evaluation by the presenter is part of his/her institutional role and therefore role-based and does not reflect subjective speaker perspective as a private person. True subjective viewpoints are integrated into the news magazine via the opinion-based ‘commentary’ performed by a person other than the presenter.

Since the news reader in the news magazine behaves identically to the news reader in the speaker-based format the position of the dot in the conceptual continuum also agrees with that determined for the speaker-based format, namely at the institutional talk side of the conceptual continuum. As the presenter in the news magazine behaves similarly in some respects (general use of epistemic modality and source attributions) but fundamentally differently in some other respects (interpretation/evaluation via different linguistic means, e.g. the frequency of source attributions) this aspect is accounted for in the conceptual continuum via slight rightward movement (cf. table 22). That is, the presenter’s use of language, as the one of the news reader, fundamentally orientates at the objective transmission of information in accordance with the fulfillment of the ascribed institutional role of “objective information transmitter” and therefore his/her language is also predominantly institutional in character. However, the linguistic differences resulting from an interpretive function of the presenter have to be accounted for respectively.

(h) Speech activities and speech events: speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality

• **The news reader/speaker:**

As in the investigated speaker-based news format, the speech situation in the news magazine is characterized by the absence of interaction within the institutional frame concerning the news reader who solely engages in the monologic speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of format-specific journalistic text types to a large, disperse audience.

As argued in chapter 7.1.1, the institutional role of the news reader is that of an “objective information transmitter” which involves an absence or at least a significant reduction in the

expression of personal opinions by the news reader. This reduced subjectivity implies reduced emotionality which is mirrored on the lexical level in the general absence of affective language. The general absence of linguistic means that express the speaker's feelings also indicates a lack of personal involvement into what is being talked about. This lack in the news reader's use of language thus corresponds to a lack in this respect characterizing those speech activities and events that have been determined here as appropriate forms of verbal discourse within a formal speech style applied in a formal speech situation: discussions and debates.

- **The presenter:**

As aforementioned, the presenter engages both in a monologic speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports and in a dialogic speech event of the news interview with a correspondent or a news actor. As concerns the presenter, the institutional speech situation is therefore characterized by the absence *and* presence of interaction within the institutional frame.

Since the presenter's use of language in the news magazine is guided by the same requirement towards objective information of the audience (cf. factor (4) on type of politeness), his/her language in the aforementioned speech activity and event will be governed consequently by the fulfillment of an institutional role as "objective information transmitter" and we can expect that this role will correspondingly be expressed via the presence of particular linguistic means and the absence of other such means, namely those that are determined above for the news reader: absence of affective language as direct expression on a relationship level of reduced subjectivity and reduced emotionality and hence also of a lack of personal involvement. Indeed, if we consider the neutral stance that has been described for the interviewer in the news interview, who refrains from making any personally motivated comments and evaluations of speaker actions and states of affairs (cf. Greatbatch, 1998), then we find this reflected exactly in the lack of personal involvement that is assumed here. Relevant comments made by the presenter (in the news interview or lead-ins) are thus to be seen solely as a part of his/her institutional role (which involves an interpretive function). Strictly speaking, the presenter's performance of speech activities and speech events involves the fulfillment of clearly ascribed communicative tasks of structuring, interpreting and para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1) and we can assume that the accomplishment of these tasks, guided by objectivity, involves the presenter's lack of personal involvement. (For example, the presenter's direct addressing of the audience is a linguistic means of para-social interaction but constitutes a part of the institutional role of being a presenter in the news magazine and does not reflect the presenter's true interest in the addressees). The lack of personal involvement underlying the language use also of the presenter therefore implies the presence of speech activities and events that in their nature correspond to those activities and events that are typical of linguistic formality, i.e. those characterizing a formal speech style within a formal speech situation.

To sum up, the language use of both presenter and news reader in the news magazine is characterized by speech events and/or speech activities that include their performer's lack of personal involvement into what is being talked about. The absence of personal involvement defines these activities and events as parts of verbal discourse within the institutional frame that correspond to those speech activities and events that are typical of linguistic formality illustrating a reduction in subjectivity and hence in emotionality.

### **(3) Extent of speech regulation**

In accordance with the investigated speaker-based news format the production of talk within the news magazine fundamentally underlies strict processes of institutional pre-planning. That is, the topics featured in the news magazine and their concrete verbal realization by both the presenter and the news reader in the chosen editions of the format are always the result of preceding institutional work processes within diverse editorial offices. As a consequence, also speech by the presenter and news reader as applied in the news magazine that is at hand is highly regulated since it is unexceptionally pre-produced by the institution television. Clearly, based on topics previously featured in the speaker-based program and hence also based on journalistic criteria of newsworthiness, this regulation relates to strict pre-determination of appropriate topics and their order in each edition including their overall verbal and stylistic realization via different journalistic text types. Such strict regulation even remains valid in the news magazine for the text type 'news interview' which, as a speech event, significantly differs from everyday conversation in the clear attribution of communicative roles to those who participate in the speech event. Accordingly, the presenter takes on the role of the interviewer with an ultimate right to pose questions while the correspondent or news actor has the communicative role of the interviewee with a central obligation to answer questions. The local management that characterizes everyday conversation is not a characteristic feature of the interactive speech event labeled "news interview." Both are two different "speech-exchange systems" (cf. Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974) with different rules for appropriately, i.e. effectively, engaging in 'doing' conversation or news interviews.

### **(4) Predominant type of politeness: role-oriented versus person-oriented politeness**

As argued in the discussion of factor (2) on speech style, section (a) *self-monitoring*, the verbal discourse featured in the institutional speech situation of the television studio is both monolog- and dialog-based: the presenter engages either in a speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language predominantly via lead-ins to broadcast reports or participates as interviewer in the interactive speech event of the news interview with correspondents and news actors. The news reader's actions within the institutional frame, on the other hand, are restricted to the monologic speech activity of reading out the news also

applying institutionally pre-produced language. Consequently, the communicative situation is characterized by both the absence and presence of interaction within the institutional frame, although the news interview does not feature actual face-to-face interaction between agent (= presenter) and client (= correspondent or news actor) who are characteristically spatially separated. Their shared participation in verbal interaction is enabled by respective technologies that allow the transmission of the audio-visual television signal from an external location into the television studio and vice versa. The purpose of performing such interviews is their broadcast to a mass audience. Thus, the concepts of role-oriented and person-oriented politeness to explain verbal interaction in everyday and institutional contexts of speech have to be applied to the mass communicative situation: the news reader addresses an absent, disperse audience; the presenter, participating in multilateral communication, addresses an absent correspondent or news actor and simultaneously an absent, disperse audience.

- **The news reader/speaker:**

As in the studied speaker-based news format the institutionally required objectivity of the news reader in the news magazine is an important factor that limits the occurrence of personal involvement in the transmission of information. That is, the institutional role of ‘news reader’ ultimately determines appropriate – in this case purely objective – agent action which implies the absence of or relevant reduction in personal involvement into what is being talked about. Indeed, in accordance with the news reader in the speaker-based program, also the language use of the news reader in the news magazine is characterized by the presence of emphatic stress for rhetorical reasons but typically also by an absence of affective stress (e.g. to express empathy, anger or outrage).

A lack of personal involvement as required by the institutional role of “objective news reader” consequently implies the news reader’s lack of person-oriented politeness. His/her role as objective information transmitter instead involves a purely role-oriented politeness type that centrally incorporates the neutral stance of the news reader in providing information.

- **The presenter:**

Since the predominant institutional function to be fulfilled by the news format *per se* is that of (objective) information, this function is naturally valid not only for the speaker-based news format investigated here but also for the sub-format ‘news magazine’ that is at hand. On the surface, the main structural difference between the two information-oriented sub-formats consists in (1) greater running time of the news magazine, which allows more detailed discussion/background information of topics/events previously featured in the speaker-based format, and in (2) the sole presence of a news reader (= speaker-based format) versus combined presence of a presenter and a news reader (= magazine format) in the first frame of interaction.

When we accept the predominance of the information function also for the news magazine, then this implies that both the news speaker *and* the presenter incorporate an institutional role that is oriented at the objective transmission of information and that, consequently, entertainment of the audience is not an appropriate option and steps in the background. For the presenter in the news magazine this means that – in theory – (s)he will adopt the same fundamental institutional role of “objective information transmitter” than the news reader does in the two sub-formats. Accordingly, the adoption of this role also involves the adoption of role-oriented politeness with neutral speaker stance in addressing both television audience and correspondent/news actor and the general absence of person-oriented politeness that would express a true personal interest in the addressee.<sup>362</sup>

The institutional role of the presenter is more extensive than that of the news reader in two respects: Firstly, it involves the presenter’s active participation in a text type that is excluded from the prime time edition of the speaker-based format: the news interview. The presenter’s role here relates to the elicitation of information from the addressee, i.e. correspondent or news actor and, doing so, with an underlying aim of assumed objective information of the audience, this elicitation includes the application of role-oriented politeness. In other words, since role-oriented politeness is a fundamental constituent of fulfilling an institutional role as objective transmitter of information, it is necessarily also involved in the elicitation of information by the presenter in the news interview which constitutes the central communicative task to be managed by the presenter in that text type.

The application of role-oriented politeness in the elicitation of information by the presenter thus implies that such elicitation does not happen because there is a real interest of the presenter in the person – correspondent or news actor – spoken to but that it is simply a part of his/her institutional role as presenter ‘presenting’ information to the audience.

Secondly, the institutional role of the presenter is also more extensive than that of the news reader because its fulfillment is associated with the execution of clearly ascribed communicative functions of structuring, interpreting and para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1). Also para-social interaction – a formal means of viewer bonding via verbal means that aim at establishing a relationship between presenter, program and audience – has to be seen in view of fulfilling an institutional role that differs from acting as private person. That is, the presenter’s institutional role also pertains to a para-social function (e.g. via directly addressing the audience in greetings (opening sections) and farewells (closing sections)). As a part of the presenter’s institutional role this function is thus also part of the presenter’s role-oriented type of politeness that characterizes his/her communicative actions as institutional agent. Direct addressing therefore is not an expression of person-oriented politeness and hence does not indicate a true interest in the person spoken to and para-social interaction as such is not applied with the underlying aim of establishing a real-world relationship with the audience.

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<sup>362</sup> Whether the presenter actually shows the same neutral stance than the news reader in the magazine format is discussed in section (g) on linguistic modality.

That is, it does not express person-oriented politeness that characterizes communicative encounters in everyday conversation.

#### **(5) Access to the speech situation: public or non-public**

Once again, in accordance with the investigated speaker-based news format and the daytime talk show format, also the magazine format per se is characterized by public communication since the institutional speech situation of television can be accessed by everybody who has at his/her disposal the relevant technology for reception of the audio-visual television signal. For this reason it is a public speech situation with nearly unrestricted and therefore public access. Hence public access is valid for all magazine types that are focused on here.

#### **(6) Place and time of conversation: fixed or free**

Also here, in accordance with the two previously studied television formats, the magazine format is, firstly, produced within the institutional setting of the television studio and its broadcast is, secondly, subject to scheduling. Thus, the magazine format, too, including all relevant sub-types considered here, shows both a fixed place and time of conversation necessitated by production requirements. As concerns the news magazine, this special time is daily later in the evening regularly following the prime time edition of the speaker-based news format *Tagesschau*.

When we transfer the results again to the conceptual continuum (table 22) we see that a particular constellation of the factors that determine institutional and private talk emerges for the news magazine. We can see this constellation as defining a magazine-type specific factor profile for language use involving the speech of both presenter and news reader.

Table 22 presents the results for the considered magazine types in combination with those for the speaker-based news format and the daytime talk show format.

### **7.3.2.2 The political magazine**

The political magazines chosen for investigation here are the two German public service ones called *Panorama* (broadcast since 1961) and *Monitor* (broadcast since 1965).<sup>363</sup> Since they have a long tradition within German television the two magazines can be considered classic ones in their category.

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<sup>363</sup> Cf. Wegener (2001). *Panorama*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste; *Monitor*. ARD (WDR, Köln). Das Erste.

In the preceding chapter on the news magazine it was argued that the language use of both the presenter and the news reader is governed by the adoption of an institutional role as “objective information transmitter” that results from an underlying institutional function of information to be fulfilled by the news format as such. The adoption of such a communicative role by the presenter implies his/her neutral stance towards events and states of affairs that are reported on in the news magazine.

We can assume the same function of information to be valid predominantly for the political magazine. This assumption can also be based formally on the types of topics that are dealt with in the two magazines within this category for these are exclusively public topics in nature with an associated general public interest (cf. the discussion of factor (1) on conversational topics below). However, in contrast to the news magazine’s objective ways of executing its ascribed information function the execution of this function on the part of the political magazine also centrally implies the performance of the mass media’s control function and hence this means a movement away from pure objective information towards higher institutional subjectivity. In other words, unlike the news magazine, the execution of the information function in the political magazine also includes the communicator’s criticism of events and states of affairs that are reported on in the magazine type in such a form that it addresses and calls attention to relevant problems, questions etc. that concern the workings of the political and social system.<sup>364</sup> This criticism necessarily implies a deviation by the presenter in the political magazine from the neutral stance that characterizes the presenter and the news reader in the news magazine and we can assume that this deviation will be mirrored respectively in the language use of the presenter in the political magazine via a higher degree of linguistic subjectivity. More precisely, since the presenter’s institutional role includes an interpretive function (cf. chapter 7.3.1), it is here that we can expect this linguistic subjectivity will be revealed. Accordingly, the analysis of the presenter’s speech that is to follow should reveal the linguistic means whereby this assumed subjectivity is accomplished.

Thus, while the news magazine is given the possibility for institutional criticism only by means of the opinion-based text type “commentary” performed via an external expert, criticism is taken for granted in the political magazine and is accepted as its central purpose. It is in this respect that the institutional function of interpretation differs in the news and the political magazine. Interpretation in the former necessitates the presenter’s neutral stance in order to retain institutionally ascribed objectivity. Interpretation, therefore, is rather *descriptive* in character since it is restricted e.g. to the presentation of additional background information. Interpretation in the latter centrally includes institutional criticism to be executed by the presenter. Interpretation, therefore, is rather *prescriptive* in character in so far as it also involves a discussion about how the political/social system should or might work appropriately. In chapter 7.3.1 it is explained that the concrete manifestation of the interpretive function according to Burger (2005) is dependent on the actual type of magazine.

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<sup>364</sup> Cf. Wegener (2001: 56).

Consequently, we can see here that the difference in (the extent of) interpretation between the news and the political magazine is mainly a matter of the expectable depth of evaluation of events and states of affairs that takes place in so far as this evaluation is either descriptive or additionally prescriptive in nature.

(1) Appropriate conversational topic: public topics versus private topics

Table 19 lists all topics as featured in the two studied editions of each political magazine. There are 17 topics altogether. Of these topics nine are featured in *Panorama* and eight are featured in *Monitor*. Characteristically, all topics in the editions that are chosen for investigation cover political, social and economic matters. Thus, they are exclusively ‘hard news’ (17 topics = 100%). All topics can further be defined as being of high public interest because they fundamentally address the workings of the political, social and economic system as a whole and are therefore of significance for (the well-being of) society as a whole. Consequently, they are without exception ‘public topics’ appropriate for occurrence in the public sphere.

Date of broadcast	Topics
<u>Panorama</u> T01_PA_Das Erste 01.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nationalmannschaft: Nazis nicht stolz auf Deutschland</li> <li>• Wehrpflicht: Gammeln fürs Vaterland</li> <li>• Lästige Werbe-Anrufe: Datenschutzgesetz ein Flop</li> <li>• Ehrenämter bei Caritas &amp; Co.: Tarnung von Billigjobs</li> <li>• Präsidentenwahl mit der Brechstange: Merkel setzt Wulff durch</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[5 topics]</b></p>
T02_PA_Das Erste 22.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discounter Kik: Jagd auf arme Mitarbeiter</li> <li>• Aschewolke: Airlines ignorieren Entschädigungsanspruch</li> <li>• Volksentscheid Hamburg: Egoismus macht Schule</li> <li>• Endlager: Atom-Multis verdienen am eigenen Müll</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[4 topics]</b></p>
<u>Monitor</u> T01_MO_Das Erste 17.06.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milliardengrab Schweinegrippe: Wer steuerte die WHO?</li> <li>• Gauck oder Wulff: Countdown für die Bundesregierung</li> <li>• Euro in Gefahr: Wie Deutschland die Euro-Krise befeuert</li> <li>• Wir versuchen es immer wieder: Wie deutsche Juden die israelische Seeblockade durchbrechen wollen</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>[4 topics]</b></p>

T02_MO_Das Erste 08.07.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WM-Fieber: Wie Politik die Fußball euphorie nutzt</li> <li>• Depressive Kinder: Welchen Anteil hat die Schule?</li> <li>• Afghanistan: Steuergelder für Warlords und Taliban?</li> <li>• Teurer Zug: Ein Intercity zum Abgewöhnen</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center; color: blue;">[4 topics]</p>
<p><b>The titles of all topics are taken over from the online presence of each magazine:</b></p> <p><a href="http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv164.html">http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv164.html</a>  <a href="http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv166.html">http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv166.html</a>  <a href="http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor//sendungen/2010/0617/index.php5/index.php5">http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor//sendungen/2010/0617/index.php5/index.php5</a>  <a href="http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor//sendungen/2010/0708/index.php5/index.php5">http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor//sendungen/2010/0708/index.php5/index.php5</a></p>	

Table 19: The topics featured in the studied editions of the German political magazines *Panorama* and *Monitor*

## (2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style

### (a) Self-monitoring: high grade or low grade of self-monitoring

In accordance with the news magazine, the communicative actions of the presenter in the political magazine are characterized by the performance of either monolog-based speech activities of reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of program-specific text types or dialog-based speech events in the form of an interview with another institutional agent (cf. section (h) on speech activities and events).

Both monologic and dialogic forms of verbal communication within the institutional frame are characteristically limited in conversational spontaneity. That is, while the former lack spontaneity due to an absence of speaker interaction that would impose relevant demands of online production towards such spontaneity, the latter are not to be treated as news interviews ‘proper’ but rather serve a structural function within the magazine as elements leading over to the following program (cf. sections (d) and (h)). These elements typically lack the interactive spontaneity that characterizes the news interview in the news magazine: they feature pre-planned questions and expectable answers.

Since conversational spontaneity is significantly reduced in the political magazine and since the reading process in the speech activities can be assumed to require the presenter’s full attention, we can also assume a comparatively high degree of self-monitoring on the part of the presenter in the act of reading out institutionally pre-produced language.

The presenter’s self-monitoring is again reflected in characteristic patterns of emphatic stress. For example, in the studied editions of the two types of political magazines those words that are considered as important because they convey significant information are usually specifically stressed for rhetorical reasons in order to:

- highlight facts and figures:

“Rund *sechs* Millionen Menschen in Deutschland sind *zahlungsunfähig*. Sie haben *so* hohe *Schulden*, dass ihnen Pfändung droht“ (T02\_PA: lead-in [0:12 - 0:57]).

“Heute geht gerade Mal jeder *fünfte überhaupt* zum Bund“ (T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 – 3:56]).

“Wer *heute* seinen *Wehrdienst* antritt, ist im *Dezember* schon wieder *fertig*“ (T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 - 3:56]).

- Emphasize the fact that something *was* or was *not* done, *is* or is *not* the case:

“Ben Bolz, Johannes Edelhoff und Tobias Lickes über deutsche Fluggesellschaften, die sich *nicht* an das Gesetz halten“ (T02\_PA: lead-in [8:15 – 8:54]).

“*Wer* nun aber glaubt, Fußball sei eine rein *sportliche* Angelegenheit, *irrt gewaltig*“ (T01\_PA: lead-in [0:06 – 0:42])

“Und Deutschland hat bis heute *keine* Abnehmer für die *ungenutzten* *Impfstoffvorräte* gefunden“ (T01\_MO: [9:05 – 9:12])

“Doch es sollte nicht eine *Schattenwirtschaft* entstehen, die *riesiges* Geld in *falsche Hände spült*, und *genau* das *passiert*“ (T02\_MO: lead-in [13:55 – 14:50]).

The presenter’s high degree of self-monitoring is also visible in pronunciation patterns. Accordingly, in all lead-ins to broadcast reports the pronunciation of words in the reading process is clear, comprehensible and standard in character; again the phenomena of connected speech otherwise present in spontaneous everyday conversation are characteristically missing. Accordingly, there are no contracted or reduced forms but generally prestige, i.e. standard, varieties on the phonological level (such as [ɪst] for German “ist” and [nɪçt] for German “nicht”).

To sum up, the language use of the presenter in the political magazine can be determined to show a high grade of self-monitoring on the basis of three aspects: (1) formally on the simple process of (predominantly) reading out language that has been institutionally pre-produced; (2) in more concrete terms on the existence of characteristic stress patterns; (3) on pronunciation patterns characterized by the (dominant) use of standard phonetic varieties.

(b) Structural complexity: assumed overall high grade or low grade of structural complexity

Again we can argue that the presenter’s language use is generally subject to the same demands of recipient design in mass communication that were determined for the presenter in the news magazine. Therefore, we can assume that his/her speech on the level of syntactic complexity will correspond to the speech of the news presenter and show a general tendency towards clause coordination, i.e. parataxis, instead of complex subordination.

Indeed, the sentence structure characterizing the speech of the presenter in the political magazine is similar to the sentence structure that was illustrated for the presenter in the news magazine in the previous chapter. Accordingly, there are two dominant structure enhancing language features in the speech of the presenter in the political magazine: (1) adverbs and (2) conjunctions of different type whose application fulfills a general argumentative purpose expressing the presenter's overall critical stance:<sup>365</sup>

- **Adverbs:** e.g. *sonst, leider, dabei, deshalb*

So richtig richtig kann es nicht sein, sonst würde nicht eine Kinderpsychiatrie nach der anderen ihre Tore öffnen.

(T02\_MO: lead-in [4:40 – 5:18])

Leider hat diese Loreley auf Schienen auch einen bedauerlichen Hang andere in den Abgrund zu ziehen.

(T02\_MO: lead-in [22:07 – 22:48])

Dabei haben wir wirklich nur höflich gefragt.

(T01\_PA: [9:48 – 10:01])

Deshalb ist es auch besonders ehrwürdig wenn diese Ehrenämter missbraucht werden um einen regulären Arbeitsplatz zu ersetzen.

(T01\_PA: lead-in [16:04 – 16:39])

- **Conjunctions**

⇒ **Coordinating conjunctions:** e.g. *und* (high frequency), *oder, aber, doch, denn*

Das bringt man schon kleinen Kindern bei und das setzt sich im Laufe des Lebens fort.

