Maximilian Kunz

Communication skills I

23. Januar 2017

Critical review of presentation:
Recent advances in large scale FE solvers
By Santiago Badiá

The review of this presentation will look closer at three aspects. The general structure used to deliver the subject of the presentation, the speech and delivery of the presenter, and finally the use of visual aids in form of slides.

The structure of the presentation follows the principle of rhetorical buckets, starting with the context of large scale computing in FE-problems, followed a complication to the main topic of the presentation and the motivation behind it. This makes it easy for the listeners to process the following information. The presenter spends a lot of time in the beginning explaining the principle of creating subdomains of FE-meshes to generate a coarser problem and the resulting benefits for computing in multiple scales. This builds a solid foundation to understand the topic even for non-expert listeners.

The speech of the presenter himself is well audible in the whole room and he speaks a clear and easily understandable English. However, he talks fast and with barely any pauses between sentences, which quickly floods the listener with information. There is no much time left to process the given information. Additionally, the presenter frequently makes comments about related content to the current subject, that is then directly named by himself to be not relevant for this presentation itself. These small off-topic remarks distract from understanding the main statements of the current slide.

The slides themselves appear to try to follow the suggestions of past research to optimize their function. The fond is a simple sans-serif style that is big enough to be read even from the last row. The high contrast of the fond color and the background makes it easy to read. Especially in the beginning the slides are very helpful to understand the principle of creating subdomains, though the use of pictures. However, towards the end the slides tend to be too crowded to help the listener/viewer. The diagrams used are filled with information that cannot be processed in time while listening. Additionally, the heavy use of acronyms may make it hard for non-exerts to understand the slides message.

As a conclusion, the presenter followed mainly the guidelines for a good and understandable presentation, but the fast talking, lack of pauses and sometimes crowded slides, flood the listeners with too much information.