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The studio interaction as a contextual resource for TV-production

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Abstract

The present text focuses on the complex context of TV-production. The study shows how the dynamics of the studio interaction can be made relevant as a crucial contextual resource for the production crew filming and broadcasting the very same interaction. The mutual intelligibility of the crew's indexical practices (e.g. talk, switches and camera movement) is shown to be grounded in a state of mutual attention to the unfolding studio interaction. Based on a number of recordings made in the control room during the live production of the French TV-show *Rideau Rouge* (January 20, 2004) the study describes in particular the crew's orientations towards three dimensions of the endogenous organization of the studio interaction: turn construction, sequence organization, and activity constitution. The analysis confirms the general relevance of these orders of organization for talk-in-interaction, and shows how each can be used for the practical purposes of the production of the show. The study also reflects upon possible mediating effects when perceiving the studio interaction at a distance. In the control room, the studio interaction can only be observed through the technological system at hand, which is shown to be of some importance for the way in which it can be understood.

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1. Introduction

The present study considers two different types of “focused” interaction (Goffman, 1963). On the one hand, a multi-party interview taking place in a TV-studio while being filmed and broadcast, on the other, the work of live editing this same interaction taking place in a nearby control room. The studio interview will be described not only as a self-organizing type of

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institutional interaction, but also, and this will be my primary point of focus, as a crucial contextual resource for the very intelligibility of the actions performed by the members of the crew, working to turn that interaction into a TV-program.¹

Not uncommonly, the “context” of an interaction is treated as aspects of its material surround. However, focusing here on the live production of a TV-interview, we are in a situation where a first interaction (the interaction being filmed in the studio) is treated as a contextual background in a second interaction (the interaction taking place within the production crew). Working to make a broadcastable TV-show, the members of the crew orient to particular phenomena of the studio interaction in order to make sense of and coordinate their actions. Particularly, we will see that these phenomena, that are thus made relevant as background for collaboration and decision-making within the crew, characterize the organization of the studio interaction. I have chosen here to focus mainly on three dimensions of this interaction: turn construction, sequencing, and activity constitution. The analyses that follow will demonstrate the relevance of practical units relative to these dimensions of the studio interaction for the work of the production crew. The interactive sense-making within the crew is thus to a very large extent depending on a state of constant mutual attention towards the studio interaction, providing necessary contextual background for understanding the actions of different members of the crew.²

Unlike other approaches to the study of discourse, that may treat context as something that could be conceived of as being “prior” to and determining in a one-way fashion the organization and the specificity of the interaction that it “encompasses” in a general way (an interaction may for instance be said to take place within a “media context” and as a result of this have certain characteristics), the “praxeological” perspective adopted here for the study of the television context treats context as a dynamic and interactional phenomenon, accomplished by different kinds of participants performing different tasks (cf. e.g. Schegloff, 1987; Duranti and Goodwin, 1992; Drew and Heritage, 1992). Through their actions, both the participants in the studio interaction and in the production crew constantly create and renew the emerging context, which in turn is also exploited as a resource for the intelligibility of their respective actions. Concerning the members of the crew, they systematically take what is happening in the studio into account in the production of their local context.

However, not all members have the same kind of access to the studio interaction (which, as we will see, will have some consequences for the way in which this interaction can be understood). Whereas those who are co-present in the studio, e.g. the camera operators (should they look outside the camera’s viewfinder), may have unmediated access to it, the people working in the control room, e.g. the director, the script, and the technical engineers, can only perceive the interaction through the technological system that is used,

¹ Some of the crew’s actions are partly accessible to TV-viewers, mainly shots, switches between shots and sometimes also broadcast camera movements. For the TV-viewers, the studio interaction both informs (provides for the accountability of e.g. a switch of shots) and is informed (is seen in a particular way) by these practices (Broth, 2008; Macbeth, 1999). Other actions are not accessible, such as the camera zoomings and panning not going on the air and all the embodied verbal and non-verbal practices of the members of the crew.

² Other studies have treated aspects of context as a resource for interaction. See e.g. Goodwin (1995), Heath and Luff (1992b), and Heath et al. (2005). Goodwin (2000:1492) expresses this idea in the following way: “Both talk and gesture can index, construe, or treat as irrelevant, entities in the participants’ surround. Moreover, material structure in the surround, such as graphic fields of various types, can provide semiotic structure without which the constitution of particular kinds of action being invoked through talk would be impossible.”

consisting of cameras and microphones in the studio, and their corresponding monitors and loudspeakers in the control room. Taken together, the television context is thus also highly complex, as it is differentiated according to the tasks and perspectives of the different participants.

By trying to demonstrate the importance of the mediated studio interaction as a crucial contextual resource for the intelligibility of the practices of the crew, I most generally want to argue for a view of language and other embodied practices as *indexical* phenomena (Garfinkel and Sacks, 1970). Meanings of practices (in this context, speech, gesture, camera movement, switches, etc.) are thus treated as always a local, situated and contextually contingent matter. Analysing the integration of phenomena of the studio interaction in the interaction within the crew, for which the studio interaction thus becomes part of the contextual background, implies close attention to the precise relation between what is happening in the two kinds of focused interaction. This relation can only be observed and analysed if these interactions are first recorded and then carefully transcribed. The extracts studied for the present paper were taken from a corpus of recordings of the live production of the French interview show called *Rideau Rouge* (broadcast live on on *TV5 Internationale* between 2002 and 2005). More specifically, the analyzed events occurred on 22 January 2004, as the crew was broadcasting a show having as its main theme the planet mars.³

The reader will first find transcriptions and analyses that focus exclusively on two short extracts of the studio interaction (chapter 2). Only later (chapter 3 and 4) will also the interaction within the production crew be taken into account, in an attempt to describe how it exploits the studio interaction as a contextual resource for their work.

2. The studio interaction

The studio interaction both accomplishes and takes place within a context that is quite different compared to many other kinds of interaction. Firstly, the studio interaction is performed in a television studio for the purpose of being filmed and broadcast live. If there would not be a production crew to broadcast it, it would in fact lose its “raison d’être”. Secondly, in this particular show, the studio interaction is most often organized as an interview.