(T02\_PA: lead-in [22:06 – 22:30])

Er war beliebt in der Bevölkerung, eben keiner dieser Parteisoldaten und das kam gut an, [...].

(T01\_MO: lead-in [9:20 – 9:56])

Während Deutschland also vor sich hin trötete und träumte und in Schwarz Rot Gold abtauchte [...].

(T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01])

Da werden bestimmt ein paar Tränen fließen, schlechte Laune auch hier und da. Und dann aber auch richtige Verzweiflung. Und ich frage mich [...]

(T02\_MO: lead-in [4:40 – 5:18])

Da wird einem einiges von der Regierung eingebimt zur Zeit, nämlich zu dieser Politik gibt es keine Alternative. Oder (.) am Sparkurs führt kein Weg vorbei. Oder (.) wir leben über unsere Verhältnisse. Sätze die falsch oder einfach lähmend sind.

(T01\_MO: lead-in [14:06 – 14:39])

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<sup>365</sup> All following examples represent the original notation according to the transcripts.

[D]ie ganz große WM-Euphorie ist vorbei, aber für Gesprächsstoff hatte dieses wunderbare Team ja wochenlang gesorgt.

(T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01])

Schön und gut. Doch es sollte nicht eine Schattenwirtschaft entstehen die riesiges Geld in falsche Hände spült [...].

(T02\_MO: lead-in [13:55 – 14:50])

Wer nun aber glaubt Fußball sei eine rein sportliche Angelegenheit irrt gewaltig. Denn Jan Liebold ist doch etwas sehr Politisches daran aufgefallen.

(T01\_PA: lead-in [0:06 – 0:42])

⇒ **Subordinating conjunctions:** *als, weil, wenn, nachdem, während*

Aber Verteidigungsminister Theodor zu Guttenberg wurde ja gerade ordentlich zurückgepiffen als er nur erwähnte eine Abschaffung der Wehrpflicht zu prüfen.

(T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 – 3:56])

Weil sie sich fürs Gemeinwohl engagieren werden sie vom Staat auch steuerlich begünstigt.

(T01\_PA: lead-in [16:04 – 16:39])

Deshalb ist es auch besonders ehrwürdig wenn diese Ehrenämter missbraucht werden um einen regulären Arbeitsplatz zu ersetzen.

(T01\_PA: lead-in [16:04 – 16:39])

Der isländische Vulkan war uns ja trotz seines doch eigenwilligen Namens sehr vertraut geworden nachdem er mit seiner üppigen Aschewolke im April den Flugverkehr über Europa lahmgelegt hatte.

(T02\_PA: lead-in [8:15 – 8:54])

Während Deutschland also vor sich hin trötete und träumte und in Schwarz Rot Gold abtauchte [...].

(T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01])

⇒ **Correlative conjunctions:** *entweder...oder*

[E]ntweder logistische Aufgaben selbst übernehmen und mit noch mehr Toten und Verletzten rechnen. Oder Outsourcing betreiben und dann die Kontrolle verlieren, wo Geld und Güter hingehen.

(T02\_MO: [21:46 – 22:07])

Also entweder fiebert man mit den Mannschaften bei der Fußball Weltmeisterschaft mit, oder wie gestern am spielfreien Tag liefert dann Berlin die große Show.

(T01\_PA: [0:06 – 0:42])

In accordance with the news magazine, we can relate the use (and diversity) of adverbs and conjunctions in the political magazine to the presenter's interpretive function that is here specifically also characterized by his/her critical stance towards presented events and states of affairs – an aspect that is characteristically absent in the news magazine whose presenter and news reader retain an institutional role of “objective information transmitter.” Interpretation

and critical evaluation in the political magazine involve an argumentative structure, too that essentially implies the use of conjunctions and adverbs in the form illustrated above. They are effective linguistic means whereby interpretive and evaluative activities are achieved.

Apart from the use of adverbs and conjunctions, the speech of the presenter in the political magazine does, however, significantly differ from the speech of the presenter in the news magazine as concerns the use of source attributions. As illustrated in the previous chapter, the language use of the presenter in the news magazine is characterized by the application of additional source attributions in order to highlight the validity of presented events and states of affairs and to attribute instances of affective language to institution-external sources. Section (g) on linguistic modality below demonstrates that the speech of the presenter in the political magazine – apart from one exception – fundamentally lacks additional source attributions. Hence these drop out as structure enhancing linguistic means in the political magazine. The same applies to complex referential specification via appositional noun phrases such as “[der] Freiburger Erzbischof Robert Zollitsch, de[r] [Vorsitzende] der Deutschen Bischofskonferenz” (T01\_TT: lead-in speaker/news reader [12:12 – 12:25]). This is not used as a means of referent identification by the presenter in the studied editions of the two political magazines.

However, what we do find are different types of dependent clauses which Biber (2001) associates with increased linguistic complexity. Accordingly, there are relative clauses that serve referent specification corresponding to English *wh*- or *th*-relative clauses (e.g. T01\_PA\_ lead-in [10:01 – 10:24]; T02\_PA: lead-in [8:15 – 8:54], lead-in [14:30 – 15:00]; T01\_MO: lead-in [22:17 – 23:11]; T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01], lead-in [13:55 – 14:50]). Other frequently used dependent clauses are *that* complement clauses (e.g. T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 – 3:56], lead-in [22:42 – 23:08]; T02\_PA: lead-in [0:12 – 0:57], lead-in [14:30 – 15:00], lead-in [15:00 – 15:57]).

When we take a closer look though at that obvious structural complexity of the presenter’s language we find that it is in fact sometimes relativized by intonation, as it is in the news magazine. That is, although we cannot deny that there is indeed structural elaboration, at times the presenter also tends to show an intonation pattern that is characterized by falling intonation signaling the end of a sentence/utterance that otherwise could have been continued. In this way structural complexity is reduced as sentences/utterances are structurally simplified. One example shall suffice to illustrate this here:

Nun ist es ja völlig klar, dass gerade solche Menschen Arbeit brauchen. Sonst kommen sie nie aus ihrer Situation heraus. Und solange man gute Arbeit leistet, kann es dem Arbeitgeber ja auch vollkommen egal sein, ob man nun privat in Not steckt.

(T02\_PA: lead-in [0:12 - 0:57])  
(Original notation according to the transcript)

Transformed into a sentence in written language this excerpt could have been like that:

Nun ist es ja völlig klar, dass gerade solche Menschen Arbeit brauchen, sonst kommen sie nie aus ihrer Situation heraus und solange man gute Arbeit leistet, kann es dem Arbeitgeber ja auch vollkommen egal sein, ob man nun privat in Not steckt.

Following the original notation of the transcript, the presenter's speech illustrates falling intonation that precedes the use of the adverb "sonst" and of the German coordinating conjunction "und" (represented via underlining). This reduces the structural complexity of an otherwise rather complex sentence in written language.

To sum up, similar to the presenter in the news magazine, the language use of the presenter in the political magazine is characterized by particular linguistic means which contribute to an increase in overall structural complexity: frequent use of adverbs and different types of conjunctions. Their use can be explained with the presenter's ascribed role of interpretation and critical evaluation of events and states of affairs. The presenter in the political magazine also shows a use of different types of dependent clauses similar to the presenter in the news magazine which also play a role in the increase of overall structural complexity. At the same time the speech of the presenter in the political magazine significantly differs from that of the news presenter with respect to (1) a lack of source attribution and (2) a lack of elaborate referential specification via modifying noun phrases. In these respects the speech of the presenter in the political magazine is structurally less complex than that of the news presenter and this is accounted for respectively in the conceptual continuum via a slight movement to the right from the news presenter (cf. table 22). As argued in connection with the news magazine, an avoidance of ultimate structural complexity in the political magazine can be related to an assumed recipient design orientation in mass communication.

(c) Word choice: lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality or informality

In accordance with the news magazine the choice of words by the presenter in the political magazine is dependent on the underlying function of information to be fulfilled by the format. Strictly speaking, the presenter in the political magazine adopts an institutional role of "information transmitter" yet not that of an "objective information transmitter" that characterizes the news presenter. That is, while the latter requires a neutral stance, the former is defined by the presenter's critical stance in accordance with an overall control function (cf. the beginning of this chapter and section (g) on linguistic modality).

While the adoption of an institutional role as "objective information transmitter" necessarily involves the minimization of expressing subjective viewpoints and hence implies the absence of both colloquial, i.e. informal and affective language, the adoption of an institutional role as information transmitter comprising a critical stance allows the dropping of such institutional objectivity and therefore, by definition, it also allows the presenter's

expression of subjective viewpoints – i.e. the application of speaker’s modality – and the occurrence of colloquial, informal as well as affective language. (Since the presenter in the tabloid magazine follows a general entertainment/infotainment orientation this also holds generally true in fact for the tabloid magazine to be investigated in chapter 7.3.2.3).

When we take a look at the speech of the presenter in the political magazine on the lexical level we find a few instances that may be considered as affective language; “ziemliche Schweinerei” (T02\_PA: lead-in [22:06 – 22:30]), “[d]as war schon ein einmaliges Ereignis” (T02\_PA: lead-in [15:00 – 15:57]) and “dieses wunderbare Team” (T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01]). These are all performed on the part of the presenter herself. Affective language that is attributed to a particular news actor is absent in the investigated editions.<sup>366</sup> Colloquial terms, however, as we will see in a moment, are frequently used.

In fact, the political magazine shows two general tendencies with respect to the overall formal or informal nature of the vocabulary items it features. That is, on the one hand, we do indeed find a range of colloquial, informal linguistic expressions and some instances of figurative language (as we do in the news magazine). Relevant examples include:

#### **Colloquial, informal (idiomatic) expressions:**

- *Dafür sorgen dass frische Luft ins Ritual kommt* (T01\_MO: lead-in [9:20 – 9:56]), *einbimsen*, *etwas umkremeln* (in the sense of investigate and clarify) (T01\_MO: lead-in [14:06 – 14:39]), *vor sich hin tröten*, *einlullen* (T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01]), *jemanden zurückpfeifen*, *jemandem etwas einimpfen* (T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 – 3:56]), *quasi für umsonst* (T01\_PA: lead-in [10:01 – 10:24]), *Chefin* (T01\_PA: lead-in [22:42 – 23:08]), *Bahnchef* (T02\_PA: interview/teaser [28:14 – 28:41]), *Tschüß* as farewell (*Panorama*, *Monitor*)

#### **Figurative language (linguistic metaphors):**

- T02\_MO: lead-in [22:07 – 22:48]: the presenter compares the German Intercity train with the mythical figure of the mermaid Loreley (“Loreley on rails”); T02\_PA: lead-in [0:12 – 0:57]: the firing of a heavily indebted employee is compared to a drowning person who is drawn away from his/her lifebelt.

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<sup>366</sup> Although “[d]as war schon ein einmaliges Ereignis” (T02\_PA: lead-in [15:00 – 15:57]) and “dieses wunderbare Team” (T02\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 1:01]) express affective meaning, in comparison with the quoted “ziemliche Schweinerei” and the affective terms occurring in the other formats investigated here this is another emotional level in so far as the examples listed here are positively affective while the other examples are characteristically negatively affective and are therefore more significant examples of affective language so to say. That is, the terms here are expressions of positive emotions while the terms presented elsewhere are strong expressions of negative emotions. Indeed when we accept the application of affective language generally as a component of an institutional role to be fulfilled then this is another factor that renders such affective language use by the presenter less significant in so far as it does not actually constitute an expression of a true viewpoint as private person. The use of affective language in the political magazine – and in fact in any other magazine type – does thus not express a high level of underlying emotionality on the part of the speaker as *private person*.

As in the news magazine especially the use of figurative language functions to liven up the language – in this case in order to achieve a critical tone (see in this connection also section (g) on linguistic modality). Also here figurative language is a linguistic means serving entertainment and it is here that language use gains infotainment character because information receives a similar “entertaining preparation” than in the news magazine.

On the other hand, again similar to the news magazine, we also find vocabulary terms that can be defined as belonging to a ‘public register’ in accordance with the public nature of the topics discussed in the magazine type. In other words, the concrete choice of lexical items in the political magazine is immediately influenced by the type of topics featured in the program. Since the chosen editions of the two magazines exclusively feature hard news, i.e. topics concerned with political, economic and social matters, this is naturally mirrored in word choice and therefore we find words within a public register addressing those topics. Respective political and economic terms within this register include, e.g.:

- T02\_PA: lead-in [15:00 – 15:57]:
- Topic: Volksentscheid Hamburg: *Votum, Bürgerinitiative, Volksentscheid, Schulreform*
  
- T02\_PA: lead-in [22:06 – 22:30]:
- Topic: Endlager: Atom-Multis verdienen am eigenen Müll: *Abfallgebühren, Entsorgung, Atommüll, Stromkonzerne*
  
- T01\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 0:59]:
- Topic: Milliardengrab Schweinegrippe: *Schweinegrippe, Influenza-Welle, Pandemie, WHO, oberste Gesundheitsbehörde der Vereinten Nationen, Warnstufe, Schutzimpfung*

To sum up, in contrast to the presenter in the news magazine, the presenter in the political magazine adopts a critical stance in the transmission of information in accordance with an underlying control function to be executed by the political magazine. This critical stance is reflected on the lexical level in (1) the application of colloquial, informal lexical expressions and figurative language as well as (2) the application of affective language by the presenter without attribution to external news actors. Since overall word choice is also heavily dependent on topic choice, the speech of the presenter is also characterized by a ‘public register’ that relates to featured political, economic (and social) topics.

When we compare the language use of the presenter in the political magazine with that of the presenter in the news magazine on the lexical level we find that they mainly differ in the extent to which affective language is used. That is, while affective language is absent from the language of the presenter in the news magazine, it does in fact occur in the speech of the presenter in the political magazine. Both behave lexically similarly in their use of linguistic

informality: colloquial expressions and figurative language that are applied presumably in an attempt to increase the entertaining effect of the language.

The deviation by the presenter of the political magazine in the direction of using more affective terms is indicated respectively in the conceptual continuum (cf. table 22) once more with a slight right-ward position from the news presenter. Yet, it does not reach the middle-position of the presenter in the tabloid magazine that is characterized by the absence of hard news and hence of a public register in the form presented above (see chapter 7.3.2.3).

(d) Speech planning: relatively high or low degree of speech planning

In accordance with the presenter in the news magazine, a definition of the presenter's degree of speech planning in the political magazine needs to be done with respect to his/her participation in either a monolog-based speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language predominantly in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports or in a dialog-based interview with another institutional agent.<sup>367</sup>

As concerns the former the demands of online production towards (increased) linguistic spontaneity that otherwise significantly affect speech planning in all dialogic, i.e. interactive, forms of verbal communication are characteristically absent here. Consequently, there is less pressure towards linguistic spontaneity than there is in verbal interaction. In fact, we can even argue for a complete absence of linguistic spontaneity here since it is simply not an option within this reading activity of the presenter who is supposed to restrict himself/herself to the simple process of reading out in accordance with the adoption of an institutional role. (This also fundamentally holds true for the tabloid magazine).

The institutional pre-production of language that takes place also here means a true process of language pre-planning within relevant editorial offices. This advance planning precedes any concrete process of language use by the presenter whose final reading activity due to such elaborate institutional pre-planning does not require any online planning of speech.

As concerns the latter we can even here argue, too with reduced demands of online production and thus with reduced spontaneity since the interview that characterizes the investigated editions of the two chosen political magazines significantly differs from the news interview in the news magazine in so far as it does not constitute a news interview proper but rather is a structural element within the magazine that leads over to the following program. Being such an element it not only includes a program announcement but specifically also functions as a teaser that introduces an important topic of that program (i.e. the following news magazine). In contrast to the 'real' news interview as featured, for example, in the studied editions of the news magazine, the interview in the political magazine at the end of each edition is much shorter – question by presenter, followed by answer of institutional agent, followed by 'thank you' – and features pre-produced questions but characteristically

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<sup>367</sup> Cf. section (h) on speech activities and speech events.

lacks the uncertainty that often underlies the answers given by news actors in the news interview proper.

To sum up, the political magazine can be defined to involve a relatively high degree of speech planning in so far as it is characterized by an advance production on the part of the institution of speech to be featured in the magazine. This institutionally pre-planned language is read out by the presenter in the form of program-specific text types and (s)he is therefore limited in overall linguistic spontaneity. In contrast to the news magazine, this is valid for both monologic speech activities and dialogic speech events in the political magazine.

(e) Information structure: expected high or low grade of explicit information

Since the political magazine follows the same basic institutional function of information than the news magazine – though with much more space for criticism – we can argue here, too that the demands placed on informative media talk towards completeness and comprehensibility of information will have an impact on the overall presentation of information also in this magazine type and because complete and comprehensible information is generally problematic due to presumed varying communicative needs of the large, disperse audiences in mass communication we can also here state a general tendency rather towards elaborateness in the presentation of information. Let us see whether this is the case or not.

The investigation of the news magazine in this respect has shown a high grade of explicit information (i.e. low grade of linguistic vagueness) in the presentation of *featured news actors* including those whose political/social function can be treated as shared knowledge. The investigation has also illustrated such explicit information in connection with presented *events* and *states of affairs*.

When we compare these findings to the editions of the political magazines chosen for investigation, we find a general tendency towards less explicit information (i.e. a higher grade of linguistic vagueness) in connection with the presentation of news actors. That is, news actors do not receive a similar detailed specification of their identity – their political or social function – than do the news actors in the news magazine. Accordingly, we only find a few instances of referential specification via modifying noun phrases similar to the news magazine (cf. *Panorama*: “Verteidigungsminister Theodor zu Guttenberg” (T01), “Bahnchef Grube,” (T02)). Most of the time, however, the news actors featured in the political magazines do not receive further specification of their identity in any way. For example *Monitor* (T01): lead-in [9:20 – 9:56] contains four names but the referents are not specified in more detail: *Horst Köhler, Merkel, Wulff, Gauck*. Likewise, the interview at the end of the same edition features *Hannelore Kraft* whose identity remains unspecified [28:40 – 29:01]. In *Panorama* (T01): lead-in [22:42 – 23:08] we even find an instance of naming a political function (“Aber die Politik, Partei und vor allem die *Chefin* ticken eben anders”) but the person fulfilling that

function characteristically remains unnamed. This is a central difference to the news magazine where any news actor talked about is also respectively identified in more detail either via attributive adjectives or appositional noun phrases as we have seen. As was shown this also especially relates to persons that are not constantly featured in the news.

When we take a look at events and states of affairs reported on in the political magazines, however, we find that they behave similarly to the news magazine in the degree of explicit information they receive, namely in the form of presenting additional and relevant background information to that events and states of affairs. An apt example in this connection is *Monitor*: T02: lead-in [13:55 – 14:50]: In the beginning we are presented with a fact, an event that has recently occurred:

“Vorgestern im Süden von Kundus: Ein Tanklastler wird von den Taliban in die Luft gesprengt. Er transportierte Benzin für die ISAF-Truppen in Afghanistan.“

This is followed by the presentation of additional background information concerning the purpose of the trucks:

“Er war nur einer von hunderten LKW, die die Soldaten täglich mit Nahrung, Wasser und Benzin versorgen.“

This again is complemented by interpretation and evaluation by the presenter (cf. section (g) on linguistic modality for this example). Another example is T01\_MO: lead-in [22:17 – 23:11]: we are presented with pictures from Turkish television. Their broadcast is preceded by relevant background information:

“Gerade mal siebzehn Tage ist es her da gab es diesen nach wie vor nicht untersuchten Zwischenfall im Mittelmeer. Das israelische Militär stoppte gewaltsam eine Flotte mit Aktivisten auch aus Deutschland die die Seeblockade vor Gaza durchbrechen wollten.“

Yet another example considers the eruption of an Icelandic volcano in T02\_PA: lead-in [8:15 – 8:54]. The presenter refers to the consequences caused by that eruption for European air traffic:

“Der isländische Vulkan war uns ja trotz seines doch eigenwilligen Namens sehr vertraut geworden, nachdem er mit seiner üppigen Aschewolke im April den Flugverkehr über Europa lahmgelegt hatte.“

This example also illustrates that although referential specification is less detailed with featured news actors it is indeed more detailed in character again with

- featured objects (e.g. “Was macht eigentlich der Eyjafjallajökull? *Der isländische Vulkan* [...]“ (T02\_PA)),

- institutions (e.g. “*Textilunternehmen Kik*” (T02\_PA), “die WHO, *die oberste Gesundheitsbehörde der Vereinten Nationen*” (T01\_MO)),
- particular terms (“per Volksentscheid. *Ein demokratisches Mittel [...]*“ (T02\_PA), “[eine] *Influenza-Welle von globalem Ausmaß*, [eine] *Pandemie*“ (T01\_MO)),
- other persons, i.e. mythical creatures that are referred to (“[...] d[ie] *Nixe Loreley*. *Sie zog bekanntlich die Rheinschiffer mit ihrem betörenden Gesang in den Abgrund*,” “*rheinische femme fatale*” (T02\_MO)).

These examples increase the overall grade of explicit information within the political magazines that is characteristically reduced otherwise if we solely focus on the news actors featured in the magazine type.

To sum up, in accordance with the news magazine, the political magazine illustrates a general tendency towards a rather high grade of explicit information. In the political magazine this tendency does, however, not result from referential specification of news actors – which as we have seen is significantly reduced in comparison with the news magazine – but it is based rather on (1) the explicit verbalization of background knowledge in connection with presented events and states of affairs and (2) the referential specification of featured objects, institutions, important terms and mythical creatures. This latter type of referential specification other than with familiar or less familiar news actors and the explicit verbalization of background information with events and states of affairs that are reported on are indeed immediately consistent with the journalistic objectives of complete and comprehensible information of the audience.

Since the political magazine differs from the news magazine in the extent of specifying the identity of featured news actors – which means a higher degree of linguistic vagueness on the level of information structure in this respect for the political magazine – this is accounted for in the conceptual continuum via a slight rightward position from the presenter and news reader in the news magazine.

