THE HONG KONG UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF COMPUTER SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

PhD Qualifying Exam

A Survey on Intelligent User Interfaces for the Learning of Verbal Communication Skills

Presenter: Xingbo Wang
Supervisor: Prof. Huamin Qu

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Outline

Motivation

Background

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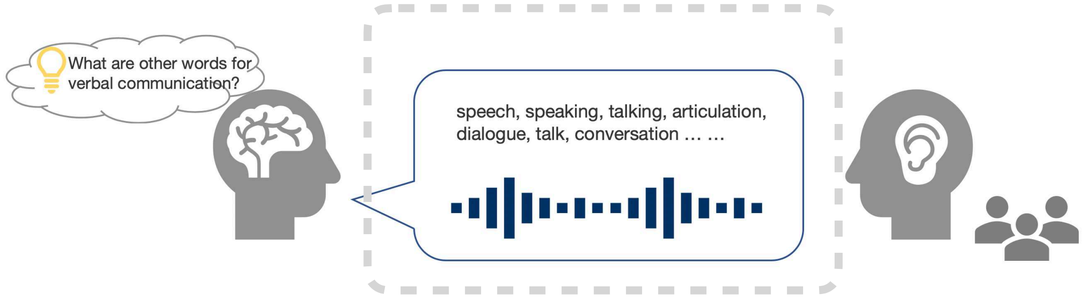
Verbal communication skills :Proper usage of words and sounds to deliver message

Motivation

Background



Verbal communication skills

Adaptive speech content

Engaging vocal delivery

Public speaking

Job interview

Everyday conversation

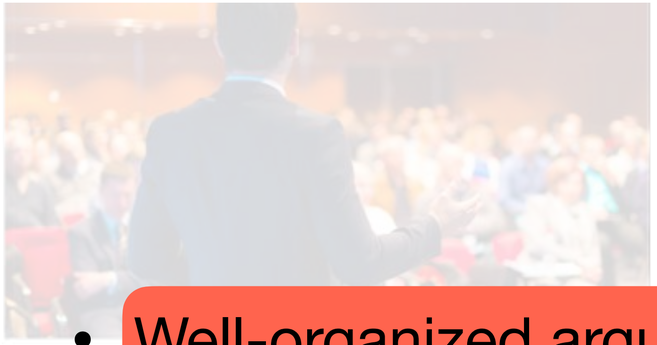
Motivation

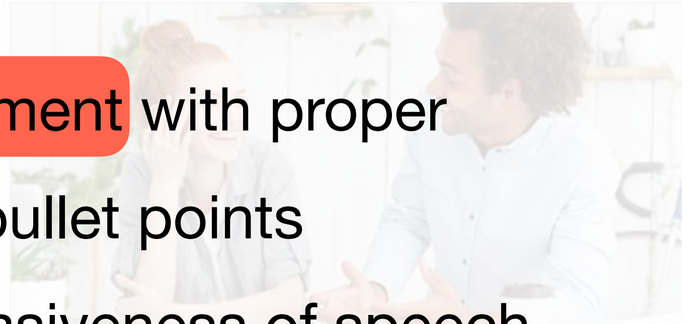
Background

Verbal communication skills

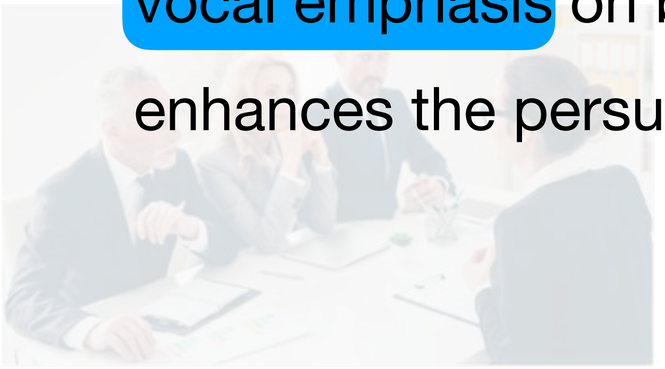
Adaptive speech content

Engaging vocal delivery





Everyday conversation



Job interview

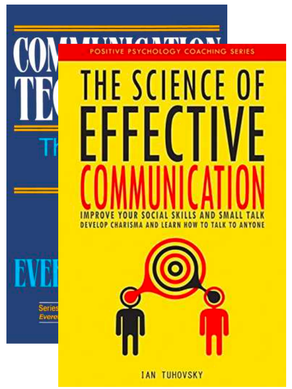
- Well-organized argument with proper vocal emphasis on bullet points enhances the persuasiveness of speech

Motivation

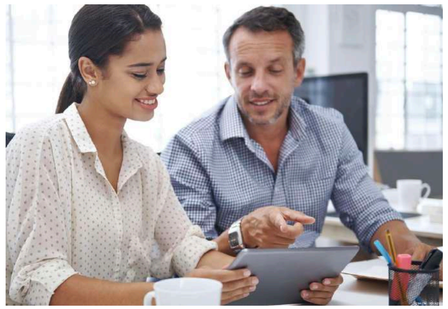
Verbal communication skills learning

- **Self-learning**: guidelines from books

  No feedback



- **Professional training**: feedback from coaches
  - Qualitative
  - Inflexible

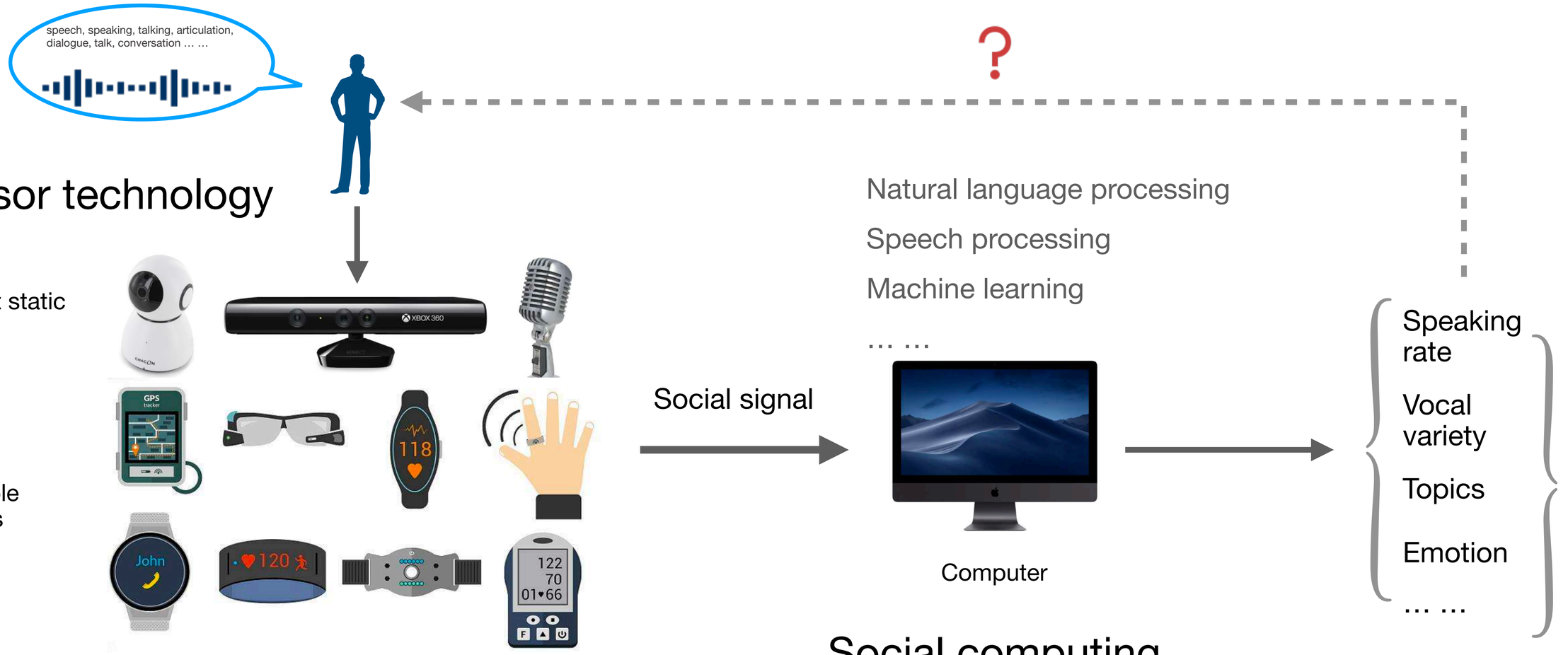


There is a lack of

- Quantitative & automated feedback
- Tool support for effective learning

Motivation

Quantitative automatic feedback



Motivation

User interfaces for learning

Knowledge learning platforms

Language learning softwares

Not for "soft skills"

- They have more clear criteria of what are "correct"
- Their feedback is mostly offline
- Their feedback is mostly in visual forms

Motivation

Challenges

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Intelligence

Quantitative automatic feedback

- Derive quantitative descriptors about speech behavior
- Assess multimodal speech behavior

Learning

User interfaces for effective learning

- Offer valuable guidance on users' behavior
  - When ? (e.g., realtime or post hoc feedback)
  - How ? (e.g., through visuals or other forms)
  - …

Outline

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Automatic Assessment

Competence rubrics

Researchers have conducted a number of studies to identify core communication competency and its rubrics for the practice of communication skills

(Quianthy, 1990; Lucas, 2007; Morreale et al., 2007; Rhodes, 2010; Thomson & Rucker, 2002)

Core aspects of communication proficiency

Adaptive speech content	Topic selection, support material usage, idea organization, word choices
Engaging vocal delivery	Vocal variety, articulation, non-verbal behavior

Automatic Assessment

Competence rubrics

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(Quianthy, 1990; Lucas, 2007; Morreale et al., 2007; Rhodes, 2010; Thomson & Rucker, 2002)

Adaptive speech content

Engaging vocal delivery

Performance standard The student . . .	Assessment Criteria				
	Advanced 4	Proficient 3	Basic 2	Minimal 1	Deficient 0
Demonstrates a careful choice of words	Language is exceptionally clear, imaginative and vivid; completely free from bias, grammar errors and inappropriate usage	Language appropriate to the goals of the presentation; no conspicuous errors in grammar; no evidence of bias	Language selection adequate; some errors in grammar; language at times misused (e.g., jargon, slang, awkward structure)	Grammar and syntax need to be improved as can level of language sophistication; occasionally biased	Many errors in grammar and syntax; extensive use of jargon, slang, sexist/racist terms or mispronunciations
Effectively uses vocal expression and paralanguage to engage the audience	Excellent use of vocal variation, intensity and pacing; vocal expression natural and enthusiastic; avoids fillers	Good vocal variation and pace; vocal expression suited to assignment; few if any fillers	Demonstrates some vocal variation; enunciates clearly and speaks audibly; generally avoids fillers (e.g., um, uh, like)	Sometimes uses a voice too soft or articulation too indistinct for listeners to comfortably hear; often uses fillers	Speaks inaudibly; enunciates poorly; speaks in monotone; poor pacing; distracts listeners with fillers

Public Speaking Competency Rubric (PSCR) (Schreiber et al., 2012)

Automatic Assessment

Computational features

	Prosodic Features (Vocal delivery)	Language Features (Speech content)	Other Features (Speech content)
low-level Features	tempo, loudness, pitch	Syntactic features (e.g., Part-of-Speech features), semantic meaning	-
High-level Features	speaking rate, liveliness, fluency	word choices (e.g., PMI, LIWC), topics, content features, presentation state, content structure	emotion, stage atmosphere (e.g., laughter, applause)
Feature Encodings	freq., max., min., avg., std, multi., quot., add, minus		

Computational features summarized from previous work

Tempo, loudness, pitch -> auditory perception of a speech

Articulation

- *Speaking rate: syllables/ words/sentences per minute*
- *fluency: smoothness of speech -> filled pauses, filler words (e.g., “em”,”hmm”)*

Vocal variety

- *liveliness: expressiveness of voice -> intonation -> variation of pitch and volume*

Automatic Assessment

Computational features

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Vocal delivery Speech content

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Computational features summarized from previous work

Word usage

=> commonness: *PMI*

=> psychology: *LIWC, sentiment/subjectivity lexicons*

Topics => LDA

Content organization => BoW, Word2Vec

Adaptation

=> *Presentation state: presentation & QA*

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Computational features

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Vocal delivery Speech content

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Computational features summarized from previous work

Speaker engagement

=> emotion

Audience engagement

=> stage atmosphere (e.g., laughter, applause, booing)

Automatic Assessment

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Performance assessment

Rule-based methods

Based on the statistical properties of features to set the range of “good”/“bad” performance
(e.g., std, freq., mean)

Vocal delivery

Pitch variety, speech speed => mean+std of words/sentences

Speech content

Content coverage => spotted keywords in speech and their weights (tf.idf) / text in slides

It is simple and useful for basic features. However,

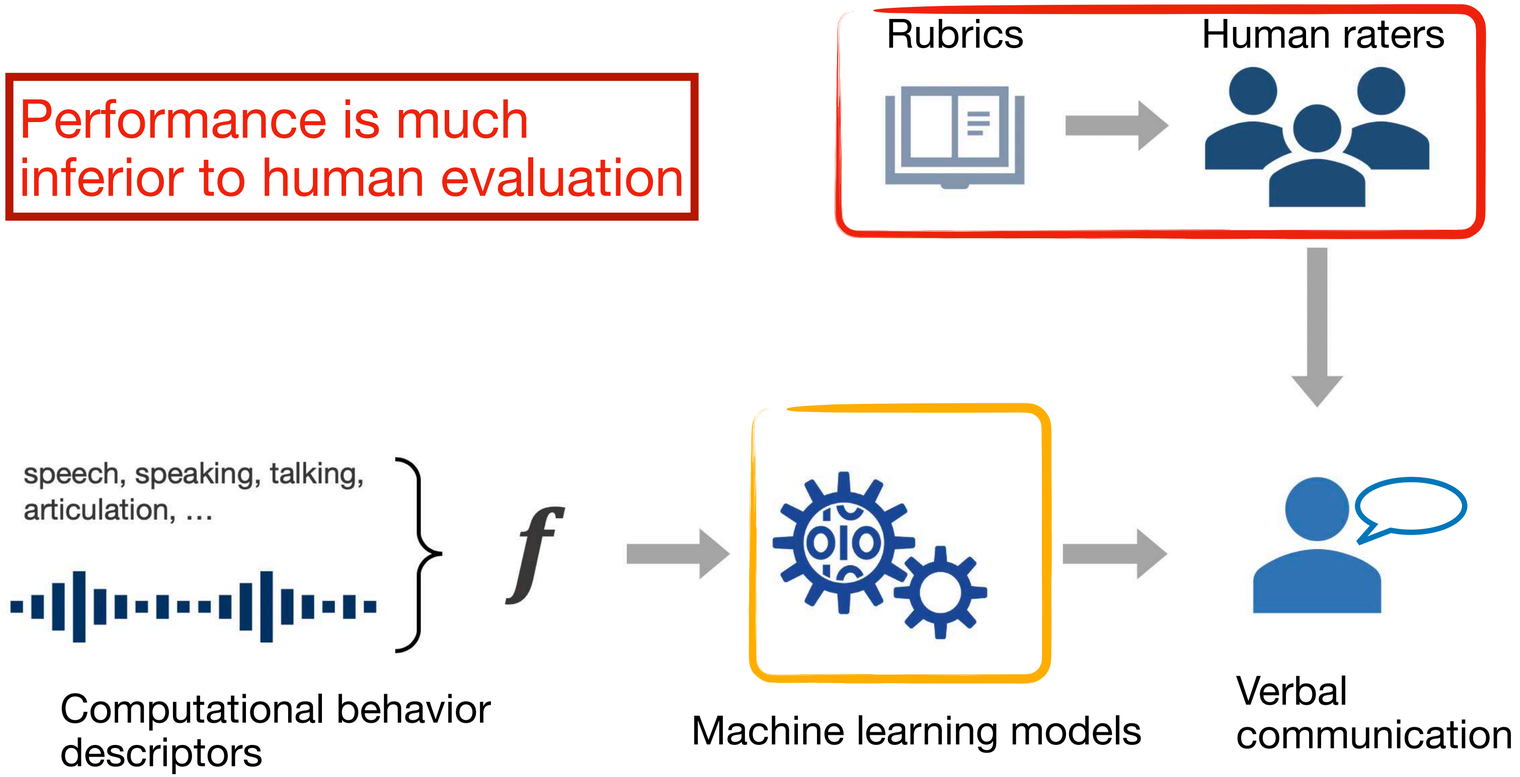
- it is intricate to decide thresholds for complex features (e.g., emotion)
- it fails to adapt to different speakers and different speaking scenarios