Broadcast interviews have been described as being “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984:290) as a particular form of institutional interaction by an orientation by its participants to a specific set of conversational norms. Interviews are accomplished, among other things, through a shared orientation to a *pre-allocation of types of turns* (cf. e.g. Atkinson and Drew, 1979; Clayman and Heritage, 2002; Drew and Heritage, 1992; Greatbatch, 1988), meaning that what the interviewer should properly be doing is to ask questions and what the interviewee should be doing is to give answers to those questions. As long as a question has not been recognizably put, the interviewee withholds speaking, and in this way contributes reflexively to the establishment of the normative constraints of the interview. In particular, this withholding contributes to the way the interviewer’s turns are structured, sometimes

³ With the exception of the recorded TV-program, the recordings (totaling roughly 30 h) were made in the control room. The production work was recorded at four different occasions between 2003 and the beginning of 2004. On each occasion, three cameras were used to record (1) a contextual view of the control room, showing the “wall of screens” (reproducing the multitude of shots that the camera operators continually produce) as well as the people working in front of it, (2) a close up view of only the “wall of screens”, and (3) a contextual view of the studio, by zooming in on one of the small screens in the control room that showed that view.

containing quite long preliminary stretches of uninterrupted talk that provide a background for the question to come. The interviewer can also reclaim the floor whenever a first answer has been produced, thus putting pressure on interviewees to hang on to their turns should they want to say more.⁴

Image 1 shows the studio of Rideau Rouge on the 20 January 2004. Both the audience and the eight invited guests are seated facing a big screen, showing images of the planet Mars during the greater part of the show. To the right, between the guests and the screen, one can also see the moderator, sitting behind a table. The camera operators are also visible, at different places around the moderator and the invited guests.⁵

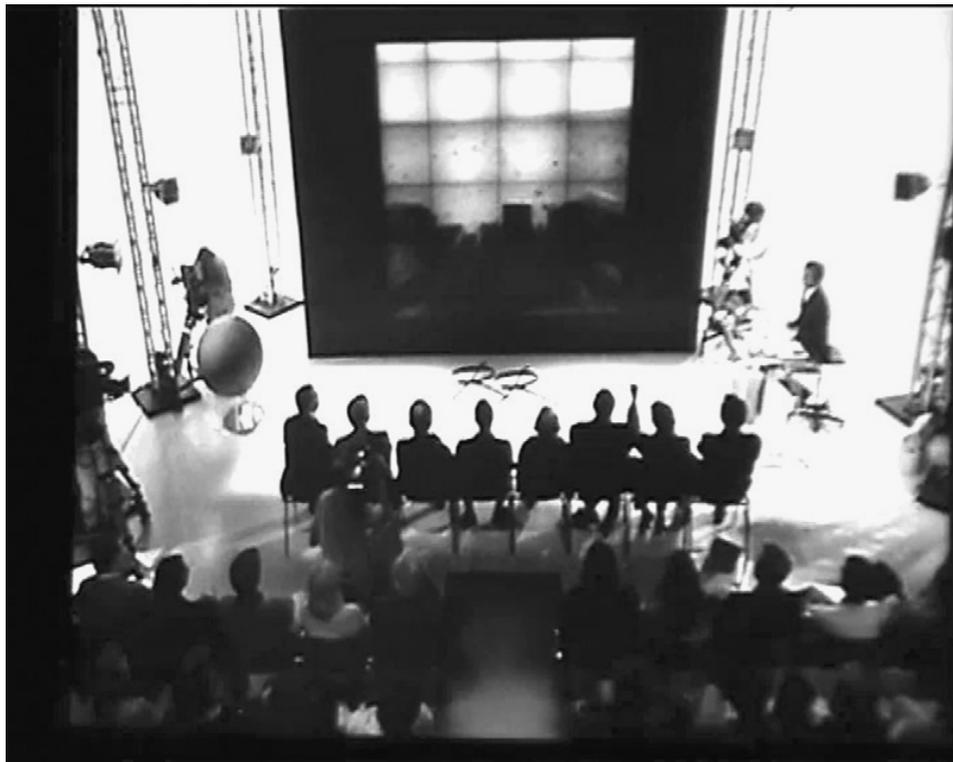


Image 1. The studio.

Let's now consider two data extracts of the studio interaction, having in common that the moderator (Claude Sérillon) begins to address another guest than the one currently speaking. In extract (1), Giovanni Bignami, one of the eight invited guests in the studio, is commenting on the images that he sees on the screen in front of him (for transcription conventions, see [Appendix A](#)):

⁴ If this previous research has indeed described in detail many of the aspects of the organisation and the specificity of the studio interaction – most often interviews – it has left the interaction taking place within the production crew completely unexplored. But see [Broth \(2004, 2008\)](#), [Mondada \(2007\)](#), and [Relieu \(1999\)](#) for some of the rare studies topicalizing this second type of interaction.

⁵ This way to spatially distribute participants in the studio demonstrates very clearly that the interaction between the moderator and his guests is primarily addressed to the distant audience of TV-viewers, and not to the co-present studio audience, who are forced to watch the interacting parties from behind.

(1) RR040122-TV [00:22:12 – 00:22:26] (French original)

1. GB: un espèce de premier:, checkout, d'un instrument: européen,
 2. GB: (0.5) qui:: qui mon:tre que:[:: °(euh ouais une] %une+%)°=
 3. Mod: [(tsk) .hh >oui<:]
 4. Mod: =euh::: (.) >francis rocard<,,=
 5. Mod: =vous é: (.) vous (.) vous montrez: quelque chose du doigt?
 6. FR: (0.1) on (.) on=
 7. FR: =[vient de voir le:::(.) les: les t]roi[s m è t r e s + : : : :]
 8. Mod: [.hh je vous donne (x) ma baguette], [il y A (.) une longue his]toire?
 9. FR: (0.4) °%euh::[:%°] [spi] -7 spirit a fait trois mètres là
 10. Mod: [ou] ça: (.) euh: [pas] --

(English translation⁶)

1. GB: a sort of first, checkout, of a european: instrument,
 2. GB: (0.5) tha::t that show:s tha:[::t °(eh yeah a] %a+%)°=
 3. Mod: [(tsk) .hh >yes<:]
 4. Mod: =eh::: (.) >francis rocard<,,=
 5. Mod: =you é: (.) you (.) you are: pointing to something?
 6. FR: (0.1) we (.) we=
 7. FR: =[just saw the:::(.) the: the th]re[e m e t e r s : : : :]
 8. Mod: [.hh I give you (x) my stick], [is it (.) a long sto]ry?
 9. FR: (0.4) °%eh::[:%°] [spi]-7 spirit made three meters there
 10. Mod: [or] it: (.) eh: [not]--

This extract shows how the moderator cuts off the guest currently speaking (Giovanni Bignami) in the midst of a syntactic unit, far from having reached a point of possible completion (l. 1–4). The moderator is pointing to another guest (Francis Rocard) with his stick (not shown in transcript), and after a clicking sound and a short inbreath, he produces a quick “oui”, understandable as a second pair part to a preceding summons (Schegloff, 1968) by that guest (which implies that he is no longer attentive to the first guest). At line 4, the moderator names this guest and subsequently addresses a question to him containing a “formulation” (Heritage and Watson, 1979) of how he understands what this guest is doing (l. 5).

