

# act4leadership<sup>®</sup>: Introducing a new Coding Scheme for Analyzing Leader-Follower-Interactions

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## Purpose & Development

- Recent approaches to the study of leadership acknowledge that leadership is a process of conveying social influence (e.g., IBM Global CEO Study, 2012):
  - Leadership is a dynamic, context-embedded social process (cf. Fairhurst, 2009).
- However, most leadership research is still based on self-report measures and focuses on leadership as an individual, top-down phenomenon.
- Fairhurst and Uhl-Bien (2012) suggest that researchers should examine organizational discourse in leadership settings:
  - Communication is a core element of leadership as a relational process (see also De Vries, Bakker-Pieper, & Oostenveld, 2010).
- We fill this research gap by introducing a new coding scheme to capture verbal interaction in leadership settings: act4leadership<sup>®</sup>
- Deductive development** - act4leadership<sup>®</sup> is based on the well-examined act4teams<sup>®</sup> coding scheme (e.g., Kauffeld & Lehmann-Willenbrock, 2012) and was adapted to the special requirements of dyadic, hierarchical settings of leader-follower-interactions such as annual appraisal interviews.
- Inductive development** - Further differentiation by means of the analysis of eight annual appraisal interviews:
  - Specific organizational setting is considered.

## Unitizing & Coding

- Exhaustive coding scheme with 52 mutually exclusive categories and four extra categories (pause, laughter, interrupted sentence, incomprehensible statement).
- act4leadership<sup>®</sup> distinguishes four facets of interaction: problem-solving behaviors, procedural behaviors, socio-emotional behaviors, and action-oriented behaviors
- Dysfunctional, negative behaviors are also included (e.g., complaining).
- Unitizing and coding is performed using INTERACT software (Mangold, 2010).
- The leader's/ follower's verbal expressions are unitized into sense units (cf. Bales, 1950). Each unit expresses a single message or thought.
- Length of sense units vary from less than one second to a maximum of 20 seconds. Sense units do not overlap.
- Act-for-act-coding: Every sense unit is coded into one of the 52 categories of the act4leadership<sup>®</sup> coding scheme.
- The person talking (leader vs. follower) is also coded.
- To account for differing lengths of the interviews, the number of codes per category are standardized to a one hour period.
- Interrater-reliability yielded a value of  $\kappa = .88$  (Cohen's Kappa).
- Time economy: An experienced rater needs six hours to code a one hour interview (1:6).

Problem-focused behaviors	Procedural behaviors	Socio-emotional behaviors	Action-oriented behaviors
Performance evaluation	Positive procedural statements	Positive socio-emotional statements	Positive, proactive statements
<b>Performance evaluation (on scale)</b>	<b>Goal orientation</b>	<b>Question about opinion</b>	<b>Interest in change</b>
<b>Describing performance evaluation</b>	<b>Procedural question</b>	<b>Encouraging participation</b>	<b>Personal responsibility</b>
<b>Connections with performance evaluation</b>	<b>Procedural suggestion</b>	<b>Reasoned disagreement</b>	<b>Action planning</b>
<b>Problem with performance evaluation</b>	<b>Setting up rules</b>	<b>Providing support</b>	Negative, counteractive statements
Development planning	<b>Clarifying</b>	<b>Active listening</b>	<b>No interest in change</b>
<b>Direction of development</b>	<b>Time management</b>	<b>Giving feedback</b>	<b>Complaining</b>
<b>Action planning of development</b>	<b>Visualizing</b>	<b>„I“-Message</b>	<b>Empty talk</b>
<b>Connections with development planning</b>	Negative procedural statements	<b>Humor</b>	<b>Seeking someone to blame</b>
Knowledge management	<b>Losing the train of thought in details and examples</b>	<b>Offering direct praise</b>	<b>Denying responsibility</b>
<b>Organizational knowledge</b>	<b>Reading out loud</b>	<b>Offering indirect praise</b>	<b>Terminating the discussion</b>
<b>Question about knowledge</b>		<b>Expressing positive feelings</b>	
Differentiating a problem		<b>Expressing negative feelings</b>	
<b>Problem</b>		Negative socio-emotional statements	
<b>Describing a problem</b>		<b>Criticizing/ running someone down</b>	
<b>Connections with a problem</b>		<b>Self-promotion</b>	
Differentiating a solution		<b>Interrupting</b>	
<b>Defining the objective</b>		<b>Side conversation</b>	
<b>Solution</b>		<b>Disruption</b>	
<b>Describing a solution</b>			
<b>Problem with a solution</b>			
<b>Arguing for a solution</b>			

sample statements coded with the act4leadership<sup>®</sup> coding scheme

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPT	CODE
Leader	This point is practically being summarized into one point. That is why we discuss it in general now. (Der Punkt wird hier ja im Prinzip als ein Punkt zusammengefasst, deshalb sprechen wir jetzt darüber insgesamt.)	Setting up rules
Follower	That is what I understood, too. (Das habe ich auch so verstanden.)	Giving feedback
Leader	Let us have a look at it then. (Dann sehen wir uns die Sachen mal an.)	Procedural suggestion
Leader	So for this first point, I would consider the requirements as to 100% fulfilled. (Also an diesem ersten Punkt würde ich die Anforderungen als zu 100% erfüllt einschätzen.)	Performance evaluation
Leader	You realise things on your own and therefore the problem-solving works absolutely fine. (Du erkennst die Sachen selbstständig und da geht die Problemlösung absolut reibungslos.)	Connections with performance evaluation
Leader	This is a point where I appreciate you a lot! (Das ist ein Punkt, da schätze ich dich sehr!)	Offering direct praise
Follower	Hmh.	Active listening
Leader	And there it should continue like that! (Und da soll das auch so weitergehen!)	Interest in change

## Future Research

- Further validation of the act4leadership<sup>®</sup> coding scheme
- Application of the coding scheme to appraisal interviews from different organizations
- Sequential analysis to identify patterns of interaction between leaders and followers
- Between-group comparison of interviews (e.g., concerning duration of the interview or participation equality)