Automatic Assessment

Performance assessment

Machine learning (supervised learning)

Performance is much inferior to human evaluation



Human evaluation examples

Quality control: inter-agreement

Supervised learning models

Q1: Models <=?=> judgements

- SVM/SVR, L1/L2 Regularized Logistic Regression, Lasso, tree-based models (e.g., RF)
- BN, HMM

Q2: Features <=?=> judgements

- Correlation Coefficients

Automatic Assessment

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Performance assessment

Deep learning

CNN (Krizhevsky et al., 2012), LSTM (Hochreiter and Schmidhuber, 1997), Transformer (Vaswani et al., 2017) and their variations achieve impressing results on complex analytical tasks of human communication understanding

- CNN (Hershey et al., 2017) => Audio event detection and classification
- BERT (Devlin et al., 2018) => Various NLP tasks
- MFN (Zadeh et al. 2018) => Multimodal feature fusion

It is difficult for human to understand and interpret the model results

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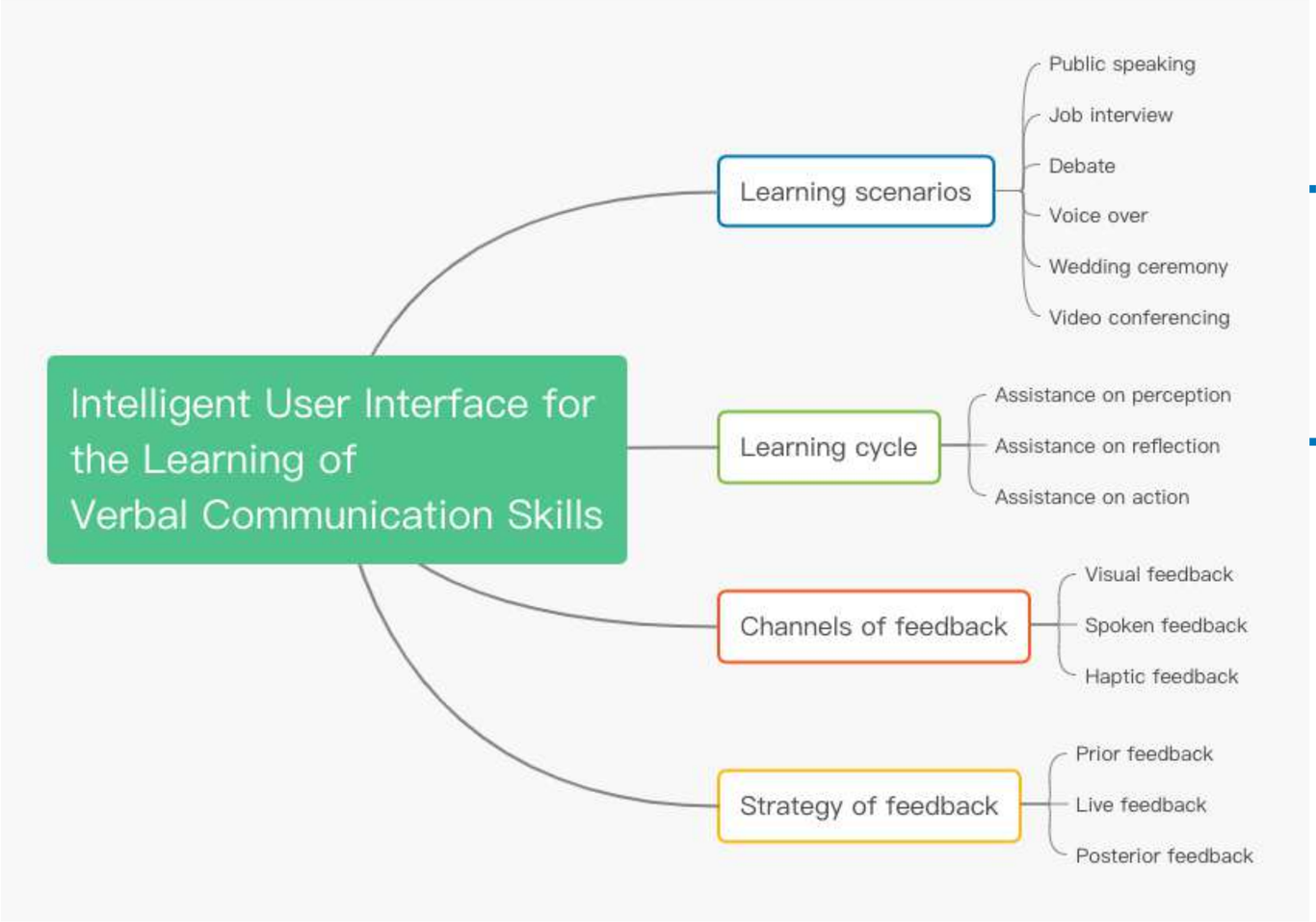
Intelligent User Interface

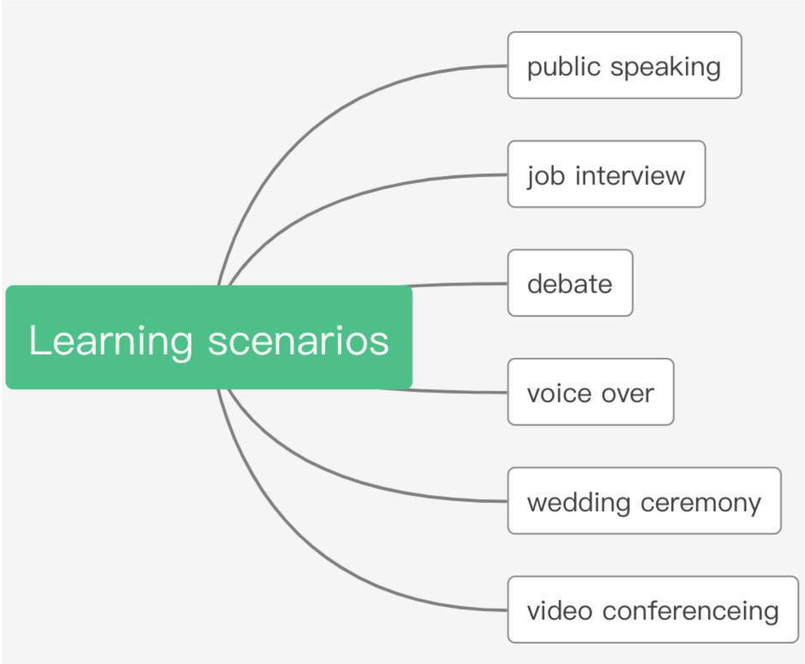
Taxonomy



Intelligent User Interface

Taxonomy

1 Considering learning scenarios,



Speaking anxiety

Content organization

Vocal delivery

Stage management

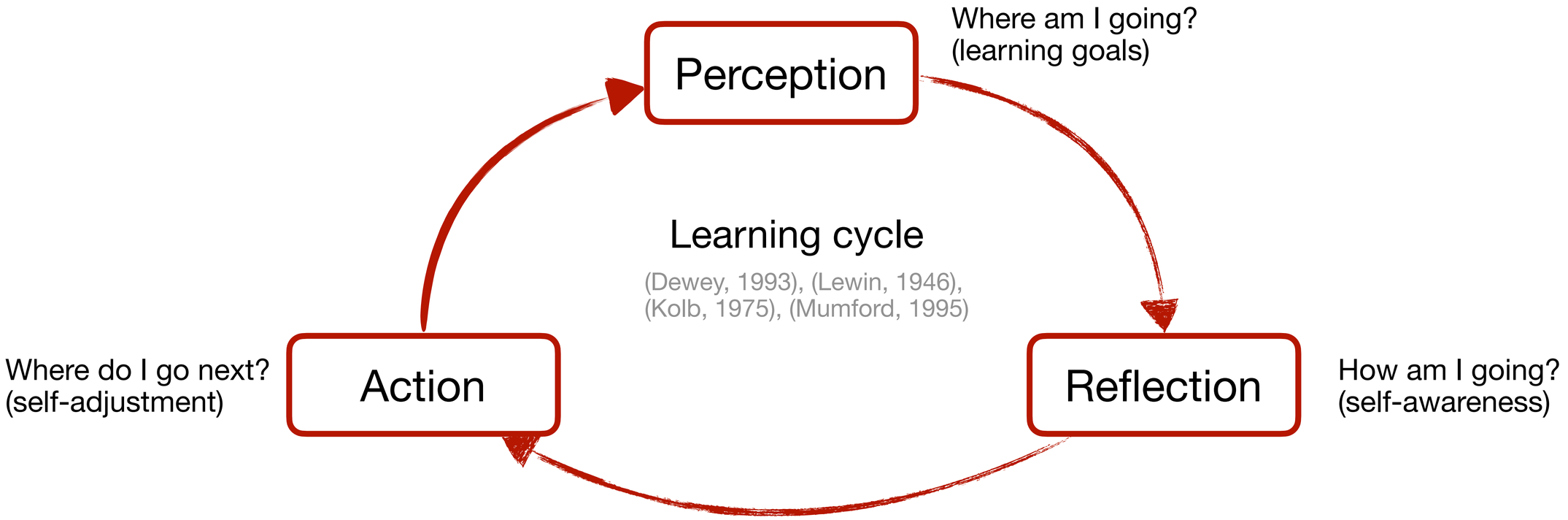
Group interactions & dynamics

Design focus

Intelligent User Interface

Taxonomy

2 Considering the learning process,



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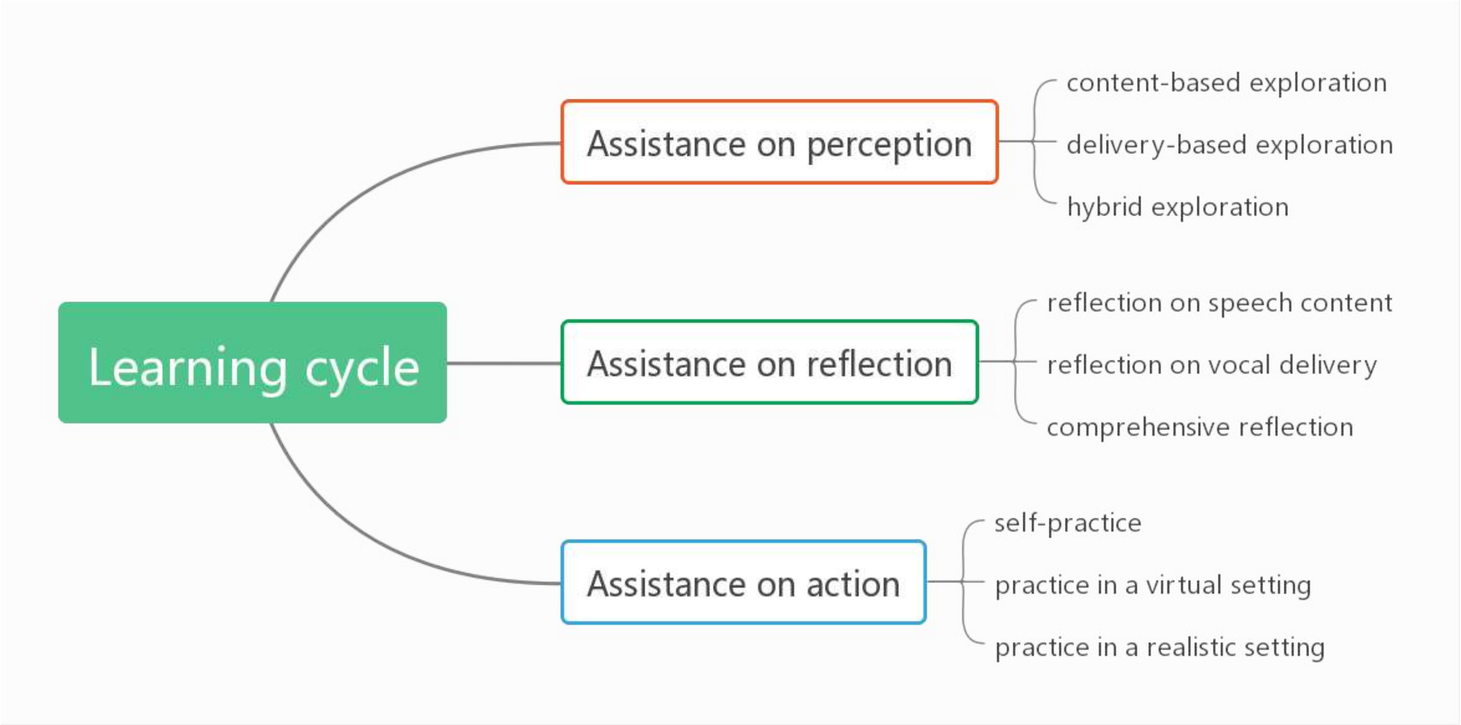
Taxonomy

