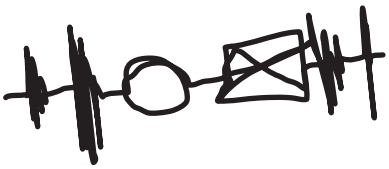

Script for

# Basic Course Community Radio Acoustic Design


**1 PRESENTATION FORMS ON THE RADIO**
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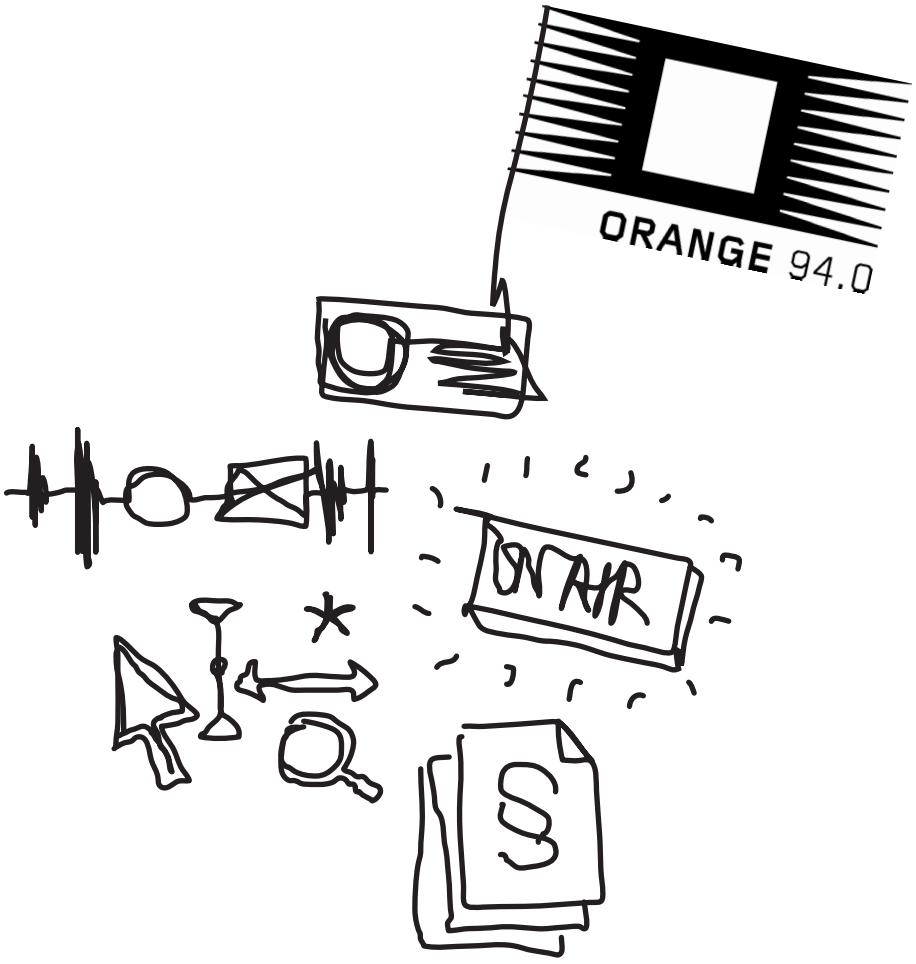
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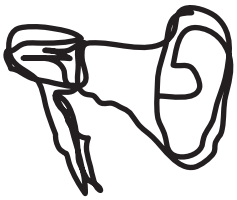
ON AIR

# 1 PRESENTATION FORMS ON THE RADIO

**Fact-oriented presentation**
informing



**Opinion-oriented presentation**
expressing opinion

Since it's people who do journalism, it can never be really objective. The distinction refers to whether a presentation form focuses on documenting "facts" or puts personal reflection at the centre.

**to inform,**
**to document**

▶

**to describe,**
**to narrate**

▶

**to reflect,**
**to take a stance**

news
reportt
documentary

reportage

survey
discussion
feature
statement

satire
commentary

## 1.1 Fact-Oriented Presentation Forms

**News** Information on current events from the fields of politics, economy, culture, weather, sports etc. is given (in a short, fact based and impersonal account) > also newslet

**Report**
A reporter informs about an incident or a specific topic.

**Expert-Interview**
An interviewer asks a person questions on specialized knowledge about a factual topic.

**Documentary** A documentary can be differentiated from the feature or the report insofar as it is very factual, quoting facts and documents.

