

# XVIth European Symposium on Language for Special Purposes (LSP)

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## Abstract

Theme: Cultural aspects of specialized communication

### Title: Involvement in Russian and German conference presentations

Studies on cross-cultural aspects of academic discourse confirm that despite globalization and internationalization of scientific community there are still culture-based features of academic styles that vary from culture to culture. Striking differences have been stated for example between some East-European (such as Russian, Polish, Bulgarian) and Western (American, British, German) academic traditions (e.g. Breilkopf/Vassileva 2006).

Whereas the written academic discourse, its genres and features have been quite well studied from the cross-cultural point of view, there are still only few studies concerning the oral academic discourse. One of the most important genres of the oral academic communication is conference presentation that provides knowledge exchange in form of the face-to-face interaction. Previous researches on conference presentations (e.g. Kotthoff 2001) indicate that this genre can be performed rather diversely in different cultures. In case of an intercultural communication, such differences can even cause misunderstandings and accusations of "bad style".

In this paper, I would like to discuss some features of German and Russian oral academic discourse, analyzing a corpus of conference presentations that were recorded during four sociological conferences in Germany and in Russia within the VW-Project "Gattungen wissenschaftlichen Diskurses im interkulturellen Kontakt", University of Freiburg, Germany.

In my analysis, I will concentrate on involvement (monitoring by the speaker of the communicational channel with the listener) as it was described by Chafe (1981) and especially on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference as forms of involvement in conference presentations. The questions to be answered are: What are the discourse functions of the phrases with the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 2<sup>nd</sup> person reference? Which forms of the 1<sup>st</sup> person, singular or plural are preferred by German and Russian speakers? What functional and quantitative differences concerning personal reference can be seen between German and Russian presentations?

#### Literature:

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