Although these practices of interruption of a current speaker and selection of another one could be considered relatively authoritative in character, it is worth keeping in mind that the two guests let it happen: Giovanni Bignami stops speaking and does not reclaim the floor (l. 2), and Francis Rocard, upon completion of the turn that selects him as next speaker, immediately takes the turn (l. 6). The way turns are allocated here is thus produced interactively as a normal course of action for this special kind of activity and the particular contingencies of the situation, where the participants, importantly, are commenting on images that pass by on the screen in front of them. It would thus seem that the participants orient to the fact that the images are moving, by introducing their comments as quickly as possible, and before the image they are talking about vanishes from the screen. However, the remainder of extract (1) displays problematic turn-taking: once the question has been put, Francis Rocard treats himself as having the right to produce at least a minimal answer before handing back the turn to the moderator (cf. Clayman and Heritage, 2002:131). He continues his answer even though the moderator takes a turn to elaborate on his question, after the transition relevance place (Sacks et al., 1974, see 3.1 below) on line 5, which leads to extensive overlap.

⁶ The translation, which is intended to give a working understanding of the French original, respects the line numbering of the original to facilitate comparison between the two versions.

The next extract (2) occurs 1 minute and 37 seconds later in the same interview:

(2) RR040122-TV [00:24:03 – 00:24:30] (French original)

50. FR: très très (0.2) peu: euh (.) couvert de cratères,=
 51. FR: =donc a été REproces*sé. (.) °comme on dit°.
 52. Mod: (0.4) euh:: (.) Alain.=
 53. Mod: =juste avant de: de vous donner la parole,
 54. Mod: (0.1) on va::, (.) essayer de faire=
 55. Mod: =un petit peu de pédagogie,=
 56. Mod: =de comprendre ce qu'est MARS.
 57. Mod: (0.3) alors nous sommes allés=
 58. Mod: =*tout bêtement dans un lieu--
 59. Mod: (0.2) que: beaucoup de: français connaissent¿=
 60. Mod: =mais aussi beaucoup d'étrangers?=
 61. Mod: .HHH* euh::: :: c'est-à toulou:se¿
 62. Mod: à la cité de l'espace,
 63. Mod: .hhhhh et en compagn- avec euh moktar gaouad,=
 64. Mod: =°et° raphael müller,=
 65. Mod: =nous avons essayé de--
 66. Mod: (0.4) VOUS: expliquer,
 67. Mod: (.) UN peu mieux, de NOUS: expliquer,
 68. Mod: (.) ce qu'est cette (.) PLANète qui nous fascine.

(English translation)

50. FR: very very (0.2) little: euh (.) covered with craters,=
 51. FR: =so has been reproces*sed. (.) °as one calls it°.
 52. Mod: (0.4) euh:: (.) Alain.=
 53. Mod: =*just before giving you the floor,
 54. Mod: (0.1) we will::, (.) try to make=
 55. Mod: =a little bit of pedagogy,=
 56. Mod: =to try to understand what Mars really is.
 57. Mod: (0.3) so we just went=
 58. Mod: =*simply to a place--
 59. Mod: (0.2) that: a lot of French people know of¿=
 60. Mod: =but also a lot of foreigners?=
 61. Mod: .HHH* euh: :: :: it's in Toulouse¿
 62. Mod: at the cité de l'espace,
 63. Mod: .hhhhh and togeth- with euh Moktar Gaouad,=
 64. Mod: =°and° Raphael Müller,=
 65. Mod: =we've tried to--
 66. Mod: (0.4) YOU: explain ((explain to you)),
 67. Mod: (.) better still, to US: explain, ((explain to us))
 68. Mod: (.) what it is this (.) PLANet that fascinates us.

When we re-enter the action, Francis Rocard is still speaking. Just like in the first extract, the moderator turns to address another person in the studio by looking at him and by pronouncing his first name (l. 52), projecting him as the recipient of the next question (cf. Broth, 2006). However, on line 53, the moderator indicates that he intends to do something before this,⁷ and on lines 54–56 we get to know that this is an introductory presentation “un peu de pédagogie” (“a little bit of pedagogy”) about the planet Mars. As he does this, he starts speaking as part of a collective party (“on” [Engl. “one”] is arguably referring to the entire crew producing the show, of which the moderator, of course, is part) and also begins shifting his gaze several times between the guest to come and the camera (not shown in transcript). The moderator goes on to explain that the crew (this time using “nous” [Engl. “we”]) went to a well-known space centre to find out (l. 57–61).

⁷ See Goodwin (1996:384) on “prospective indexicals”, forward pointing expressions whose definite sense is to be understood from the interactional future.

After naming the reporters responsible for the crew's efforts to explain the matter, first only to the viewers (l. 66), subsequently also made to include the team itself (l. 67), he finishes his turn with a very low fall (l. 68), after which a pre-recorded video clip goes on the air.

Some of the studio practices we have just considered provide for the intelligibility of the crew's work. We will now turn to see what happens in the control room, where part of the crew is watching and analyzing the studio interaction through loudspeakers and a number of TV-monitors. The question of primary interest is how the members of the crew exploit the structure and the projectability of the studio interaction for the practical purposes of their work.

3. The studio interaction as part of the control room context

As noted earlier, the mediated representation of the studio interaction that is created by camera operators and sound engineers constitutes an absolutely central dimension of the control room context. Members of the crew that work in the control room also constantly make this representation relevant through their actions.

The control room is the “center of coordination” (Suchman, 1992:114) of TV-production. This is where the actions of all the members of the crew, who are distributed at different places, are coordinated using a technological system of microphones, cameras, loudspeakers and monitors. A significant difference between the television control room and other centers of coordination, such as emergency centers, airport or subway control rooms,⁸ concerns the nature of the images that are visible on the monitors. In contrast to such centres, where fixed cameras are used, monitors used in the TV control room show shots of the studio that are actively accomplished by camera operators, who are constantly adapting to the local contingencies of the studio interaction and the interaction within the crew. This means that the shots that are visible on the screens in the control room have an “accountability” (Garfinkel, 1967) that fixed cameras do not.