2 Considering the learning process,



Exploration of knowledge base

Reflection of vocal/verbal behavior

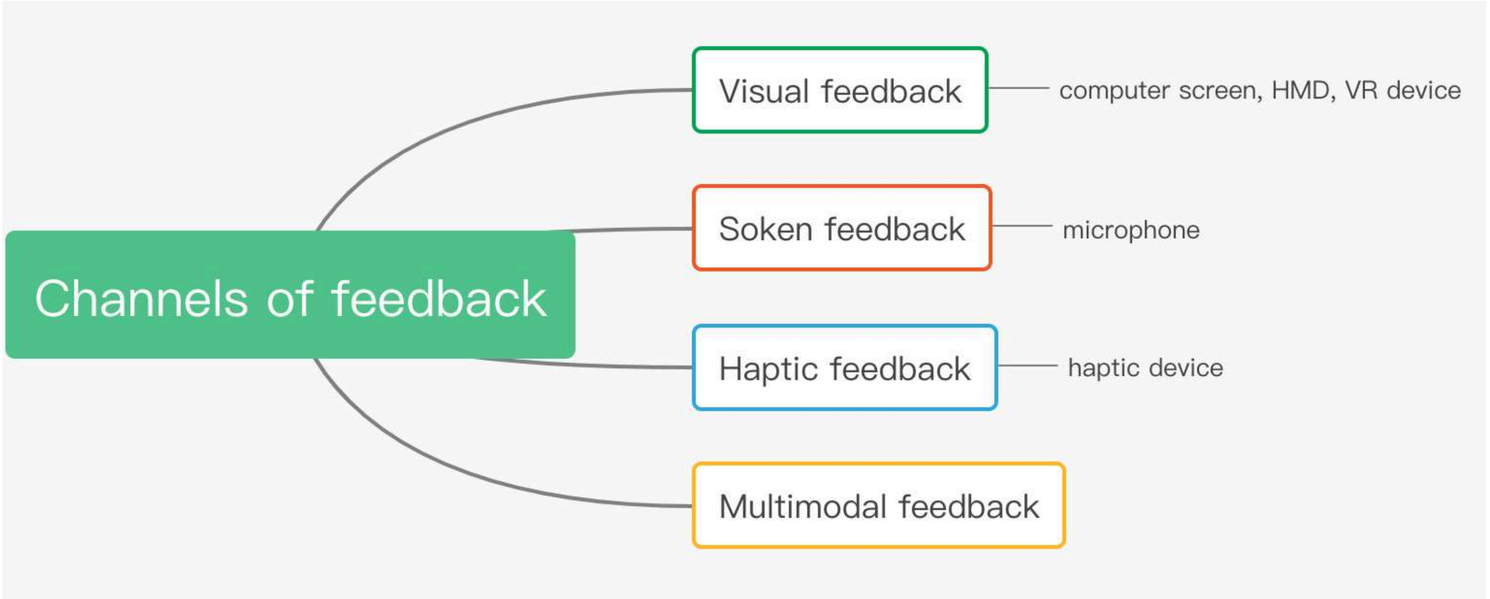
Putting knowledge into action

Intelligent User Interface

Taxonomy

Feedback has been considered as an effective intervention in skills learning and a key consideration of learning interfaces

3 Considering the channels of feedback,



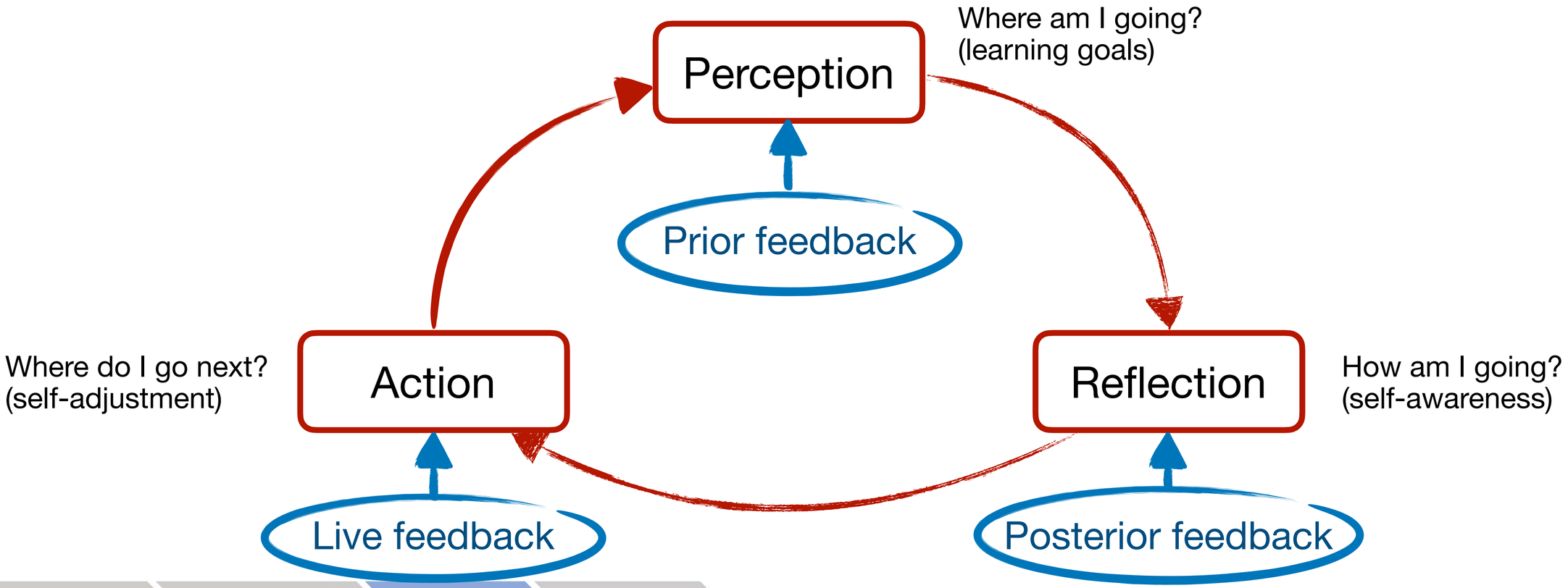
Most widely used for feedback on speech content and vocal delivery

Reduce cognitive load

Intelligent User Interface

Taxonomy

4 Considering the feedback strategy (in the learning cycle),



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Taxonomy

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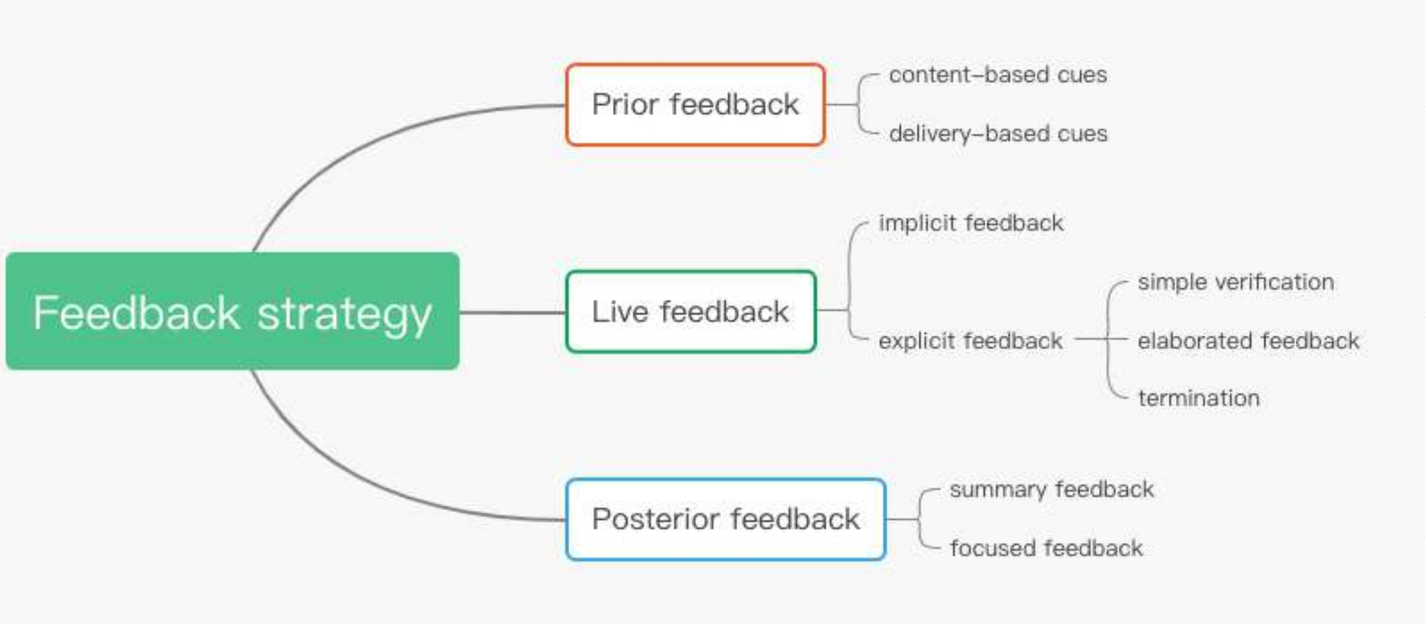


Evidences & consequences

Excellent learning examples

↓

Good speech delivery needs varied intonation

Feedback complexity

Avoid information overload

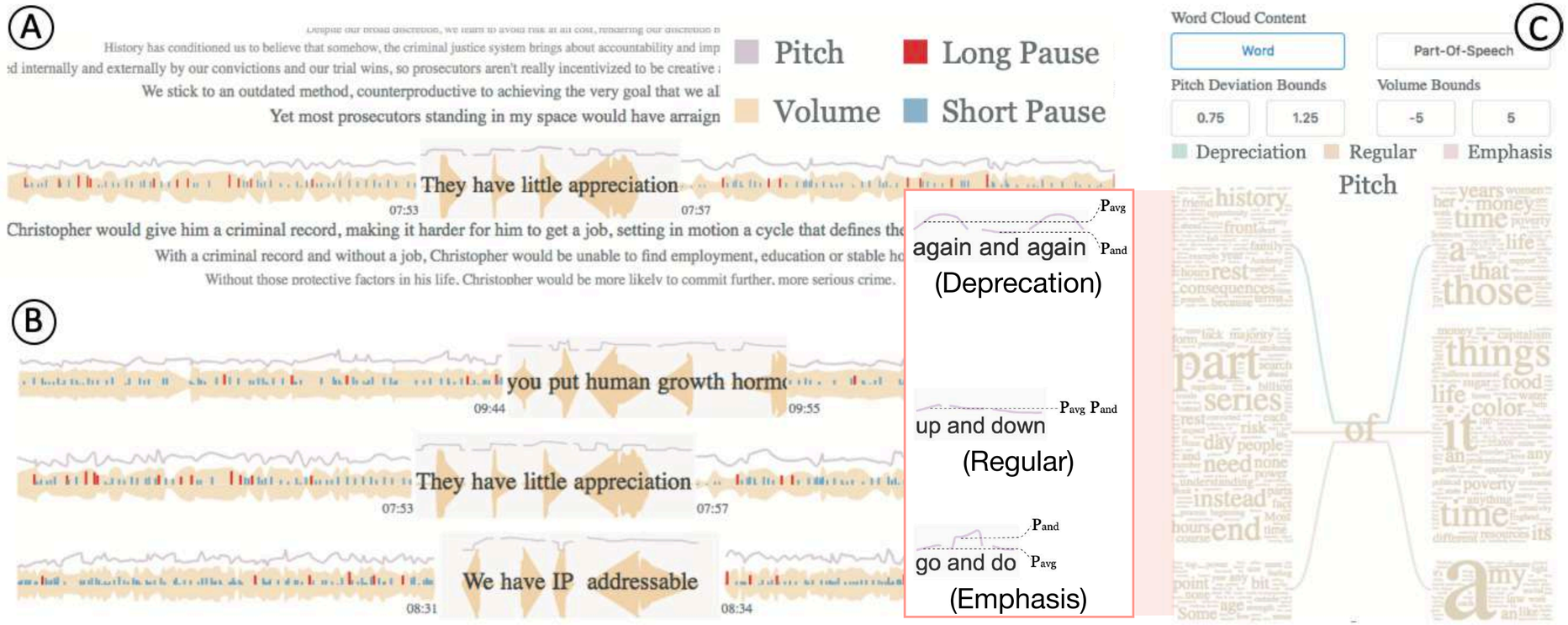
Focus of self-reflection

Exploration from coarse to fine

Intelligent User Interface

Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Exploring narration strategies (pitch, pause, volume)



Sentence-level

A: context+focus design for visualization of prosodic features

B: Structural query

Word-level

C: Word clouds for phrase intonation

SpeechLens (Yuan et al., 2019)

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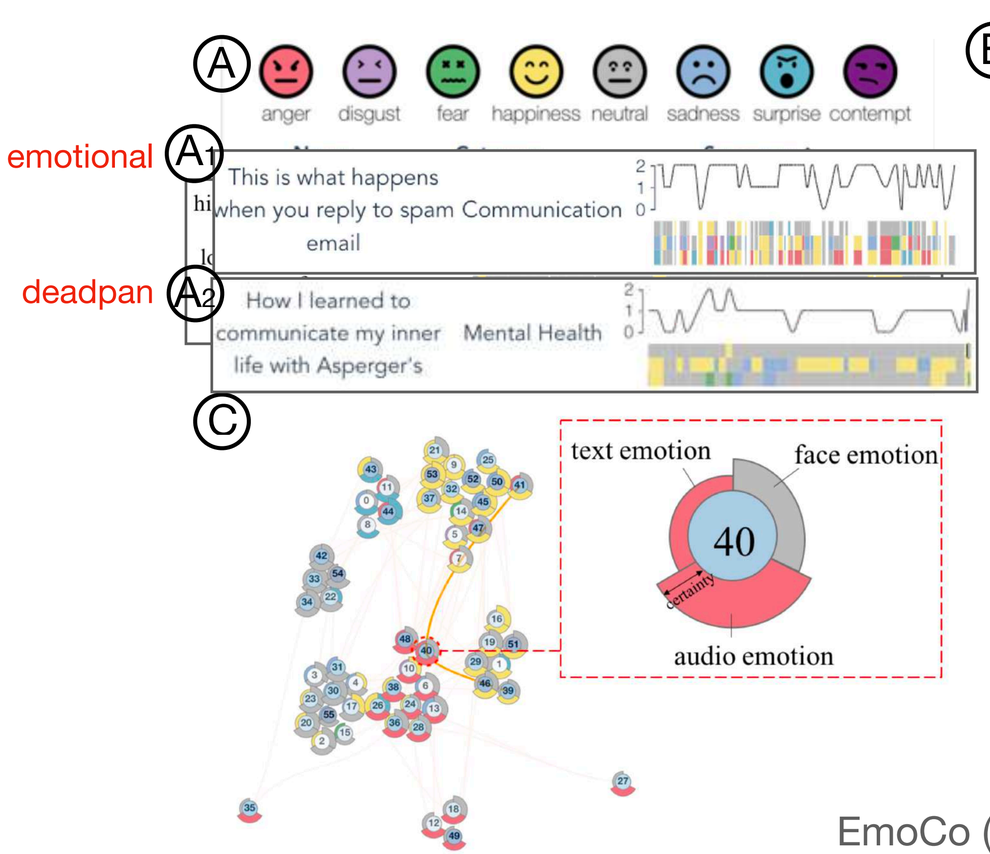
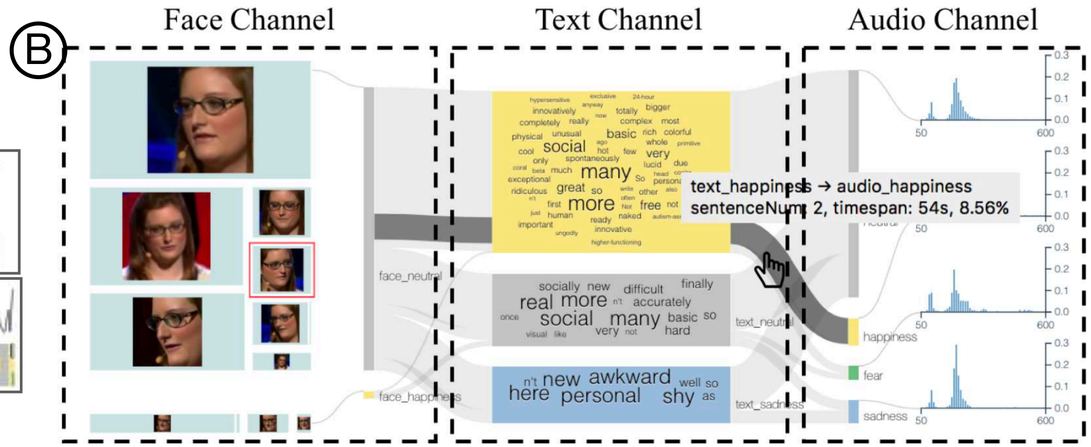
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Exploring emotion coherence in presentation





