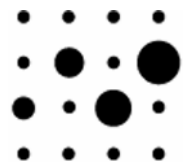




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Involvement in Russian and German conference presentations



Volkswagen**Stiftung**

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Conference presentations:

- Concentrated information has to be presented intelligibly and convincingly in a short period of time.
- A face-to-face interaction takes place between the speaker and the audience.
- The criticism from the part of the audience can be expressed immediately to the speaker.

As a result:

- Conference presentations are supposed to be organized in order to be easily followed by the audience.
- Speakers are supposed to be aware of the possible reactions and criticism from the part of the hearers.
- The speaker giving a conference presentation should be able to control whether the audience is following the submitted information, whereas the audience is regarded to be an active interlocutor.

Involvement (Chafe 1982: 47):

- Involvement includes monitoring by the speaker of the communication channel which exists with the listener, and attempts to make sure that the channel is functioning well.
- The speaker may do things to reassure him- or herself that the listener is assimilating what he or she is saying, or to prod the listener into noticing and acknowledging the flow of information.

Linguistic devices of involvement:

- Chafe 1982: First person reference of the speaker, references to the speaker's mental processes, emphatics and particles, hedges and vagueness markers.
- Vassileva 2002, 2006: Self-reference in form of the first person singular and plural, reference to the audience in form of the second person, rhetorical questions, jokes, story-telling elements, reference to other speakers of the conference etc.

Subject and aim of the study:

- Involvement in form of the speaker's self-reference and in form of the speaker's reference to the audience (*/ think, you see etc.*)
- Establishing cultural differences between the German and the Russian sociological style concerning speaker-audience interaction

Conference presentations from cross-cultural point of view:

Studies	Studied genres	Compared cultures	Studied phenomena
Vasslieva 2000, 2006	Conference Presentations	Bulgarian vs. English/American	Means of the speaker-audience interaction: self-reference, group-reference etc.
Kotthoff 2001	Conference Presentations	Russian vs. German	Thematic development, placement in the special discourse, citations, reference to the speaker's research achievements
Yakhontova 2002	Titles of the conference presentations abstracts	Russian/Ukrainian vs. English/American	Contents and form of the titles

Data:

- German corpus: 15 conference presentations recorded 2001 at 2 sociological conferences in Rostock and Dortmund, 49.534 words, average length 26 min.
- Russian corpus: 15 conference presentations recorded 2002 at 2 sociological conferences in Moscow, 27.878 words, average length 19 min.

Points of discussion: German vs. Russian conference presentations

- Linguistic devices of involvement and its discourse functions
- Frequency of the speaker and audience reference
- Functional differences concerning speaker and audience reference
- Comparison with the results of the previous studies

Linguistic devices and functions of the speaker and audience reference

- Interaction: Constructions with the 1st person singular and plural or with the 2nd person plural. Their aim is to inform the audience about the way the speaker organizes his or hers presentation.

Example:

[VORT DT HLM 2]

ich möchte ihnen im folgenden (-)
einige ergebnisse vorstellen

*I would like to introduce you further
some results*

Linguistic devices and functions of the speaker and audience reference

- Embedding: Constructions with the 1st person singular/plural or with the reference to the audience, establishing connection between the presentation and the conference situation.

Example:

[VORT DT SZD 09]

also hier haben wir ja auch einige beiträge gehört
schon im laufe dieser tagung

*well we have also already heard here some papers
during this conference*

Linguistic devices and functions of the speaker and audience reference

- Generalization: Constructions with the 1st person plural referring to a group including the speaker, or to some common knowledge shared by the speaker and the audience.

Example:

[VORT DT KOP 29]

das professionelle handeln

mit einem diffusen oder mysteriösen (-) wissen (.)

das kennen wir aus unserem eigenen metier (.)

*professional dealing with some ambiguous
or cryptical knowledge - we know it from our own
profession*

Linguistic devices and functions of the self-reference of the speaker

- Relativization: Constructions with the 1st person singular and (sometimes) plural indicating the opinion of the speaker.

Example:

[VORT DT KUR8]

ich denke es ist in diesem kreis ziemlich bekannt

I think it is quite well known in this circle

Linguistic devices and functions of the self-reference of the speaker

- Narration: Constructions with the 1st person singular and plural referring to some activities of the speaker beyond the presented text.

Example:

[VORT DT BRA 01]

ich interviewte ihn (-) (paul wise) (-)

im rahmen der (...) studie (-)