Image 2 shows part of the control room. The shots that the five camera operators produce are visible in the lower row of monitors, and the people facing these shots are, from left to right, the script, the director, and the technical assistant. For present purposes, it may be sufficient to note that the script is keeping track of all the details of the plan (who is supposed to do what at what moment), and that the director's main task is to switch between the shots that appear before him on a number of screens, which he does by pressing buttons before him (the shot actually hitting the air is the one that is visible top center in Image 2). Five of these shots are continuously produced in the studio by mobile cameras, and two others are fixed. The camera operators in the studio can hear what is said in the control room through their headphones but cannot readily speak back, since they would then be heard by the other participants in the studio.⁹

We will now consider the studio interaction from a control room perspective, retranscribed as extracts (3) and (4), and on which subsequent analysis will be based (the dialogue in the studio is now italicized; see Appendix for transcription conventions):

⁸ See e.g. Heath and Luff (1992b), Heath et al. (2005) and Theureau and Filippi (2000) for studies on subway and regional train control, Goodwin (1996), Goodwin (1995), and Harper and Hughes (1992) on airline control, and Whalen (1995) on emergency centers.

⁹ See Broth (2004) for more information on this team and their work.

11. FR: (0.4) °eh::[:%°] [spi]-7 spirit {a*} three meters there
 12. Mod: [or] it*: (.) eh: [not]--
 13. Ca2: (CU FR) +R -R
 14. Cmn: 3*2 -2*3
 15. Dir: {hah}--

(4) RR040122-R [00:24:03 – 00:24:30] (French original)

50. FR: très très (0.2) peu: euh (.) couvert de cratères,=
 51. FR: =donc a été REproces*sé. (.) °comme on dit°.
 52. Cmn: mag*4
 53. Mod: (0.4) euh:: (.) Alain.=
 54. Mod: =*juste avant de: de vous donner la parole,
 55. Cmn: 4*1
 56. Ca2: _____ >.>.>
 57. Mod: (0.1) on {va::,
 58. Dir: {c'est à l'autre bout.}
 59. Ca2: <,<.<,<.<,<.<,<.<,<
 60. Mod: (.) essa}yer de faire=
 61. Mod: =un petit peu de pédagogie,=
 62. Ca2: , . , . , . , . , _____
 63. Mod: =de comprendre ce qu'est MARS.
 64. Mod: { (0.3) {alors nous somme}s allés=
 65. Dir: {=>IL VA NOUS EN{VOYER LE SUJET<:}
 66. Mod: =*tout {bêtement dans un} lieu--
 67. Cmn: 1*2
 68. Jou: {on met l'sujet. }
 69. Mod: {(0.2) que: beau}coup de: fran}çais connaissent:ç=
 70. Dir: {il est en quoi [là:]}
 71. Scr: [al]ain cirou:::ç }
 72. Mod: =mais au{ssi {beaucoup} d'étrangers?=
 73. Tec: {x x [(sera] toujou=}
 74. Dir: {[LE SUJET]}
 75. Mod: {.HHH * euh : } : : :}:: c'est-à toulou:seç
 76. Tec: {=[rs] en ma*g deux:]}
 77. Scr: {=[le sujet *de] quoi }ç
 78. Jou: { [(le) sujetç] }
 79. Cmn: 2*1
 80. Mod: à { la cité de l' espa}ce,
 81. Jou: {[le SUJET DE PÉDA]GOGIE.}
 82. Tec: {[(on va dire).]
 83. Mod: { .hhhhh } et en compagn- avec euh moktar gaouad,=
 84. Scr: {mars péda}gogie: ? ben attends: mag-- (0.3) ma- (.) mag}
 85. Mod: {=°et° raphael müller},=
 86. Scr: {(.) UN À VENI:R+ ç}
 87. Mod: =nous avons essayé de--
 88. Mod: {(0.4) {VOU}S: expliquer,
 89. Dir: {(0.2) 'ttentio{n:ç}
 90. Mod: (.) UN {peu mieux, de NO}US: ex{pliquer,}
 91. Scr: {MAG (.) UN : : }
 92. Dir: {tu l' mettras d=}
 93. Mod: {(.) ce qu'est c}ette (.) { PLANète} qui nous fa{scine.}
 94. Dir: {=ans l'écran:::ç }
 95. Tec: {>oui oui<}. { (faci}le).

96. Scr: (0.2) *TO [P M]AG UN:.
 97. Dir: [top]
 98. Cmn: 1*6

(English translation)

50. FR: very very (0.2) little: euh (.) covered with craters,=
 51. FR: =so has been reproces*sed. (.) °as one calls it°.
 52. Cmn: mag*4
 53. Mod: (0.4) euh:: (.) Alain.=
 54. Mod: =*just before giving you the floor,
 55. Cmn: 4*1
 56. Ca2: _____ >.>.>
 57. Mod: (0.1) we {will::,
 58. Dir: {it's at the other end.}
 59. Ca2: <,<.<,<.<,<.<,<.<,<
 60. Mod: (.) tr}y to make=
 61. Mod: =a little bit of pedagogy,=
 62. Ca2: , . , . , . , . , _____
 63. Mod: =to try to understand what Mars really is.
 64. Mod: { (0.3) {so we just we}nt=
 65. Dir: {=>HE WILL START UP { THE VIDEO<¿ }
 66. Mod: =*sim{ply to a} place--
 67. Cmn: 1*2
 68. Jou: {we put in the video. }
 69. Mod: {(0.2) that: a lot} of french pe}ople know of¿=
 70. Dir: {he is in what bu[tton]},
 71. Scr: [al]ain cirou::¿ }
 72. Mod: =but al{so {a lot of } foreigners?=
 73. Tec: {x x [(will] alway=
 74. Dir: {[THE VIDEO]}
 75. Mod: {.HHH * euh : } : : :}:: it's in toulouse¿
 76. Tec: {=[s] on ma*g two: } }.
 77. Scr: {=[the video *on] what }¿
 78. Jou: { [(the) video¿] }
 79. Cmn: 2*1
 80. Mod: at { the cité de l' espa}ce,
 81. Jou: {[the VIDEO ON PEDA]GOGY.}
 82. Tec: {[(so to speak) .]
 83. Mod: { .hhhhh } and togeth- with euh moktar gaouad,=
 84. Scr: {mars peda}gogy:? well hang on mag-- (0.3) ma- (.) mag}
 85. Mod: {=°and° raphael müller},=
 86. Scr: {(.) ONE COMING UP+ ¿ }
 87. Mod: =we've tried to--
 88. Mod: {(0.4) {YOU}: explain ((explain to you)),
 89. Dir: {(0.2) 'ttentio{n:¿ }
 90. Mod: (.) bet{ter still, to U}S: ex{ p l a i n , } ((explain for us))
 91. Scr: {MAG (.) ONE : : }
 92. Dir: {do you put it=
 93. Mod: {(.) what it is th}is (.) { PLANet } that fascin{ates us.}
 94. Dir: {=on the screen::¿ }
 95. Tec: >{yeah yeah}<. { (e a s)y).
 96. Scr: (0.2) *G [O M]AG ONE:.
 97. DIR: [go]
 98. Cmn: 1*6