(f) Conversational redress: expected high or low degree of conversational redress

Again we can state a relevant social distance between the presenter of the political magazine and the disperse audience (s)he addresses similar to an assumed social distance between agent(s) and client(s) in social institutions other than television. We can explain this distance with the agent’s strict adherence to fulfilling an institutionally ascribed communicative role of “presenter,” in this case of a political magazine. That is, although the presenter’s role in this type of magazine is not that of an “objective information transmitter” (as it is in the two news

formats investigated here), we can nevertheless assume that the presenter, simply because of the fact that (s)he adopts this particular institutional role, will exclusively act according to this role only. That means, (s)he will indeed generally retain institutional objectivity and, doing so, the identity of the presenter as private person with own subjective viewpoints and a personal interest in the addressee will thus step in the background. That is, (s)he will refrain from making any *truly personally* motivated evaluations and comments. These are always part of the ascribed institutional role and, as we have seen, this role centrally involves an interpretive function (cf. chapter 7.3.1) which in the political magazine includes the presenter's criticism of presented events and states of affairs. His/her application of speaker's modality (cf. section (g)) is thus a direct expression of this interpretive function and it has to be seen in light of this function in the first place.<sup>368</sup> Therefore, also the presenter's seemingly subjective evaluation featuring the German 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun "Ich" (e.g. T02\_MO: farewell/closing section [27:53 – 28:10]: "*Ich* freue mich dass Sie zugeschaut haben") is performed on behalf of the institutional role and for this reason is rather not an expression of a true personal viewpoint as private person.

Although it fundamentally involves criticism of presented events and states of affairs, the communicative behavior of the presenter in the political magazine implies an overall reduction in *actual* face threat of performed utterances simply because this behavior is *exclusively role-oriented* in nature but never immediately personally motivated (even if the presented criticism corresponds to the presenter's opinion as a private person). For this reason, the concrete risk of face threat which is otherwise present in everyday conversation especially also as concerns the verbalization of subjective viewpoints (e.g. criticism of events, states of affairs and persons) is characteristically not present here or at least significantly reduced. This is also the case because we can indeed assume that it is shared knowledge that the political magazine will be critical in executing its ascribed information function. Thus, if utterances performed by the presenter are face threatening – which, we can argue, they actually are because they involve criticism – then this is another quality of face threat than in everyday conversation because it is an expected (and accepted) threat of face. That is, face threat happens on an institutional level because speech acts are performed on behalf of the institution within an institutional role and face threat is therefore never personally motivated by definition. Therefore, we can speak of a reduced risk of face threat that is otherwise given in everyday conversation, simply because we are dealing here with another quality of face threat, namely one that is role-motivated but typically never personally motivated as in everyday conversation where it expresses interlocutors' personal involvement into what is being talked about.

It is in this respect that we can speak of a high grade of conversational redress that is not expressed via a high degree of intentional indirectness but consists in the presenter's

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<sup>368</sup> In fact this would consequently also apply to any potential instances of affective language in this particular magazine type.

restriction to acting solely within an institutional role whereby (s)he formally keeps up a social distance between institutional agent and addressed audience. The mere adoption of this role reduces the face threat potential of performed (critical) speech acts since these are never personally motivated but are always accepted as a part of exactly this institutional role. This is similar to the news magazine (where the risk of face threat is minimized via objective language use in the form of factual statements).

When we compare the opening and closing sections in the two editions of the chosen political magazines with those in the news magazine we can see that the political magazine generally opens with a greeting and closes with a farewell that is more personal and informal and hence less distancing in nature than are the greetings and farewells in the news magazine. Accordingly, the two editions of *Panorama* show the greeting formula “Herzlich willkommen zu Panorama;” the two editions of *Monitor* open with “Willkommen” (T01\_MO) and “Ich begrüße Sie herzlich” (T02\_MO). Although the audience is mostly not personally addressed – and where it is the greeting features the more deferential German 2<sup>nd</sup> person pronoun “Sie” – it is not only welcomed but warmly welcomed.<sup>369</sup> Yet, the use of the German “Sie” is a verbal reflection of an obvious social distance between presenter and audience. Indeed also in the farewell in T01\_MO [29:01 – 29:16]: “Liebe Zuschauer sagen Sie Ihren Fußball begeisterten Freunden und Verwandten dass es Monitor auch im Internet gibt“ the informality expressed via direct addressing with the adjective “liebe” (engl. *dear*) is limited by means of the immediately following socially distancing “Sie” (cf. “Liebe Zuschauer sagt Euren [...]”)

When we take into consideration the other farewells in the investigated editions of the two political magazines, the informal expression “Tschüß” seems to counteract the assumed social distance between institutional agent and clients and hence also formally contradicts an assumed high degree of conversational redress. However, we can treat it as a component of the presenter’s institutional role which implies para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1). That is, we can see it as an ultimate attempt by the institution at viewer bonding in the first place but it does not actually represent a true attempt at establishing a close relationship between presenter and audience. Hence the social distance between agent and clients remains valid even at the presence of such informal farewell expressions. (As we will see this is similar in the tabloid magazine).

To sum up, we can determine a high degree of conversational redress for the presenter in the political magazine. We can relate this degree to a minimized face threat potential of produced speech acts due to the presenter’s restriction to acting solely within his/her ascribed institutional role. The presenter’s adherence to his/her institutional role simultaneously involves the maintenance of a social distance between presenter as institutional agent and audience as clients.

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<sup>369</sup> Cf. the news magazine: “Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren.”

(g) Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker's modality

It is explained at the beginning of this chapter that the production of the political magazine underlies the same institutional function of information than does the production of the news magazine. A central difference between the two types of magazine, however, concerns the execution of the interpretive function by the presenter. Thus, while the presenter in the news magazine is expected to retain his/her institutionally ascribed neutral stance in the interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs that are reported on, the presenter in the political magazine is expected to behave more critically in the interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs in accordance with an associated control function to be performed by that particular type of magazine. That is, in opposition to the presenter in the news magazine the presenter in the political magazine is characterized by a critical stance and hence we can expect that this critical stance will be directly mirrored in the execution by the presenter of his/her interpretive function. Since the expression of criticism implies the expression of a subjective opinion that stands in contrast to another opinion, the presenter's criticism necessarily involves the application of speaker's modality – the verbalization of subjective speaker perspective. The central question is consequently how the presenter in the political magazine makes use of his/her ascribed interpretive/evaluative function in the discussion of events and states of affairs. That is, how does (s)he actually apply speaker's modality? Since we accept and expect the expression of subjective viewpoints in the political magazine we could indeed also expect that instances of speaker's modality do not receive qualification in any form in such a way as they constantly do in the news magazine via relevant source attribution that indicates subjective viewpoints as those made by external news actors or institutions.

When we consider the editions of the two political magazines focused on here, we find that interpretation by the presenter takes place in the following ways: (1) Similar to the news presenter it consists in the presentation and evaluation of additional background information to featured events and states of affairs. A particularly apt example in this connection is again T02\_MO: lead-in [13:55 – 14:50]: As illustrated in section (e), we are presented in the beginning with a fact, an event that has recently occurred:

“Vorgestern im Süden von Kundus: Ein Tanklastler wird von den Taliban in die Luft gesprengt. Er transportierte Benzin für die ISAF-Truppen in Afghanistan“ (**factual statement**)

This statement is followed by the presentation of additional background information concerning the purpose of the trucks:

“Er war nur einer von hunderten LKW, die die Soldaten täglich mit Nahrung, Wasser und Benzin versorgen“ (**relevant background information**).

The presentation of this background information is in a first step supplemented with the presenter's interpretation (in italics) of that particular procedure constituting yet another level of background information:

*“Ein Milliardengeschäft - für private Firmen. Dahinter die Idee, Aufträge vor allem an afghanische Firmen zu vergeben und so lokale Strukturen zu stärken“* (**Interpretation and background information**).

This additional background information then finally receives the presenter's evaluation and characteristically this evaluation includes the use of the German modal verb “sollen” with deontic modal meaning:

*“Schön und gut. Doch es sollte nicht eine Schattenwirtschaft entstehen, die riesiges Geld in falsche Hände spült - und genau das passiert“* (**Evaluation including deontic modality**)

Another example in this connection is T02\_PA: lead-in [8:15 – 8:54]: The audience is given relevant background information that specifies the volcano in question and the consequences of its eruption in 2010:

*“Was macht eigentlich der Eyjafjallajökull? Der isländische Vulkan war uns ja trotz seines doch eigenwilligen Namens sehr vertraut geworden, nachdem er mit seiner üppigen Aschewolke im April den Flugverkehr über Europa lahmgelegt hatte, worüber wir ja dank dutzender Sondersendungen, Sonderseiten und Sonderberichte auch umfassend informiert wurden“* (**referential specification via background information**)

This specification of volcano and event is followed by an evaluation of that event:

*“Aber wie es immer so ist, hat sich der Rauch erst mal gelegt, hört und sieht man nichts mehr“* (**evaluation**).

A final example that shall illustrate the general procedure is T01\_PA: lead-in [3:13 – 3:56]: We are presented with a statement concerning German compulsory military service:

*“Wer heute seinen Wehrdienst antritt, ist im Dezember schon wieder fertig“* (**factual statement**).

This is followed by relevant background information stating the reason and justifying the statement:

*“Ab heute muss man nämlich nur noch für sechs Monate zur Bundeswehr“* (**background information**).

This, in turn, is complemented by the presenter's evaluative comment:

*“Ob das noch Sinn macht?“* (**evaluation**).

Shortly later we are told about the status of compulsory military service in Germany that is attributed to an external political source and the reason for that status is presented as relevant background information:

“Die Wehrpflicht ist heilig. Vor allem für die Union. Jahrzehntlang wurde uns eingepflichtet, dass sie für die Grundfesten unserer Demokratie unerlässlich sei. Denn nur mit der Wehrpflicht bekäme man Soldaten aus der ganzen Bevölkerung“ (**factual statement** with qualification via source (= **evaluation**) and additional **background information**)

This is supplemented with an evaluative statement by the presenter questioning the importance of compulsory military service in Germany:

“*Die Realität sieht allerdings anders aus. Heute geht gerade mal jeder fünfte überhaupt zum Bund. Und dort kämpft der Soldat dann weniger für Demokratie als mehr gegen endlose Langeweile*“ (**factual statement** (= **evaluation**)).

All these examples show that relevant background information provided by the presenter typically entails an evaluation of that information (given in italics).

(2) In fact, the last example presented here aptly reveals another linguistic means whereby the presenter in the political magazine fulfills his/her interpretive function: the formulation of obvious or resulting questions (“*Ob das noch Sinn macht?*“).<sup>370</sup> Other relevant examples include:

T02\_MO: lead-in [4:40 – 5:18] on depressive children: “Und ich frage mich: Ist es richtig, das Leben von Kindern mit den gleichen Ansprüchen zu überziehen, wie das von Erwachsenen? Ist es richtig, Angst vor dem Abstieg und dem Versagen eins zu eins an Kinder weiterzugeben?”

T01\_MO: lead-in [9:20 – 9:56] on the election of the Federal President in Germany: “Merkels Mann Wulff oder Gauck für Rot-Grün? Wie frei werden die Wahlmänner und Frauen wohl entscheiden können? Oder müssen sie sich der Parteidisziplin, dem Machterhalt wieder einmal beugen?”

T02\_PA: lead-in [15:00 – 15:57]: on the referendum in Hamburg: “Aber dennoch stellt sich für alle die Frage: Ist so ein Volksentscheid das richtige Mittel, um über so ein Thema abzustimmen?”

(3) In accordance with the presenter in the news magazine, the interpretive function of the presenter in the political magazine involves commenting on immediately preceding broadcast reports typically in the form of a concluding remark to that report. For example:

T02\_PA: [8:07 – 8:15]: with respect to a preceding report about Kik: Aufgrund unserer Recherchen prüft die zuständige Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund jetzt ein erneutes Ermittlungsverfahren gegen KiK.

T02\_PA [14:30 – 15:00]: with respect to the behavior of a particular German airline after the eruption of an Icelandic volcano in 2010: “Wir haben übrigens noch ein Antwortschreiben von Condor erhalten. Darin teilt man uns mit, dass Condor ja immerhin die Ersten gewesen wären, die den Flugverkehr nach der Aschewolke wieder aufgenommen hätten, dafür hätte man auch zahlreiche Dankeschreiben bekommen. Wörtlich heißt es die Fernsehbilder glücklicher Passagiere gingen um die Welt. Na dann verzichtet man doch sicher gerne auf die Begleichung seiner Hotelrechnung, oder?”

T02\_MO [21:46 – 22:07]: with respect to a broadcast report about tax payers’ money for the Taliban: “Krieg produziert genau so ein Dilemma: entweder logistische Aufgaben selbst übernehmen und mit noch mehr Toten

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<sup>370</sup> Not all questions are used within an interpretation function. For example, “Kennen Sie das auch?” (T01\_PA: lead-in [10:01 – 10:24] is a form of para-social interaction.

und Verletzten rechnen. Oder Outsourcing betreiben und dann die Kontrolle verlieren, wo Geld und Güter hingehen. Nicht hinzunehmen ist aber, wenn man den eigenen Feind finanziert.“

The presenter's speech in the political magazine also (4) includes – though less significant than in the news magazine – the use of figurative language again not only as an element that livens up language in the process of discussing events and states of affairs but also in order to lend an evaluative, i.e. critical, undercurrent to that discussion. A prominent example in this connection is: T02\_MO: lead-in [22:07 – 22:48]. Here the presenter compares the German Intercity train with the mythical figure of the mermaid Loreley. Accordingly, the train in question is referred to as a “Loreley on rails” (“Leider hat diese Loreley auf Schienen auch einen bedauerlichen Hang andere in den Abgrund zu ziehen”). Furthermore, in T02\_PA: lead-in [0:12 – 0:57]: the firing of a heavily indebted employee is compared to a drowning person who is drawn away from his/her lifebelt.

Similar to the news magazine, the most important aspect with respect to the presenter's interpretive function relates to (5) the additional use of source attributions and epistemic modality in order to demonstrate factuality and the degree of commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition. Here a central difference occurs to the news magazine. Clearly, in contrast to the news magazine where we indeed have a difference in use of these features between the news reader and the presenter but where these features, in general, are nevertheless frequently used, the studied editions of the political magazines show an absence of both source attributions and epistemic modality. That is, in the political magazine the speech of the presenter reveals a strong tendency towards performing factual statements without additional qualification. The speech of the presenter in the political magazine is similar in this respect to the speech of the presenter in the news magazine. It is, however, similar only because the lack of source attribution in the political magazine is much more prominent than in the news magazine.<sup>371</sup>

When we ask why source attribution and epistemic modality are absent in the speech of the presenter in the political magazine we can argue on the basis of a difference in the execution of the information function between the news and the political magazine. That is, the news magazine implies the neutral stance of both news reader and presenter in the presentation of information and source attributions and epistemic modality are the linguistic expressions of such a speaker stance. The political magazine, on the other hand, allows a critical stance on the part of the presenter and this critical stance in turn allows the absence of additional qualification of statements via source attribution and epistemic modality. The speaker's

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<sup>371</sup> Indeed the studied editions of the two political magazines feature only one instance with additional source attribution (in italics) in the form as found in the news magazine: “Die Blockade wird ein wenig gelockert, dafür *so Israels Regierung heute* mögen die Europäer weitere Hilfsschiffe verhindern” (T01\_MO [28:29 – 28:40]. Similarly, the only instance of epistemic modality is “*Scheint* ganz schön zu polarisieren das Thema” (T01\_PA [9:48 – 10:01].

neutrality is not an ascribed objective in the transmission of information in the political magazine. Hence we do not need the formal linguistic means of that neutrality.

As a consequence, the presenter in the political magazine does as a rule not reproduce valuating statements made by others using source attribution but characteristically (s)he produces valuating statements himself/herself and this is simply what we would expect considering the critical stance of the presenter in the political magazine.

Indeed, the critical stance that distinguishes the presenter of the political magazine from the presenter of the news magazine is expressed via several linguistic means: (a) characteristically the presenter in the political magazine shows a more subjective way of presentation and evaluation than the presenter in the news magazine featuring the German first person singular pronoun “ich” (e.g. T02\_MO: lead-in [4:40 – 5:18]: “Und *ich* frage mich ist es richtig das Leben von Kindern mit den gleichen Ansprüchen zu überziehen wie das von Erwachsenen?” Farewell, closing section [27:53 – 28:10]: “*Ich* freue mich dass Sie zugeschaut haben;“ T01\_MO: lead-in [0:18 – 0:59]: “*Ich* verspreche Monitor lohnt sich“).

A similar strategy in this connection is the use of the German first person plural pronoun “wir” which, on the one hand, denotes the presenter as acting not only on behalf of an institution but first and foremost as a member of an editorial team (e.g. T02\_PA [8:07 – 8:15]: “Aufgrund *unserer* (1<sup>st</sup> person plural, genitive case) Recherchen prüft die zuständige Staatsanwaltschaft Dortmund jetzt ein erneutes Ermittlungsverfahren gegen Kik;” [14:30 - 15:00]: “*Wir* haben übrigens noch ein Antwortschreiben von Condor erhalten;“ T01\_PA [9:48 – 10:01: “Bisschen heftige Reaktion. Dabei haben *wir* wirklich nur höflich gefragt“) and which, on the other hand, is used by the presenter in order to illustrate herself as a member of the audience she addresses (e.g. T02\_PA [8:07 – 8:15]: “Der isländische Vulkan war *uns* (1<sup>st</sup> person plural, dative case) ja trotz seines doch eigenwilligen Namens sehr vertraut geworden [...] worüber *wir* ja dank dutzender Sondersendungen, Sonderseiten und Sonderberichte auch umfassend informiert wurden“).

(b) The critical stance of the presenter in the political magazine is also reflected via the use of irony (cf. T02: PA [14:30 – 15:00]: “Na dann verzichtet man doch sicher gerne auf die Begleichung seiner Hotelrechnung, oder?“ (.) Das Schreiben von Condor in seiner ganzen Schönheit und mehr zu diesem Thema finden Sie bei uns im Internet unter Panorama de: e:“).

Yet, as argued in connection with the news magazine, we should be careful to treat such evaluations as true expressions of subjective speaker perspective since evaluation is necessarily involved in the institutionally ascribed function of interpreting events and states of affairs and consequently we can treat it as a fundamental part of the institutional role of being a presenter – in this case of a political magazine.

To sum up, the presenter in the political magazine can be determined to adhere to a general information function underlying the production of this magazine type. Hence the presenter in

the political magazine is an “information transmitter” but in contrast to the news magazine (s)he is an information transmitter with a critical stance that is correspondingly reflected in the execution of the interpretive/evaluative function by the presenter. Interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs in the political magazine takes place via (1) presentation and evaluation of additional background information, (2) formulation of questions, (3) commenting on immediately preceding broadcast reports, (4) use of figurative language, (5) characteristic absence of source attribution and epistemic modality, (6) subjective evaluation via German first person pronouns “ich” and “wir,” (7) use of irony.

As in the news magazine, evaluation by the presenter in the political magazine is part of his/her institutional role and therefore role-based and does not reflect subjective speaker perspective as a private person.

Since the presenter in the political magazine behaves similarly in some respects to the presenter in the news magazine (e.g. presentation and evaluation of additional background information, formulation of resulting questions) but fundamentally differently in some other respects (e.g. general absence of source attributions and epistemic modality, more subjective ways of evaluation via use of first person pronoun) this aspect is accounted for in the conceptual continuum via a slight rightward movement from the presenter in the news magazine.

(h) Speech activities and speech events: speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality

Similar to the presenter in the news magazine, the presenter in the political magazine engages in a monologic speech activity of reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of (1) lead-ins to broadcast reports and (2) pre-produced short comments or concluding remarks respectively, but (s)he also participates as interviewer in the interactive speech event of the interview with another institutional agent. Hence the speech situation in the political magazine is characterized by both presence and absence of interaction within the institutional frame.

Typically though the interview in the political magazine significantly differs from the news interview in the news magazine in several respects:

- The interview in the political magazine always **stands at the end** of each broadcast edition.
- The interview in the political magazine features **another institutional agent** as interviewee: the presenter of a news magazine.
- The interview in the political magazine is **much shorter** than the news interview in the news magazine. That is, while the news interview consists of a range of

different questions, the interview in the political magazine is restricted to the **performance of one question** only.

These aspects can be related to the **structural function** of the interview in the political magazine:

- The interview in the political magazine structurally **leads over** to the following program: characteristically a news magazine.

These aspects can also be related to the **stylistic function** of the interview in the political magazine:

- It is not a news interview ‘proper’ but a stylistic means for **viewer bonding** via:
  - Including a program announcement
  - Introducing an important topic of that program functioning as teaser

Such program-final interviews, broadcast reports and their lead-ins and concluding remarks by the presenter establish the program-specific forms of journalistic text types and they build the program’s particular text type profile. Can we say anything about their formal or informal nature? Are they speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality?

In order to answer this question we have to consider the institutional role of the presenter in the political magazine. Accordingly, similar to the presenter in the news magazine, this role is indeed that of an “information transmitter” but, as argued at the beginning of this chapter, in contrast to the news presenter this role does not in the first place involve the transmission of strictly objective information. That is, the presenter in the political magazine does not adopt the role of an “objective information transmitter” that characterizes the news presenter. (As we will see, this is also valid for the presenter in the tabloid magazine which orientates at entertainment/infotainment). This difference is connected to the magazine’s fulfillment of the media’s control function.

The speech of the presenter in the political magazine thus does not necessarily imply a reduction in the expression of personal opinions as is relevant for the news presenter. Consequently, a theoretical possibility for the verbalization of subjective viewpoints implies the speaker’s underlying emotionality which in turn involves the occurrence of affective language – linguistic means that reflect the speaker’s feelings. The presence of affective language then also reveals on a relationship level the personal involvement of the speaker into what is being said. For example, the discussion of the daytime talk show format (chapter 7.2.1) has illustrated that the personal conflicts executed on stage and the telling of personal narratives are speech events or activities respectively that are characterized by the speakers’ high personal involvement into the topic at talk and this is mirrored in the application of

affective language. Social conflicts and personal narratives are thus events and activities that in their nature are typical of linguistic informality in so far as they characterize an informal speech style within an informal speech situation.

The central question here is whether we can actually speak of a true personal involvement into what is being talked about and hence of a true personal interest in the addressee on the part of the presenter in the political magazine. Clearly, although the presenter in the political magazine does not formally adopt the function of an “objective information transmitter,” (s)he nevertheless adopts the institutional role of a “presenter” of a particular type of magazine and we can argue that the adoption of exactly this institutional role will involve the same general absence of personal involvement, independent of the existence of an institutional orientation at objective information. That is, the presenter always acts in his/her role as institutional agent and not as private person. Consequently, every communicative action by the presenter needs to be viewed in this light. That means, we can treat the occurrence of affective language and speaker’s modality (e.g. evaluation via comments) also in the political magazine solely as part of the presenter’s institutional role (involving an interpretive function) and not as expressions of personally motivated subjective viewpoints and personal feelings (cf. sections (c) on word choice and (g) on linguistic modality). The lack of personal involvement underlying the presenter’s language use therefore means the presence of speech activities (and events) that in their nature correspond to those activities (and events) that are typical of linguistic formality, i.e. those characterizing a formal speech style within a formal speech situation. The speech situation indeed is a highly formal one when we consider that the speech activities (and events) performed by the presenter are actually performed within an institutional frame and, as argued above, they are performed on behalf of an institutional role of being a presenter. For this reason they are part of a, by definition, formal, i.e. institutional, speech situation and consequently they are also, by definition, typical of linguistic formality.