A: video barcode charts & coherence curves → overview

B: an augmented Sankey diagram → channel connection

C: sentence clustering view → emotion combinations & its distribution

EmoCo (Zeng et al., 2019)

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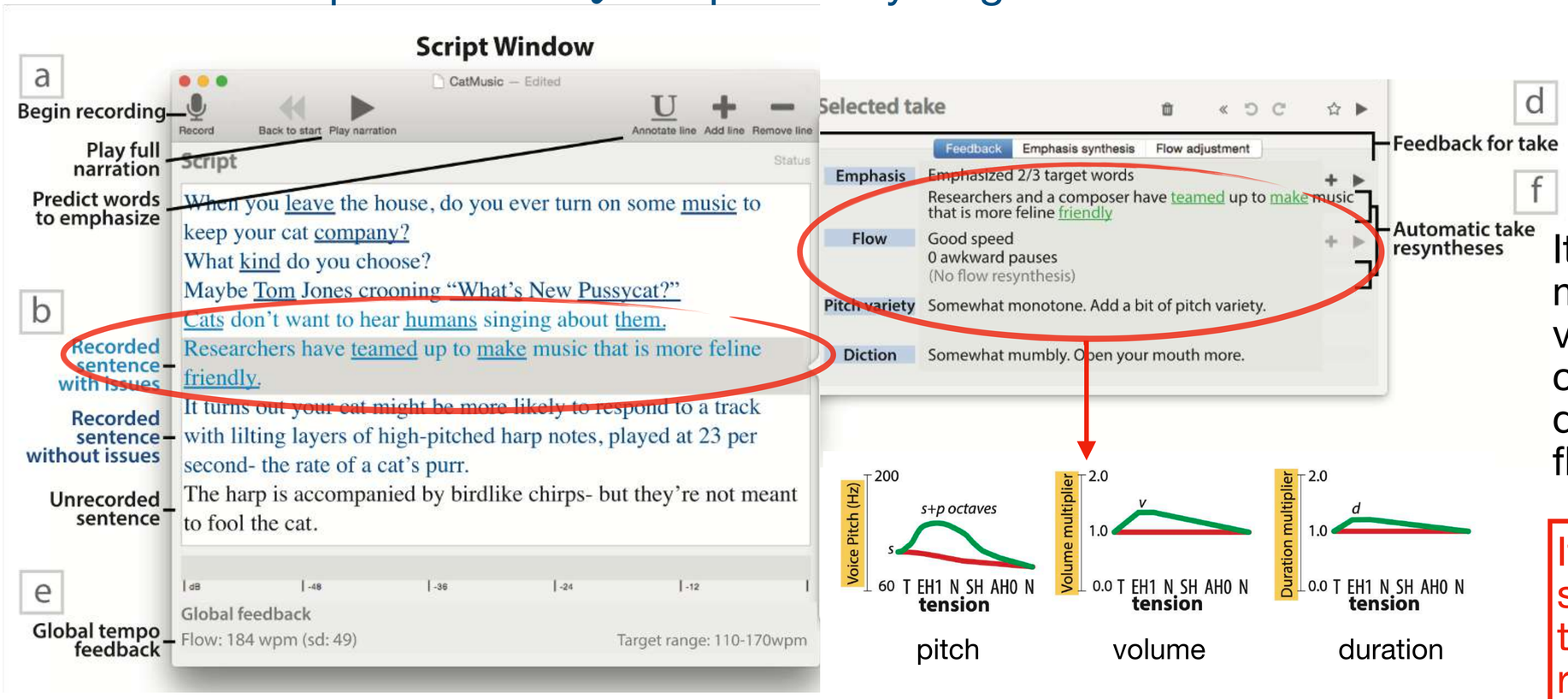
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

From feature exploration → Speech styles generation for voice-over



NarrationCoach (Rubin et al., 2015)

It can automatically modify the pitch, volume and duration curves to generate desired emphasis and flow.

It is difficult for novice speakers to identify the words for resynthesis

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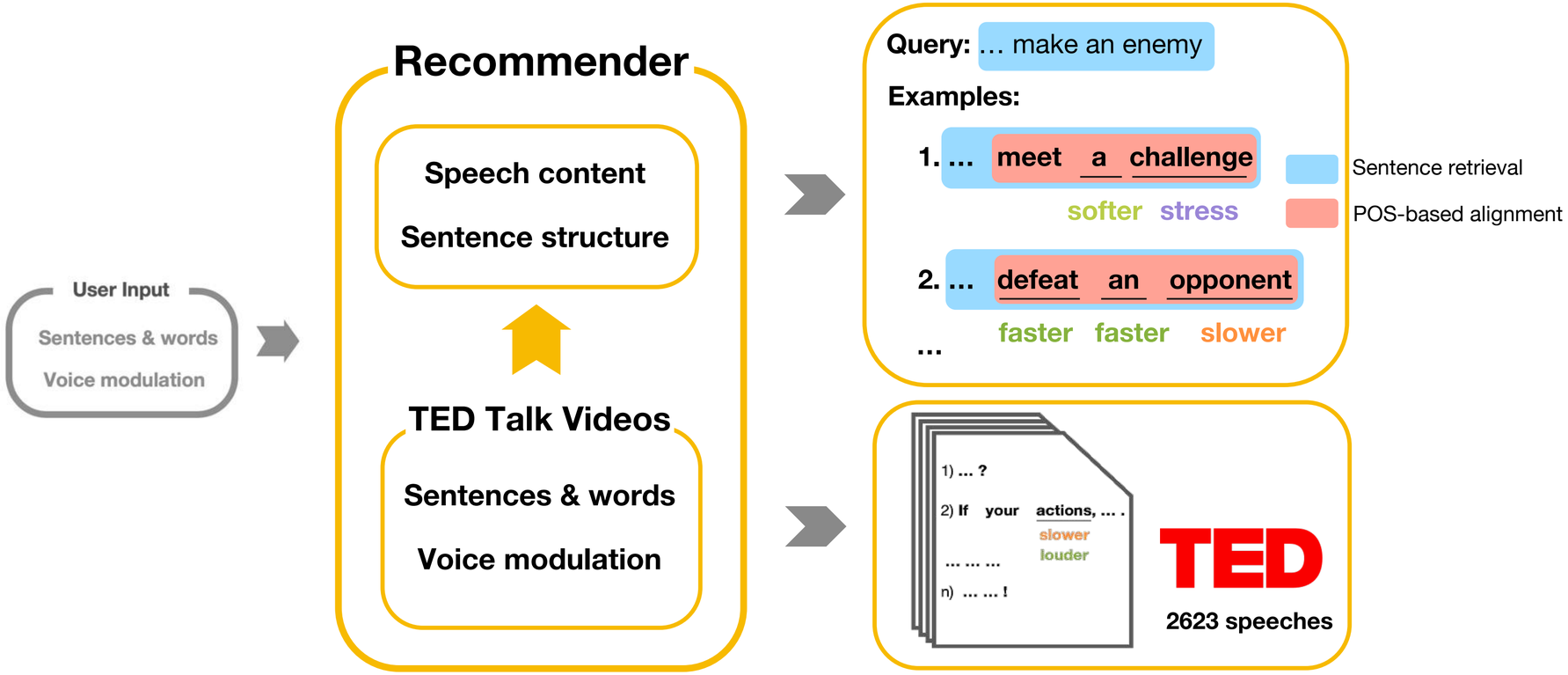
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Data-driven recommendation of voice modulation techniques



Overview of VoiceCoach (Wang et al., 2020)

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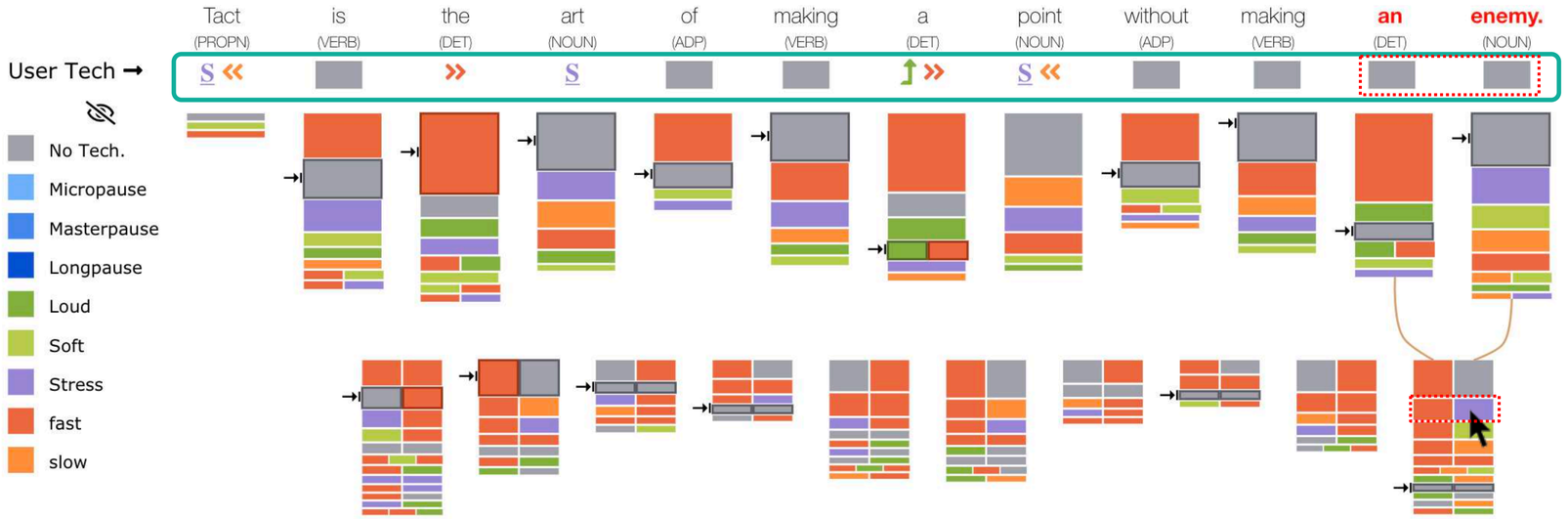
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Data-driven recommendation of voice modulation techniques



N-gram based hierarchical summary

VoiceCoach (Wang et al., 2020)

Users' performance

Speed	Faster ≫
	Slower ≪
Volume	Louder ↑
	Slower ↓
Pause	Brief Pause ■
	Master Pause ■■
	Long Pause ■■■
Pitch	Stress S
	Normal ■

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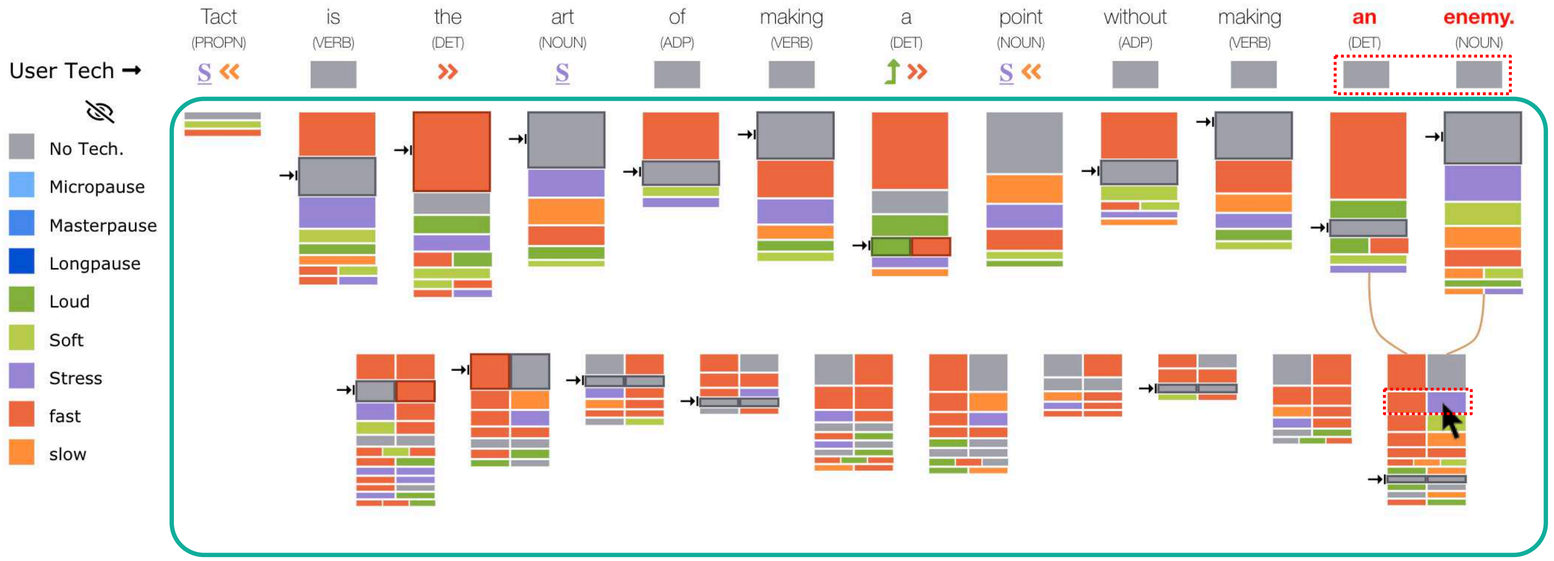
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Data-driven recommendation of voice modulation techniques

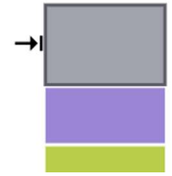


Word Combinations

1-gram summary

2-gram summary

arrow markers:



N-gram based hierarchical summary

VoiceCoach (Wang et al., 2020)

