MORE THAN PERSONAL NARRATIVES IN ENGLISH ACADEMIC LECTURES

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ABSTRACT. *Although narratives and particularly personal narratives have been widely investigated, their use in academic lectures has received comparatively little attention. This study focuses on the narratives employed in 20 university lectures of 4 different academic disciplines using two corpora: the MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English) from the University of Michigan, and a corpus recorded in several British universities. This paper reveals important results about the use of narratives in lectures, especially related to the narrative types and their connection with the lecture content, the narrative function, how narratives embed in the lecturer's discourse, and the structure of the narrative.*

KEY WORDS. *Lectures, narrative type, narrative function, embedded discourse.*

RESUMEN. *Las narraciones y en particular las personales han sido ampliamente investigadas, sin embargo su uso en las clases magistrales permanece todavía inexplorado. En este estudio se analizan 20 clases magistrales en el ámbito universitario en 4 disciplinas académicas diferentes. Las clases forman parte de dos corpus: el MICASE (Michigan Corpus of Spoken Academic English) de la University of Michigan y un corpus recopilado en diversas universidades británicas. El artículo revela el uso de las narraciones en las clases, principalmente en lo referente a la tipología y su conexión con el contenido de la clase, la función de las narraciones en este contexto, su integración en el discurso, y la estructura narrativa.*

PALABRAS CLAVE. *Clases magistrales universitarias, tipos de narraciones, funciones narrativas, integración en el discurso.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, narratology has covered a large field of studies mostly based on conversation analysis, literary studies, or psychological perspectives. Interest

in the use of narratives in the personal and the professional sphere suggests their important social role in a good number of human activities. However, to my knowledge relatively little attention has been paid to the use of narratives in academic genres. At present, works in this area seem restricted to the following. In researching these academic genres, the study of narratives has focused on comparative studies. In this respect, Grimes (1975) made a comparison of scientific writing and fairy tales, while Myers (1990, 1994) compared the "narrative of nature" and the "narrative of science" in popular scientific articles and research articles respectively. The use of narratives in research presentations has also received scholarly attention. Thus, Dubois (1980) detected the presence of narratives in biomedical conference presentations. Weissberg (1993) found that narratives that graduate students use in seminar presentations move toward the research article's IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion) development –following Swales's (1990) rhetorical pattern for research articles. Finally, Thompson (2002) undertook a comparative study of the narratives employed in research presentations and research articles. These three works are highly illuminating for the present study, in that they identify narratives in accounts of experimental procedure.

When we turn to the use of narratives in teaching genres, its study has apparently been restricted to the use of personal narratives in lectures. Strodt-López (1987) analyzed personal narratives in nine Humanity and Social Sciences lectures at a major American university. Most relevant for the current study is the primary function attributed to personal narratives in this paper: "Personal anecdotes concentrate attention and produce involvement (…) [They are used] to achieve specific content-oriented and interactional goals" (Strodt-López 1987: 194). On the other hand, Dyer and Keller-Cohen (2000) focused on how the professional identity and expertise of lecturers are constructed by the use of narratives of personal experience. Through the analysis of two narratives of personal experience (from Naval Architecture and Auto Engineering lectures), these authors showed how lecturers position themselves as experts making use of pronouns and other referring expressions in addition to self and other's evaluation.

This review of the previous literature reveals little empirical work exists on the description of narratives in academic lectures. As far as I could find, those that do so focus exclusively on narratives of personal experience. However, the analysis of narratives in research genres, and particularly the detection of narratives in the accounts of the experimental procedure in research presentations, opens the scope of the study of personal narratives in lectures to other narrative types. Furthermore, this suggestion of finding narratives beyond the account of personal experiences in lectures is supported by Juzwik's (2006) work. This author focused on how the teacher builds *ethos* –as the rhetorical invention of one's identity for persuasive purposes– through narratives at school in classes on the Holocaust. One of the relevant outcomes of this study was the identification of six different types of narrative discourse according to their rhetorical features.