To sum up, the language use of the presenter in the political magazine is characterized by speech activities (and events) that include the presenter’s lack of personal involvement into what is being talked about. This lack results from an adoption of and restriction to a communicative role as presenter acting on behalf of the institution television. The absence of personal involvement defines these activities/events as parts of verbal discourse within the institutional frame that correspond to those speech activities that are typical of linguistic formality illustrating a reduction in subjectivity and hence in emotionality.

### **(3) Extent of speech regulation**

In accordance with the two news formats considered here the production of talk within the political magazine is subject to strict processes of institutional pre-planning. That is, all topics

featured in the political magazine and their concrete verbal realization by the presenter are always the result of preceding institutional work processes within relevant editorial offices. For this reason, also the speech of the presenter in the political magazine is highly regulated because it is unexceptionally produced in advance by the institution. Strictly speaking, this regulation relates to strict pre-specification of appropriate topics and their order in each edition including their overall verbal and stylistic realization via the program-specific forms of journalistic text types.

#### **(4) Predominant type of politeness: role-oriented versus person-oriented politeness**

Similar to the news magazine, the verbal discourse that takes place in the institutional speech situation of the television studio within the political magazine is both monolog- and dialog-based (cf. sections (a) *self-monitoring* and (h) *speech activities/events* in the discussion of factor (2) on speech style). That is, the presenter engages either in a speech activity of reading out language that has been institutionally pre-produced mainly in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports (and pre-produced short comments/concluding remarks) or (s)he participates as interviewer in the interactive speech event of the interview with another institutional agent. In contrast to the news magazine though, this is not a news interview proper (i.e. with correspondents and news actors) – it is too short for that and lacks interactive spontaneity – but characteristically it is rather a stylistic means for viewer bonding that consists in a program announcement/teaser which introduces the topics of the immediately following news magazine. As in the news magazine, the speech situation in the political magazine hence is formally characterized by both the absence and presence of interaction within the institutional frame, although interaction is less significant here for the aforementioned reasons.

The purpose of performing such speech activities and events is again of course their broadcast to a mass audience. It also remains valid, therefore, that the concepts of role-oriented and person-oriented politeness have to be applied to the mass communicative situation which is characterized by a presenter who participates in multilateral communication.

In the discussion of this factor for the news magazine it was argued that both news reader and presenter adopt an institutional role of “objective information transmitter” that is ultimately determined by the function of objective information to be fulfilled by the news format per se. It was further explained that the adoption of such a role necessarily also entails the adoption of role-oriented politeness including a neutral speaker stance in addressing both television audience and correspondent/news actor. This in turn implies the general absence of person-oriented politeness that would signal personal involvement and thus a true personal interest in the addressee.

It is argued initially that the political magazine can be determined to fulfill the same basic function of information than the news magazine does. However, a central aspect that distinguishes the presenter in the news magazine from the presenter in the political magazine is the adoption of a neutral stance that characterizes the execution of the presenter's interpretive function. In the political magazine we find a deviation from such neutral stance as based on institutional criticism that governs the interpretive function of the presenter in the political magazine. This is important in so far as we cannot actually derive the presence of an exclusively role-oriented type of politeness here directly from the requirement of institutional objectivity since such objectivity is simply not as essential in the political magazine as it is in the news magazine. (In fact the same argumentation holds true for the tabloid magazine which shows a clear entertainment orientation).<sup>372</sup> Nevertheless, we can maintain the assumption of a role-oriented type of politeness to be relevant also for the political magazine simply by considering the fact that also the presenter in the tabloid magazine actually adopts his/her institutional role of 'presenter' and it is simply due to this adoption that we can speak also here of a significant reduction in personal involvement that characterizes the presenter's communicative actions within the institutional frame. (S)he acts exclusively on behalf of an ascribed role as institutional agent (with an institutionally required interpretive function), but characteristically not as private person verbalizing own subjective viewpoints in the interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs that are reported on. In fact, the presenter's lack of personal involvement can also formally be explained on the basis of a spatial dislocation between presenter and television audience (cf. the discussion of this factor in chapter 7.1.1).

Absent/reduced personal involvement on the part of the presenter thus naturally implies absent/reduced person-oriented politeness in favor of an adopted role-oriented politeness that formally corresponds to the acknowledgement by the institutional agent of an ascribed institutional role as presenter of a political magazine.

This role entails para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1) as a formal means of viewer bonding which is typically performed in the political magazine in greetings (opening sections) and farewells (closing sections). Due to its nature as role-based communicative behavior that opens and closes a program such para-social interaction is to be seen rather as an element of the presenter's role-oriented type of politeness than as an expression of a true personal interest in the addressee.

Linguistically, the fulfillment of an institutional role as presenter of a political magazine is again reflected in language use in the presence of emphatic stress for rhetorical reasons and the general absence of affective stress (e.g. to express empathy, anger, outrage etc.), which in everyday speech situations indicates the speaker's personal involvement into what is being talked about.

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<sup>372</sup> See chapter 7.3.2.3, factor (4) on role-oriented and person-oriented politeness in the tabloid magazine.

**(5) Access to the speech situation: public or non-public**

- In accordance with all other magazine types considered here: public access due to public communication.

**(6) Place and time of conversation: fixed or free**

- In accordance with all other magazine types considered here: fixed place and time of conversation necessitated by production requirements.

When we transfer the results to the conceptual continuum (table 22) we see that a particular constellation of the factors that determine institutional and private talk emerges for the political magazine. In accordance with the news magazine we can see this constellation as defining a magazine-type specific factor profile for language use.

### **7.3.2.3 The tabloid magazine**

The tabloid magazine investigated here is the German public-service program *Brisant*, broadcast daily (Monday to Friday) including a weekend edition (Saturday).<sup>373</sup> The program is explicitly labeled a tabloid magazine (“Boulevardmagazin”).<sup>374</sup>

In the foregoing chapters on the news and the political magazine it was argued that the language use of the presenter (and the news reader respectively) is fundamentally governed by the communicative function of information that can be ascribed to both types of magazine.

As concerns the news magazine, the fulfillment of this function involves the presenter’s and the news reader’s adoption of an institutional role as “objective information transmitter” with an overall neutral stance towards events and states of affairs reported on in the magazine.

As concerns the political magazine, the execution of this function also involves the performance of the media’s control function and this consequently implies a movement away from pure objective information of the audience towards higher institutional subjectivity as expressed in the presenter’s interpretive function.

Therefore, we can also state here a similar influence of the underlying institutional function on the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine. Clearly, the basic assumption here is that the tabloid magazine, in contrast to the news and political magazine, can be defined to fulfill not only an information function but also, and probably predominantly, aims at the entertainment of the audience. That is, while we cannot deny the format per se a general

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<sup>373</sup> See <http://www.mdr.de/brisant/> for the online presence of the magazine (last access: 20.02.2011).

<sup>374</sup> Cf. <http://www.mdr.de/brisant/redaktionseinblick/5318873.html> (last access: 20.02.2011). *Brisant*. ARD (MDR, Leipzig). Das Erste.

information orientation, we can nevertheless assume a strong tendency towards entertainment. This assumption is also based on the nature of the topics that are featured in this magazine type. These are characteristically ‘tabloid topics’, i.e. topics with soft or spot news character, but typically not hard news which seem to be reserved for mainly information-oriented formats such as the news and the political magazine (cf. factor (1) on conversational topic). In these magazine types tabloid topics, in turn, are not completely absent but at least are significantly reduced (cf. the five editions of the news magazine ending with a soft news topic). Thus, it seems that there is a relationship between the institutional function that can be ascribed to a format and the topics featured in this format in such a way that the fulfillment of (objective) information implies a concentration on hard news (ultimately representing public topics) and the execution of entertainment involves a concentration on soft and spot news representing tabloid topics.

The assumption of both information and a dominant entertainment orientation for the tabloid magazine consequently means that we can ascribe to the format if not even ultimate entertainment then at least a middle position between information and entertainment which results into an overall ‘infotainment’ status of the tabloid magazine.

If we accept the predominance of the institutional function of entertainment for the format then we should expect to find private talk applied by the presenter within the institutional frame as a form of language appropriate for the fulfillment of this function (cf. table 8).

If we accept at least a middle position of infotainment for the format, we should expect to find this conceptual middle position to be reflected in a linguistic middle position, i.e. a form of language that is located between institutional and private talk with the concrete position depending on which function – information or entertainment – is more distinctive.

More generally, the central assumption of an entertainment function and even the mixture of both information and entertainment governing the production of the tabloid magazine should result in the application (of features) of private talk as appropriate, i.e. function-specific, language form.

### **(1) Appropriate conversational topic: public topics versus private topics**

Table 20 presents all topics of the two investigated editions of the German public-service tabloid magazine *Brisant*. Including the eight news of the day topics there are 33 topics altogether. All names of topics are based on the spoken content. In contrast to the news and political magazine none of the topics is concerned with political or economic matters (= hard news) but, characteristically, all topics apart from two exceptions exclusively refer to social matters with spot (18 topics = 54.55%) or soft (13 topics = 39.39%) news character. That is, they either relate to crime and catastrophes or they can be classified as human interest stories involving light, non-serious entertainment. In the two editions spot news typically precede

soft news and the two types of news are roughly separated in each edition by a social topic (2 = 6.06%) that can be defined as ‘hard news’ in nature since it describes a particular state of affairs within the social system that ultimately concerns the workings of that system: organ transplantation and alcohol dependency.

The general absence in the tabloid magazine of political and economic topics, i.e. of topics relating to serious, ‘hard’ facts concerning the political and social system, can be explained on the basis of the communicative function of entertainment (or at least infotainment) that is assumed to govern the production of the format and that seems to exclude exactly these topics because of their serious nature. That is, these topics ultimately contradict the communicator’s aim of (more or less) ‘light’ entertainment which seems to be associated with a particular type of topics only, namely ‘tabloid topics’ that correspond to the tabloid nature of the magazine type. In other words, we can say that it is the nature of an individual magazine type that determines the nature of the topics featured in that type. Accordingly a tabloid magazine will feature only what we may define as ‘tabloid topics’: either sensational (= spot news of crime and catastrophes) or light human interest stories (= soft news) but characteristically no ‘hard’ political or economic topics (= hard news). A news magazine, on the other hand, with a sole function of information will objectively report on the events and states of affairs within the social and political system featuring exactly the hard news that concern these systems. Similar to the news magazine, a political magazine, in turn, will also focus on hard news – political and economic topics concerning events and states of affairs within the political and social system – but, as we have seen, it will be critical in its actual treatment of those events and states of affairs.

The general absence of hard news within the tabloid magazine can thus be explained via their inappropriateness for the magazine type’s purpose of fulfilling a general entertainment/infotainment function that is achieved via a tabloid orientation that prefers tabloid topics. We can then also say that, similar to the daytime talk show format, the function of entertainment/infotainment associated with the tabloid magazine will have an impact on the general occurrence of discourse topics in so far as only those will tend to occur with high frequency which indeed can be determined to serve this function, namely spot and soft news.

However, in contrast to the daytime talk show format all featured topics can be defined as being of public interest and thus they are ‘public topics’ appropriate for occurrence in the public sphere. However, this determination here is not so much based on the fact that the topics ultimately consider the workings of the political, economic and social system as a whole and that they are consequently of significance for (the well-being of) society as a whole, but simply because their nature does not *per se* contradict an occurrence in the public sphere as does, for example, the nature of the majority of the topics featured in the daytime talk show format. In the discussion of this factor in chapter 7.2.1 it is argued that the greatest part of the topics in the daytime talk show categorized as ‘relationship’, ‘sex’ and ‘death’ can be defined as private topics – concerned with the everyday problems of ordinary people –

since they fundamentally address the interlocutors' private sphere and, doing so, they appear less appropriate for discussion in the public sphere. This is valid especially for the two highly sensitive intimate and/or taboo topics 'sex' and 'death'.

The spot news and soft news featured in the tabloid magazine, however, are appropriate for use in both social spheres, private *and* public. That is, they are appropriate for use in the public sphere because we cannot deny them a general public interest and they are appropriate for use in the private sphere because soft news are typically the topics of gossip – an interactive speech event within informal everyday conversation between (highly) familiar interlocutors. The suitability for occurrence in both social spheres is defined in chapter 4.2 as a characteristic of public topics.

Date of broadcast	Topics
07.06.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bathing accident (spot news)</li> <li>• Kachelmann case (spot news)</li> <li>• Garage fire (spot news)</li> <li>• News of the day (near airplane disaster, flood, motor kite crash, amok alert in school) (all spot news)</li> <li>• Kidney transplantation (hard news)</li> <li>• Corrida accident (spot news)</li> <li>• Relationship drama (spot news)</li> <li>• New Lagerfeld-muse (soft news)</li> <li>• Sandra Bullock (soft news)</li> <li>• Sweden's national holiday (soft news)</li> <li>• VIP-news (soft news)</li> <li>• Nadeshda Brennicke (soft news)</li> <li>• Tom Jones (soft news)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right; color: blue;">[12 topics + 4 sub-topics labeled news of the day]</p>
08.06.2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationship drama (spot news)</li> <li>• Infanticide (spot news)</li> <li>• Severely injured person in Hamburg (spot news)</li> <li>• Pets as models: fraud (soft news)</li> <li>• News of the day (infanticide, crow attack, pipeline explosion, flood) (all spot news)</li> <li>• Murder in Heidelberg (spot news)</li> <li>• Alcohol dependency among elderly persons (hard news)</li> <li>• Fox attack (spot news)</li> <li>• Crown princess Victoria of Sweden (soft news)</li> <li>• Gala Dinner for South Africa (soft news)</li> <li>• Johannes Brandrup (soft news)</li> <li>• Auction Diana dress (soft news)</li> <li>• VIP-news (soft news)</li> <li>• Elephant in Zurich (soft news)</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right; color: blue;">[13 topics + 4 topics labeled news of the day]</p>

Table 20: The topics featured in the two studied editions of the German tabloid magazine *Brisant*

## (2) Appropriate speech style: Use of formal or informal speech style

### (a) Self-monitoring: high grade or low grade of self-monitoring

We can compare the presenter in the tabloid magazine to the news reader in the speaker-based news format and the news magazine in so far as his/her communicative actions within the institutional frame are limited exclusively to reading out institutionally pre-produced language that is the product of diverse editorial work processes. As a consequence, conversational spontaneity is significantly reduced and the reading process requires the presenter's full attention. Thus, we can assume a comparatively high degree of self-monitoring performed by the presenter in the act of reading.

The presenter's self-monitoring is once more revealed in (1) characteristic patterns of emphatic stress. Accordingly, in the two investigated editions those words that are deemed important because they convey significant information are usually specifically stressed for rhetorical reasons, for example

- to highlight facts and figures:

“*Kein* Vergleich aber mit der *Glut*-Hitze gegen die die Kameraden vor Ort ankämpfen müssen“ (T01: lead-in [6:28 – 6:47]),

“Das fragt heute keiner mehr denn Tom Jones kann auf fast *fünfzig* Jahre Erfolg zurückblicken. Zwar wird Tiger-Tom heute *siebzig*, doch noch immer sind vor allem seine weiblich Fans nicht nur von seiner Stimme fasziniert“ (T01: lead-in [34:52 – 35:27]),

“Jeder *sechste* Alkoholabhängige in Deutschland zählt mittlerweile zur Gruppe der *älteren Menschen*” (T02: lead-in [16:23 – 16:46]),

- a timespan:

“*Wochenlang* war sie untergetaucht und hat sich vor den Papparazzi versteckt” (T01: lead- in [24:17 – 24:35],

- the fact that something *was* or *was not* done, *is* or *is not* the case:

“Zwar wird Tiger-Tom heute *siebzig*, doch noch immer sind vor allem seine weiblich Fans *nicht* nur von seiner Stimme fasziniert“ (T01: lead-in [34:52 – 35:27]).

(2) The presenter's high degree of self-monitoring is furthermore evident in pronunciation patterns. In all lead-ins to broadcast reports the pronunciation of words in the reading process is clear, comprehensible and standard in character; again the phenomena of connected speech otherwise present in spontaneous everyday conversation are characteristically missing. Accordingly, there are no contracted or reduced forms but generally prestige, i.e. standard, varieties on the phonological level (such as [ɪst] for German “ist” and [nɪçt] for German “nicht”).<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> An exception in this connection is the presenter's evaluation at [17:58 – 18:03] in T01\_BR featuring reduced [nɪç] and the use of the lexically informal “ins” (T02\_BR: lead-in [20:46 – 21:05]), a contraction of the German preposition “in” and the German definite neuter article “das.”

To sum up, the language use of the presenter in the lead-ins to broadcast reports can be determined to show a high grade of self-monitoring on the basis of three aspects: (1) formally on the simple process of reading out language that has been institutionally pre-produced; (2) in more concrete terms on the existence of characteristic stress patterns; (3) on pronunciation patterns characterized by the (predominant) use of standard phonetic varieties.

(b) Structural complexity: assumed overall high grade or low grade of structural complexity

When we take a look at the syntax characterizing the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine we find that it is similar in reduced complexity to the one that characterizes the language use of the news reader in the speaker-based program and the news magazine. That is, there is a comparatively simple sentence structure that lacks the structural complexity resulting from (multiple) sub-ordination of clauses. Accordingly, clause coordination (parataxis) is preferred – a feature that Biber (2001) associates with reduced linguistic complexity. Indeed the presenter's utterances are linked mainly via coordinating conjunctions while the use of subordinating conjunctions is present but rather insignificant compared to the frequency of coordination especially via German “und” – a striking difference to the presenter in the news magazine, who makes frequent use of subordinating conjunctions and adverbs that serve a general interpretive function.

The two chosen editions of the tabloid magazine contain the following **coordinating conjunctions**:

- *Und* (used with high frequency), *doch*, *denn*, *aber*

Einen schönen Guten Abend und herzlich willkommen zu Brisant. Es gibt Neues im Fall Jörg Kachelmann und bei uns erfahren Sie gleich was hinter all den Schlagzeilen rund um eine mögliche Freilassung und dem Glaubwürdigkeitsgutachten steckt.

(T01: Greeting and topic announcement/teaser [0:00 – 0:17])

Der Sprössling wird beim Spielen von der Strömung weggerissen und der verzweifelte Vater springt hinterher.

(T01: lead-in [0:17 – 0:35])

Annabell Freiling will ihrem Lebensgefährten eine Niere spenden damit sie endlich ein ganz normales Leben führen können. Doch der Weg dahin ist steinig und schwer.

(T01: lead-in [10:25 – 10:49])

Das fragt heute keiner mehr denn Tom Jones kann auf fast fünfzig Jahre Erfolg zurückblicken. Zwar wird Tiger-Tom heute siebzig, doch noch immer sind vor allem seine weiblichen Fans nicht nur von seiner Stimme fasziniert.

(T01: lead-in [34:52 – 35:27])

Den berühmten Elefanten im Porzellanladen den kennen viele. Aber der Elefant auf Stadtbummel das ist neu.

(T02: lead-in [37:33 – 37:49])

The two chosen editions of the tabloid magazine contain the following **subordinating conjunctions**:

- *Obwohl, damit, ob, nachdem, als, wenn, während*

Der zwei jährige wurde zu Tode gequält obwohl ein Mitarbeiter der Stadt Bremen auf das Kind aufpassen sollte.

(T02: lead-in [2:05 – 2:28])

Annabell Freiling will ihrem Lebensgefährten eine Niere spenden damit sie endlich ein ganz normales Leben führen können.

(T01: lead-in [10:25 – 10:49])

Nun kann man sich trefflich darüber streiten ob Stierkämpfe überhaupt sein sollten. [...] Aber auch dem letzten Stierkampf-Fan sollte die Unsinnigkeit dieser Massenbelustigung klar werden nachdem jetzt ein zwölf jähriger Jung-Torero fast gestorben wäre.

(T01: lead-in [15:27 – 15:49])

Der dreiundfünfzig jährige schwebt in Lebensgefahr als die Beamten und der Notarzt an dem Hamburger Bahnhof ankommen.

(T02: lead-in [5:19 – 5:37])

Und wenn es mit der Model-Karriere von Herrchen oder Frauchen nicht klappt dann könnte doch der geliebte Vierbeiner im Rampenlicht stehen.

(T02: lead-in [7:36 – 8:00])

Während die Untertanen seit dem Wochenende feiern dürfen muss die Braut ihren vorehelichen Pflichten nachgehen.

(T02: lead-in [23:21 – 23:48])

Characteristically, the predominant structure enhancing language features that are shown in the language use of the news reader and the presenter in the news magazine are generally missing in the tabloid magazine. Accordingly, we do *not* find source attributions that accompany stated facts in order to denote a source of reported information and to highlight the validity of stated facts (e.g. “nach Angaben von BP” in T01\_TT\_Das Erste: speaker announcement [13:12 – 13:39]). Likewise, we do *not* find the linguistic means that are used in the speaker-based news format and the news magazine in order to specify in more detail the identity of the persons that are reported on. That is, the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine lacks the use of attributive adjectives and appositional noun phrases as modifiers in connection with particular news actors. For example, the news magazine features “[d]er Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow“ in T04\_TT\_Das Erste: lead-in [9:30 – 9:53]. The tabloid magazine, however, does not use such appositional

constructions where it could well do so. To give an example: in T02\_BR: lead-in [23:21 – 23:48] the presenter could refer to Sweden’s crown princess as “die zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling Schwedens Kronprinzessin Viktoria” which would constitute a significant increase in structural complexity (apart from a similar increase in the density of information packed in the lead-in). This is typically avoided though in the tabloid magazine. Instead – while the actual density of information packed in the lead-in as such remains the same – the tabloid magazine illustrates a strategy of presenting information in such a form that referent and lexical modifiers are often separated and background information is delivered bit by bit:

[...] Das heißt für *Swedens Kronprinzessin Victoria* sie muss ihr Innerstes nach außen kehren. Rede und Antwort stehen vor laufenden Kameras. Denn das Volk will wissen was ihre *zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling* so erlebt hat hinter den Mauern des königlichen Palastes.