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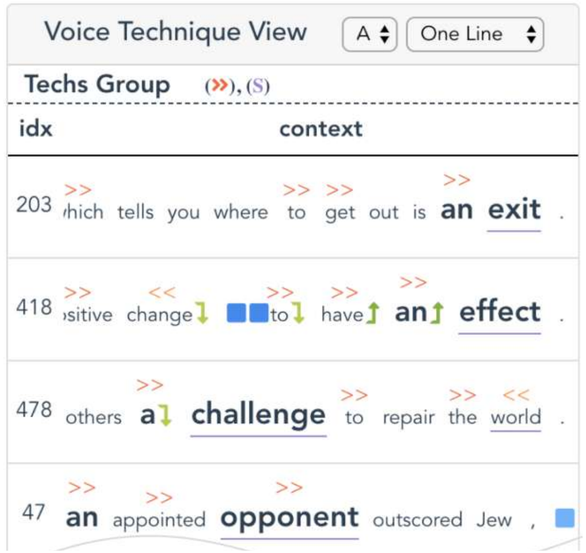
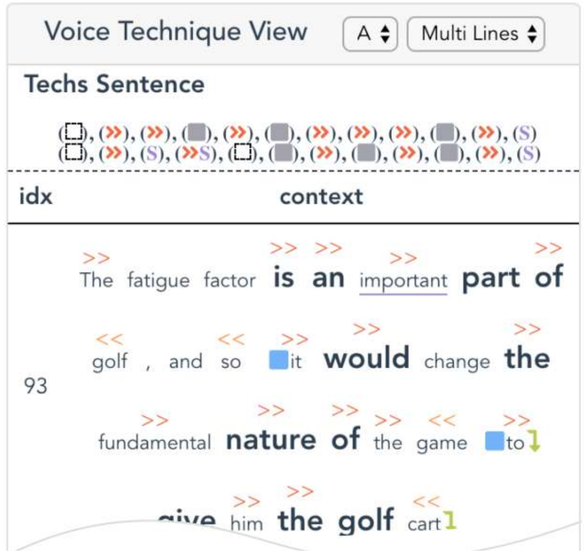
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Data-driven recommendation of voice modulation techniques

Query: Tact is … making **an enemy**



One-line mode



Multi-line mode

VoiceCoach (Wang et al., 2020)

Speech examples

- modulation of interest is highlighted
- context for phrase of interest
- listening to original audio clips

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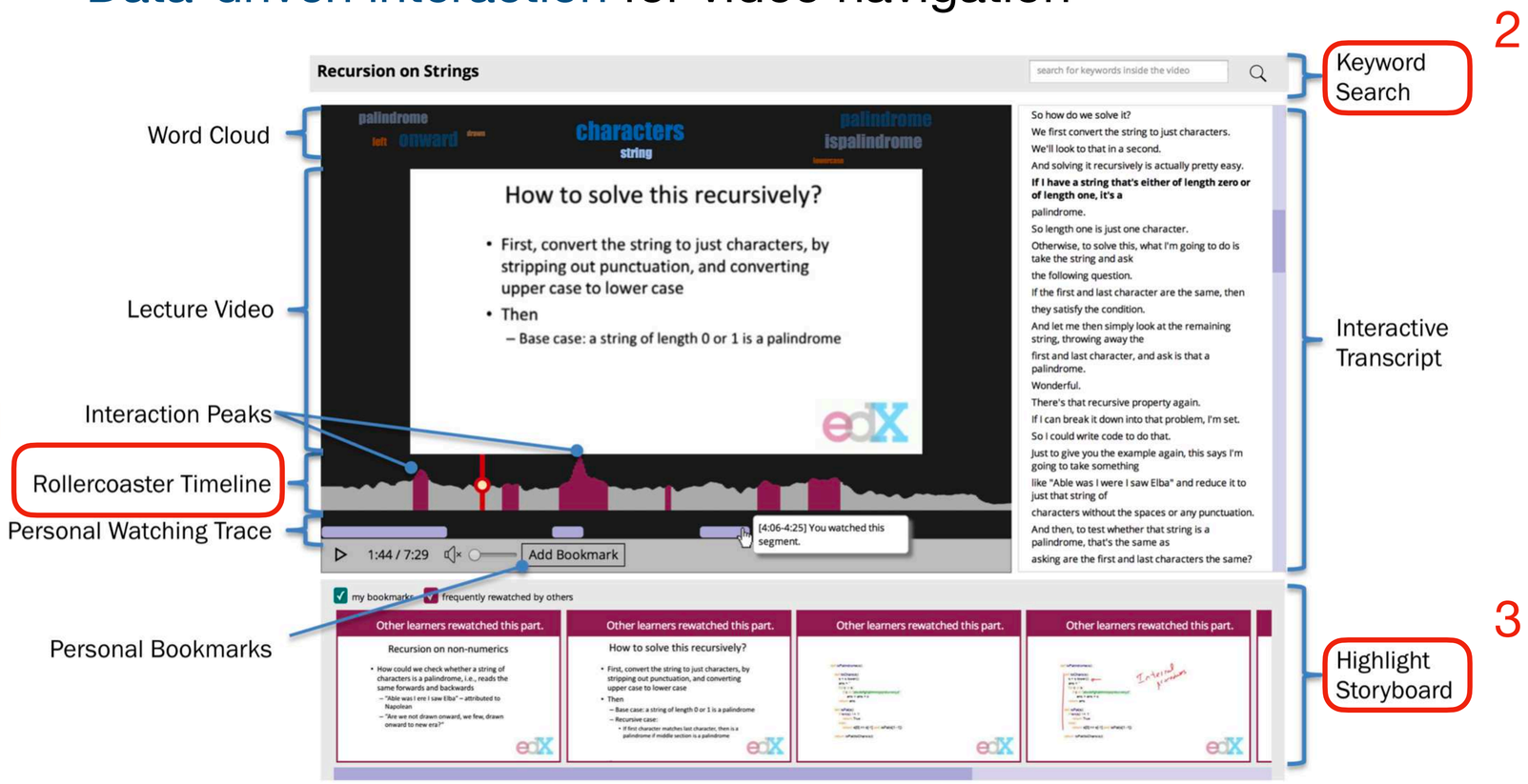
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Data-driven interaction for video navigation



- Timeline (1)
- Search (2)
- Summarization (3)

LectureScape (Kim et al., 2014)

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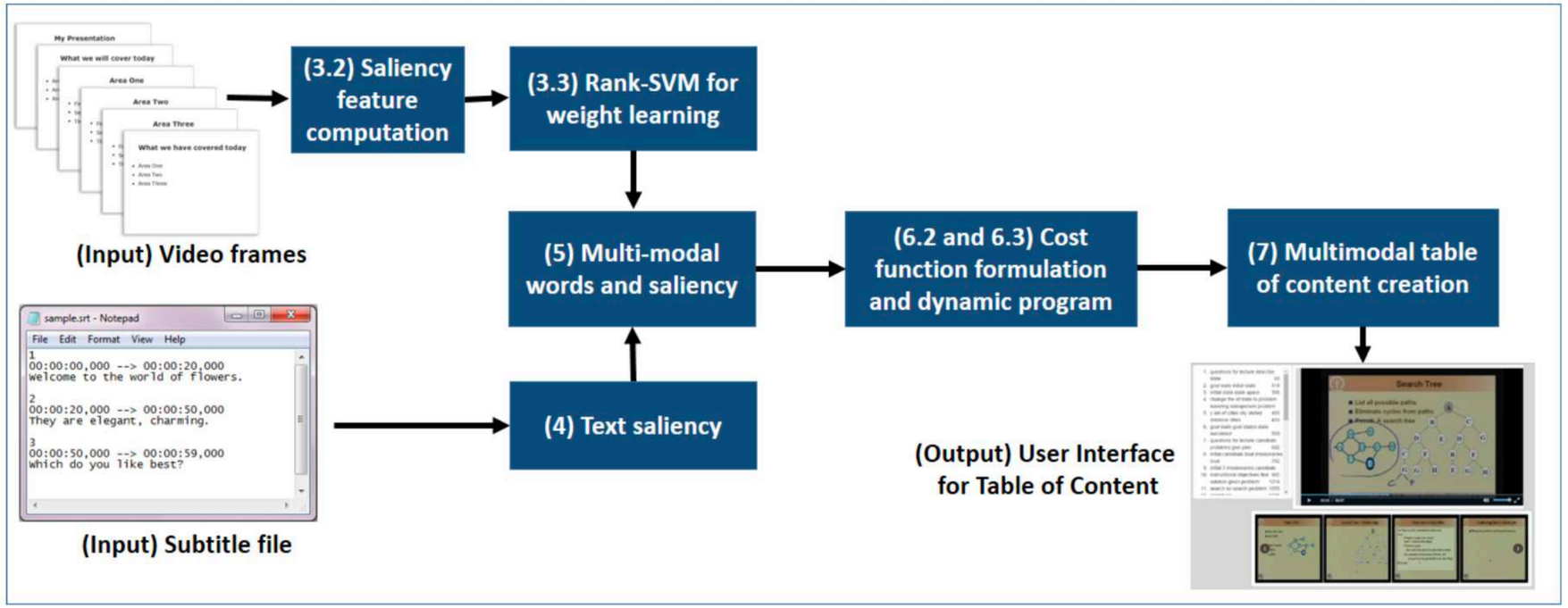
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Topic-based content summarization



MMToC (Biswas et al., 2015)

Visual & spoken word fusion

- Extend visual salient words with a group of spoken salient words based on the semantic similarity

Content segmentation

- Minimize the inner-group difference
- Maximize the inter-group difference

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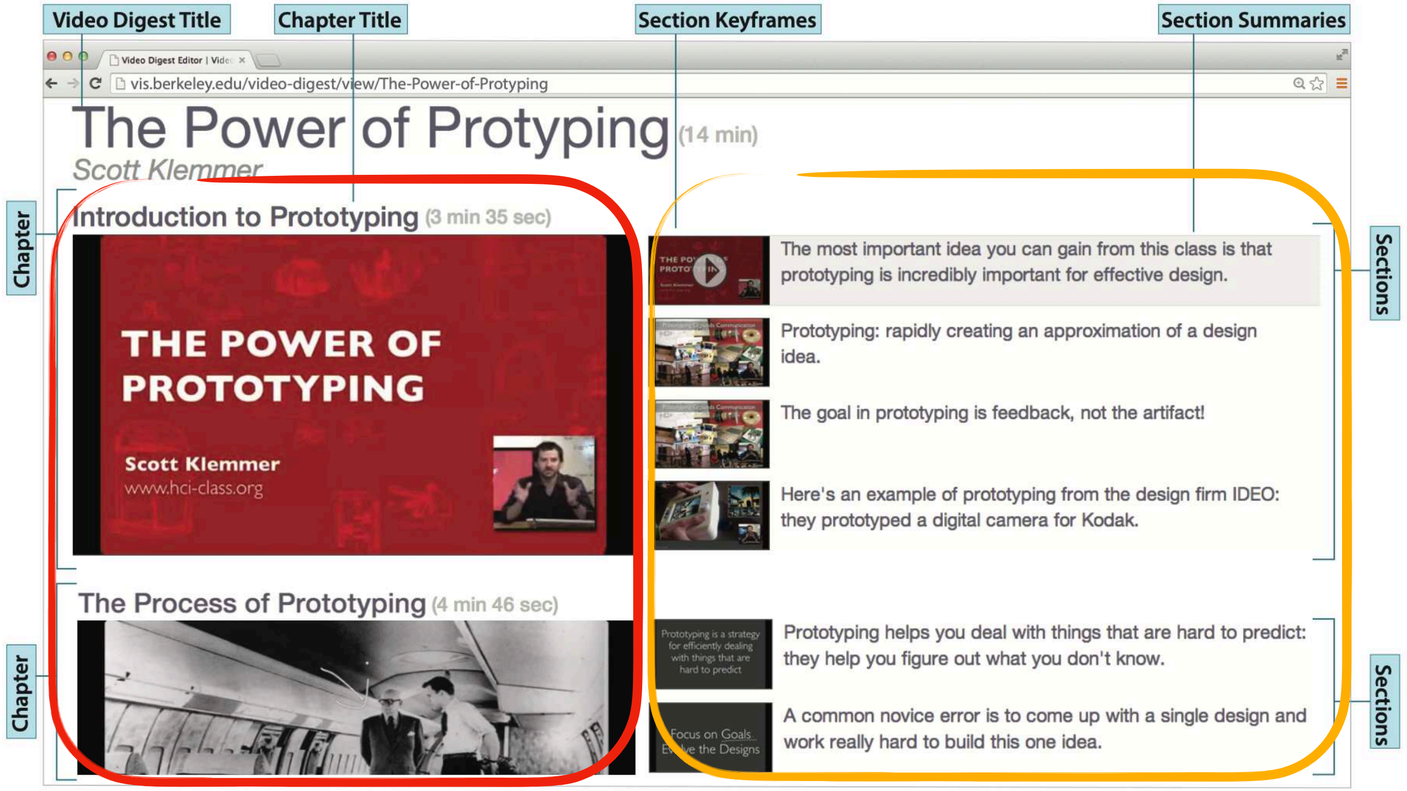
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

Textbook-inspired chapter/section content organization

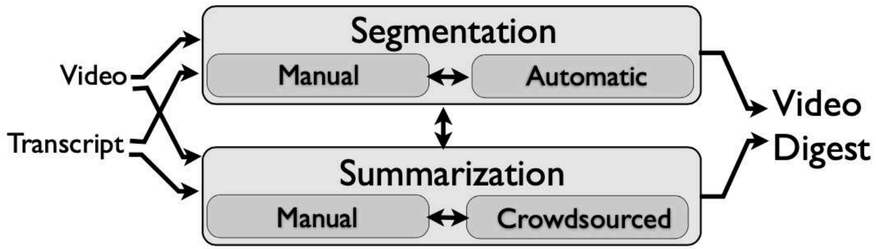


Video Digest (Pavel et al., 2014)