*I interviewed him (-) paul wise
within the study*

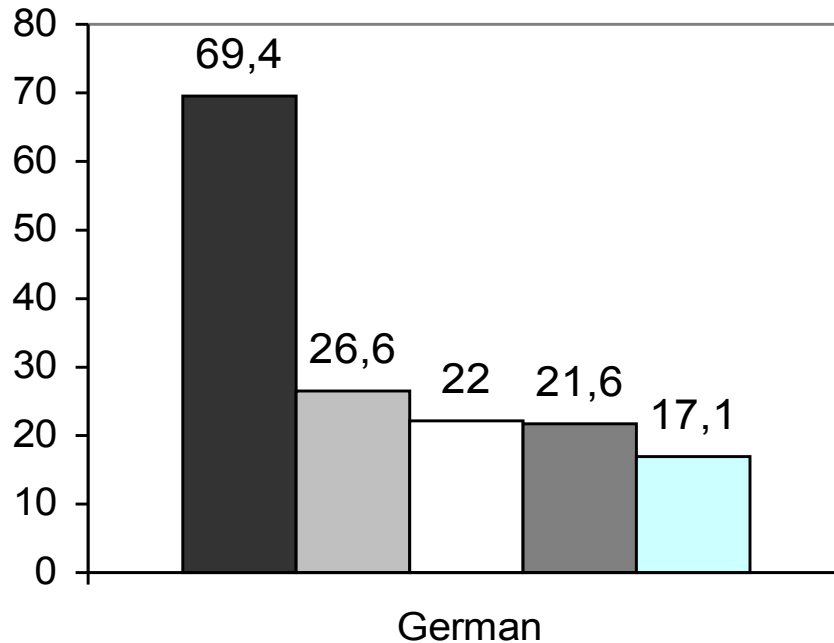
Frequency of self-reference in Russian and German corpora

Function	Russian corpus	German corpus
Interaction	40,4	69,4
Embedding	9,9	17,1
Generalization	60	22
Relativization	44,9	22,6
Narration	40,4	21,6
	relative frequency per 10.000 words	

Frequency of the audience reference in Russian and German corpora

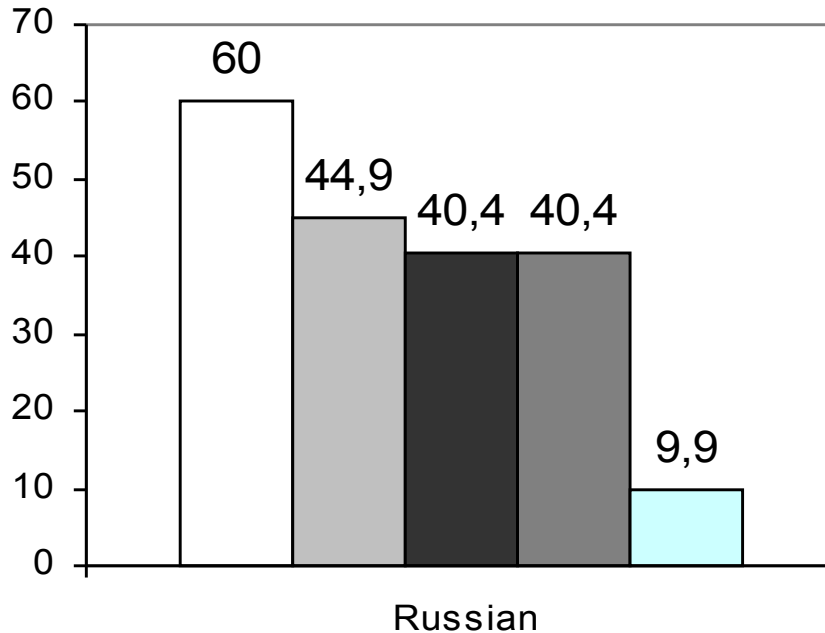
	Russian corpus	German corpus
relative frequency per 10.000 words	12,5	29,3

Functional distribution in German conference presentations



■ Interaction ■ Relativization □ Generalization ■ Narration ■ Embedding

Functional distribution in Russian conference presentations



□ Generalization □ Relativization ■ Interaction ■ Narration □ Embedding

Summary:

- German sociologists prefer constructions signaling direct involvement of the audience in the interaction with the speaker (like interactive self-reference or embedding).
- Russian sociologists prefer constructions with the function of generalization, narration and relativization which express involvement of the audience in a less direct way.

Russian example: Dealing with the facts of the own biography

[VORT RUS BAR 43]

nu čto ja mogu skazat'

well what can I say

čto moim odnokursnikom po universitetu

my fellow-student at the university

byl učitel' (.) učitel' načal'nyx klassov

was a teacher a primary school teacher

kotoryj sam prišol so školy

who himself came from the school

Russian example: National reference

[VORT RUS GWR 23]

očen často kogda (.) molodež

very often when young people

vot iz našix gorodov

from our cities

iz našix severnyx oblastej osobenno (...) otdalënyx

especially from our remote northern provinces

poseščajut muzei pariža ili nju-jorka

go to visit museums in Paris or New York

ne xotjat zaježžat' v moskvu

they don't want to go past Moscow

ne xotjat byvat zdes'

they don't want to stay there

German example: Interacting with the audience

[VORT DT ENG 50]

in der folgenden darstellung (---)

at the following diagram

sehen sie wieder unterteilt nach kindergarten-

you see again two columns divided into

und grundschulkindern zwei säulen

the preschool and the primary school children

wobei die (-) linke säule äh der anteil ist äh

the left column is the percentage of women

an frauen die tatsächlich für kinderbetreuung geld

who spend money for the childcare

ausgeben

Summary:

- German corpus:
- Self-reference and audience reference are used as a frequent means of involvement
- Highest frequency: interactive and embedding constructions, reference to the audience
- Audience oriented means of involvement are preferred – direct involvement
- Form of involvement: Speaker and audience as interlocutors
- Reference to the professional and research activities
- Russian corpus:
- Self-reference and audience reference are used as a frequent means of involvement
- Highest frequency: relativization, narration and generalization
- Speaker and group oriented means of involvement are preferred – indirect involvement
- Form of involvement: Speaker and audience as a group
- Unformal address of the audience, reference to the everyday experience