(T02\_BR: lead-in [23:21 – 23:48])

The example illustrates preposed referent specification via the immediately preceding noun phrase “Schwedens Kronprinzessin” in combination with postposed specification via a noun phrase (“zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling”) that is spatially separated from the referent it specifies.<sup>376</sup> Accordingly, the structural elaboration of reference (cf. Biber’s (2001) complexity dimension with this name) as an expression of increased structural complexity that is otherwise achieved by the use of exactly those appositional noun phrases as illustrated above does *not* take place and hence this procedure of separating referent and lexical modifiers contributes to a reduction in overall structural complexity.

Also, the two investigated editions of the tabloid magazine illustrate a few instances of those types of dependent clauses that in the first place belong to Biber’s (2001) category of *Structural Elaboration of Reference*, namely relative clauses that correspond to English *wh* and *that* relative clauses among other things (T01: lead-in [2:57 – 3:18]: “[E]s gibt wohl ein Gutachten *das die Glaubwürdigkeit seiner Ex-Geliebten in Frage stellt*,” lead-in [6:28 – 6:47]: “Eine Autowerkstatt brennt und mit ihr ein Reifenlager *in dem auch noch ein paar Gasflaschen rumstehen*,” lead-in [20:17 – 20:41]: “Es ist ein zwanzig jähriger Jüngling aus Marseille *der vor seiner Zeit als Lagerfeld-Muse Hubschrauber zusammengebaut hat*,” T02: lead-in [16:23 – 16:46]: “Oft sorgt der Übergang vom Berufsleben in den Ruhestand für eine Art Leere und Langeweile *die im Alkohol ertränkt werden sollen*“).

However, *that* complement clauses – which are frequently used in the news magazine – are only infrequently used in the present editions of the tabloid magazine (T02: lead-in [29:16 – 29:39]: “Schauspiel-Schönling Johannes Brandrup hat nun schon in vielen TV- und Kinofilmen gezeigt *dass er mehr kann als nur hübsch in die Kamera zu lächeln*,” lead-in

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<sup>376</sup> For preposed and postposed referent specification in the tabloid magazine see also section (e) on information structure.

[32:29 – 32:57]: “ Und jetzt wollen wir den Beweis antreten *dass Kleider eben doch Leute machen*).

To sum up, when we compare the use of the features that Biber (2001) associates with increased linguistic complexity in the news magazine and the tabloid magazine we find that they are highly reduced in the tabloid magazine which shows a tendency towards reduced structural complexity as concerns the presenter. Strictly speaking, the linguistic behavior of the presenter in the tabloid magazine differs completely from that of the presenter in the news magazine with respect to (1) the use of subordinating conjunctions and adverbs, as well as (2) structure enhancing linguistic features such as attributive adjectives, appositional noun phrases, additional source attributions and particular types of dependent clauses. In the news magazine the frequent use of subordinating conjunctions and adverbs can be attributed to the presenter's institutional function of interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs which, as was argued, implies an argumentative linguistic structure that essentially involves the use of such conjunctions and adverbs in order to provide relevant background information, to explain relationships and to pose resulting questions. Indeed, the presenter in the tabloid magazine that is at hand predominantly restricts himself to the action of merely introducing a following broadcast report; his language use reveals a lack of exactly such background information and explanation of relationships that characterizes the presenter in the news magazine. The function of interpretation in the news magazine, therefore, seems to be another one than in the tabloid magazine where elaborate evaluation/interpretation does not take place. Hence the insignificance of subordinating conjunctions and adverbs in the tabloid magazine becomes explainable.

Consequently, the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine reveals a clear tendency towards reduced structural complexity in the two studied editions of the format. This tendency can be explained on the basis of an interpretation function that differs from the one performed by the presenter in the news magazine but it can also be formally related to an assumed recipient design orientation in mass communication.

(c) Word choice: lexical items typically associated with linguistic formality or informality

It is argued initially that the central assumption of an entertainment or at least infotainment function for the tabloid magazine will result in the application (of features) of private talk as appropriate language form for the fulfillment of this function. Following our conceptual continuum, this consequently involves on the lexical level the application of lexical items that are rather associated with linguistic informality than with linguistic formality. A reduction of linguistic formality can also be derived formally from the absence of an institutional function of “objective information transmitter” for the presenter in the tabloid magazine whose language is thus not subject to objectivity in such a way as is required from the news reader or

the presenter in the news magazine. As we have seen, the presenter in the news magazine often deviates from being completely objective in various ways (e.g. lexically via linguistic metaphors and a few colloquial terms), which can be seen in connection with his/her institutionally ascribed interpretive function. Consequently, if even the presenter in the news magazine with an underlying function of (objective) information deviates from a complete neutral stance in some respects then we may all the more expect such a deviation from the presenter in the tabloid magazine since it does not follow a pure information function but has a definite entertainment orientation. The central question here is thus: Do we find the assumed linguistic informality reflected in overall word choice of the presenter in the tabloid magazine? In concrete terms this means that we should be able to find both colloquial/informal words or idiomatic expressions and affective language as a reflection of the speaker's underlying emotionality which is otherwise significantly reduced in purely information-oriented news formats such as the ones considered here.

Indeed, when we take a look at the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine on the lexical level we find several instances of (1) colloquial/informal lexical items: *Knast*, *Kameraden*,<sup>377</sup> *Job*, *ballern*, *(Tattoo-)Luder*, *abräumen*,<sup>378</sup> *Ohrwurm*, *tingeln* (T01), *Herrchen/Frauchen*, *abzocken*, *spazieren*, *Mauerblümchen*, *Promi-news*,<sup>379</sup> *Stadtbummel*, *stapfen* and of (2) informal idiomatic expressions: *sich nicht unterkriegen lassen*, *unterwegs sein*,<sup>380</sup> *sich mausern*,<sup>381</sup> (T01), *verschlagen werden* (T02). However, these informal lexical expressions contrast with a range of rather formal terms: *Mandanten* (used within legal language), *Schmach*, *(etwas) begehen*, *royale Hochzeit* (T01), *des Nachts* (T02).

Similar to the speaker-based news format and the news magazine, the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine only shows a few instances of affective language: *zu Tode gequält werden* (T01: lead-in [15:27 – 15:49] and T02: lead-in [2:05 – 2:28]) and *eine grausame Tat begehen* (T02: lead-in [11:46 – 11:57]). Yet, in contrast to the studied news formats, these instances are not attributed to external sources and hence they constitute the presenter's own evaluation of an event/state of affairs. (For the significance of this procedure see section (g) on linguistic modality).

Characteristically though, apart from the terms *Ohrwurm* and *Mauerblümchen*, the studied editions of the tabloid magazine lack the linguistic metaphors that liven up the language of the presenter in the news magazine. The informality that makes up the language of the presenter here thus pertains mainly to the high frequency of using informal terms and idiomatic expressions.

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<sup>377</sup> Used in connection with the topic “garage fire” (T01: lead-in [6:28 – 6:47]). The choice of *Kameraden* instead of German *Feuerwehr* (fire brigade) or *Feuerwehrmänner* (fire fighters) expresses institutional empathy on the level of affective meaning. Stylistically it may be treated also as a strategy to avoid lexical repetition of the term *Feuerwehr* which is already used in the beginning of the lead-in.

<sup>378</sup> Here used in terms of German *erhalten, einen Preis gewinnen* (engl. *to win/obtain a prize*).

<sup>379</sup> A reduction (clipping) of the German *Prominenter/Prominente* (male/female); therefore actually: *Prominenten-News*.

<sup>380</sup> Here used in terms of German *präsent sein* (engl. *to be present*).

<sup>381</sup> Here used in terms of German *sich zu etwas entwickeln* (engl. *to develop into* = change in own personality).

To sum up, the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine that is at hand is not affected by a formal requirement of a restriction to transmitting objective information since the underlying function of the magazine type is predominantly that of entertainment/infotainment but not of information. The absence of such a requirement has linguistic consequences on the lexical level in so far as it is mirrored mainly in the frequent application of colloquial, informal terms and idiomatic expressions as features of private talk that constitutes the appropriate language form for the fulfillment of the ascribed communicative function of entertainment/infotainment. In other words, the use of such informal expressions as featured in the two studied editions is in accordance with the institutional function of entertainment. Since this function does not formally require the presenter's neutral stance as objective information transmitter, the lack of additional source attribution with the use of affective language is explainable and does not pose a problem.

Since the presenter in the tabloid magazine behaves similarly to the presenter in the news magazine as concerns the application of informal linguistic expressions but is characteristically not affected by any simultaneously existing demands for (purely) objective information transmission, this is indicated respectively in the conceptual continuum via a middle position for this aspect indicating a greater potential variability in lexical informality for the presenter in the tabloid magazine in comparison with the presenter in the news magazine (whose language use is determined with a slight right-ward position only for this linguistic aspect).

(d) Speech planning: relatively high or low degree of speech planning

In accordance with the news reader in the speaker-based format and the news magazine the communicative actions of the presenter in the tabloid magazine are restricted to the performance of monologic speech activities mainly in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports. Therefore, the demands of online production which otherwise affect speech planning in all dialogic forms of verbal communication are absent and thus there is less pressure towards linguistic spontaneity. Indeed, the same is valid here for the presenter as it is for the news reader: we can legitimately assume a complete absence of linguistic spontaneity on the part of the presenter in the tabloid magazine since we can relate this absence to the institutionally ascribed communicative role that is limited to the process of reading out language that has been institutionally pre-produced in the form of program-specific journalistic text types. Spontaneity is not an option within this reading process.

Institutional pre-production naturally involves a true process of language pre-planning within relevant editorial offices that precedes the concrete process of language application by the presenter who restricts himself/herself to simply reading out this language that has been produced in advance. This reading process itself, consequently, does not entail any online planning of speech.

To sum up, the tabloid magazine can be defined to involve a relatively high degree of speech planning in so far as it is characterized by an advance production by the institution of language to be featured in the magazine. This institutionally pre-planned language is read out by the presenter in the form of program-specific text types and (s)he is thus limited in his/her linguistic spontaneity.

(e) Information structure: expected high or low grade of explicit information

As initially stated, the dominant communicative function that we can associate with the tabloid magazine is that of entertainment or at least infotainment. With a production focus on this function the central aspect of informing in a complete and comprehensible way that was previously determined to govern the production of informative media talk becomes insignificant (cf. this section in chapter 7.1.1 on the speaker-based news format). Naturally following from this is that the demand towards complete and comprehensible information will not have an actual influence on the overall presentation of information in the tabloid magazine in the form that it has in the information-oriented news formats studied here. Nevertheless, we can well argue that the demands of the mass communicatively extended speech situation remain intact independent of the dominant communicative function to be fulfilled by a format. Clearly, what is always relevant is the problem of recipient design in multilateral communication: what can be presupposed as given information (i.e. shared background knowledge) and what must rather be seen as new information (i.e. special/expert knowledge). Therefore, it was argued, we may assume a general tendency on the part of the communicator towards elaborateness in the presentation of information as an attempt to comply with the communicative needs of all audience members.

Interestingly, when we compare the two editions of the chosen tabloid magazine with the news magazine investigated here we find that it shows a tendency towards a comparatively low grade of explicit information (i.e. a high grade of linguistic vagueness) in some cases and a comparatively high grade of explicit information (i.e. a low grade of linguistic vagueness) in other cases. Strictly speaking, as in the news magazine, this especially concerns the *persons* that are reported on. Since we are dealing here with a tabloid magazine, those persons are typically celebrities rather than a frequent number of politicians as featured in the news magazine. In order to illustrate this aspect, table 21 below lists the names of the celebrities focused on in the studied editions of the tabloid magazine that is at hand and, where present, includes their referential specification.

Brisant		
Date of broadcast	Featured celebrities and referential specification	
T01_BR_Das Erste 07.06.2010	---	Jörg Kachelmann ---
	---	Claudia Schiffer ---
	<i>Mode-Zar</i>	Karl Lagerfeld ---
	<i>Zwanzig jähriger Jüngling aus Marseille der vor seiner Zeit als Lagerfeld-Muse Hubschrauber zusammengebaut hat.</i>	
	[...]	Baptiste Giabiconi [...] <i>derzeit gefragteste[s] und erfolgreichste[s] Männermodel der Welt.</i>
	---	Sandra Bullock ---
	<i>Kronprinzessin</i>	Viktoria ---
	<i>Schauspielerin</i>	Ursula Karven ---
	---	Nadeshda Brennicke [...] <i>das jugendliche Nachwuchstalents von einst</i> [...]
	---	Tom Jones [...] <i>Tiger</i> [...] <i>Tiger-Tom</i> [...]
T02_BR_Das Erste 08.06.2010	---	Kevin [...] <i>Der zwei jährige [...]</i>
	<i>Schwedens Kronprinzessin</i>	Viktoria [...] <i>zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling [...]</i>

	---	Sir Roger Moore	---
	---	Nana Mouskouri	---
	---	Chiara Chaplin	---
	<i>Schauspiel-Schönling</i>	Johannes Brandrup	---
	---	Diana	
		[...]	[...] [ihr] Verlobte[r] Charles
			[...] Prinzessin
<i>U.S.-Schauspieler</i>	Will Smith	---	

Table 21: Referential specification in the German tabloid magazine *Brisant*

Table 21 shows that some celebrities (e.g. Jörg Kachelmann and Claudia Schiffer) are presented via their name only and their identity is not specified in more detail. (This is a striking difference to the news magazine, in which all news actors characteristically receive referential specification, i.e. even those whose identity can be presupposed as given information/shared background knowledge such as “Bundeskanzlerin Merkel”). The other celebrities listed here are more closely identified either by preposed or postposed referential specification or via a combination of both. Accordingly, preposed specification as in the news magazine (predominantly) happens via additional noun phrases immediately preceding the name (e.g. “Kronprinzessin Viktoria,” “Schwedens Kronprinzessin Viktoria,” “Mode-Zar Karl Lagerfeld”). Postposed specification of referents typically does not immediately follow the referent in question as a modifying noun phrase but tends to constitute contextual information within a following sentence/utterance. For example, we are not presented with “Prinzessin (= preposed noun phrase) Diana, die Verlobte von (Prinz) Charles” (= postposed noun phrase) or with “Die Verlobte von (Prinz) Charles Prinzessin Diana” (= preposed modifying noun phrase) but her social/political status is referred to later in the lead-in. Likewise, we are not told about “Schwedens Kronprinzessin (= preposed noun phrase) Viktoria, die zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling” (= postposed noun phrase) but her social/political status as queen and wife is only presented later as contextual information. In the case of Baptiste Giabiconi we have a mixture of preposed and postposed identity specification which are both disconnected from the referent they specify. Especially this example also illustrates a tendency, in accordance with the news magazine, to be more elaborate in referential specification with particular persons. In the news magazine these were persons that are not constantly featured in the news in the way that are members of the

cabinet. In the tabloid magazine this concerns an assumed still widely unknown male model whose identity is defined in more detail via presentation of elaborate background information.

Similar to the news magazine, where given, referential specification in the form as illustrated here at times also serves to increase the density of information packed in a text type but typically the structural complexity that results from such specification in the news magazine (e.g. via “[der] Fraktionschef der Linkspartei im Thüringer Landtag Ramelow“) is avoided here. Accordingly, we do *not* find “die Verlobte von Prinz Charles Prinzessin Diana” or “die zukünftige Königin und Bald-Ehefrau von Daniel Westling Schwedens Kronprinzessin Viktoria” or “das derzeit gefragteste und erfolgreichste Männermodel der Welt, Baptiste Giabiconi, ein zwanzig jähriger Jüngling aus Marseille, der vor seiner Zeit als Lagerfeld-Muse Hubschrauber zusammengebaut hat [...]“. The actual density of information packed in the lead-in *as such* is the same but the presentational style of referent specification in the tabloid magazine whereby referent and lexical modifiers are often separated and background information is delivered bit by bit significantly reduces structural complexity (cf. section (b)).

In contrast to the news magazine where we often find a high grade of explicit information also as concerns *events* and *facts* that are reported on, the tabloid magazine tends to leave out additional background information with some facts and events but presents such additional information in other instances. For example, we are not told the reason for why the person named Jörg Kachelmann was actually arrested (cf. T01: greeting and topic announcement/teaser [0:00 – 0:17]; lead-in [2:57 – 3:18]). On the other hand, we are told what happened to Kevin: “Der zwei jährige wurde zu Tode gequält obwohl ein Mitarbeiter der Stadt Bremen auf das Kind aufpassen sollte” (T02: lead-in [2:05 – 2:28]); we are told why a family is collectively accused of murder: “Die drei sollen die Geliebte des Ehemannes getötet haben” ” (T02: lead-in [13:34 – 13:56]); we are told the story behind the auction of a Diana-dress: “[das Kleid] sorgte neunzehnhundert einundachtzig für weltweites Aufsehen. Als Diana damit zum ersten Mal ganz offiziell an der Seite ihres Verlobten Charles erschien war die Wandlung vom Mauerblümchen zur Prinzessin vollzogen“ (T02: lead-in [32:29 – 32:57]).

In accordance with the news magazine, a term whose proper understanding can be considered as requiring specific, i.e. expert, knowledge (here: “Love Stockholm” in T01: lead-in [26:59 – 27:23]) is also explained illustrating explicit verbalization of background information.

To sum up, the tabloid magazine does not orientate predominantly at a communicative function of objective information as does the news format. For this reason it is not immediately affected by the journalistic objectives of complete and comprehensible information of the audience as is the news format which, being subject to such information, shows a general tendency towards explicit verbalization of background knowledge both with

respect to a potentially shared amount of world knowledge and specific expert knowledge. This high degree of explicit information is not paralleled in the tabloid magazine. As we have seen, this type of magazine shows a tendency towards a high degree of explicit information in some cases and a low degree of explicit information in other cases with respect to (1) referential specification – the identity of some referents is modified while the identity of some others is not – and (2) additional background information to presented facts and events – some receive such information while others do not. We can relate this procedure to an absent influence of any immediate demands towards completeness and comprehensibility which are placed on informative journalistic work but which do not so much affect a dominant entertainment orientation in the production of media contents for a mass audience. This particularity of the tabloid magazine on the level of information structure is accounted for respectively in the conceptual continuum via a middle-position for this aspect: no exclusively high or low grade of explicit information.

(f) Conversational redress: expected high or low degree of conversational redress

Once more we can state a relevant social distance between the presenter of the tabloid magazine and the disperse audience (s)he addresses similar to an assumed social distance between agent(s) and client(s) in social institutions other than television. We can explain this distance with the agent's strict adherence to fulfilling an institutionally ascribed communicative role of "presenter," in this case of a tabloid magazine. That is, although the presenter's role in this magazine type is not that of an "objective information transmitter" (as it is in the two news formats studied here), we can nevertheless assume that the presenter, simply *because* (s)he adopts this particular institutional role, will exclusively act according to this role only. That is, (s)he will retain institutional objectivity and, doing so, the identity of the presenter as private person with own subjective viewpoints and a personal interest in the addressee will thus step in the background. That is, (s)he will refrain from making any *truly personally* motivated evaluations and comments. These are always part of the ascribed institutional role and, as we have seen, this role centrally involves an interpretive function (cf. chapter 7.3.1). The presenter's application of speaker's modality and instances of affective language (cf. sections (g) and (c)) are thus direct expressions of this interpretive function and they have to be seen in light of this function in the first place. Therefore, also the presenter's seemingly subjective evaluation featuring the German 1<sup>st</sup> person singular pronoun "Ich" (cf. T02\_BR: "Ha: das wird schon. *Ich* bin mir ganz sicher" [32:27 – 32:29]) is performed on behalf of the institutional role and for this reason is rather not an expression of a true personal viewpoint as private person.

In fact, this purely role-oriented communicative behavior of the presenter implies an overall reduction in actual face threat otherwise present in everyday conversation especially also as concerns the verbalization of subjective viewpoints (e.g. criticism of events, states of

affairs and persons) and of emotions via affective language. It is in this respect that we can speak of a high grade of conversational redress that is not expressed via a high degree of intentional indirectness but consists in the presenter's restriction to acting solely within an institutional role whereby (s)he formally keeps up a social distance between institutional agent and addressed audience. The mere adoption of this role reduces the face threat potential of performed speech acts since these are never personally motivated but are always accepted as a part of exactly this institutional role. This is similar to the news magazine (where the risk of face threat is minimized via objective language use in the form of factual statements).

When we compare the opening (and closing) sections in the tabloid magazine with those in the news magazine we find that the two investigated editions open with the same greeting formula ("Einen schönen guten Abend und herzlich willkommen zu Brisant") that is more personal and informal, i.e. less distancing, in character than is the greeting formula in the news magazine ("Guten Abend meine Damen und Herren"), which was determined to constitute a verbal reflection of a relevant social distance between institutional agent and client(s). Although this greeting seems to counteract this assumed distance and with it an assumed high degree of conversational redress, we can nevertheless view it as a component of the presenter's institutional role which implies para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1). That is, we can treat it as an ultimate attempt by the institution at viewer bonding in the first place but it does not actually represent a true attempt at establishing a close relationship between presenter and audience. Hence the social distance between agent and clients remains valid even at the presence of such informal greeting formulas.

To sum up, we can determine a high degree of conversational redress for the presenter in the tabloid magazine. We can derive this degree from a minimized face threat potential of produced speech acts due to the presenter's restriction to acting solely within his/her ascribed institutional role. At the same time the presenter's adherence to his/her institutional role involves the maintenance of a social distance between presenter as institutional agent and audience as clients.

(g) Linguistic modality: use of utterance and speaker's modality

When we want to investigate the use of especially speaker's modality in the tabloid magazine, we should call to mind the institutional function that the format orientates at because we can argue that it will have a significant influence on the general likelihood of the expression of subjective speaker perspective within the institutional frame. Accordingly, it was argued in the discussion of the two news formats focused on here that an institutional function of objective information and the resulting communicative role of the presenter as "objective information transmitter" will affect language use in so far as they require the absence of – or

at least a significant reduction in – the expression of subjective speaker perspective. Therefore, the occurrence of speaker's modality in such clearly information-oriented television formats actually runs contrary to our expectations of being objectively informed.

However, when we take a look at the tabloid magazine we see that its production is not influenced by an institutional function of (objective) information but, as initially stated, it rather follows a general entertainment or at least infotainment orientation. This means that the presenter in the tabloid magazine does not actually fulfil the institutional role of an "objective information transmitter" and thus there is no immediate role-required neutral stance of the presenter in the tabloid magazine that would inhibit speaker's modality – the explicit expression of a speaker's subjective attitude towards what (s)he states in the proposition.

Nevertheless, we can well argue that also the presenter in the tabloid magazine does not act as a private person but first and foremost does so in his/her role as presenter of a tabloid magazine simply because of the formal acknowledgement and adoption of that role. From this it follows that all instances of speaker's modality in the speech of the presenter should be seen in the first place as expressions of exactly this institutional role. Clearly, since this role implies the communicative task of interpretation/evaluation (cf. chapter 7.3.1) we can treat the occurrence of speaker's modality, i.e. the verbalization of subjective speaker perspective, as an integral part of the presenter's interpretive function but not necessarily as his/her subjective point of view as a private person (even if this may be the case).