In this article, I describe the narratives employed in lectures of four different academic disciplines drawn from a previous study focused mainly on the structure of the narratives used in this academic spoken genre (Querol Julián 2010). To carry out the description, the study was divided in three parts. First, I show how lecturers at university employ various types of narratives –in addition to the personal ones–, what their function is, and how they are embedded in the discourse. Then, I explore the possible relationships between narrative types and academic disciplines. Finally, the structure of the narratives in this academic genre is brought to the fore. For the aim of this study I have taken narratives to be the realization of a rhetorical value where a narrator tells a story based on a sequence of at least two events (experienced or not by him/ her or the audience) using commonly, but not exclusively, past tense or present. The concept of rhetorical value follows Bhatia's (2001) terminology for the classification of genres into levels. Exposition, description, explanation and narrative among others are rhetorical values that constitute a generic colony, in this study the academic spoken discourse of the individual genre of lectures. The main objective of this study is therefore to describe the narratives used by lecturers in different academic disciplines.

2. THE CORPUS AND METHOD

A corpus of 20 lectures was analyzed for the purpose of this study, which belong to two larger corpora: MICASE (The Michigan Corpus of Academic and Spoken English) (Simpson *et al*. 1999), and a corpus recorded in several British universities (Giménez 2000). The lectures share three major features: a) the number of students is between 25 and 100; b) the primary discourse mode is monologic; and c) students' academic roles are junior, senior, or mixed undergraduates. The corpus was constituted by lectures from 4 different disciplines: Biology from the MICASE; and Business, Law, and Sociology from the British corpus. The analysis was carried out on four lectures from each discipline as shown in Table 1.

In a preliminary study I also analyzed the narratives employed in Literature and History lectures from the MICASE. However, results seem to suggest that in both cases narration is the predominant generic value. Rather than being incidental, it occupies the major part of the lecture. Due to this discursive situation I decided, for the aim of the present study, not to consider them as part of the corpus. However, some observations are worth noting. In Literature, narratives told a story of fictional events that occurred in a book where the characters of the story are the characters of the book, and the lecturer plays exclusively the role of narrator. The literary narratives analyzed were used by the lecturer as a starting point for discussion. In the context of History lectures, narratives of real-life events that occur to well-known people prevailed. These narratives were employed as the main generic value in presenting the content of the lecture, and for this reason, they no longer form part of this study.

Corpus	Code	Discipline	Title
MICASE	LEL175JU086	Biology	Practical Botany Lecture
	LEL175JU154		Intro to Evolution Lecture
	LEL175SU098		Intro to Biochemistry Lecture
	LES175SU079		Microbial Genetics Lecture
Several British Universities	BU-bus1	Business	International Organizational Structure
	BU-bus2		European Monetary System
	BU-bus3		Exchange Rates
	BU-bus4		Multinationals
	BU-law1	Law	Charitable/Non-Charitable Purpose Trusts
	BU-law2		Potential Defect in the Contract
	BU-law3		'Vicarious Liability' and 'Breach of Statutory Duty'
	BU-law4		False Confessions
	BU-soc1	Sociology	Women and Poverty
	BU-soc2		Sheltered Housing
	BU-soc3		Doctor-Patient Interaction
	BU-soc4		Ethics of Social Research

Table 1. *Corpus of analysis*.

In order to carry out the analysis on Biology, Business, Law, and Sociology lectures three variables were considered to identify the different narrative types: a) the nature of the events told in the story, b) the characters, and c) the lecturer's role in the story. The selection of these variables was not arbitrary. They help to construct the standpoint adopted to analyze the narratives, that is, the students' involvement in the story and therefore in the lecture. Regarding the nature of the events, lecturers may tell real-life or fictional stories. Narratives may include one or more characters, often the lecturer is one of them and sometimes also students are involved; however, other characters may participate in the story such as ordinary people –anonymous people–, well-known people, organizations or non-human characters. As for the role of the lecturer, it is that of narrator but s/he may also play the role of character. The relationships among these three variables –nature of the events, characters and lecturer's role– provides a picture of narratives in university lectures –a picture that goes beyond the lecturer's use of narratives of personal experience.

3. TYPES OF NARRATIVES

In the corpus 79 narratives were identified, which can be divided into four possible different narrative types, named as: Experience, Personal, Hypothetical, and Event. Table 2 shows the three variables that characterize them, as well as their distribution in the corpus.

Narrative Type	Distribution (%)	Variables		
		Nature of the events	Characters	Lecturer's role
Experience	16	real-life	ordinary people	narrator
Personal	4	real-life	lecturer; lecturer's relatives, friends or acquaintances	character-narrator
Hypothetical	43	fiction	lecturer, students, ordinary people	character-narrator
Event	37	real-life	well-known people, organizations, non-human characters	narrator

Table 2. *Narrative types*.