As already observed, in the studio interaction, the moderator first addresses another guest than the one currently speaking. He passes the turn to the new guest in (3), but in (4) he instead postpones the moment when the new guest will effectively become speaker in order to make an announcement regarding the upcoming display of a video clip. The recording and the detailed transcription of what happens in the control room during these moments allows me to describe the orientations of the members of the crew in relation to the interaction that they are broadcasting. I will try to show how the crew use turn construction, sequencing, and activity constitution in the studio interaction for accomplishing the accountability of their actions, and thus their collaborative work of broadcasting the studio interaction.

3.1. *Practices by reference to turn design in the studio*

The turns-at-talk in the studio are constituted by one or several turn constructional units (TCUs), whose ends are projectable by competent members (Sacks et al., 1974; Goodwin, 1981), and hence also by the members of the television crew (Broth, 2004; see also Mondada, 2001, 2007). The endings of such units amount to transition relevance places (TRPs), around which turn transfer has been shown to be organized (Sacks et al., 1974). Just as the participants to the interaction orient to the projectability of these units in the mutual organization of their emerging talk, the crew also orients to this projectability in performing their professional task of broadcasting that talk in a way that makes it understandable.

This orientation can be observed several times, maybe most clearly in (4). At line 52, there is a switch, which is performed by the director at a point where the guest has just expanded his turn from a possible completion point (end of line 50), projecting him as current speaker for a bit longer. The same goes for the next switch the director performs (l. 55), where the identification of the next guest by the moderator projects more talk before turn transfer, arguably also in the form of a question. So, a first point to be made is that switches between shots can exploit, and be understood by reference to (cf. Jayyusi, 1988), the projectable character of interview-turns-in-progress.¹⁰ This analysis is supported by the fact that, in (3), where the moderator interrupts the guest to self-select at a point when there is no upcoming TRP, the director does not make any immediate switch to show the close-up of the moderator, but the switch is performed only when the moderator is already well into his turn (lines 2 and 4).

At line 65, the director announces, as the moderator has just completed a TCU (l. 63), that he has understood that the moderator is now doing the lead-in to the video that is to come (entitled “MARS: pédagogie” in section 8 of the run-down sheet, *Image 3*). He does this by saying “il va nous envoyer le sujet” (literally: he will send the video to us), an indexical expression whose intelligibility depends on the local contingencies of the studio interaction. In making this announcement, he however also displays an understanding that it is not yet the time to actually “press the button”, but that there are things still having to be performed before the lead-in is complete. These things would seem to include at least 1) a presentation of the reporters

¹⁰ Of course, switches by the director can respond to more than the verbal dimension of the studio interaction. In extract (3), for instance, the director switches two times to adapt to the moderator’s change of positions as he takes a few steps to hand his stick to Francis Rocard: at line 10, the director can no longer stay with camera 1 as the moderator walks out of the close-up shot, and the director also switches away from a shot at line 14, as the moderator goes to stand right in front of camera 2, completely blocking the close-up shot of Francis Rocard.

Une émission préparée par Claude SERILLON
En direct le 22/01/2004

RIDEAU ROUGE N°13
"MARS EN TETE"

Réalisée par Michel HERMANT

| N° | ACTION | TPS | CUMUL | IMAGE | SON | MUR D'IMAGES | OBSERVATIONS |
|----|--------------------------------|---------|----------|-------------------|--------|-----------------------|--|
| 7 | CS lance 1er sujet | 0:00:10 | 22:39:40 | PLAT. | DIRECT | | |
| 8 | Sujet: MARS : pédagogie | 0:03:00 | 22:42:40 | MAG | MAG | | |
| 9 | Plateau CS + invités | 0:09:00 | 22:51:40 | PLAT. | DIRECT | Document 12' + photos | début avec G. BIGNAMI / F. ROCARD puis J.P. BIBRING / P. LEE puis H. REEVES |
| 10 | Vanessa: questions internet | 0:03:00 | 22:54:40 | REGIE INTERNET | DIRECT | | |
| 11 | CS lance 2ème sujet | 0:00:10 | 22:54:50 | PLAT. | DIRECT | | |
| 12 | Sujet : L'IMAGINAIRE | 0:04:36 | 22:59:26 | MAG | MAG | | |

2

Image 3. Page two of the run-down sheet.

responsible for the video and 2) typically, a very low fall at the end of the last TCU.¹¹ Until these things get done, there is still time to do other things: insert the image of the new guest (l. 67), verify which button should be pressed (l. 70), and repeat the announcement (l. 74) that this far has received now acknowledgement from the script (whose responsibility it is to see to it that the right video-recorder gets started at the end of the moderator's current turn). There is also time for a question-answer sequence (l. 77 and 81), repairing (Schegloff et al., 1977) the insufficient state of current knowledge of the script. Note how both the question of the script and the answer of the journalist are initiated at "tone unit" boundaries (represented by a punctuation mark followed by a line break in the transcript, see e.g. Du Bois et al., 1993), if not at full TCUs, in the moderator's unfolding talk. In this way, the interactants manage to display an attention to both their co-present interactant and the technologically mediated turn of the distant moderator (cf. Relieu, 2005).