After these theoretical pre-considerations the central question now is whether – and if so how – the presenter in the tabloid magazine makes use of speaker's modality and hence this concerns the ways in which interpretation/evaluation in the tabloid magazine takes place.

Evaluation in the two editions of the studied tabloid magazine is typically performed by the presenter in connection with highly emotional topics, i.e. topics which arouse emotions because of the underlying cruelty of presented events and states of affairs. In the two editions these are the topics "Corrida accident" (T01) and "Infanticide" (two times in T02). The emotionality that accompanies these topics is mirrored verbally in the presenter's use of affective language (whereby he verbalizes an assumed public opinion): *zu Tode gequält werden* (T01: lead-in [15:27 – 15:49], T02: lead-in [2:05 – 2:28]) and *eine grausame Tat begehen* (T02: lead-in [11:46 – 11:57]).

Evaluation is furthermore performed via shortly commenting on immediately preceding broadcast reports. Accordingly, one such evaluation concerns the emotional topic "Corrida accident" in T01: "Das ist unfassbar und muss doch eigentlich nich' sein oder?" [17:58 – 18:03].

As argued in section (c) on word choice, unlike in the studied news formats the instances of evaluation by the presenter that are represented here are not attributed to external sources and hence they are indicated as the presenter's own evaluation of an event/state of affairs. However, as initially argued, we can define such evaluation as part of an institutional role of

being a presenter. The lack of overt source attribution here can thus be treated as verbal behavior that is consistent with the institutional role in so far as this role does not primarily entail the transmission of objective information as it does in the news format. The general absence of source attribution then is in accordance with a general entertainment/infotainment function, i.e. a function that allows space for evaluation characteristically also without additional attribution of evaluative statements to institution-external sources or other institutions. This is a central difference to the news magazine where the language use of both news reader and presenter typically features additional source attribution not only to denote a source of affective language but also in order to highlight the validity of presented facts ('*x* has said that *y* therefore *y* must be true').

In accordance with the news formats investigated here, the language of the presenter in the two editions of the tabloid magazine *does*, however, indeed feature a range of lexical elements with epistemic modal meanings in order to illustrate the degree of commitment to the truth of what is stated in the proposition (e.g. the German adverb/modal particle "wohl" (T01: lead-in [2:57 – 3:18]; T02: lead-in [0:00 – 0:22]), the German adverbs "vielleicht" (T02: lead-in [0:00 – 0:22]) and "offenbar" (T02: lead-in [5:19 – 5:37]; lead-in [13:34 – 13:56]), the German modal verb "sollen" (T02: lead-in [13:34 – 13:56])). All these lexical elements are used by the presenter in the tabloid magazine to account for the possibility, i.e. likelihood, of presented events and states of affairs.

As in the news magazine, evaluation by the presenter in the tabloid magazine involves the formulation of obvious or resulting questions (e.g. T01: lead-in [2:57 – 3:18]: "Oder ist das alles nur Taktik der Kachelmann-Anwälte um ihren Mandanten frei zu bekommen?" T02: greeting and lead-in [0:00 – 0:22]: "Verzweiflung, Ausweglosigkeit oder purer Hass?") and when we consider the ways in which the presenter in the tabloid magazine actually evaluates we often find a striking resemblance to the presenter in the news magazine that consists in a tendency towards reduced subjectivity in that evaluation:

T02: lead-in [13:34 – 13:56]: *Der Verdacht klingt unglaublich, sie wollten mit dem Mord offenbar den Familienfrieden wieder herstellen.* (**Indirect/impersonal evaluation**)

T02: lead-in [20:46 – 21:05]: Der Fuchs ist schlau und hinterlistig. Doch so schlau *das überrascht dann doch.* (**Indirect/impersonal evaluation**)

T01: lead-in [15:27 – 15:49]: *Nun kann man sich trefflich darüber streiten ob Stierkämpfe überhaupt sein sollten.* Was ist daran unterhaltsam wenn Tiere vor einer grölenden Menge zu Tode gequält werden. (**Explicit evaluation with indefinite German pronoun "man"**)

In these examples the presenter does *not* use the German first person personal pronoun "ich" that otherwise explicitly expresses the speaker's subjective viewpoint. Accordingly, the presenter does not state, for example, "I think that this sounds unbelievable" or "to me this is surprising" but instead he uses a more indirect and impersonal strategy (in italics) whereby subjectivity in evaluation is significantly reduced.

However, this is only one aspect that characterizes evaluative activities by the presenter in the tabloid magazine. Mostly in contrast to the news formats considered earlier, the presenter here also illustrates evaluation in which the personal perspective is indeed highlighted via the use of the first person singular pronoun “ich” and the German first person plural pronoun “wir.”<sup>382</sup> Characteristically, this happens in the short comments provided by the presenter to a previous broadcast report:

T02: [32:27 – 32:29]: Ha: das wird schon. *Ich* bin mir ganz sicher.

T01: [24:14 – 24:17]: Und *wir* werden immer wieder gern dabei sein.

Nevertheless, as aforementioned, we should treat such instances of overt expression of speaker perspective rather as a component of an institutionally ascribed function of interpretation.

To sum up, since the presenter in the tabloid magazine is guided by an entertainment function but fundamentally not by an information function (s)he is not subject to the demands for objective language use to the extent that are presenter and news reader in the news magazine and thus we can relate the differences in handling speaker’s modality in the tabloid and the news magazine immediately to the difference in dominant institutional function. Clearly, while the occurrence of speaker’s modality in the news magazine formally contradicts objective information, the application of this type of modality in the tabloid magazine is less problematic.

Evaluation in the tabloid magazine happens in the form of affective language applied in connection with highly emotional topics and short comments on previous broadcast reports. Typically, instances of evaluation via affective language are not attributed to external sources as they constantly are in the investigated news formats. We can explain this difference with a difference in institutional function. In accordance with the news formats, evaluation further includes the use of utterance modality, i.e. in the form of epistemic modality, and the formulation of relevant questions.

Evaluation by the presenter in the tabloid magazine is both indirect/impersonal illustrating reduced subjectivity *and* highly subjective via use of the German first person singular and plural pronouns “I” and “we.”

Since interpretation/evaluation is a central part of the institutional role of “presenter,” all evaluative communicative actions can be seen in light of fulfilling this role. Hence they are not to be seen as personally motivated expressions of a subjective viewpoint as private person.

As the presenter in the tabloid magazine behaves similarly to the presenter in the news magazine (general use of epistemic modality, interpretation/evaluation via particular linguistic

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<sup>382</sup> Via the plural pronoun the presenter defines himself as part of the audience. The German “wir” therefore corresponds to an inclusive “we” denoting “you and I.”

means) but yet also differently in some other respects (i.e. use of affective language without attribution of that language to external sources) this greater subjectivity/emotionality is accounted for in the conceptual continuum via a still slightly more rightward movement than for the presenter in the news magazine (cf. table 22). The language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine is consequently similar in this respect to the language use of the presenter in the political magazine which is characterized by the critical stance of the presenter that finds its expression in a higher degree of subjectivity (e.g. lack of source attribution).

(h) Speech activities and speech events: speech activities and events typical of linguistic formality or informality

The speech situation in the tabloid magazine is characterized by the absence of interaction. That is, in contrast to the other types of magazines considered here the presenter's communicative actions in the tabloid magazine are restricted to the performance of monologic speech activities of either reading out institutionally pre-produced language in the form of lead-ins to broadcast reports and to a series of short news films or, less frequently, making short commentaries referring to an immediately preceding broadcast report. Broadcast reports, news films and their lead-ins by the presenter constitute the program-specific forms of journalistic text types and they establish the program's particular text type profile. What about their formal or informal nature? Are they speech activities typical of linguistic formality or informality?

To answer this question we have to take into consideration again the institutional role of the presenter in the tabloid magazine. In contrast to the presenter in the news magazine, this role is not (necessarily) that of an "objective information transmitter" since the tabloid magazine does not orientate at the communicative function of (objective) information in the first place but rather at entertainment and at least at infotainment. His/her language use, therefore, does not necessarily imply an absence of or significant reduction in the expression of personal opinions. Consequently, as illustrated for the political magazine, a theoretical possibility for the verbalization of subjective viewpoints implies the speaker's underlying emotionality, which in turn involves the occurrence of affective language – linguistic means that reflect the speaker's feelings. The presence of affective language then also reveals on a relationship level the personal involvement of the speaker into what is being talked about.

Similar to the political magazine, the central question here is whether we can actually speak of a true personal involvement and hence of a true personal interest in the addressee on the part of the presenter in the tabloid magazine. Clearly, although the presenter in the tabloid magazine does not formally adopt the function of an "objective information transmitter," (s)he nevertheless adopts the institutional role of a "presenter" of a particular type of magazine and we can argue, as we did for the political magazine, that the adoption of exactly this institutional role will involve the same general absence of personal involvement,

independent of the existence of an institutional information-orientation. That is, the presenter always acts in his/her role as institutional agent and not as private person. Consequently, every communicative action by the presenter needs to be viewed in this light. That means, we can treat the occurrence of affective language and speaker's modality (via evaluation, comments) also in the tabloid magazine solely as part of the presenter's institutional role (involving an interpretive function) and not as expressions of personally motivated subjective viewpoints and personal feelings (cf. sections (c) on word choice and (g) on linguistic modality). The lack of personal involvement underlying the presenter's language use therefore means the presence of speech activities that in their nature correspond to those activities that are typical of linguistic formality, i.e. those characterizing a formal speech style within a formal speech situation. The speech situation indeed is a highly formal one when we consider that the speech activities performed by the presenter are actually performed within an institutional frame and, as argued above, they are performed on behalf of an institutional role of being a presenter. For this reason they are part of a, by definition, formal, i.e. institutional, speech situation and consequently they are also, by definition, typical of linguistic formality.

To sum up, the language use of the presenter in the tabloid magazine is characterized by speech activities that include the presenter's lack of personal involvement into what is being talked about. This lack results from an adoption of and restriction to a communicative role as presenter acting on behalf of the institution television. The absence of personal involvement defines these activities as parts of verbal discourse within the institutional frame that correspond to those speech activities that are typical of linguistic formality illustrating a reduction in subjectivity and hence in emotionality.

### **(3) Extent of speech regulation**

Just like the news format (both speaker-based program and news magazine) and the political magazine the production of talk within the tabloid magazine underlies strict processes of institutional pre-planning. Consequently, also here the topics featured in the tabloid magazine and their concrete verbal realization by the presenter are always the product of previous institutional work processes within editorial offices. For this reason, also the speech of the presenter in the tabloid magazine is highly regulated because it is unexceptionally produced in advance by the institution. This regulation in concrete terms pertains to strict pre-specification of appropriate topics and their order in each edition including their overall verbal and stylistic realization via the program-specific forms of journalistic text types.

### **(4) Predominant type of politeness: role-oriented versus person-oriented politeness**

In contrast to the presenter in the other magazine types investigated here the presenter in the tabloid magazine only performs monologic speech activities in the form of lead-ins to

broadcast reports and, less frequently, short commentaries relating to a previous broadcast report (cf. factor (2), section (h) on speech activities and speech events). The communicative situation hence is characterized by the absence of interaction within the institutional frame. Consequently, since the presenter in the tabloid magazine solely addresses an absent, disperse audience the concepts of role-oriented and person-oriented politeness have to be adapted to the mass communicative situation.

Unlike the presenter and news reader in the news magazine, the institutional role of the presenter in the tabloid magazine is not necessarily that of an “objective information transmitter.” In the news format this role is based on the function of information that is associated with the format involving the transmission of objective information unbiased in character. However, as the communicative function of the tabloid magazine can be determined to lie at the entertainment/infotainment side this, by definition, permits a deviation from an institutional role as “objective information transmitter” towards a more subjective and entertaining presentation of information. That is, the tabloid magazine is not subject to the same demands of objective information transfer than the news format as based on a difference in associated communicative function.

In previous discussions of this factor the institutionally required objectivity of both the presenter and the news reader in the studied news formats was explained as an important factor that limits the occurrence of personal involvement in the transmission of information. Since, however, institutional objectivity, as argued above, is less important in the tabloid magazine than in the news format, we can actually not derive the absence of personal involvement into what is being talked about on the part of the presenter directly from an institutionally demanded objectivity. Yet, in accordance with the political magazine, what stays the same is the adoption of an institutional role of ‘presenter’ and it is simply because of this adoption that we can speak here, too of a significant reduction in personal involvement characterizing the presenter’s communicative actions within the institutional frame; the presenter does not act as private person expressing own subjective viewpoints in the interpretation/evaluation of events and states of affairs but characteristically acts in his/her ascribed role as institutional agent with an institutionally required interpretive function.

As argued in chapter 7.1.1, the presenter’s lack of personal involvement can also formally be explained on the basis of a spatial dislocation between presenter (as institutional agent) and television audience.

The presenter’s lack of personal involvement consequently implies his/her lack of person-oriented politeness in favor of an adopted role-oriented politeness that formally corresponds to the acknowledgement by the institutional agent of an ascribed institutional role as presenter of a tabloid magazine. This role involves para-social interaction (cf. chapter 7.3.1) as a formal means of viewer bonding characteristically performed in greetings (opening sections) and farewells (closing sections) and therefore, as previously argued, this form of interaction

should also be treated rather as component of the presenter's role-oriented type of politeness than as an expression of his/her true personal interest in the addressees.

Linguistically, the fulfillment of an institutional role as presenter – in this case of a tabloid magazine – is once more reflected in language use: presence of emphatic stress for rhetorical reasons and absence of affective stress (e.g. to express empathy, anger, outrage etc.), which in everyday speech situations indicates the speaker's personal involvement into what is being talked about.

**(5) Access to the speech situation: public or non-public**

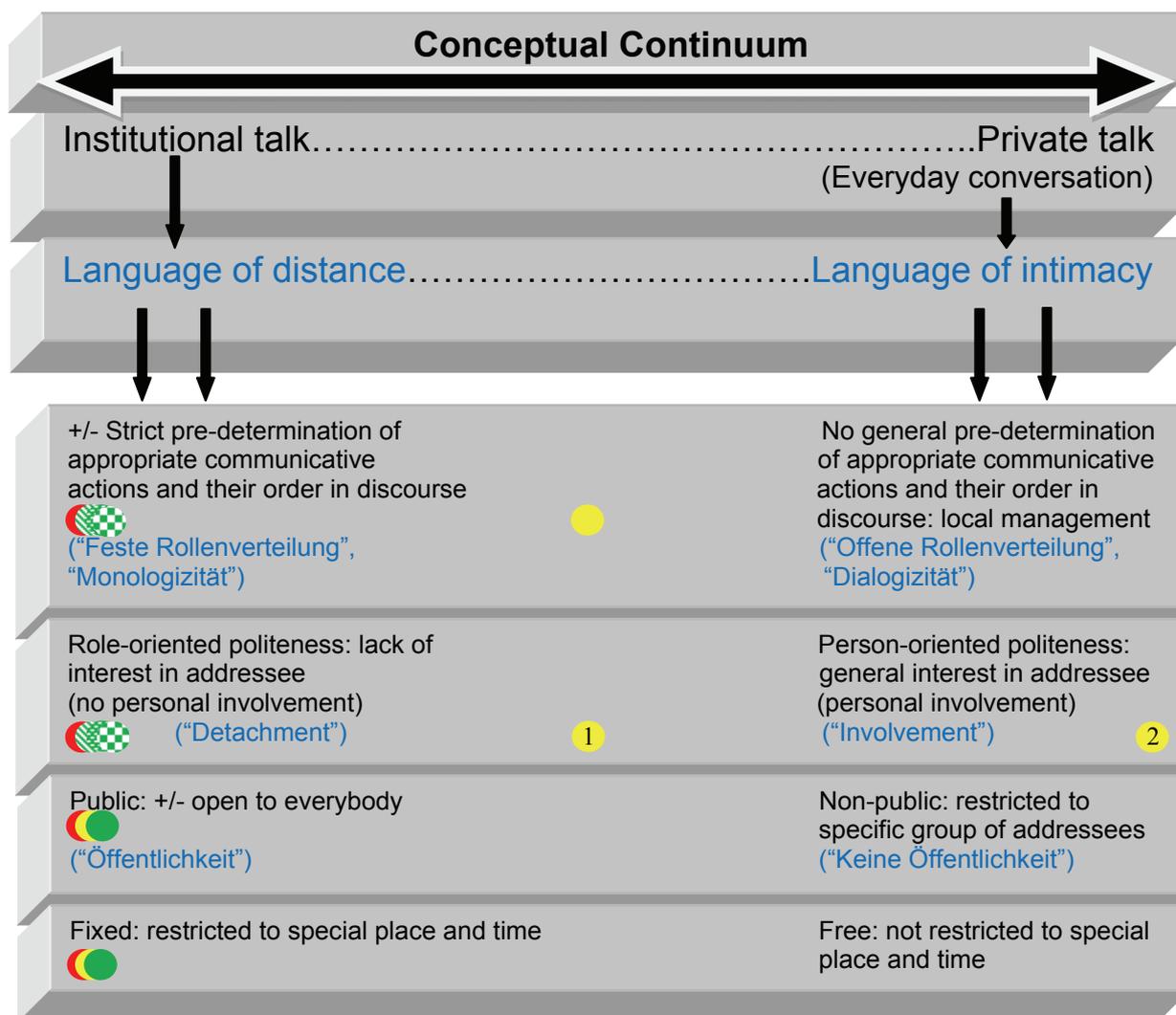
- In accordance with all other magazine types considered here: public access due to public communication.

**(6) Place and time of conversation: fixed or free**

- In accordance with all other magazine types considered here: fixed place and time of conversation necessitated by production requirements.

When we transfer the results to the conceptual continuum (table 22) we see that a particular constellation of the factors that determine institutional and private talk emerges for the tabloid magazine. In accordance with the news and political magazine we can see this constellation as defining a magazine-type specific factor profile for language use.





- = Tagesschau (German speaker-based public service news format)
- = Daytime talk show format ( = host ; = guests )
- = Magazine format ( = news magazine, = presenter; = news reader/speaker)
  - = reader + presenter (monologic speech activities)
  - = presenter (news interview)
- = political magazine
- = tabloid magazine

Table 22: The factor profiles of selected magazine types within the conceptual continuum of language<sup>383</sup>

Table 22 presents an overview of the program- or format-specific factor profiles of language use for all television formats that were chosen here for linguistic investigation. When we take a closer look at the conceptual continuum we see that some things are striking:

<sup>383</sup> The green dots (with different pattern for each investigated magazine type) indicate the constellation of each factor as determined in the previous sub-chapters 7.3.2.1 – 7.3.2.3.

- For the last two factors in the continuum (*access to the speech situation; place and time of conversation*) all formats – news, talk shows and magazines – show the same constellation independent of their underlying communicative function in broadcasting. We can attribute this correspondence to the nature of mass communication as such and specific conditions of content production for broadcasts that necessarily affect all television formats in the same way.
- The factor profile for the investigated public-service speaker-based news format shows – with one exception on the level of structural complexity – a clear tendency towards usage of institutional talk. We can ascribe this tendency to the format's underlying communicative function of information and a connected restriction to the transmission of objective information. Institutional talk, it can be argued, is the appropriate linguistic means for the fulfillment of the institutionally ascribed information function to be executed by the format. The low grade of structural complexity can be related to communicative demands placed on recipient design in processes of mass communication.

In this connection it is worth calling to mind that the studied speaker-based news format is a sub-format that consists next to other news formats such as the infotainment-oriented news show or the news magazine which was also focused on here. The mere existence of different news formats – especially if they deviate from a pure transmission of objective information such as the news show – may well yield a different constellation of the factors as determined for the speaker-based format. Indeed, when we take a look at the news magazine we see that it reveals, on the one hand, a constellation of the factors for the news reader that corresponds to the news reader/speaker in speaker-based format. However, it illustrates, on the other hand, also a deviation from this constellation on the part of the presenter which causes a significant difference in overall factor constellation and hence in the resulting factor profile between the speaker-based news format and the news magazine although the two formats formally adhere to the same underlying information function. We can ascribe the constellation-difference for the presenter in the news magazine to an institutionally ascribed function of interpretation that is not entailed in the institutional role of 'news reader'. This function has obvious consequences for language use on the level of expected institutional objectivity.

- The factor profile for the studied daytime talk show format – with a few exceptions – denotes a clear tendency towards usage of private talk (everyday conversation) relevant for both host and guests. We can attribute this tendency to the format's underlying communicative function of entertainment. Private talk/everyday conversation, it can be argued, is the appropriate linguistic means for the fulfillment of the institutionally ascribed entertainment function to be executed by the format. The deviations can be explained with the existence of an institutional speech situation and

hence of institutionally framed conversation in which parts of conversational discourse may be locally managed by the guests but in which conversational topics are fundamentally pre-determined by the institution. Likewise, institutionally framed conversation implies the presence of an institutional agent. In the daytime talk show this agent can step out of his/her institutional role as host and present himself/herself as audience member.

- The factor profile for the magazine format *per se* is less definite. This results from the fact that, similar to the news format, the magazine format is not a homogeneous one but comprises different magazine types with potentially different communicative functions. As we have seen the news magazine can be determined to follow an information function; the political magazine does so, too but allows a critical stance on the part of the presenter in the execution of this function; the tabloid magazine, on the other hand, can be associated with a strong tendency towards entertainment or at least infotainment. These differences in communicative function understandably have linguistic consequences that are revealed respectively in the conceptual continuum and the constellation of the factors is therefore strongly dependent on the individual magazine type that is investigated. As a consequence it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish a factor profile that is valid for the whole format covering all the sub-types it includes. That is, we *can* state factor profiles but we can only do so for isolated magazine types but characteristically not for the magazine format as such.

What we can see in the conceptual continuum is that, interestingly, although the tabloid magazine and the daytime talk show formally orientate at the same function of entertainment, the language use between the two formats is highly different in so far as the overall factor constellation for the tabloid magazine rather shows a tendency towards institutional talk than private talk. When we want to explain this difference we can do so on the basis of the persons that (inter)act within the institutional frame. That is, the daytime talk show features guests on stage acting in their communicative 'roles' as private persons. This aspect promotes the occurrence of (the characteristic aspects of) private talk.