Chapter — Topically coherent sections

Section — A set of varying topics

Bayesian topic segmentation



Crowdsourcing summary and ranking

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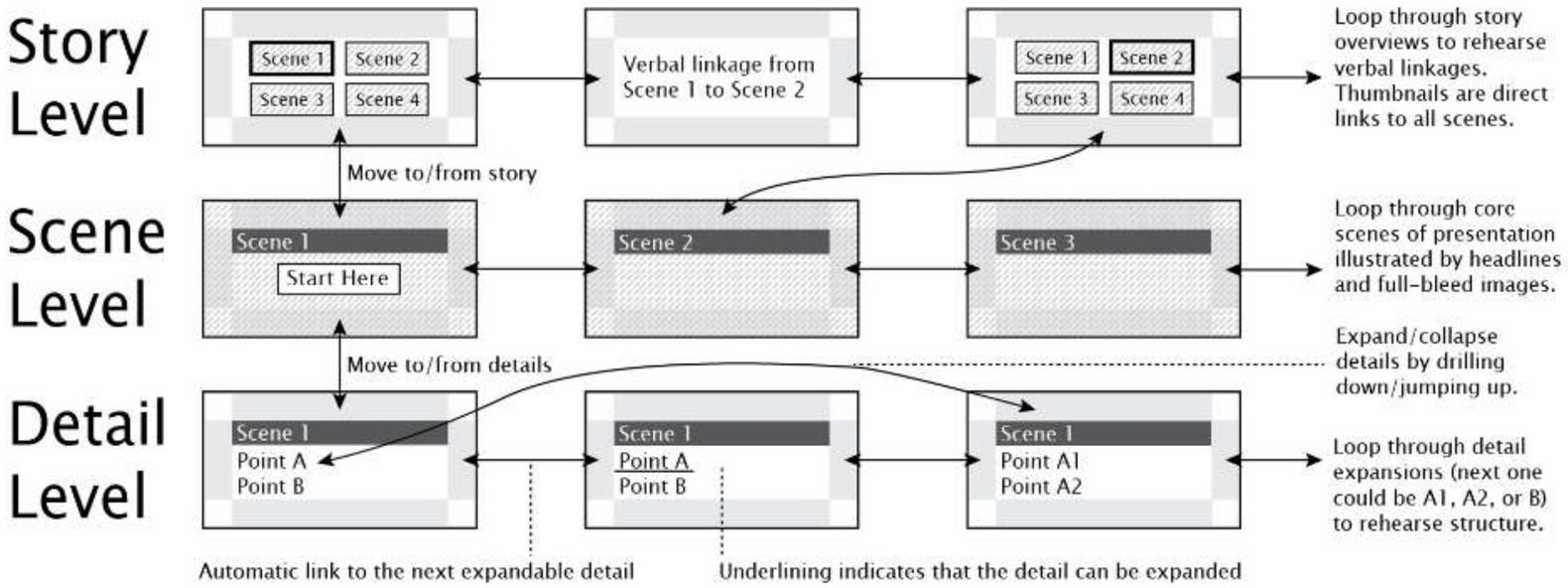
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

From content exploration → Hierarchical content structure planning



HyperSlides (Edge et al., 2014)

Action	Syntax	Explanation
Create scenes	[Scene 1 < image1.jpg] [Scene 2 < image2.jpg]	Create scene slides with titles "Scene X" that have the background imageX.jpg.
Add details	[Scene 1 < image1.jpg] [> Point A] [>> Point A1] [>> Point A2] [> Point B]	Add Point A and Point B as details of Scene 1, with Point A1 and Point A2 sub-details of Point A. A third level of detail is possible using [>>>...], and so on.
Add hyperlinks	[> Point A >> http://url.tld] [> Point B >> anyfile.ext]	Link from Point A to a URL. Link from Point B to a file.

Mark-up language to create hierarchically structured scenes

↓

hyperlinked slides of a consistent and minimalist style

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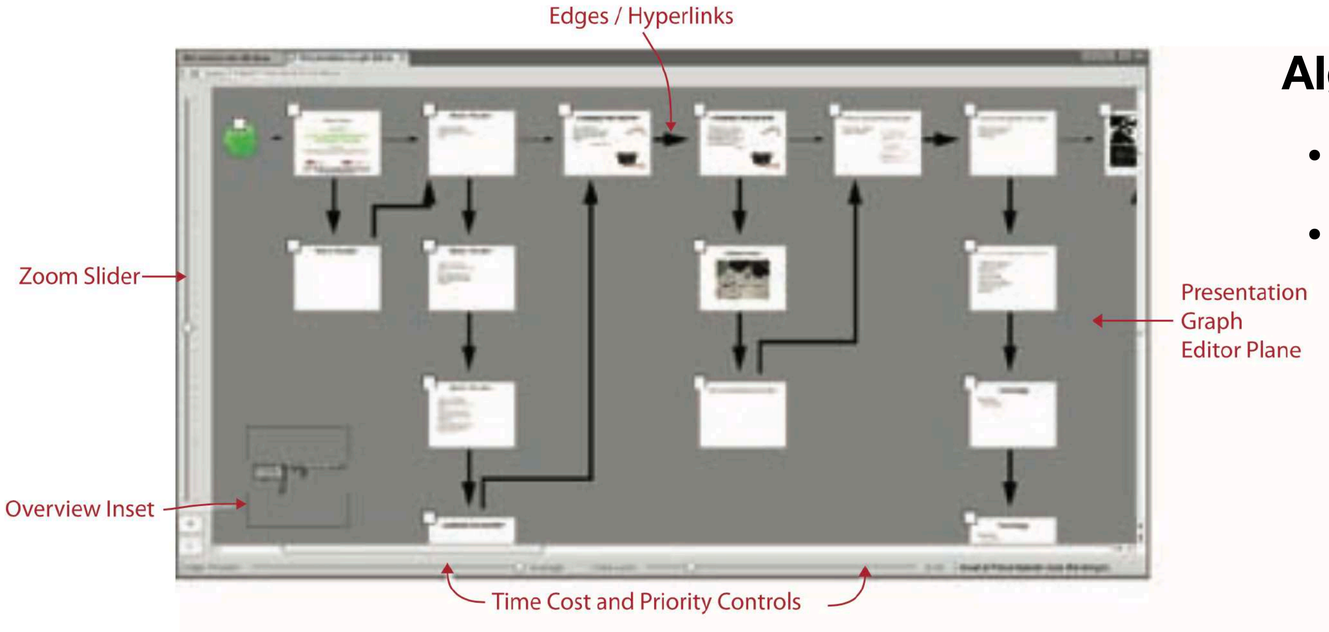
Prior feedback: Delivery-based cues ≫ Content-based cues

From manual planning → Automatic structure generation & path suggestions

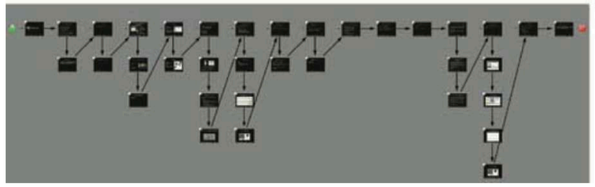


NextSlidePlease (Spicer et al., 2012)

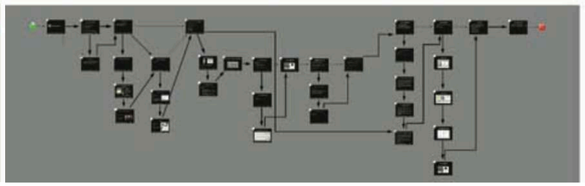
Algorithm support

- Semantic similarity between adjacent slides => presentation graph
- Time constraints, priority => path suggestions

Linear layout



Structure generation



Post editing

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Prior feedback:

Limitations

- Do not consider learning from BAD examples
- Do not consider learning from multimodal speech styles

NEXT: Live feedback (implicit feedback)

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Live feedback: **Implicit feedback** ≫ Explicit feedback

Simulate nonverbal behavior of virtual audience

- Posture (e.g., straight, relaxed, forward)
- Head orientation
- Gaze

Virtual audiences in Cicero (Batrinca et al., 2013)

MACH (Hoque et al., 2013)

Acknowledgement

- nodding, changing posture
- spoken acknowledgement "That's very interesting"

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Live feedback: **Implicit feedback** ≫ Explicit feedback

Investigate the impact of nonverbal behavior of virtual audience

Two characters of virtual coaches (Gebhard et al., 2013)

	Gestures	*Facial expression*	*Pause*	*Gaze*	*Comments*
Understanding	Narrow	Positive	Shorter	Friendly	Many polite phrases
Demanding	Space-taking	Negative	Longer	Dominant	Few polite phrases

Within-subject study

- Participants perceive the differences and they reported that **demanding** character induced higher level of stress
- Demanding condition: more breathing **pauses**, higher **movement** energy

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Live feedback: **Implicit feedback** ≫ Explicit feedback

Limitations

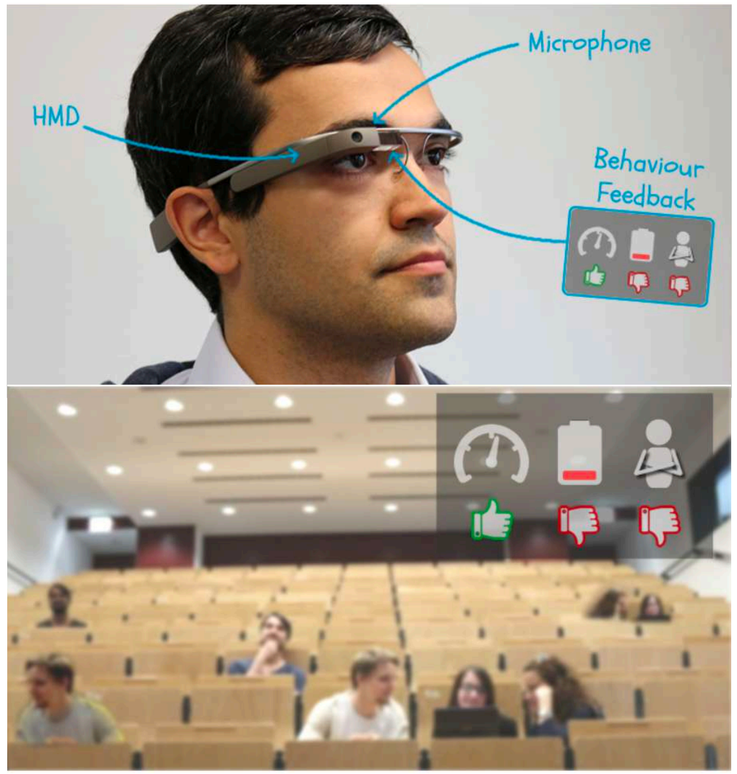
- Most listening behaviors of virtual audience are controlled by finite state machines. There is a lack of more intelligent models to simulate affective states of listeners

NEXT: Explicit feedback (simple verification)

Intelligent User Interface

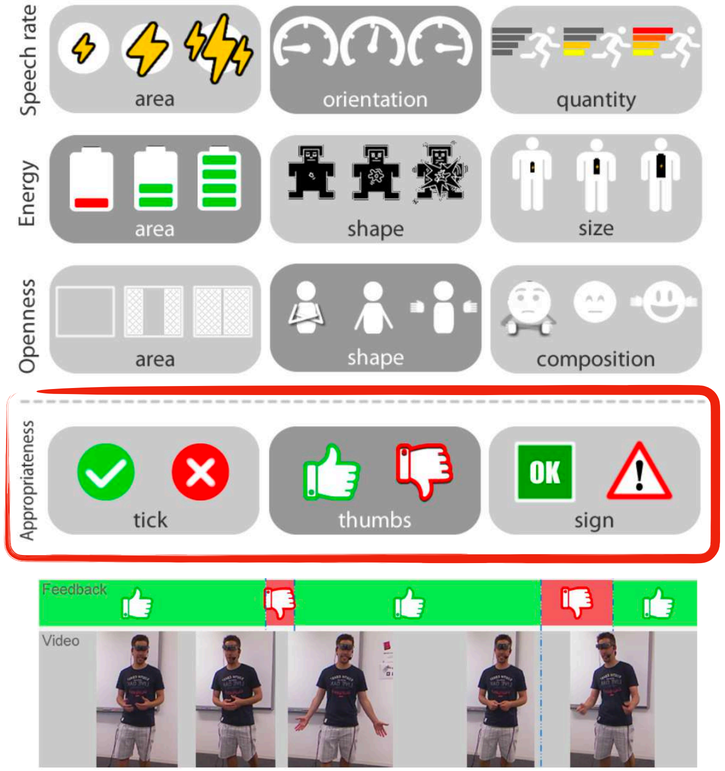
Live feedback: Implicit feedback ≫ Explicit feedback - simple verification

Realtime behavioural checking on speech delivery with Google Glass



Logue (Hoque et al., 2013)

Feedback icon alternatives



Final design

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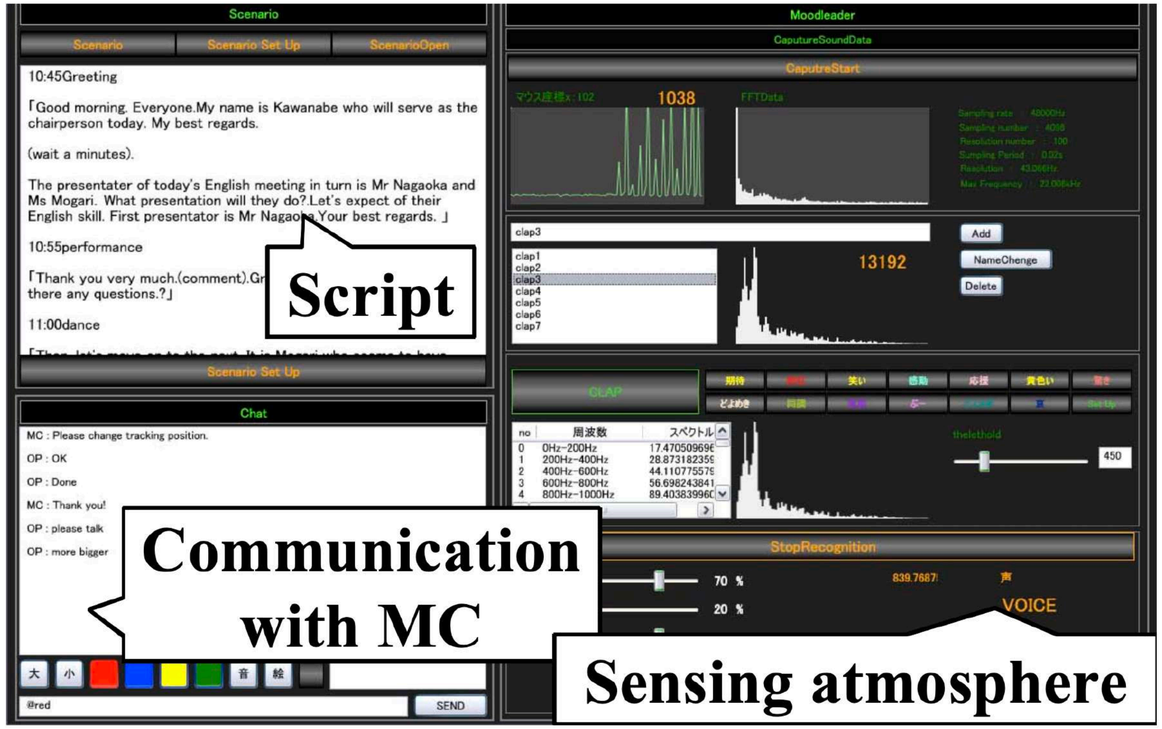
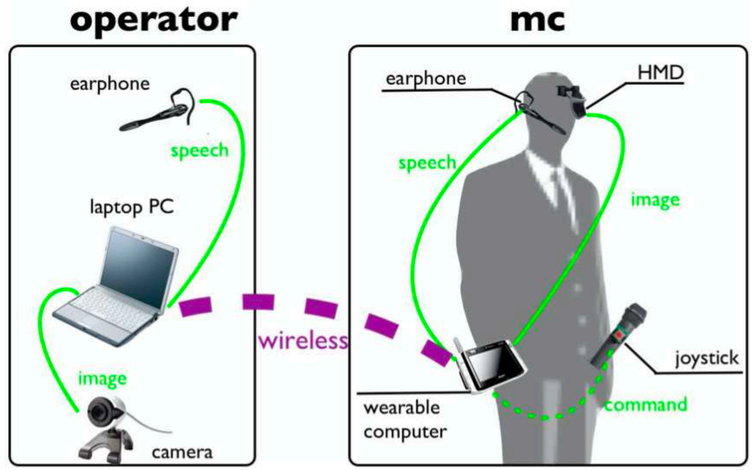
Live feedback: Implicit feedback ≫ Explicit feedback - simple verification