The quantitative distribution of the narrative types reveals Hypothetical narratives are the most frequent, followed by Event narratives. The use of Experience is low, and most surprisingly, in this relatively small-scale study, Personal narratives comprise only 4% of the total. This immediately suggests a need to look beyond this type, since they are not frequently used in this academic genre.

As stated before, the difference between the narrative types focuses on the combination of the three variables. The nature of the events is the key point in the identification of Hypothetical narratives since they are the only ones that tell non-real-life events. Furthermore, even though the nature of the events in Experience, Personal, and Event narratives is the same, in Personal narratives the lecturer is also a character of the story. The difference between Experience and Event narratives lies in the characters; whereas in Experience ordinary people are the protagonists of the story, in Event they are well-known people, organizations, or non-human characters. Additionally, Event narratives are also characterized by adopting a historical perspective of the story. These two narratives are named after Juzwik (2006).

As far as character is concerned, lecturers are characters in Personal and Hypothetical narratives, and ordinary people in Experience and Hypothetical. On the other hand, students only appear in Hypothetical narratives, and well-known people, organizations, or non-human characters take part in Event narratives.

In the next section, a description of the four narrative types, how they are embedded in the lecturer's discourse, as well as their potential function is presented through the analysis of a representative example of each type.

3.1. *Experience narratives*

Attending to the three features proposed to identify the narrative types, Experience narratives can be defined as narratives that tell a story of real-life events whose characters are ordinary people. The lecturer plays the role of an outside narrator who is

not involved in the story. Excerpt 1 illustrates an Experience narrative employed in a Law lecture about False Confessions (lecture code BU-law4, narrative #1 of this lecture), see the transcription system used in the Appendix. The narrative appears at the beginning of the lecture. After some references to the topic of confessions covered in the previous semester, the lecturer states his concerns to talk about false confessions. A reference to the students' background knowledge –a cultural or disciplinary reference (following Fortanet-Gómez *et al*.'s (2007) classification of references to background knowledge in lectures)– about the Guildford Four Case and the Bridgwater Case provides the cognitive framework to introduce the narrative. Both cases deal with fabricated confessions that are apparently assumed to be known by the students. At this point the lecturer wants to go into the topic and introduces an example of false confession by means of a narrative.

Excerpt 1

[…] but what I am sort of concerned to be talking about this semester, is to actually tackle the point about false confessions, because there are such things as false confessions. and in English law there is nothing sort of just necessarily to stop someone being convicted on a confession alone. ... and in fact, if we look at the Guildford Four, ... that was a false confession if we look at ... the recent case, … the Bridgwater Case, that was a false confession, it was falsified. they were both fabricated confessions. that's what was involved in both those cases.

1 but to start with, to kick us off,

2 there's an interesting case called Porter and Court,

3 which is on the list,

4 which is a case ... about a ... man who appeared on the television

5 and said that he had shot some deer in the Quantock Hills.

6 and he went along then ... after the television programme,

7 and confessed this to the police officers.

8 the police officers didn't find any evidence of there having been any shooting in the Quantock Hills.

9 so, there was no actual evidence of an offence.

10 when it came to the trial,

11 the defendant then said well, actually, I was only joking, it was all a bit of a laugh.

12 but he was nevertheless convicted.

13 and when he appealed …

14 they said we dismiss this appeal because his own admissions were sufficient evidence against him…

15 now, in fact, referring back to the Guildford Four,

it was the Guildford Four Case that actually then led to Government… the Government Law Commission, the Runciman Commission, to be formed to look into miscarriages of justice and into the criminal justice system in general. […]

In excerpt 1, line 1 introduces the narrative. The micro-marker *but* conveys the semantic value of contrast, between "the old information and the new one". A value that is reinforced by the expressions: *to start with, to kick us off*. In line 2, the lecturer refers to the new case in a positive evaluative way with the use of the adjective *interesting*. This is followed, in line 3, by a metadiscursive comment that refers to the immediate context of the lecture, *which is on the list*; a comment that brings the students outside the narrative framework before presenting the main body of the narrative where the actions or events of the story are told. The complication stage (from lines 4 to 14) –as it was called by Labov and Waletzky (1967)– may create positive expectations of the story.