## Part IV Summary and conclusion

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### Summary

The purpose of the present work was to illustrate the language use of television via the linguistic analysis of different television formats – news, daytime talk shows and magazines – in an attempt to illuminate the nature of television both as a mass medium and institution within society. Strictly speaking, this concerns western liberal democracies characterized by media markets affected by similar (yet culturally dependent) processes of commercialization and tabloidization. (The descriptions of television and television discourse that were presented in the foregoing chapters therefore are of relevance, e.g., for German, British and North American television, which have also been referred to at different points in the present account of media language).

The description of television started with a discussion of its nature as a mass medium in chapter 1. It was demonstrated that the ‘mass medium’ television is characterized by *mass communication* as a form of communication that is specific to the mass media and that fundamentally differs from interpersonal communication in so far as it is (1) a *one-way communication*, lacking direct and immediate feedback of its addressees, and (2) addresses a large, *disperse* audience (which complicates recipient design in processes of mass communication). This was followed by an account of the political functions that are typically ascribed to the mass media in democratic societies: *information*, *articulation*, *control* and *critique*. We can add to this an additional function of *entertainment*.

The description of television moved on in chapter 2 to a discussion of its nature as a social institution. It was argued that the institutional frame of television is split up into *multiple frames of interaction* as based on the character of television as a ‘mass communicator’. This aspect leads to the establishment of two additional frames of interaction – the actual mass communicative process and interpersonal communication triggered by that process – which together with the interpersonal communication in the television studio establish the *multi-level institutional frame of television*. This ultimately results into a connection between the public sphere (of television production) and the private sphere (of television consumption).

It was stated in this connection that mass communication means *public communication* because it reaches large audiences and hence grants nearly unrestricted access to the communication taking place within the institutional frame. From this, it was discussed, results a special social responsibility on the part of television within the public sphere for the application of a form or style, respectively of language that is suited for the general public and consequently appropriate for broadcast to the large numbers of addressees it reaches. That is, the public character of mass communication as performed by the institution television places particular demands on the form of language to be ideally applied on television when televised, i.e. broadcast to a mass audience. This form of language should be ideally *public/institutional*

in character in accordance with the special kind of public access created by the ‘institution’ television and as an expression of its responsibility towards the general public.

We can also derive this theoretical demand for public/institutional talk from the pure fact that television is an institution, i.e. independent of its use of public communication. Treating television as an institution – in accordance with other institutions such as law, health or education – imposes specific requirements on the language that is used within the institutional frame. Communication within the institutional frame is characteristically affected by institution-specific regulations – different from those present in everyday conversation – that can also influence the ways in which *language* is used by interactants within this frame. Everyday conversation (or: private talk) and institutional communication (or: institutional talk) are two different ‘speech exchange systems’ with different rules for ‘doing conversation’ appropriately. Viewing television as an institution in the first place thus means that the institutional frame of television *per definition* requires a form of language that is institutional in nature and therefore different from (the workings of) everyday conversation, i.e. conversation in non-institutional contexts of speech. *Conversationalization* as a phenomenon of television language becoming more and more conversationalized in character and as the linguistic expression of a general movement by contemporary mass media towards *tabloidization* hence constitutes a conceptual and structural paradox insofar as it is in conflict with the actual demands of the institutional frame of television for a respective language form that is institutional and thus more formal in character than everyday conversation. The institutional nature of television calls for the exclusive use of institutional talk within the institutional frame and it consequently excludes by definition a development towards conversationalization, i.e. everyday conversation. This is also the case since everyday conversation *per se* is traditionally reserved for the private sphere (of private matters) and because of this reason is not regarded as suited for the occurrence in the public sphere (of institutional matters) including television production.

In chapter 3 the two phenomena of *tabloidization* and *conversationalization* were explained as relatively recent developments within contemporary mass media affected by increasing commercialization and a resulting shift towards entertainment in the production of media contents. An interculturally varying phenomenon, *tabloidization* was defined as denoting structural changes within contemporary mass media (including television) with respect to content choice as well as visual and linguistic content realization in order to increase the entertaining value of media products. In this connection *conversationalization* was determined as a specific linguistic development in the course of a general tabloidization process. Accordingly, the term designates the linguistic process whereby contemporary media language tends to include with increasing frequency (features characteristic of) informal everyday conversation thus becoming more and more conversationalized in character.

In an attempt to illustrate the institutional nature of television, the structural and conceptual paradox constituted by linguistic conversationalization within the institutional

frame of television formed the starting point for an analysis of language use on television by means of a linguistic analysis of selected television formats in chapter 7. The central question in this connection was determined to be where we can detect conversationalization (i.e. informal everyday conversation; *private talk*) and where we can find more formal talk (i.e. *institutional talk*) on television. In order to answer this question, the first part concerned with the (structural) nature of television as mass medium and institution was followed by a second part discussing the characteristic features both of *everyday conversation* and *institutionally framed conversation*. Accordingly, chapter 4, in a first step, illustrated the determinants of everyday conversation with reference to speech act theory (Austin/Searle), conversational implicatures (Grice), politeness theory (Brown/Levinson) and turn-taking (Sacks/Schegloff/Jefferson). This culminated in a demonstration of the *relative freedom* of verbal action in everyday conversation insofar as the workings of this type of ‘speech exchange system’ do not involve any regulation with regard to a general pre-determination of communicative actions and their order in discourse. In a second step, chapter 5 examined the determinants of institutionally framed conversation. This started with a discussion of the concept of ‘institution’ featuring a definition of the term and was followed by an account of the characteristic features of institutions. It was argued that, in contrast to everyday conversation, verbal discourse in institutional speech situations involves a more or less strict *restriction of communicative actions* based on the grade of *formalization* of an individual institution via institution-specific regulations. Accordingly, we can distinguish between formal, mixed and non-formal institutions (Koerfer, 1994). Concrete action restriction in different types of institutions pertains to appropriate, i.e. institution-specific, communicative actions and their order in institutional discourse. In this connection also the particularities of the *institutional speech situation of television* were addressed including an account of ‘setting/scene’, ‘topic’ and ‘participant relations’. It was explained that, in contrast to traditional institutions, e.g. of law, health and education, the speech situation of television is simultaneously *institutional* and *public* in character. The description of institutionally framed conversation ended with a final specification of the determinants of institutional talk as the particular form of talk that is used within the institutional frame.

With the help of the determinants of everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation as illustrated in chapters 4 and 5 it was possible in chapter 6 to characterize in detail *institutional talk* and *private talk* (everyday conversation) by means of crystallizing particular factors that can be used to define the structural properties of both types of talk and that highlight their structural differences. Accordingly, the chapter started with a determination of *the defining factors of institutional and private talk* as based on the results of the two preceding chapters. One of these factors was the use of a *formal* or *informal speech style*. Their assumed constituent features were assessed via discussion of possible levels of distinction within the language system. This was done in an attempt to define the structural *dimensions of linguistic formality and informality* and by means of this to refine the concept

of ‘speech style’. The components of formal and informal speech styles described in this way supplemented the defining factors of institutional and private talk and allowed a final presentation of the characteristics of the two types of talk. Institutional and private talk were then illustrated to establish a *conceptual continuum of language* as two discrete conceptions of language opposing each other within a conceptual continuum of language possibilities. This conceptual continuum was described in reference to Koch’s and Oesterreicher’s (1986) notion of ‘konzeptionelles Kontinuum’.

The conceptual continuum with its characteristic features of institutional talk and private talk formed the analytical matrix for the concrete analysis of television language in part III. The overall aim in the final linguistic analysis of different television formats that followed in chapter 7 was to illustrate the nature or range of language used on television with respect to the occurrence of both institutional and private talk or maybe an in-between form of language conception. To do so particular television formats (news, daytime talk shows and magazines) were chosen with the underlying aim to demonstrate where we can find institutional talk on television – and how this talk looks like – and where we can detect instances of (informal) everyday conversation, i.e. conversationalized media language. In this connection the two (opposing) institutional functions of *information* and *entertainment* stated for television were treated as central communicative functions to be fulfilled by the ‘institution’ television in the broadcast of produced television contents and they formed the basis for the linguistic analysis of the mentioned television formats. The basic premise in this connection was that the two institutional functions can be related to particular television formats that are associated with the fulfillment of either information or entertainment or an in-between form of ‘infotainment’. Accordingly, the news format was associated with a dominant information orientation and the daytime talk show with a dominant entertainment focus while the magazine format was determined to allow a range from information over infotainment to entertainment depending on the actual magazine type that is studied. Another central assumption in this context was that each format will apply *function-specific talk* – institutional talk, private talk or an in-between form – in accordance with the fulfillment of the associated institutional function. Hence it was assumed that the news format with an underlying information function will use institutional talk as a form of talk appropriate for the fulfillment of that function. Institutional talk here reflects linguistic objectivity insofar as language is reduced to the pure transmission of facts unbiased in character. It was also assumed that the daytime talk show format with an underlying entertainment function will rather show a tendency towards conversationalization using private talk (informal everyday conversation) as a form of talk appropriate for the fulfillment of the entertainment function. Likewise, it was argued that the magazine format, depending on the institutional function ascribed to a particular magazine type, will use a form of talk that is appropriate for the fulfillment of that particular function in an individual magazine.

The linguistic analysis performed in chapter 7 resulted in the establishment of *format or program-specific factor profiles for language use* that indicate the use of institutional talk, private talk, or an in-between form as based on the constellation of the factors that were determined to define institutional and private talk in each considered television format. In particular, the analysis revealed the use of institutional talk on the part of the investigated speaker-based news format and the use of private talk on the part of the chosen daytime talk shows. The linguistic analysis of the magazine format showed that a clear specification of language use for the magazine format as such is problematic and can only be done with respect to an individual magazine type. It was illustrated that the news magazine (with an associated information function) shows a tendency towards using institutional talk. The same is generally valid for the political magazine, although the presenter shows a critical stance that is absent in the speech of the news presenter. Also the tabloid magazine (although assumed to follow a predominant entertainment function) showed a tendency towards institutional talk rather than private talk. The linguistic analysis of the magazine format included an account of the concept of the ‘presenter’. It was explained that the *presenter* is an institutional role adopted by the institutional agent in the magazine format that centrally entails the execution of particular communicative functions of *structuring*, *interpretation* and *para-social interaction*. These functions affect the language use of the presenter in the magazine format and we can explain the results for language use within an individual magazine type with the institutional role ‘presenter’ and its associated fulfillment of the three communicative functions that are complied with to different degrees in different types of magazines.

### Conclusion

The present discussion of television as a mass medium and institution and the subsequent linguistic analysis of different television formats is an account of broadcast-media language that shall constitute a contribution to contemporary studies into media language within the fields of media science in general and media linguistics in particular. The description of television language achieved in this way is thus fundamentally interdisciplinary in character: Part I (*The nature of television*) was concerned with the characteristics of television within the realms of media studies; part II (*Everyday conversation and institutionally framed conversation*) and part III (*The language use of television between institutional talk and private talk*) left the level of actual media studies and focussed on a description of the institution television within the realms of linguistics.

The description of contemporary television language provided here is in two ways significant within linguistics in general and media linguistics in particular: Firstly, the description provided is based on a detailed explication of (the scope of) institutional talk and private talk (everyday conversation) and the formation of a conceptual continuum of language possibilities. While there are accounts of institutional discourse in German linguistics, a

similar detailed account of institutional talk that is made here is in fact yet missing within Anglo-American linguistics. Secondly, the description of television language given here is important insofar as it also centrally involves the refinement and clarification of two concepts, the one used within (socio)linguistics, the other specifically within media linguistics, namely *linguistic formality* and *informality* (assessed here in terms of *formal* versus *informal speech styles*) and Fairclough's notion of *conversationalization*. Indeed, the terms *formality* and *informality* as well as *formal* and *informal speech styles* are frequently used in respective (socio)linguistic literature on linguistic variation in different situational contexts. However, interestingly, knowledge of what they 'mean', i. e. what they may implicate structurally and conceptually, is generally presupposed and as a rule they are characteristically left unexplained in this respect by researchers. A specification of the conceptual and structural dimensions of linguistic formality and informality via a determination of their possible components therefore was one of the central concerns in the present account of media language. Such a specification is yet missing in respective (sociolinguistic) literature on situational speech variation.

As argued in chapter 3, Fairclough's account of *conversationalization* of public affairs media is characteristically restricted to a determination of the phenomenon on the lexical level. The ultimate dimension of the process, i.e. with respect to characteristic features that go beyond the lexical level, in fact remains unspecified. The determination of private talk via particular factors that were worked out in chapters 4 and 5 indeed provides such a specification via illustration of the characteristic features of everyday conversation on multiple levels of the language system. These not only show the possible aspects of conversationalization but, in the case of informal everyday conversation, mirror ultimate conversationalization. That is, the definition of private talk and its components given here constitutes an effective analytical tool for the investigation of television language by means of which the possible grade of conversationalization of this language can be derived immediately from individual factor constellation. We can thus use the conceptual continuum to show **how** and to **what extent** television formats can 'go conversational' when they 'go tabloid'. This is one of the central properties of the conceptual continuum established here.

Other properties include its **versatility** with respect to:

- the **types of television formats** that can be examined. The analysis of the three formats that were considered here for their linguistic characteristics shows that the conceptual continuum can be used to investigate the language use of *any* television format and single programs within a format (e.g. tabloid magazines within the superordinate magazine format). In other words, the present continuum allows the establishment of both format-specific and program-specific factor profiles for language use and it does so for *any* television format.

- The **types of mass media** that can be investigated linguistically with the help of the continuum. It is not only an analytical matrix for the study of television talk alone but also constitutes a scientific tool for the investigation of broadcast media language as such. Consequently, the conceptual continuum as defined here can well be used to examine the linguistic characteristics also of radio talk. However, since the definition of institutional talk and private talk is based on the definition of and implies interaction within particular types of speech situations, the continuum is less usable for the investigation of print media language (e.g. newspapers, magazines). What we can do, however, even within print media is to give an account of linguistic formality and informality on the basis of the characteristics of formal and informal speech styles as illustrated in the continuum.
- The conceptual continuum is, with some restrictions, **interculturally applicable**. We can use the continuum to define tendencies towards conversationalization in mass media within media markets that have been described as being affected by (interculturally varying) processes of tabloidization. Since this is relevant at least for the western liberal democracies that have been referred to in this work, we can assume the suitability of the conceptual continuum as an analytical tool for the investigation of media language at least within these political systems. Since the conceptual continuum involves aspects of conversational politeness its intercultural applicability also depends on the use of similar politeness systems across societies.

In fact, the linguistic analysis that has been performed here reveals that the phenomenon of conversationalization is actually two-dimensional. On the one hand, it relates to changes in news media becoming increasingly tabloidized structurally involving language use. On the other hand, the daytime talk show format shows that the phenomenon, with the development of exclusive tabloid formats, also includes what may be labelled an ‘extreme form of conversationalization’. Conversationalization with reference to news media denotes the accumulation of public language used in the public, institutional sphere of television with elements characteristic of (informal) everyday conversation as used in the private sphere. The kind of language that we are talking here about is the result of institutional work processes in relevant editorial offices. Hence it is characteristically pre-produced. As a consequence, the language, even if filled with elements of everyday conversation, stays public in character in being (pre-)produced by institutional agents in the widest sense. When we consider the daytime talk show this is different. Conversationalization here is *not* the result of the conversationalization of *public* language. In fact, the language used in the institutional settings is rather true everyday conversation natural in character insofar as the language of the guests and the host is, as a rule, *not* pre-produced in any way by the institution. (This is especially valid for those instances of talk that are locally managed by the guests.) The guests

enter the public sphere of television production where they ‘act’ as private persons. Hence they apply everyday conversation as commonly used in their private environments within the private sphere. Consequently, the guests do not apply public talk and for this reason their use of language is referred to here as ‘extreme form of conversationalization’: the application of private talk instead of (conversationalized) public talk in the daytime talk show. Hence, this is a relevant systematization of conversationalization as necessitated by language use within the daytime talk show format. The term thus refers to (1) conversationalization present in the language of the institutional representatives of television within the news media as well as to (2) the language use of ordinary persons within the institutional settings of the daytime talk show.

Conversationalization, as a consequence, is in two ways significant: firstly, we have an obvious *intimization* of institutional discourse via informal everyday conversation featuring the use of affective talk that is especially shown in the daytime talk show format. Accordingly, Fromm (1999: 19) speaks in this connection of an increasing intimacy characterizing media talk. In fact, this intimization is in conflict with the actual nature of television as an ‘institution’ of the public sphere ideally requiring the application of public, institutional talk (especially also if we consider the institutional *and* public character of the speech situation). More positively, though, conversationalization means a *convergence* by television to the audience’s own discourse practices and we can see it as an expression of recipient design in the mass media that adapt to the communicative needs of addressees that are characterized by the use of (informal) everyday conversation.

Convergence leads to the second significant aspect of conversationalization: as the public sphere becomes the location of private talk originally reserved for the private sphere, we can see television’s capacity as an institution for *blurring boundaries* that are traditionally drawn between the public sphere (of institutional processes) and the private sphere (of private matters).

What can we finally say about the nature of television as an institution, i.e. with respect to Koerfer’s (1994) distinction between formal, mixed and non-formal institutions? The linguistic analysis performed here has illustrated the scope of conversationalization on television and, simply because conversationalization is a prominent feature of talk on television, we can define it as television’s own form of institutional talk appropriate for use within the institutional frame, namely for the fulfillment of an ascribed entertainment function. (Likewise, institutional talk that characterizes the use of language in (non-tabloidized) news formats is the appropriate linguistic means for the fulfillment of the information function associated with the institution television). Accordingly, when we take a look at the conceptual continuum (table 22) we see that television features both highly regulated talk (= institutional talk) with respect to communicative actions and their order for

particular formats and less highly regulated talk (= private talk) in this respect for other formats such as the daytime talk show which frequently allows local management on the part of the guests. Consequently, a valid definition of the institutional nature of television necessarily has to take this range of linguistic possibilities into account. Hence we are *not* talking here about a formal institution with a high grade of formalization based on strict institutional regulations that limit communicative behavior in institution-specific ways. Rather the institution-specific ways of more or less strict action-limitation within the institutional settings of television depending on the format and its associated institutional function point to television's nature as a mixed, or even non-formal, institution. Depending on the grade of action-regulation in an individual format we can have a public and formal setting (e.g. public service news formats) or a public and rather informal setting (e.g. daytime talk shows) and this implies the existence of both formal and informal speech situations.

The present work is a qualitative account of television language on the basis of a mostly small corpus of samples within selected television formats that have demonstrated the applicability of the previously established conceptual continuum of language possibilities. The linguistic analysis of the chosen formats combined a content-based approach of media studies to television formats with a pragmatic-interactive approach of (media) linguistics via reference to use of institutional talk or private talk based on particular factors.

The confines of this qualitative account are, in fact, shown when it comes to the determination of speech style. Especially on the level of structural complexity only general tendencies could be illustrated for the single formats and programs as based on Biber's (2001) definition of complexity dimensions and features. Thus, it would be useful to investigate the present formats within the realms of register variation and to turn the general tendencies into quantitative accounts of structural complexity or non-complexity.

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(Last access: 16.03.2011)

- <http://asne.org/>** American Society of Newspaper Editors (with a link to diverse regional codes of ethics relevant for press journalists)
- <http://www.mdr.de/brisant/>** Online presence of the German public service tabloid magazine *Brisant*.
- <http://www.fr-online.de>** Online presence of the German national daily newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau*  
A short article on the change to tabloid format in mid 2007 can be accessed via:  
[http://www.fr-online.de/verlagsservice/ueber\\_die\\_fr/in\\_eigener\\_sache/1110388\\_Frankfurter-Rundschau-startet-Tabloid-am-30.-Mai-2007.html](http://www.fr-online.de/verlagsservice/ueber_die_fr/in_eigener_sache/1110388_Frankfurter-Rundschau-startet-Tabloid-am-30.-Mai-2007.html).
- <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de>** A service offered by the German Federal Ministry of Justice together with juris GmbH providing free online versions of the German Federal Law including the German Code of Criminal Procedure (StPO): <http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/stpo/index.html>  
  
An English translation of the German StPO is provided at: [http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch\\_stpo/index.html](http://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_stpo/index.html)
- <http://www.icq.com>** A popular internet-based instant messaging (IM) service
- <http://www.jerry.springertv.com/>** *(The) Jerry Springer (Show)*  
(Official website)
- <http://www.maurymaury.com/>** *Maury* (official website)
- <http://www.wdr.de/tv/monitor/>** Online presence of the German political magazine *Monitor*
- <http://www.oprah.com/index.html>** *Oprah*  
(Official website of Oprah Winfrey with link to the show) or directly via:  
  
[http://www.oprah.com/oprah\\_show.html](http://www.oprah.com/oprah_show.html)
- <http://oxforddictionaries.com>** Oxford Dictionaries Online
- <http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/>** Online presence of the German political magazine *Panorama*

<b><a href="http://www.presserat.info/">http://www.presserat.info/</a></b>	Online presence of the German Press Council ( <i>Deutscher Presserat</i> ) featuring the German press codex – a prescriptive code of ethical journalistic operation
<b><a href="http://www.rtnda.org/">http://www.rtnda.org/</a></b>	Radio-Television News Directors Association; now: Radio Television Digital News Association (with a link to code of ethics relevant for broadcast journalists)
<b><a href="http://www.spj.org/">http://www.spj.org/</a></b>	Society of Professional Journalists (with a link to SPJ code of ethics relevant for journalistic work)
<b><a href="http://www.tagesschau.de">http://www.tagesschau.de</a></b>	Online presence of the German public service news formats <i>Tagesschau</i> and <i>Tagesthemen</i>
<b><a href="http://twitter.com">http://twitter.com</a></b>	A particular type of weblog; a microblog. Used for the posting and distribution of short messages on the internet.
<b><a href="http://en.wiktionary.org/">http://en.wiktionary.org/</a></b>	<i>Wiktionary</i> . A free online dictionary (wiki-based) Self-description as “a wiki-based Open Content Dictionary” English version of <i>Wiktionary</i> : <a href="http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Main_Page">http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Wiktionary:Main_Page</a>

## Transcribed TV-editions (listed by format)

### News:

*Tagesschau* (8pm prime-time edition). ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 18.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesschau* (8pm prime-time edition). ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 19.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesschau* (8pm prime-time edition). ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 20.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesschau* (8pm prime-time edition). ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 21.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesschau* (8pm prime-time edition). ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 22.07.2010. Video Podcast.

### Magazines (in alphabetical order):

*Brisant*. ARD (MDR, Leipzig). Das Erste, 07.06.2010. Television.

*Brisant*. ARD (MDR, Leipzig). Das Erste, 08.06.2010. Television.

*Monitor*. ARD (WDR, Köln). Das Erste, 17.06.2010. Video Podcast.