Once the presentation of the reporters gets done (l. 83 and 85) the director says "tention" (attention), displaying an understanding that the crucial moment is now drawing closer. However, a bit later we still come across a second question-answer sequence in the control room, this time between the director and the technical assistant sitting next to him (l.92, 94–95). Note here how the question is initiated at a moment when a complement in the form of an indirect question is still needed to complete the moderator's TCU in progress, i.e. at a moment when the director can understand that there is still time to clear out a technical issue with the technical assistant. There is also time for a first short answer ("oui oui"), and its later expansion coincides precisely with the low fall by the moderator the team has been waiting for to start rolling the tape. This overlap

¹¹ In our corpus of four TV-productions there are 12 introductions of video clips made by the moderator. All of them end in a sharply falling tone on the last syllable.

does not seem to matter, for the script and the director act swiftly at this point: the director introduces a switch, and the script and the director give the go-ahead to the video-controller only 0.2 seconds after the end of the moderator's last TCU.

We can thus see members of the team to exploit, for their practical purposes of accomplishing a TV-program, aspects of turn design in the studio interaction. Through this work, they manage to show relevant aspects to the viewers as they are happening, understand whether there is still time to act, and promote and display attention to the studio interaction for each other.

3.2. *Practices by reference to turn allocation/sequence organization in the studio*

The team can also be observed to be orienting to the emerging sequence of questions and answers that is one basic characteristic of interviews. In the beginning of both extracts (3) and (4), the moderator takes a new turn, to address another guest than the previous one. The subsequent switches ((3), line 14, and (4), line 55) by the director are arguably both projectable and accountable (by the crew and the viewers alike) as actions to show the new speaker to the viewers. But these particular switches are not only projectable on a very local scale such that whoever starts to talk will shortly thereafter be put on the air. It has been amply shown in previous research that particular contexts are constituted endogenously by the enactment of particular membership categories (see e.g. many of the studies on “institutional interaction” published in [Drew and Heritage, 1992](#)). In TV-interviews one of these categories is the moderator/interviewer. This participant has particular rights and obligations in the social organization of the event: this kind of participant can normally self-select as a speaker at almost any point in the unfolding interaction (at TRP in (4), but more interruptively in (3)), and takes a particular responsibility for the conversation in the studio. The understanding of this gets materialized in the more or less constant production of “broadcastable” shots ([Broth, 2004](#)) of this participant in the studio interaction (during extracts (3) and (4), the moderator is all along covered by operator 1).

On the contrary, this constant coverage does not concern any of the two persons in the studio to whom the moderator begins to address his utterances. At the time the moderator pronounces their names, neither Francis Rocard nor Alain Cirou are shown by any close-up shot.¹² But there is demonstrably a norm oriented to by the members of this team, forming a part of their professional competence, according to which whoever gets mentioned by someone in the studio should be shown as soon as possible to the viewers if this person is present ([Broth, 2008](#)). It is thus the mention of the guest's name by the moderator together with a shared orientation to this normative rule that allow the participants in the control room to see the camera movements beginning shortly after the naming (l. 3 and 56, respectively) as attempts to produce the missing close-up of the new guest, projectable as the next speaker.¹³

In extract (4), this understanding of the camera movement is in fact manifest in the director's talk at line 58, “c'est à l'autre bout” (“it's at the other end”), The placement of this utterance, beginning after the camera has begun to pan and just after a quick zooming-out by the camera operator, is what makes it understandable, by the camera operator, as a very likely reaction to the panning ([Broth, 2004:6–8](#)) so as to provide assistance in the camera operator's

¹² Whereas it is possible to see Francis Rocard far away in a wide angle shot by camera 3 when the moderator starts talking to him, Alain Cirou is not visible on any screen when the moderator pronounces his name.

¹³ See [Schegloff \(1968\)](#) on the notion of “conditional relevance”, which is relevant here as well. This notion describes the fact that a first action can create a very strong normative expectation for a second to be produced, and that the absence of an expected second action can be treated as “officially” absent by participants.

search for the right person.¹⁴ Just like the two panning movements we just considered, the directive utterance is an indexical practice—furthermore comprising the classical deictic components “c’est” (“it’s”) and “l’autre” (“the other”) whose meaning we can only understand if we take the contextual contingencies it indexes into account, and which might be glossable as: “it is not where you’re going, but at the other end of the group of participants in the studio, that you will find the guest you’re trying to make a shot of”.

The analysis of the two extracts thus also demonstrates some of the ways in which the members of the production crew can orient to the studio interaction, organised as an interview by its participants, for making sense of their own verbal and technological practices.¹⁵

3.3. *Practices by reference to a change of activities in the studio*

The studio interaction is not always describable as an interview. At other moments other types of activities emerge, where the “standardized relational pair” (Sacks, 1972) of the membership categories “interviewer—interviewee” is no longer relevant for the participants, who instead orient to other relevancies constituting these other activities. In this program, the beginning and the end of the show represent such other activities, as well as the introduction of pre-recorded material by the participant who then becomes more a “moderator” than an “interviewer”. For the work of TV-production, different activity types in the studio give rise to different relevancies and normative expectations.

The recording of the control room interaction documents the crew’s orientation to changes of activities in the studio interaction. In extract (4), line 53, the moderator addresses another guest than the one he just spoke to by calling him by his first name, but immediately thereafter steps out of the interview activity to enter another one, which subsequently proves to be that of introducing a pre-recorded video clip. However, between lines 55 and 64, the team orients towards the possibility of the guest also being the next speaker: during these moments, the camera operator achieves a close-up of this participant, furthermore being assisted in this work by the director. But just as the operator is able to present a broadcastable image (l. 62), the director (l. 65) displays a sudden realization that the moderator is now launching the video clip (“le sujet”).

What can be said about the studio interaction at the moments preceding this announcement, and what then also forms part of what makes the director understand that a change of activities has taken place, is, among other things, that: (1) the moderator also starts to address the camera, and no longer only the guest (not shown in transcript); (2) he also starts talking on behalf of a collective party (l. 57 and 64); (3) the moderator further projects that this collective party will try to do something before the next question, that is right now; and he uses the words “pédagogie” and “Mars”, presumably especially familiar to the members of the crew, since they figure in the rundown sheet that provides a material support for the planned order of events (Image 3 above).

¹⁴ The co-present participants in the control room may use their visual access of the body of the director to find that they’re not being addressed, as the director at this point is looking firmly to the left part of the row of screens before him.