Realtime behavioural checking on speech content with HMD



A wearable MC system (Okada et al., 2011)



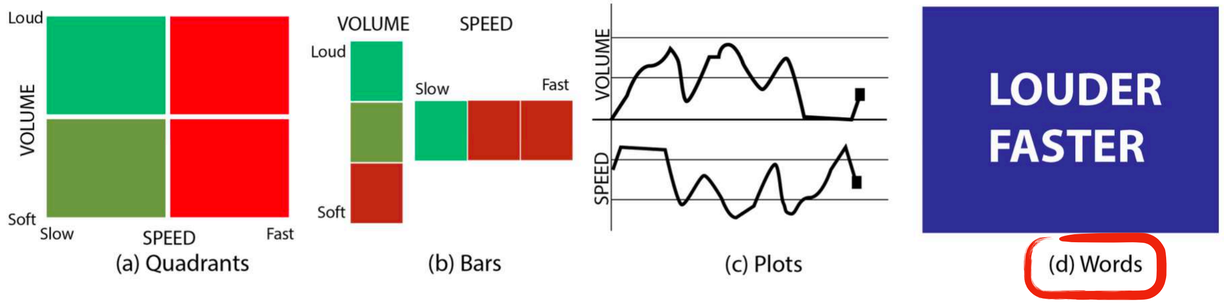
Manage stage

- Realtime tracking of MC's speech
- Communication with operators
- Sensing atmosphere (e.g., buzzing, laugh)

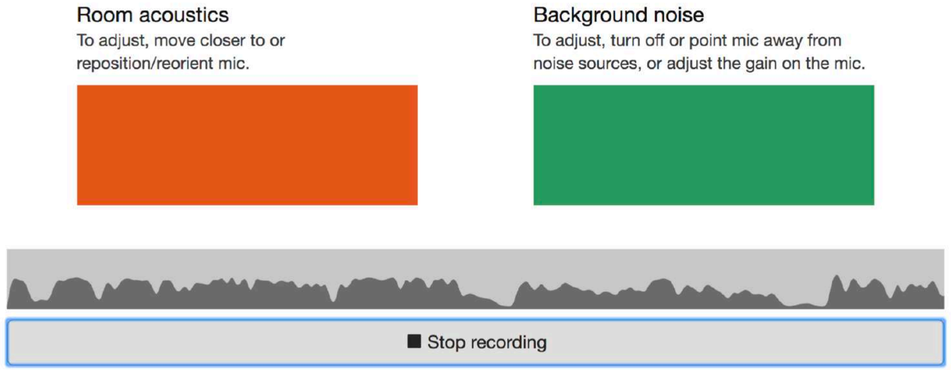
Intelligent User Interface

Live feedback: Implicit feedback ≫ Explicit feedback - elaborated feedback

Realtime instructions on speech delivery with visual feedback



Rhema (Okada et al., 2011)



VoiceAssist (Okada et al., 2011)

User study

- Verbal feedback is most favored
- Participants prefer sparse feedback to continuous feedback

Room acoustics: speech transmission index

Background noise: signal to noise ratio

Box: red/green indicates low/high audio quality

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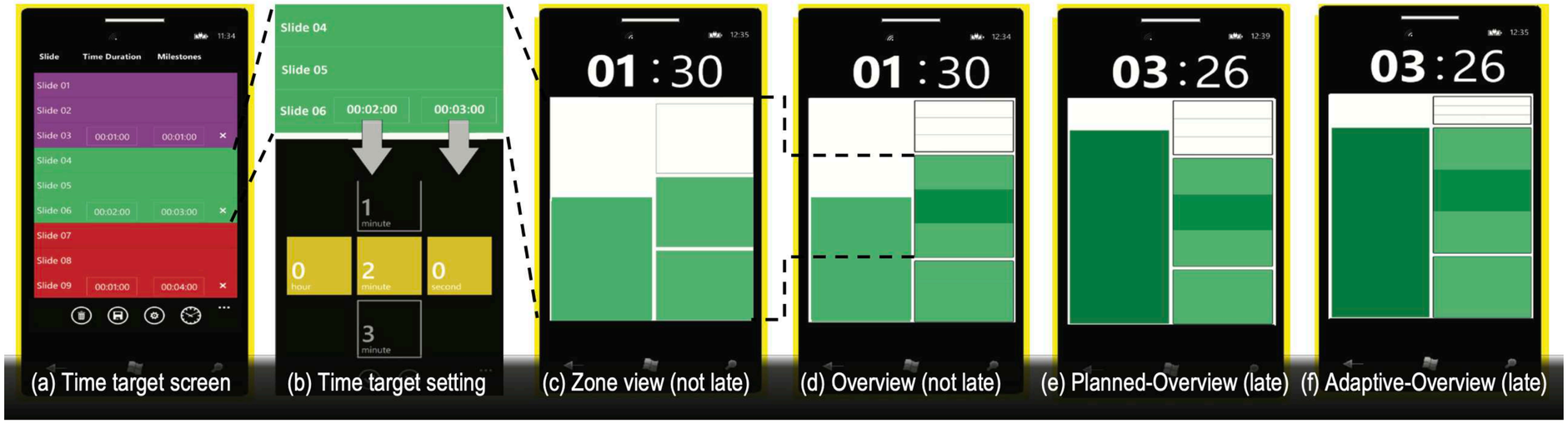
Live feedback: Implicit feedback ≫ Explicit feedback - elaborated feedback

From behavior awareness → Dynamic time control during presentation



TalkZones (Saket et al., 2014)

Two types of timing support

Less flexible

- Planned rehearsal (e)

More flexible

- Adaptive guidance (f)

Haptic feedback is enabled for redundant representation and reminder of lateness

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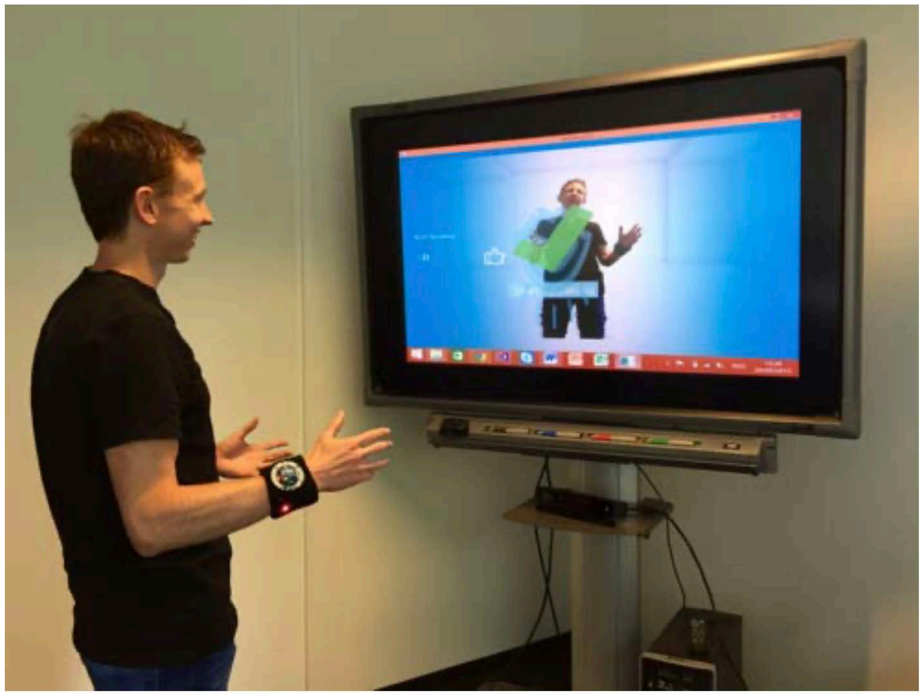
Live feedback: Implicit feedback ≫ Explicit feedback - termination

Interruption for improving specific skills



Presentation Trainer (Schneider et al., 2014)

Action list (e.g., voice modulation)

- Volume: loud, soft, normal
- Pause: long narration without pauses
- Filler sounds: “ehm”, “hmm”

→ **Corrective feedback** (realtime visuals)

Severe mistakes

(vibration, pause sound, stops the program)

- Repetition of same mistakes
- Mistakes without being corrected for too long
- Predefined severe mistakes

→ **Interruptive feedback**

Intelligent User Interface

Live feedback

Limitations

Implicit feedback

Explicit feedback

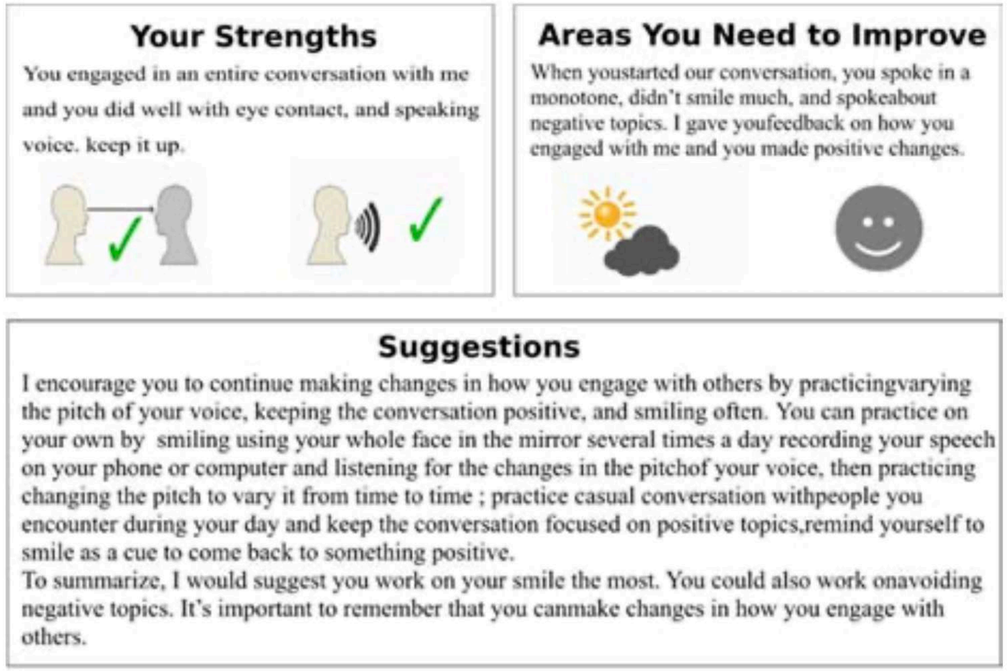
- Simple verification
- Elaborated feedback
- Termination

- Most systems focus on providing timely suggestions about users' performance. They do not consider how to help them effectively and efficiently correct their mistakes

Intelligent User Interface

Posterior feedback: Summary feedback ≫ Focus feedback

Summary of strengths & weaknesses



Your Strengths

You engaged in an entire conversation with me and you did well with eye contact, and speaking voice. keep it up.

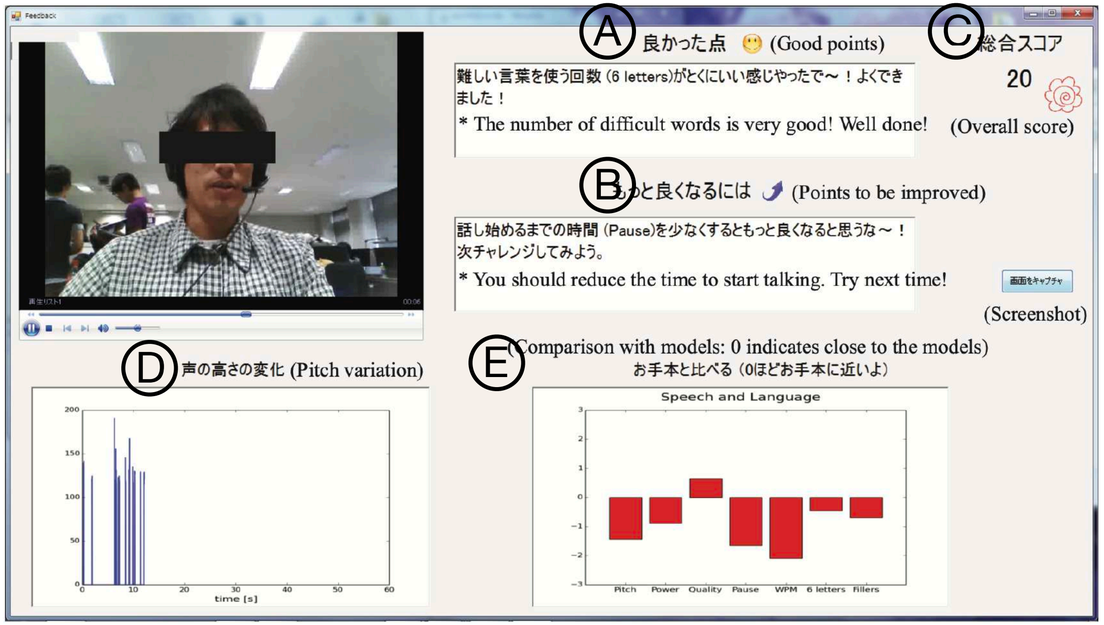
Areas You Need to Improve

When youstarted our conversation, you spoke in a monotone, didn't smile much, and spokeabout negative topics. I gave youfeedback on how you engaged with me and you made positive changes.

Suggestions

I encourage you to continue making changes in how you engage with others by practicingvarying the pitch of your voice, keeping the conversation positive, and smiling often. You can practice on your own by smiling using your whole face in the mirror several times a day recording your speech on your phone or computer and listening for the changes in the pitchof your voice, then practicing changing the pitch to vary it from time to time ; practice casual conversation withpeople you encounter during your day and keep the conversation focused on positive topics,remind yourself to smile as a cue to come back to something positive.
To summarize, I would suggest you work on your smile the most. You could also work onavoiding negative topics. It's important to remember that you canmake changes in how you engage with others.