*Monitor*. ARD (WDR, Köln). Das Erste, 08.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Panorama*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 01.07.2010. Internet.

<<http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv164.html>>

*Panorama*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 22.07.2010. Internet.

<<http://daserste.ndr.de/panorama/archiv/2010/panoramaarchiv166.html>>

(last access: 22.08.2011)

*Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 18.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 19.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 20.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 21.07.2010. Video Podcast.

*Tagesthemen*. ARD (NDR, Hamburg). Das Erste, 22.07.2010. Video Podcast.

### Daytime talk shows (analyzed excerpts):

“Love...Hillbilly style.” *Jerry Springer*. Universal TV Talk Productions LLC. Syndication, 09.12.2003. Television.

“I’m sleeping with my stepfather.” *Jerry Springer*. Universal TV Talk Productions LLC. Syndication, 10.12.2003. Television.

“You can’t trust your mate.” *Ricki*. The Garth Ancier Company, distributed by Sony Pictures Television Inc. Syndication, 08.12.2003. Television.

**All analyzed daytime talk shows (in alphabetical order):**

**German**

*Arabella*. ProSiebenSat1 Media. ProSieben. Television.

*Britt – Der Talk um eins*. Schwartzkopff TV. Sat 1. Television.

*Die Oliver Geissen Show*. creatv/Norddeich TV. RTL. Television.

*Fliege – Die Talkshow*. ARD (BR, München). Das Erste. Television.

*Franklin – Deince Chance um 11*. Schwartzkopff TV. Sat 1. Television.

*Vera am Mittag*. time 2 talk show GmbH. Sat 1. Television.

**U.S.-American**

*Jerry Springer*. Universal TV Talk Productions LLC. Syndication. Television.

*Maury*. MoPo Productions Inc., distributed by Universal Domestic Television LLC. Syndication. Television.

*Montel*. Mountain Movers Productions (in association with Chris Craft Television Productions and United Television Productions), distributed by Paramount (Viacom International). Syndication. Television.

*Oprah (The Oprah Winfrey Show)*. Harpo, Inc. Syndication. Television.

*Ricki*. The Garth Ancier Company, distributed by Sony Pictures Television Inc. Syndication. Television.

Dates and topics of all analyzed editions are listed in the appendix.

## APPENDIX

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### CHAPTER 7: Television formats and their use of language

The transcripts of all analyzed television formats are provided at the end of this appendix.

#### 7.2 The talk show format

The following is a list of the 121 investigated German daytime talk shows and their featured discourse topics (12/17/03 – 01/22/04)

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of show</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>Broadcast</b>	<b>Title/Topic</b>
<b>12/17/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Leidenschaft – Heute kämpfe ich um meine Liebe!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Schwangere Sexbombe – Ich mache Party auch mit dickem Bauch</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Ich schlage mein Kind! Na und?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Fremdgepoppt – Wer muss für mein Baby zahlen?</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Süße Rache – Heute zahle ich Dir alles zurück!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Aus den Augen verloren – Auf den Spuren der Familie</i>
<b>12/18/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Weihnachten – Dein größter Wunsch wird Wirklichkeit!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Beziehungstest: Wenn Du mich betrügst, ist alles aus</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Rückenschmerzen: Der Kampf mit dem Kreuz!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Hoffnungslos zerstritten – Wir brauchen einen Anwalt</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Hure oder Heilige? Was</i>

				<i>bin ich?</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Leben retten mit José Carreras</i>
<b>12/19/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Verdorben – Für Sex bist Du noch viel zu jung!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Zweifelhafte Elternliebe: Ich halte es zu Hause nicht mehr aus</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Vera! Erfüll mir bitte meinen Weihnachtswunsch!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Sorry Hase – Du bist ein lausiger Lover!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>(Abschlussklasse 2004) Geheimnisse der Abschlussklasse: Der Weihnachtsmann packt aus!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>NO BROADCAST</i>
<b>12/22/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Wolke 7 – Warum hast Du mich runter gestoßen?</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Mistkerl! Jetzt bin ich schwanger und Du bist weg</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Wir und Geschwister? Das ich nicht lache!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Geständnis – heute packe ich aus!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Echt oder falsch? Bei Arabella wird ein Geheimnis gelüftet!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Das Schicksal hat mich stark gemacht</i>
<b>12/23/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Adoptiert – Wo sind meine Wurzeln?</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Entscheidung: Wenn Du mich willst, dann musst Du treu sein</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Schlechte Laune? Das wäre doch gelacht!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Schluss mit den Gerüchten – heute rede ich!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Für Bauchfrei-Tops bist</i>

				<i>Du zu fett! Kapier das endlich!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Das seltsame Spiel der Liebe</i>
<b>12/29/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Zeuger oder Zahler: Heute wird entschieden, ob Du wirklich Vater bist</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Du willst eine Hexe sein? Dass ich nicht lache!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Überführt – Du hast mich betrogen!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Unsere Beziehung steht auf der Kippe! Kann der Lügendetektor uns retten?</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Sanfte Medizin: Antlitzdiagnostik</i>
<b>12/30/03</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Lolita – Warum hast Du dich schwängern lassen?</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Faszination Go-Go Dance: Gib es bitte für mich auf</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Dein Markenwahn macht mich verrückt!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Stunde der Wahrheit – Du warst doch mit der ganzen Stadt im Bett!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Zurück zu den 80ern – Arabella verpasst Dir das Kultstyling!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
<b>01/02/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Enthüllung – Heute musst Du der Wahrheit ins Auge sehen!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Skandal! Als Vater bist Du das Letzte</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Fettwanst: Deine Figur ekelt mich an!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Volltreffer: Fremdgepoppt – Aber wer ist der Vater?</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>NO BROADCAST</i>
<b>01/05/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Verraten und Verkauft:</i>

	11			<i>Heute lass ich die Bombe platzen</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Chaotische Liebe: Wir müssen dringend reden!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Gebärmaschine: Du willst doch nur das Kindergeld!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Die Angst vor der Angst – Panikattacken und Phobien</i>
<b>01/06/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Verzofft! Wenn ich Dich sehe, raste ich aus</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Hose runter! Wie stehst Du wirklich zu mir?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Entscheide Dich: Deine Affäre oder ich!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>CANCELLED</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Liebe endet nie</i>
<b>01/07/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Pfundig – Nimm ab oder ich bin weg!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Chancenlos! Meine große Liebe ist vergeben</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Verzeih mir und bleib bei mir!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Ich zahle für mein Kind, doch die Mutter, die spinnt!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Unterwegs in Sachen Liebe: Arabellas Lovescouts suchen Dir ein Date!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Haare, Spiegel der Seele</i>
<b>01/08/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Aus &amp; vorbei – Heute geb ich Dir den Laufpass!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Pleitegeier! Ich habe es satt, Dich auszuhalten</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Alles im Eimer... Oder versuchen wir es noch mal?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Britt deckt auf: Lügner</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Beziehungen im Härtesten: Wie gut kennst Du Deinen Partner?</i>

	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Der gebrauchte Mann</i>
<b>01/09/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Shopping-Alarm – Deine Kaufsucht macht mich arm!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Schamlose Beichte: Was ich Dir heute sage, tut mir jetzt schon leid</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Eines ist sicher: WIR werden uns nie verstehen!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Flittchen: Lass die Finger von meinem Kerl!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Eifersucht und Gewalt – Die Abschlussklasse unter Druck!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>NO BROADCAST</i>
<b>01/12/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Verlustangst – Lass mich bitte nicht allein!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Reiß Dich zusammen! Sonst endet unsere Freundschaft heute</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Halt die Luft an! Jetzt rede ich!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Samenroulette – Wer ist der Vater meines Babys?</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Drei sind einer zu viel – Das Liebesspiel! (1)</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>KuckucksKinder</i>
<b>01/13/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Jung &amp; skrupellos – Ich lass andere für mich schuften!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Furchtbare Erkenntnis: Kind da – Mann weg</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Ätzend: Unsere Beziehung stinkt zum Himmel!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Hausverbot! Du kommst hier nicht rein!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Drei sind einer zu viel – Das Liebesspiel! (2)</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Sanfte Medizin: Zeig mir Deine Zähne...</i>
<b>01/14/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Filmriss – Wer hat mir bloß das Kind gemacht?</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Skandalös! Du willst Dich eine gute Mutter</i>

				<i>nennen – werd erst mal erwachsen</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Du Quälgeist: Warum machst Du mir das Leben so schwer?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Bedräng mich nicht, sonst mach ich Schluss!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Single hinter Licht geführt – denn ein Zwilling kommt selten allein!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Ich schrieb für Juhnke, Ustinov &amp; Küblböck</i>
<b>01/15/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Suchanzeige – Wo ist meine Familie?</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Ausgeliebt! Dich bringe ich vor Gericht</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Ich kann's nicht glauben: War's das jetzt mit uns?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Zieh Dich warm an – heute bist Du fällig!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Rückenhaare, Hornhautfüße? Bei Arabella wirst Du schön gemacht!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Mit 80 zu alt für das Leben?</i>
<b>01/16/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Tussiterror – Du siehst unmöglich aus!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Heute breche ich mein Schweigen: Ich habe Sex mit einer anderen</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Moment mal: Wir sind noch nicht fertig miteinander!</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Lügner: Heute fliegt Deine Affäre auf!</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Dunkle Geheimnisse! Welches verändert Dein Leben?</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>NO BROADCAST</i>
<b>01/19/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Verklemmt – Deutsche Frauen bringen es nicht!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Mieses Vorbild! Aus Deinen Kindern kann ja</i>

				<i>nichts werden</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Urteil am Mittag: Ist meine Eifersucht berechtigt?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Britt deckt auf: Sozialschmarotzer</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Nervige Eltern</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Unsere Oma ist die Beste</i>
<b>01/20/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Karrierefrau – Kinder sind eine Plage!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Abgebrühtes Dreckstück! Heute musst Du auspacken</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Urteil am Mittag: Hast Du mich betrogen?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Britt deckt auf: Schockierende Wahrheiten</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Doppelleben: Unser Kind hat uns belogen!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Von allen vergessen – Der einsame Tod</i>
<b>01/21/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Backstage – Ein Tag mit Olli Geissen!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Seitensprung-Gefahr! Treulosen Männern auf der Spur</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Urteil am Mittag: Kann ich Dir noch vertrauen?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Britt deckt auf: Verhängnisvolle Affären</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Arabella testet Deine Liebe!</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Ich will unbedingt ein Kind – Adoption</i>
<b>01/22/04</b>	Die Oliver Geissen Show	RTL	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Klette – Du erdrückst mich mit Deiner Liebe!</i>
	Franklin – Deine Chance um 11	Sat 1	11.00 – 12.00	<i>Gnadenlos peinlich! Meine Eltern wollen nicht arbeiten</i>
	Vera am Mittag	Sat 1	12.00 – 13.00	<i>Urteil am Mittag: Begraben wir heute das Kriegsbeil?</i>
	Britt – Der Talk um eins	Sat 1	13.00 – 14.00	<i>Britt deckt auf: Gerüchte</i>
	Arabella	ProSieben	14.00 – 15.00	<i>Waschen, schneiden, legen: Welche Friseurin</i>

				<i>bekommt den Job?</i>
	Fliege – Die Talkshow	Das Erste	16.00 – 17.00	<i>Herr Doktor, retten Sie mich! Ich bin vergiftet</i>

The following is a list of the 15 investigated U.S.-American daytime talk shows and their featured discourse topics:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Name of show</b>	<b>Channel</b>	<b>Broadcast</b>	<b>Title/Topic</b>
12/08/03	Jerry Springer	---*	---*	<i>Steve and Todd reviews</i>
12/09/03	Jerry Springer	---	---	<i>Love...hillbilly style</i>
12/10/03	Jerry Springer	---	---	<i>I'm sleeping with my stepfather</i>
02/23/04	Maury	---	---	<i>I'm devastated...I heard you cheated with over 50 women!</i>
02/24/04	Maury	---	---	<i>I had sex with 2 cousins...who's my baby's daddy?</i>
02/25/04	Maury	---	---	<i>The secret is out...I'm married to a 14 year old boy!</i>
02/23/04	Montel	---	---	<i>Culture shock: Living a world apart</i>
02/24/04	Montel	---	---	<i>Surviving a lover's attack</i>
02/25/04	Montel	---	---	<i>Sylvia Browne: Murder, mystery, or miracle?</i>
12/08/03	Oprah	---	---	<i>Air Force Academy rape scandal</i>
12/09/03	Oprah	---	---	<i>Oprah throws a party</i>
12/10/03	Oprah	---	---	<i>Addicted: Backstreet Boy AJ Mclean</i>
12/08/03	Ricki	---	---	<i>You can't trust your mate!</i>
12/09/03	Ricki	---	---	<i>Divorce wars!</i>
12/10/03	Ricki	---	---	<i>I cheated because...!</i>
<b>*Syndication</b>				

The following is a formal description of the overall conception of the investigated U.S.-American daytime talk shows with additional reference to the internet presence of each show:

*JERRY SPRINGER (or: The Jerry Springer Show)*

The program in general aims at the pure entertainment of the studio and TV audience. For this reason *Jerry Springer* is confrontational in character in so far as it confronts conflicting persons with each other. The social conflicts are mostly based on one person cheating or having cheated on another one. The topics of the show are thus without exception private in character. Of all the daytime talk shows considered here *Jerry Springer* is the most extreme in the way it presents social conflicts on stage. The conflict is not only verbally but also physically executed on stage with the obvious function of highlighting the entertainment factor. During the show bodyguards – one of the show's striking characteristic structural elements – prevent the conflicting parties from serious physical attacks. Characteristically, face saving strategies between the conflicting parties are fundamentally missing. Serious attempts at the interactional management, i.e. maintenance, of face are generally not made. The use of highly face threatening acts is typical of the execution of the social conflict on stage. Accordingly, the conflicting parties are yelling and most of the time furiously attacking each other also physically whenever getting the chance. The execution of the whole conflict is staged. During verbal insults a bell rings at different points in time, similar to the one used in the boxing ring, signalling that the physical attacks can officially begin. The atmosphere of a wrestling ring is prevailing. As the show's graphic images reflect it, the atmosphere intended by the producers of the show is usually explosive. The setting, including steel elements and a huge ventilator reminiscent of a factory building, is correspondingly designed so as to mirror the cold atmosphere between the conflicting parties on stage. Executed within a simulated wrestling ring, the actual social conflict itself is pushed into the background while the self-presentation of the conflicting persons steps into the foreground to the general amusement of a usually bawling and cheering studio audience. Moreover, a solution of the personal problems in the sense of an approach of the conflicting parties towards each other is obviously not intended. Stable social relationships, thus, are not re-created. The program presents the classic protagonist-antagonist picture, however, with good and bad being neutralized. Hence what is taking place is an obvious celebration of social conflicts.

The institutional role of the host Jerry Springer is to formally provide for the entertainment of the audience. Thus, his communicative actions are predominantly subjected to the confrontation of the conflicting parties. He is, in general, no mediator between the guests. This is obvious, as he mostly refrains from intruding linguistically into the verbal and physical conflict of the parties which is predominantly self-managed. The bodyguards take care that nobody is seriously physically damaged. Only during the introduction of the first guest and his or her respective problem with another person(s) the conversation is managed by the host and has interview style. At the end of the show all guests usually sit together on stage next to each other and the studio-audience is given the chance to comment on the guests' behavior. Springer ends the shows with his rather pre-produced than spontaneous final thoughts.

**Internet:** <http://www.jerryspringertv.com/> (official website)

## MAURY

Similar to *Jerry Springer*, *Maury* is generally confrontational in character. The social conflicts, again, mainly center around one person cheating/having cheated on another one. The analyzed shows illustrate the program to be based on paternity tests. The conflicts are not presented as dramatically and staged as in *Jerry Springer*. Nevertheless, the reactions, mostly of one of the conflicting parties, are drastic leading from crying to nervous breakdown all closely captured by camera intruding into the private sphere of a respective person who not seldom leaves the stage and enters backstage always followed by a handheld camera. The obvious intention of the program thus is to present the high emotional involvement of the conflicting parties and by means of this to entertain. Characteristic is again the frequent absence of conversational politeness (face saving strategies) as grounded in the high emotional involvement of the persons quarrelling on stage.

The host, Maury Povich, who sits next to the guests on stage, can be said to function as a mediator between the conflicting parties. Comforting the often more than disappointed persons he tries to psychologically stabilize them and to give them advice, sometimes directions of what to do. Yet, Maury generally only interferes if it is really needed. Usually he refrains from doing so, unless a person breaks down. Maury usually starts with interviewing the first guest(s) who is/are then confronted by the next guest(s). After the on-stage appearance of this second conflict party local management often dominates the talk.

**Internet:** <http://www.mauryshow.com/> (official website)

## MONTEL

In contrast to *Jerry Springer* and *Maury*, the investigated shows of *Montel* do not include any conflict talk. In two of the three shows the guests retell a personal experience which is presented in question-answer sequences, i.e. interview style. The studied editions of the show only feature public topics and consequently, at least based on these editions, the show may be determined as (predominantly) informative than exclusively entertainment-oriented, also because in contrast to *Jerry Springer* and *Maury* it is neither confrontational nor confessional in character in the treatment of the discourse topics on stage. In accordance with the public nature of the discussed topics the speech style is less informal than in those shows featuring predominantly private topics. (Although the guests are in general highly emotionally involved (e.g. 02/24/04: *surviving a lover's attack*).

The show's host Montel Williams sits together with his guests on the stage. The communicative atmosphere is an overall intimate one with the studio-audience surrounding the stage which creates a physical closeness between the audience and the persons interacting on stage.

**Internet:** Not produced any longer

## OPRAH (or: *The Oprah Show*; *The Oprah Winfrey Show*)

In accordance with *Montel*, the investigated editions of *Oprah* do not include the public execution of social conflicts. Featuring mostly public topics the studied shows are predominantly informative in character. The obvious aim is not to be exclusively entertaining. Again, the guests report their intimate personal experiences. As in *Montel*, the verbal discourse is realized in the succession of question-answer pairs, i.e. in interview style, with the host Oprah Winfrey questioning and the guests answering. Also here, the speech style corresponds to the public character of the discourse topics and thus it is less informal than in the programs including mainly private

topics. Nevertheless, as in *Montel*, the persons generally show high emotional involvement (e.g. 12/08/03: *Air Force Academy rape scandal*).

Oprah sits together with her guests on the stage always demonstrating social closeness, i.e. empathy and sympathy. She usually presents herself as part of the audience using the inclusive ‘we’ when commenting on something. Semeria (1999: 58) describes Oprah’s role as host as “(Selbst)-Betroffenheits-Mischung aus mütterlichem Verständnis und solidarischer Verschwisterung.”

**Internet:** <http://www.oprah.com/index.html> (official website of Oprah Winfrey with link to the show) or directly via: [http://www.oprah.com/oprah\\_show.html](http://www.oprah.com/oprah_show.html)

Final show broadcast 05/25/2011

### *RICKI (Ricki Lake)*

Among the U.S.-American daytime talk shows considered here *Ricki* is the show that is closest to German shows in structure. The topics are exclusively private in character. Again social conflicts are mainly based on cheating on another person. The studied shows, mainly based on lie detector tests, are confrontational and confessional in character and we may ascribe to the show a dominant orientation towards entertainment. The setting creates the atmosphere of a living-room which the guests enter via three different entrances. The conflicting parties sit together next to each other on the stage facing the studio-audience and the host Ricki Lake who is mostly standing among the audience with a hand-held microphone, i.e. as part of the audience. The execution of the social conflicts on stage reveals that the host and the studio-audience plus diverse ‘love experts’ from among the private sphere function as a community with a consensual opinion – representing an assumed wider ‘public opinion’ – that most of the time deviates from the one presented by certain guests. In case of obvious deviation this community usually sanctions the guests’ communicative behavior and, more generally, their personal viewpoints that are revealed in their communicative behavior on stage. Consensus is usually demonstrated by means of booing or other audience participation such as providing comment (in case of non-approval of communicative behavior) and of applause (in case of approval).

The host Ricki Lake demonstrates consensual opinion by commenting, i.e. evaluating, assumed non-consensual behavior. As social conflicts are presented on stage the emotional involvement is correspondingly high among all conflicting parties. As a consequence, the basic interview structure – question posed by the host and answer given by the guests – is often disturbed by self-selection of guests managing great parts of verbal discourse locally.

**Internet:** Not produced any longer

The following is an illustration of the structural conception of a selected edition of *Jerry Springer* according to featured sequences of communicative actions:

*Jerry Springer*

Date: 12/09/03

Topic: "Love...Hillbilly Style!"

<b>Running Time</b>	<b>Content/Communicative Actions</b>
0:00:00	General introduction to topic of the day by the host
0:00:13	Introduction of 1 <sup>st</sup> guest (1 <sup>st</sup> sub-topic)
0:00:18	Interview: Springer – 1 <sup>st</sup> guest (elaboration of 1 <sup>st</sup> sub-topic)
0:04:16	Appearance 2 <sup>nd</sup> guest
0:04:20	Verbal conflict: 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> guest
0:06:09	A bell is heard (signals beginning of fight between conflicting parties)
0:06:35	Commercials
0:10:16	Springer: re-introduction to topic
0:10:45	Interview: Springer – 1 <sup>st</sup> guest; verbal fight continues; bell is heard several times during the conflict
0:14:00	Appearance 3 <sup>rd</sup> guest (1 <sup>st</sup> sub-topic; joins physical and verbal conflict; period of verbal and physical execution of conflict on stage; gong is heard several times during the execution)
0:16:15	Commercials
0:21:02	fight continues
0:25:43	"Time out" (execution of conflict is over)
0:25:52	Interview: Springer – first guest
0:27:25	Commercials
0:30:22	Springer: re-introduction to topic
0:30:29	Introduction of 1 <sup>st</sup> guest (2 <sup>nd</sup> sub-topic)
0:30:34	Interview: Springer – 1 <sup>st</sup> guest (elaboration of 2 <sup>nd</sup> sub-topic)
0:32:42	Appearance 2 <sup>nd</sup> guest
0:32:46	Verbal and physical conflict: 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> guest; bell is heard several times during the conflict
0:35:33	Commercials
0:38:35	Springer: re-introduction to topic
0:39:05	Interview: Springer – 2 <sup>nd</sup> guest
0:39:22	Appearance 3 <sup>rd</sup> guest (2 <sup>nd</sup> sub-topic; conflict continues)
0:41:03	Appearance 4 <sup>th</sup> guest (joins conflict)
0:46:10	Commercials
0:48:21	Audience participation (self-presentation; commenting)
0:53:36	Commercials
0:56:16	Springer's 'final thought'
0:57:56	Closing credits