¹⁵ Sequence organization in the studio may of course also be exploited for innumerable other purposes. For instance, when the script says “Bouge pas, Paul. Dès qu’il a commencé à parler tu t’en vas” (Don’t move, Paul. As soon as he (the new interviewee) has started to talk, you get away [September 18, 2003]) to inform a camera operator hiding behind the moderator currently on the air about when he could change positions without being seen by the viewers. The script clearly projects that the director will switch from the shot of the moderator to the shot of the new interviewee as this latter participant takes the turn, thus making the moderator, as well as the operator hiding behind him, visually inaccessible to the viewers.

By his turn on line 65, the director formulates the moderator's action as pertaining to a new activity, and thus makes it relevant for the continuation of the crew's work. But in this extract, not all the members of the crew display an understanding of the fact that a change of activities has taken place in the studio, which allows me to describe how the team resolves a problematic situation in interaction. If we consider the script's action in line 71, she's still orienting towards establishing the identity of the new guest, and does not yet participate in the preparation for the insertion of the pre-recorded material. Her lack of understanding occasions repeated attempts at a normalization, of the situation by other members of the crew: the director's announcement is repeated by a journalist standing right behind the script in the control room (l. 68); the director looks at his buttons saying "il est en quoi là" ("he is in what (button/tape-recorder)", l. 70), which makes relevant the question of what tape-recorder to put on the air for showing the upcoming video¹⁶; and yet another announcement by the director, this time in a shorter form ("LE SUJET") (l. 74). After this second announcement of an upcoming video clip, the script (overlapping a repetition of this announcement by the journalist) at last reacts by "le sujet de quoi" ("what video clip", l. 77), a question that gets its response in line 81 by the journalist. The script's central task during the show is to know, and anticipate, who will do what. This time, when she momentarily fails, there is nobody that can readily step in and do her job for her. What the other members of the crew can do, however, is to make her realize what is the next appropriate action for the team to accomplish: insert the video clip. When she finally gets it she immediately takes control over the situation and the repairable moment is over.

The change of activities can thus be said to be an aspect of the studio interaction which is made relevant as contextual background for the interaction within the crew. This is what provides for the intelligibility of the first alerting action by the director (at line 65). Extract (4) allowed me to consider some of the details of the studio interaction as seen in the control room and that are likely to make the crew understand that a change of activities is taking place. However, the analysis of diverging orientations in the control room, creating a problematic situation, also underscores the public and interactive character of intersubjectivity (Heritage, 1984). The analysis shows how "understanding that a change of activities has taken place in the studio" can be seen as a public and accountable action, and how that action can be practically accomplished in interaction.

4. Mediating effects on the accountability of the studio interaction

So far, I have focused on a number of phenomena of the studio interaction that could be perceived on both sides of the technological interface at hand, and to which the members of the crew displayed an orientation, using these as a crucial contextual resource for the accountability of their actions. In this section, I will try to demonstrate that the mode of perception – direct and in co-presence vs. mediated and distant – can, however, be very consequential for the way interactive phenomena in the studio are understood (cf. Heath and Luff, 1992a).

For the part of the crew that works in the control room, the perception of the studio interaction is assured by the technological system at hand (all the cameras, monitors, microphones and

¹⁶ Cf. the technical assistant's answer to the director's question (l. 73 and 76), which indeed displays such an understanding.

loudspeakers) that is capable of representing visually and aurally what is happening in the studio and of communicating this to the control room. However, this type of mediated access to the studio interaction can influence the ways in which it is possible to understand it. It imposes a very different view on this interaction compared to what would be possible in co-presence. In the control room, access to the studio is mediated in a very particular fashion: there is the possibility of having a multitude of perspectives of the studio, simultaneously visible on several screens. What is visible represents the shots produced by the five different cameras, which gives rise to a kind of “collage” of different perspectives. In spite of this multitude of perspectives, the control room view is also a partial one, for every camera is only representing what is already the result of analysis by the camera operator (cf. Macbeth, 1999; Mondada, 2007; Broth, 2008), who is continuously working to make a situationally relevant shot. This analysis takes into account the complex situational contingencies of the camera operator, including what is happening in the studio and the particular task of the particular operator, placed at a precise location in the studio. Camera operators thus make certain aspects of the filmed interaction more salient and relevant than others. And obviously, the people in the control room can only orient to phenomena that they can perceive (or infer based on perceivable phenomena, cf. Heath et al., 2005). What cannot be seen nor heard passes unnoticed.

It is now time to reconsider the previously analysed moments, now adding two gestural practices that are also performed in the studio interaction. Extract (5) is a retranscription of part of extract (1):

(5) RR040122-P [00:22:12 – 00:22:19] (French original)

```
1. GB: un espèce de premier:, checkout, d'un instrument: européen,
2. fr .....->
3. GB: (0.5#) qui:: qui mon:tre que[:: °(euh ouais une] %une+%°=
4. fr ->. #_,,,,,,, ((# = Image 1 and 4)
5. Mod: [(tsk) .hh >oui<ç]
6. Mod: =euh::: (.) >francis rocard<,,=
```

At line 2, the transcription indicates the beginning of a pointing gesture towards the giant screen which reaches its peak 0.3 seconds into line 4 (already shown as [Image 1](#) above), and then retracts to finally disappear by the time the current speaker pronounces the beginning of the second relative pronoun (l. 3–4). This gesture is manifestly produced in the context of a brief and silent private interaction between its producer and another guest, sitting just to the left of him, for the recording shows their heads turning and tilting slightly towards one another around its production (not shown in transcript).¹⁷ But the moderator, by verbally designing his turn as a reaction to the gesture (“>oui<”), retrospectively gives it a *summoning* status (cf. Schegloff, 1968) in relation to the on-going interview. Since the guest’s action is barely visible at the other side of the technological interface (see the shot of camera 3 in [Image 4](#)), in practice, it can only be retrospectively inferred by the people in the control room. The subsequent naming identifies the “summoner” thus constituted, and the crew relevantly projects this guest as the next speaker.

¹⁷ It is not possible to understand from the recording whether they also in fact speak to each other, which however does not seem unlikely. Be that as it may, we have no way of knowing this, since the microphones of guests not currently interviewed are routinely almost completely closed by the sound engineers.



Image 5. Extreme point of Alain Cirou's gesture.

