

**Eija Ventola**

**University of Helsinki, Finland**

***The 3<sup>rd</sup> Biennial Conference on Intercultural Rhetoric and Discourse: Multiple Literacies Across Cultures***

***The crucial linguistic and multisemiotic aspects of conference presentations***

*Conference Language*, i.e. the language used at national and international conferences for presentation of academic papers, offers a fascinating area of study for linguists interested in institutional and work-related discourse analysis. We all, working in various academic fields, need presentation skills.

This presentation first focuses on discussing the benefits of recent linguistic theories and analyses for speakers' presentation achievements. Especially novice presenters may not be familiar with the genre conventions, and thus committing oneself to the first presentation may be frightening. But training in some linguistic and discourse features may offer help to overcome the fright of giving papers.

Presenting in a foreign language, which today at many international conferences is *English* even outside the English-speaking countries, is a further challenge. Yet, it is well known that in many academic institutions, at European universities, training for giving presentations in foreign languages is still organised in a very ad hoc manner. Systematic linguistic research would offer still badly needed help and professional guidance for novice and even the more experienced non-native speakers when they present their papers in English (or any other foreign language).

But conferences are also multifaceted semiotic events. Unfortunately, however, until recently the multimedial and -modal, or rather the multisemiotic aspects, of conferencing have received surprisingly little attention among discourse analysts.

This presentation looks at some examples of conference presentation data and raises issues where we as discourse analysts and multisemioticians need to sharpen our intercultural and multimodal semiotic analytical tools in order to systematize our descriptions of what is going on and how to offer best possible help for native and non-native novices when they are developing their presentation performances. As language researchers and trainers we need to fill our own gaps in knowledge and need to know how the linguistic and non-linguistic modes of meaning-making function at conference situations and in academia in general and how to provide the trainees the linguistic and multisemiotic means of not only 'surviving' but also 'conquering' the audience (In Caesar's words: *Veni, Vidi, Vici*).