**Reportage** A reporter informs about a current event from the actual site of incidence. Often additional background information is given. Sound bites, direct quotes and original sound from the site are integrated.

## 1.2 Opinion-Oriented Presentation Forms

**Feature** A feature is a detailed report including original sound bites and quotes, as well as a lot of atmosphere; it can also be considered a form of art (on a "real" topic). In a feature all acoustic means of expression are applied, in order to convey a picture on the topic that is as lively and complex as possible, giving the listeners the impression of being "on-site."
A feature combines journalistic elements (e.g. research) with artistic ones (means and techniques). It is very much opinion-oriented

**Statement** A statement is a comment that journalists obtain and purposely broadcast in original sound (complementary in reports/news).

**Survey** A survey always consists of one question and many different answers. The answerer's names are unknown. Very important is the choice of a good question (avoid questions that can be answered with yes/no). A survey is suitable in order to give an atmospheric picture.

**Discussion** In a discussion experts place their own (often controversial) opinions at the centre. The task of the presenter (host), whose opinion remains in the background, is to mediate between the parties and summarize.

**Commentary** In a commentary a party is adopted. While still arguments are alleged and facts presented, somebody's subjective perception is placed at the centre.

**Interview** The interviewed person is in the spotlight. The interview may revolve around a person's biography or opinion on a topic.

**Satire** A satire is an exaggerated commentary, in which people nevertheless express their opinions.

## 1.3 Other Presentation Forms

**Radio Play** A radio play is “theatre on the radio,” in which stories are narrated. In contrast to an audiobook, different voices speak and perform the text in a dramatised way. Noise, atmosphere, and music underline the stories.

**Audiobook/Lecture** A literary piece is read and presented. Sometimes there is music or noise accompaniment.

**Comedy** Program elements for humoristic entertainment.

**Review** Reviews of theatre plays, films, literature, or culture in general (opinion oriented).

**Experience Report** Report on a personal experience, such as a journey, the visit of a specific restaurant, or the participation in a sport event.
- Info (e.g. facts, politics, economies) on the topic (country, place, restaurant, event)
- Sound bites, direct quotes (e.g. from the journey/place/event such as interviews or atmosphere)
- Music from the country/fitting the topic
- Subjective impressions of the experience

**Jingle** Short and concise mixture of music/sound/short text. It contains a distinctive acoustic signal representing the radio station or a specific programme (signature tune). Within the programme it is used for indicating different rubrics.

# 2 MULTILINGUAL REPORT DESIGN

Multilingual listening and broadcasting contributes to the enrichment of the radio landscape. However, this presupposes that both listeners and broadcasters are willing to engage with different kinds of uncertainties related to:

– Not understanding everything what is being said and therefore getting the impression of standing outside from time to time. However, in these cases it is important to remain listening and try to understand as much as possible.

– Speaking into the microphone a language that is no perfectly mastered.

– Relying stronger on nonverbal communication: In the studio we also make each other understandable through gestures and facial expressions.

In fact, every programme is multilingual. Everyone uses – often unconsciously and no matter what the topic is about – loanwords, special or technical terms from different languages. Multilingual report design, however, is about the conscious use of different languages.

## Realization of Multilingualism (Methods) and Interpretation Strategies on the Radio

**Complete interpretation** of what has been said into another language: an exact, but time consuming method. This can be exhausting and tiring for listeners, since they have to listen twice as long. The single takes in one language should therefore not be too long.

**Summary** Summarizing the content of longer passages in one (or several) different other languages; according to context more ore less detailed.

**Voice Over** A montage of completely interpreted statements or direct quotes. The original is played at the beginning and continues in the background while the interpretation is acoustically superimposed. Only the language into which it is interpreted can be understood, the original language has a symbolic presence and gives information on the emotional expression of what is being said.

**Reframing, building bridges** Reframing is used in order to carry further content and statements from one language into another, e.g. though an introductory question or a short summary. Bridges are built for the listeners from one language to another. Reframing is an elegant and dynamic method of multilingualism, avoiding repetitions.

**Code-Switching, Language-Hopping** Language hopping means that people suddenly and often unconsciously switch into another language, e.g. if the language situation changes through a telephone call or an in-studio guest, or if the speaker switches into another languages because an expression comes to her mind only in this language. Code-switching refers to the unconscious use of specialised terms, expressions in other languages in daily life or sub culture language.