This pointing gesture is first responded to by the moderator with a downward beat with the stick he is holding (not shown in transcript) – after which the guest retracts his index but continues to keep his hand raised (l. 53) – and then treated verbally by the moderator, at the beginning of his turn (l. 54), as requesting the right to a turn from him. Only several seconds later does the guest back down from his request by moving his hand so that the index covers his mouth and redirecting his gaze from the moderator to the screen, as he understands that he will not yet be the next speaker (l. 57 and small images). Being co-present and visually available to one another, these participants clearly exploit other embodied practices than talk only, such as pointing and gazing, for their allocation of turns (cf. Mondada, 2004, 2006). So now we can see that the design of the moderator's turn reflects not exclusively an initiative move, but is also, and crucially here, a way to acknowledge the guest's long-standing request for the floor while nevertheless sticking to his plan of introducing the video clip next in the show. However, as the guest and his requesting gesture were not visible on any of the screens (see Image 6), this aspect of the studio interaction could not come across to the people in the control room, where the naming of the new guest was instead, at first, taken as projecting him as the next guest to be interviewed (see sections 3.2 and 3.3 above).

In the two extracts, then, part of what does not get through to the control room are the gestures, that however prove to be crucial visual resources for understanding the organization of the studio interaction. Another mediating effect concerns the aural dimension. As the sound engineers normally only leave open the microphones of people currently involved in the “official” interaction, and keep all other microphones virtually closed, the sound of the private conversation in extract (5), probably at least faintly audible in the studio, does not get through to the loudspeakers and people in the control room.

It would thus seem that the technological system, and the ways in which the crew handles it, is particularly adapted to be able to represent and understand, in the control room, *practices that are constitutive of interviews*, i.e. questions/initiatives by the moderator, and



Image 6. Moderator covers gesture in screen 4.

answers/reactions by the guest that has been selected to answer or react. If the technological system is adapted and used to make these practices particularly understandable, it can be at the cost of not understanding other aspects of the studio interaction. If a guest makes an initiative, e.g. by asking for permission to speak by use of a gesture, and this initiative is not perceivable in the control room, there is the risk that the next action, whereby the moderator is reacting to the first, could be understood as an initiative by the people in the control room, since this would be the only action they perceive. And even if a particular practice is indeed visible somewhere on the screens, this does not in any way guarantee that it is taken into account by the people in the control room, who look “professionally” (cf. C. Goodwin, 1994) at the screens in order to find the next shot to put on the air rather than scrutinize the shots in their utmost detail. In order to make sure that a studio phenomenon be taken into account in the control room, it would seem that the camera operator needs to make it visually relevant in the way the shot is produced (the systematic production of close-ups of the interviewer and the interviewee are no doubt the best example of this camera practice in the TV-interview context). To a certain extent, the technological system thus *invites* the people in the control room to understand the filmed interaction as an interview rather than anything else, and not to observe phenomena that do not constitute this particular activity type.

5. Conclusion

In this text, I have described some dimensions of the interactive organization of studio interviews as a crucial contextual resource for the production of this interaction for the television media. I started out by briefly analysing two short extracts of interaction in a TV-interview, after which I turned my attention to the ways in which the members of a production crew made that interaction relevant for the organization and intelligibility of their interaction.

The analyses of the actions of this crew of TV-professionals, who are of course also competent members of their culture in a more general sense (Garfinkel, 1967; ten Have, 2002), confirm the very general relevance of the dimensions of turn-construction, sequencing and activity constitution for the organization of talk-in-interaction. In the very particular TV-context that has been studied here, these three dimensions are relevant both for participants to the interview and for the crew watching that interview in order to make an intelligible TV-show out of it. Whereas the first interaction orients to the intelligibility and projectability of emerging practices relative to these dimensions for its endogenous organization, the second one exploits this interactional logic, but for the practical purposes of turning this interaction into a live TV-program. By paying close attention to the emerging organization of the studio interaction, and trusting that their colleagues do the same, the members of the crew can exploit it as a contextual background, in relation to which they can coordinate and make sense of their own verbal and technological indexical practices (turns at talk, and e.g. switches, panning, and zooms, respectively).¹⁸

The detailed analyses of what happens in the control room when the crew observes the studio interaction also underscores the asymmetry regarding the observability of studio phenomena, according to the location of the observer. Mediated perception of the studio interaction was shown to be radically different from co-present perception, and this difference can be consequential for the way in which it is possible to understand the emerging sequence of actions in the studio. Such a consequence of the mediation was observed as two gestures, relevant for the organization of the studio interaction, were not taken into account in the control room. It should be noted that this lack of attention is not necessarily linked to a complete invisibility of these phenomena in the control room, because one of the two gestures was in fact visible in one of the screens. Rather, it would seem that the practical invisibility of these gestures is due to the fact that they were not made visually relevant by the camera operators, showing, with their cameras, the studio interaction to the people working in the control room.

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Appendix. Transcription conventions¹⁹

| | |
|--------|--------------------|
| Mod: | moderator |
| Ca(n): | camera operator(n) |
| Dir: | director |

¹⁸ Also see Broth (2002) for a study on members of the theater audience, who orient to the emerging organization of the performance for coordinating their laughter.

¹⁹ Except for the conventions used for transcribing aspects of the technological system, these conventions belong to the "Jeffersonian" transcription system (see e.g. Clayman and Heritage (2002) for a more explicit presentation). The symbols used for transcribing camera movement and gaze were inspired by the work of Goodwin (1981).

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Scr: | script |
| [] | overlap |
| { } | simultaneous events in the studio and in the control room |
| (.) | micro pause (0.1 s or less) |
| (n.n) | timed pause in seconds and tenths of seconds |
| = | latching (no pause and no overlap) |
| . | falling intonation |
| , | slightly rising intonation |
| ¿ | clearly rising intonation |
| ? | high rise |
| -- | unfinished intonation unit |
| °words° | words pronounced more silently than surrounding speech |
| <words> | words pronounced more slowly than surrounding speech |
| >words< | words pronounced more quickly than surrounding speech |
| WORDS | words pronounced louder than surrounding speech |
| %words% | creaky voice |
| wo- | cut-off word |
| .hh | breathing in, each “h” corresponding to 0.1 s. |
| : | lengthening of sound |
| * | exact location of switch |
| (n)*(n) | switch from camera (n) to camera (n) |
| =R | “le Rouge” (red light), image on the air at the beginning of an extract |
| +/-R | image that goes on, or leaves, the air |
| ... | camera movement/gesture towards object |
| ,,, | camera movement/gesture away from object |
| <<< | zooming in |
| >>> | zooming out |
| — | steady shot |
| CU | close-up |
| <u>(Gue)</u> | filmed participant |

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