Aging and Engaging (Ali et al., 2018)



Automated Social Skills Trainer (Tanaka et al., 2015)

A: good points, B: bad points

C: overall score

D: pitch variation

E: comparison with model persons (pitch, power, energy, pause, WPM, 6 letters, fillers)

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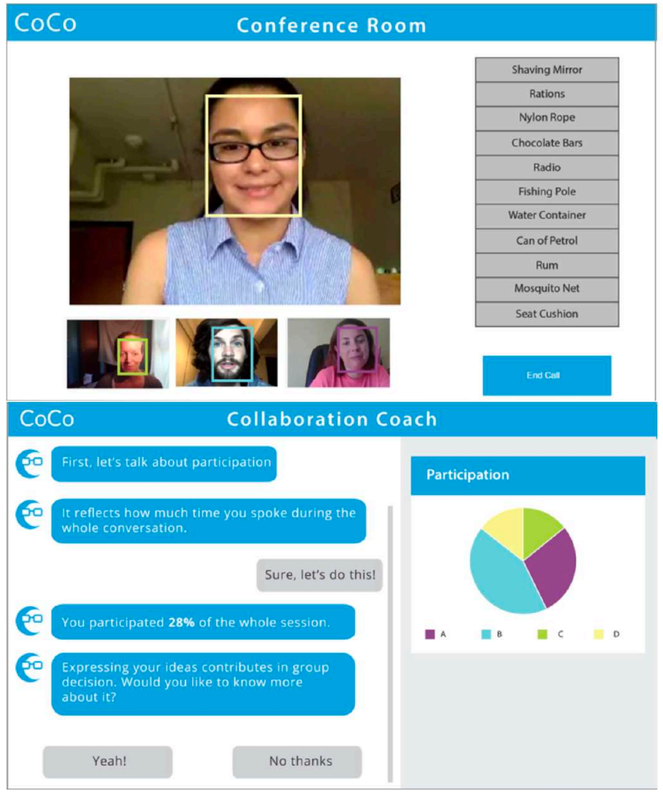
Posterior feedback: Summary feedback ≫ Focused feedback

Explaining affective behavioral performance on demand



CoCo (Samrose et al., 2017)

Performance graph

Chat-based, post-conversation feedback

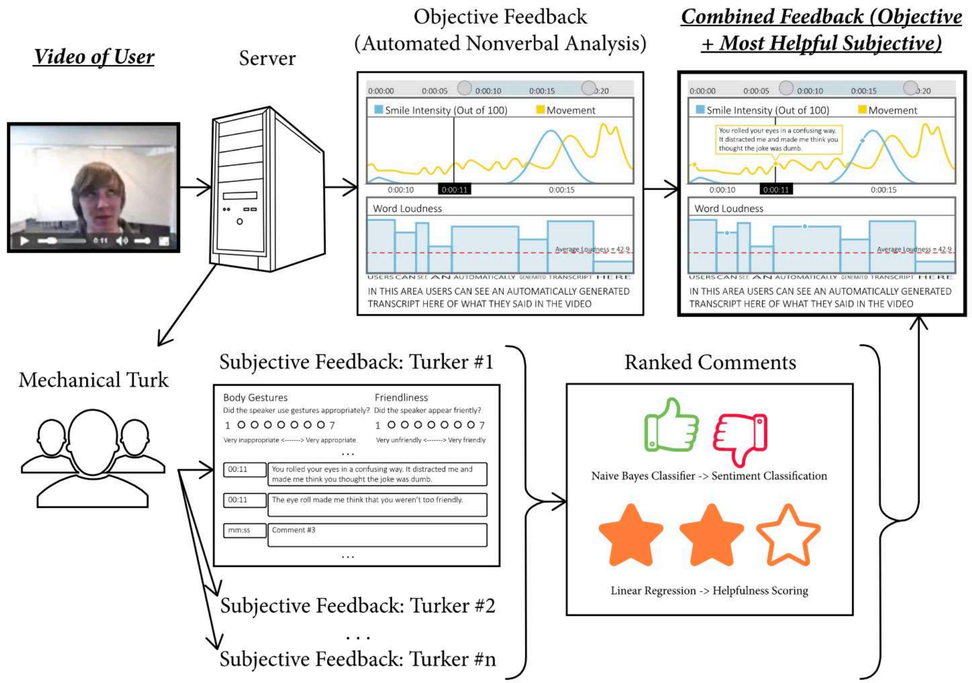
User study (with feedback)

- Balanced participation
- Skills awareness
  - How often they let others talk
  - Teammates's communicative skills

Intelligent User Interface

Posterior feedback

Comprehensive feedback from the machine and crowdsourced workers



Overview of ROC Speak (Fung et al., 2015)

Motivation

Machine Consistently & objectively sense subtle human behavior

Human Interpreting contextual behavior

Gather human feedback

- score overall performance, voice modulation, friendliness, body gestures from 1 to 7

Automated ranking

- Label *helpfulness* & *sentiment*
- Train classifiers for prediction

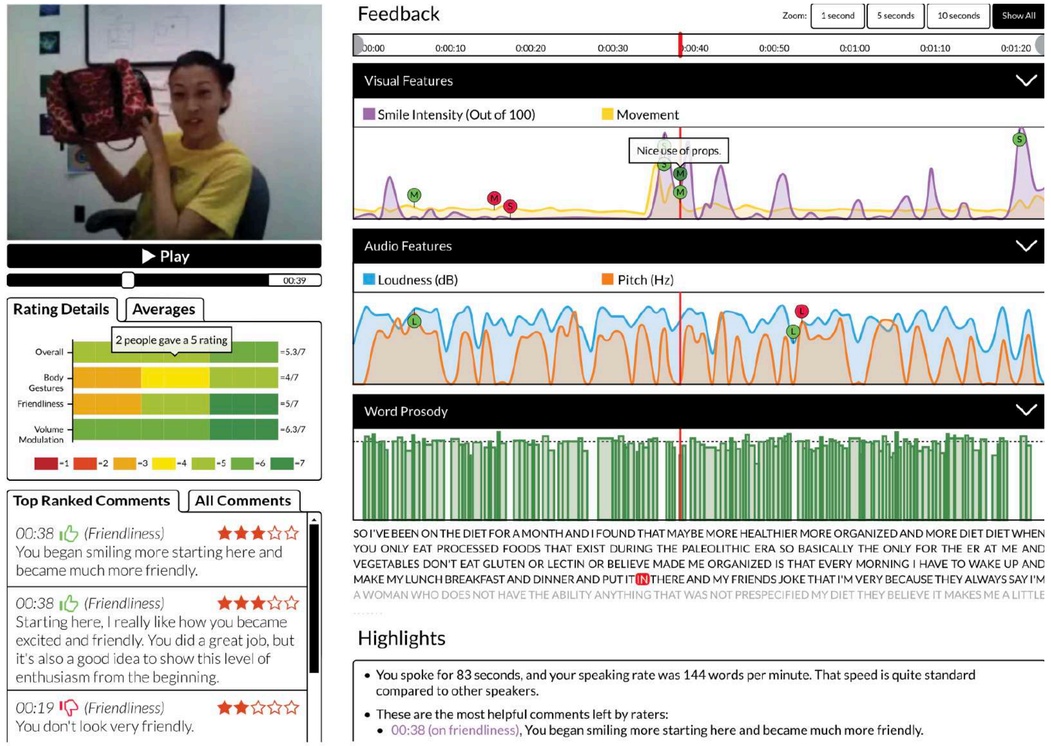
Intelligent User Interface

Posterior feedback

Comprehensive feedback from the machine and crowdsourced workers

Overview of human feedback

Ranked comments



Quantitative visual graphs

+

Embedded human feedback
red: negative
green: positive

Most helpful comments for each category

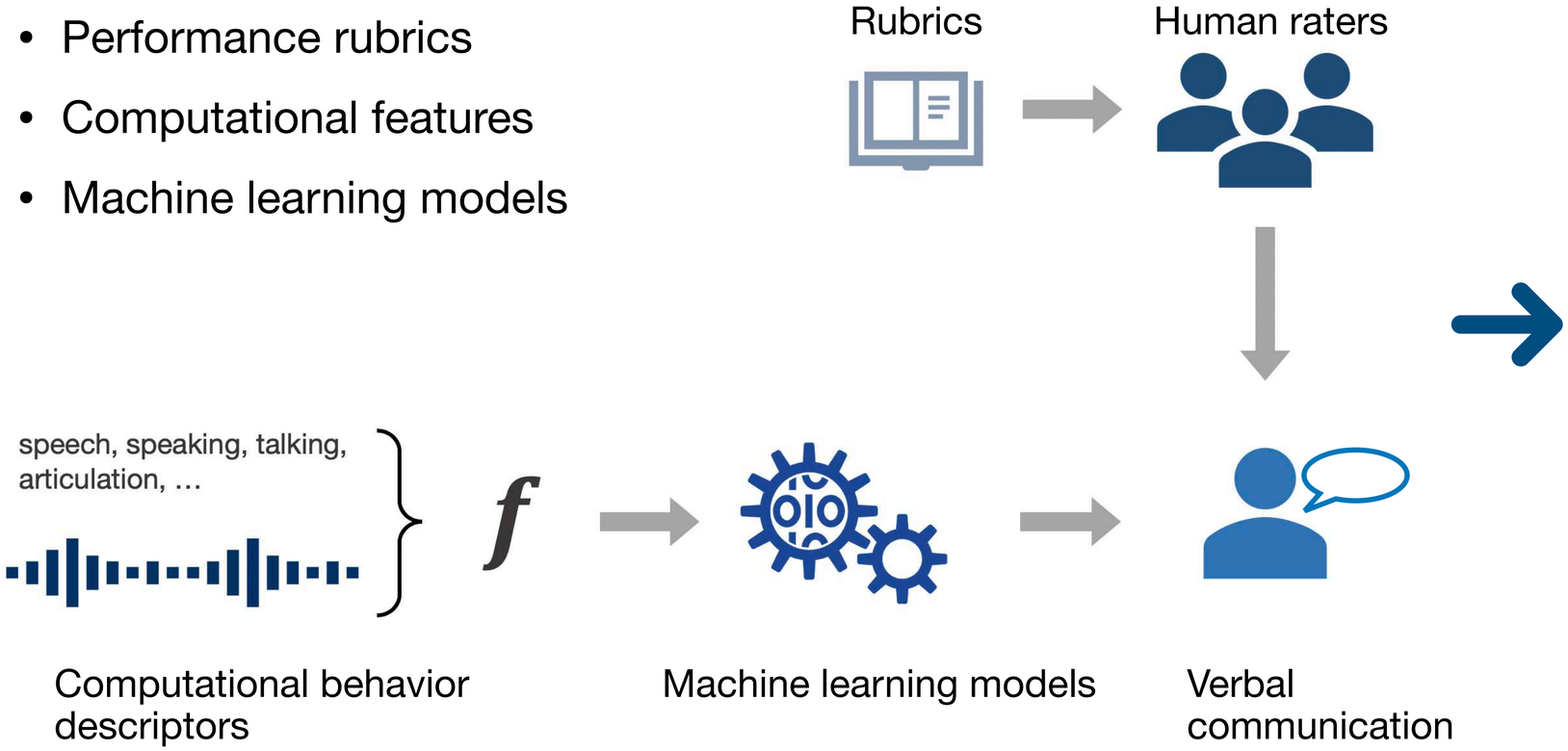
ROC Speak (Fung et al., 2015)

Conclusion

Summary & Future work

Machine Intelligence ≫ Learning Interface

- Performance rubrics
- Computational features
- Machine learning models



- Developing more advanced and interpretable models for verbal communication assessment
- Investigating interactions among different modalities

Conclusion

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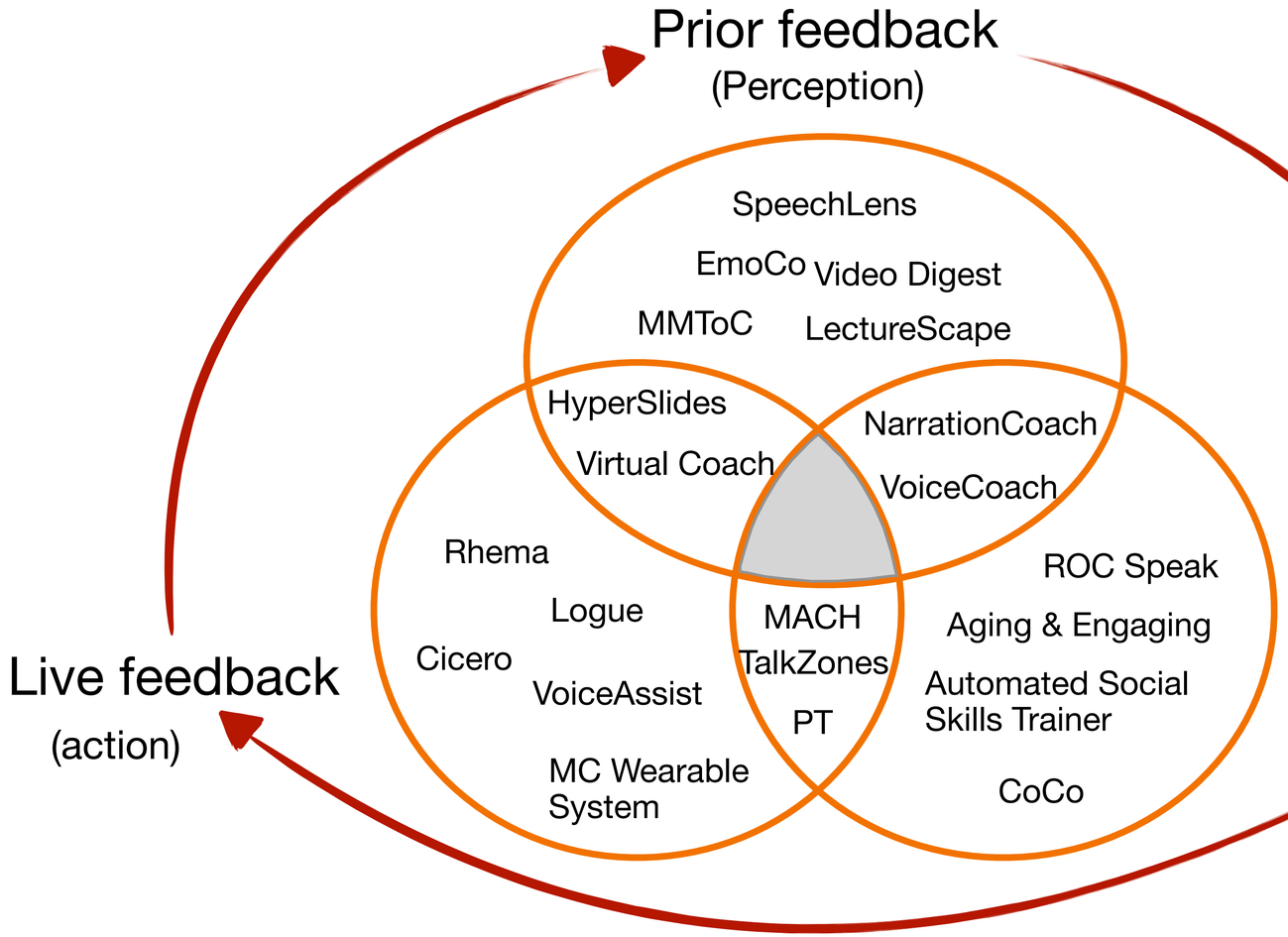
Summary & Future work

Machine Intelligence ≫ **Learning Interface**



- Providing comprehensive feedback at all stages of learning cycle
- Engaging users in an iterative learning process