**Turn-Taking: Continuous presence of different languages** Turn-taking is the altering use of two languages. The use of different languages in this case is part of the programme concept; every person is assigned a language.

**Simultaneous interpretation** The interpretation is almost produced at once with the original spoken text. “Simultaneous” refers to the fact that the interpreter is occupied with two things at the same time: listening and speaking.

**Language games, language art** Not the information, but the experimental use of language itself is placed at the centre. Language becomes a cultural and experimental design element that can be applied for deconstructing, reflecting, and expanding listening customs.

**Music** In multilingual programmes, music can play a special, supportive role. Even though music does not cause the same interpretations in everyone, all listeners, regardless of their language knowledge, understand it.

**Symbolic presence of language** This refers to short trips into other languages, for example during welcome and good-bye. In these cases, the presence of another language is symbolic and does not aim at giving information.

# 3 WRITING FOR LISTENING

## 3.1 Presentation

The presentation's task lies in combining and linking different contributions/ reports with each other. It builds a connection with the listeners, addressing them directly and arousing curiosity in them. It accompanies through the programme, specifies and summarizes content.

**Introduction**
In the introductory part the information on a report/programme/topic that listeners need in order to understand the following parts of the report. A presentation's start is short and crisp.

**Close**
Information report/topic/music that was just listened to. The conclusion of a presentation contains "service"-information: Summary, dates, contact/ homepage etc.

## 3.2 Text Design

In most of the cases, the presentation has been prepared; either in form of catch words or a manuscript.

Written text is often nice to read, but hard to understand when being heard. Who is reading can choose, who is listening, however, is directly exposed to the information. When reading prefabricated text it is important to write in a listen-able way, creating sentences that are concise and easy to understand. Every spoken phrase has a structuring centre that determines the main emphasis. The word sequence is also the path of understanding for the listeners. Stereotypes, discriminating language use and recurring forms (language patterns) should be avoided when writing texts for the radio.

**Short, easy phrases**

Structure long phrases precisely (avoid nested sentences)

– Choose a large font size – 1.5 line spacing, structure your text with headings.
– Write in breaths.
  Make a line break every breath (Language breaks).
– The best possible comprehensibility is achieved at 7-9 words per phrase.
– A general rule: Put the most important information at the first
  (or rather second) position.
– Radio language is every day language (spoken language) in your own style.
– Rather use active than passive voice, more verbs than nouns –
  this makes the text livelier.

**Familiar, easily understood (short) words and conscious language use**

– Avoid unnecessary technical terms and only use familiar loanwords.
– Explain loan words in as easy and understandable words as possible.
– Beware of synonyms: too many different terms for one and the same issue
  can cause confusion during listening.
– Round up numbers or exemplify them.

**Logic sequence of thoughts**

– Clarify the so-called W-questions at the beginning:
  Who talks? What happens? Where? Why? When? ...
– Statements should be clear and concise, one step or phrase for each thought.
– Don't jump between different aspects.
– Pick up the listeners, formulate for the audience.
– Write down everything the way it is spoken, avoid too many abbreviations,
  and respectively explain them.
– Repetitions in the text and within the programmes are important (redundancy),
  in order to guarantee that listeners understand what the topic is about
  (also if they hooked up later).
– Check the duration of a text: According to a rule of thumb, 15 lines with
  each 60 characters (a total of 900 characters) make up approximately
  one minute of broadcasting time.
– Conduct a self-test: Read the text loudly to yourself (listen to yourself),
  replace mistakable and difficult terms ("tripping hazards").

| Reading | Listening | Writing for Listening |
|---|---|---|
| Reading usually is the main activity. | Listening to radio usually is a side activity. | Oral! Write in an appealing way. Use active language. Verbs. |
| What has not been understood can be read again. | Each word can only be listened to once. | Repetition of important terms. Easy phrases. Examples, comparisons, illustration of numbers. „Sensual language.“ |
| A reader can make breaks and choose the reading velocity. | A listener has to follow the speaker's velocity. | Short phrases, verbalization of thought while reading. |
| A reader has an overview of the whole text and its structure. | A listener does not know what comes next in the report. | Give an overview and summary from time to time. |
| A reader can jump in the text. | The process of listening is sequential and linear. | Put the most important info in the first position of the sentence. |
| The text is mainly designed through layout, i.e. font and style. | The text is designed through emphasis and other acoustic means. | While reading, try to capture the sense. “Vivify” words. Melody, dynamics, tempo. |
| Punctuation and quotation marks support the reading process. | These optic tools also have to be substituted through acoustic ones. | Design acoustically: use breaks e.g. to create tension or underline importance. |
| A reader only has a typeface in front of her/him. | A listener meets people on the radio. | Speak appealingly: Whom am I addressing, what is my speaking intention? Informing, arousing, entertaining? |

Source: „Merkheft für die radiojournalistische Grundausbildung“, klipp + klang Radioschule (5. Auflage 2014). www.klippklang.ch

# 4 CREATING A SHORT REPORT

## Compiled Report

A compiled report is the most frequent form of presenting information on a specific topic. It is a mixture of sound bites (direct quotes) and spoken text, as well as music, sounds, and noises. It is suitable for representing controversial positions and offering a polyphonic picture.

## Acoustic elements:

**spoken text**

**multilingualism**
(interpretation strategies)

**sound bites**
(interviews, surveys, live recordings from press conferences, speeches, events)

**music**

**atmosphere**
(noise sequence, e.g. birthday party)
and **noise**
(separately identifiable, e.g. sparkling wine corks)

Short reports most commonly are broadcasted within a programme. The most frequent programme format is the magazine. In a magazine, information is given on diverse topics that are combined with each other through continuous presentation. There are three kinds of magazines:

**Open magazine**
Diverse topics are covered.

**Monothematic magazine**
Different aspects of a topic are discussed.

**Rubric magazine**
Diverse Topics of a rubric are addressed.

**Introduction**
Find a strong beginning!
Regarding the content it can be compared to a newspaper heading, it introduces the topic and arouses curiosity.

**Body**
In the main part the topic is expounded and a framework plot is developed. Extracts of well-matched music are played and links between places, situations, chapters, and conflict actors are created.

**Close**
Summary, dates, contacts/home pages are given. (During a music break listeners can fetch something to write). Beware of judgements or comments; do not start a new chapter.

**Atmosphere, Noise, Music** The acoustic layer requires as much attention as the text layer. Atmosphere, noise and music…

– evoke or intensify feelings and moods
– contradict or underline opinions
– structure radio montages
– give acoustic accents
– provoke changes of scene
– put into question verbal statements
– can alter a report's tempo.

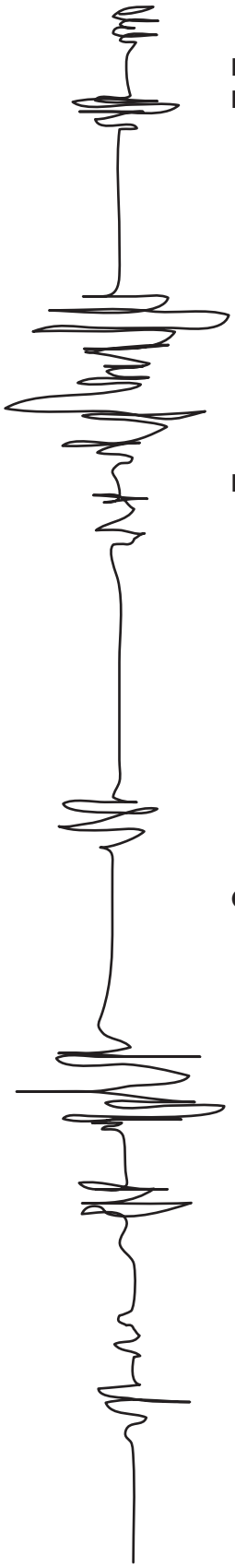
As soon as music comes into play, it dominates. As background music it should only be instrumental. When choosing music, beware of supporting clichés (Argentina = Tango, Brazil = Samba etc.). After a longer input music offers a good (reflection) pause.

It can motivate to follow the programme; the programme gets a certain rhythm. Music, however, does not always have to be coherent, but can also consciously cause fractions.

# 5 CHECKLIST FOR RADIO REPORTS

**Topic**

**Message Intention / Proposed Effect**



**Impact / Topicality / Target Audience**

**My prior knowledge**

**Possible discussion partners**

**Open questions**

**Format(s) / Realization**

Literature

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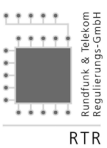
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