The characters are ordinary people involved in a trial. The lecturer refers to them as: the main character is *a man* (line 4), that becomes *the defendant* (line 10), and is referred to as *he* throughout the story; *the police officers*; and *they*, the jury. In the corpus analyzed, this type of narrative is exclusively employed in Law lectures. Here the narrator addresses the characters using the name of the role they are playing in the story, such as the defendant or the plaintiff.

There are two narrative features predominant in this piece of discourse: the use of temporal markers, and the use of other voices. Regarding the former, several markers signal the main character's actions: *and* (lines 5, 6, 7), *when* (lines 10, 13), and *then* (line 11). On the other hand, polyphony brings the representation of the characters' speech or thought to the narrative, which can add realism to the story, and blends with the dominant voice of the lecturer –the narrator of the story. Polyphony is understood in this study as the hierarchical relationship between the speaker's voice and the others' voices, being the speaker the dominant voice (Fløttum 2005). Two discursive styles are employed to represent polyphony in this excerpt: indirect speech to state the central event of the narrative (line 5), and direct speech to report two crucial moments in the story: the recognition of the false confession (line 11) and the consequence of this act, the final decision of the jury (line 14) which resolves the story.

The end of the narrative links the story to the content of the lecture. Line 15 starts with the micro-marker *now* which conveys the semantic value of segmentation –following Chaudron and Richard's (1986) micro-markers classification– to structure the discourse and mark the change of the generic value. It is followed by *in fact* and a metadiscursive comment to previous reference which was already used to introduce the narrative, *referring back to the Guildford Four*.

3.2. *Personal narratives*

The analysis of Personal narratives shows they are stories of real-life events experienced by the lecturer him or herself who is also the narrator. Although in all the examples found in the corpus the lecturer is the main character of the story, I would consider narratives experienced by the lecturer's relatives, friends or acquaintances to belong to the same group since the lecturer here is reporting a first-hand story.

Excerpt 2 is an example of a Personal narrative employed in a Sociology lecture about Doctor-Patient Interaction (BU-soc3, narrative #3). The narrative appears in the middle of the class. The lecturer describes Talbot-Parsons' sociological characterization of the doctor-patient relationship, and after that, questions this approach. The narrative is employed to illustrate one of her major criticisms to Parsons' theory, as can be read in the first part of excerpt.

Excerpt 2

[…] and finally, and perhaps most worryingly, that the doctor-patient relationship, as characterized by Parsons, suggests that the doctor is all knowing, the doctor knows everything, never has any level of what I previously called uncertainty, okay? and it makes no account of the fact that patients perhaps can come to that relationship with a set of knowledge about themselves, yeah?
1 an anecdotal example.
2 when I was pregnant last year,
3 I was supposed to be going to the doctor every week,
4 and it was very dull and boring to have to keep going towards the end of the pregnancy.
5 and they spent just ages feeling your tummy
6 and saying well, the baby is (xx) the feet are here,
7 and I tell you, as a woman, you know exactly where those feet are,
8 they've been kicking you for the last, you know, however long.
9 but this kind of attitude
10 they don't say to you where do you (xx) what kind of position you think the baby is in? yeah?
11 the doctor kind of does this always
12 and begins some examination,
13 and then brings the nurses in
14 and says to them where do you think it is?
15 and da, da, da.
16 and then, they get a third opinion
17 is that a foot, or is it a hand?
18 you know very well that it's a heel, okay?
19 but there's an idea that the patient isn't able to provide any information to the doctor, yeah?
20 and you can keep on saying well, yeah, actually, it is a heel, it is a heel
21 and they say um, yes, my dear, we'll just get someone else to check.
22 okay, this idea a classic example.
23 but patients do know things about their bodies, yeah?
24 they do know things about their health and their illness,
25 but are often not allowed to portray that information,
26 or to give that information in the consultation, yeah?

so, there's two issues maybe the doctor doesn't always know, and also sometimes the patient does know, yeah? okay? this has led, if you like, to a critique of this rather hunky-dory, happy, happy picture of what the doctor-patient relationship is like. and it was a picture that dominated until certainly the late 1970s. […]

The beginning of this narrative states its nature and function: *an anecdotal example* (line 1). There are not discourse markers or any other introductory expressions, but rather an explicit lexical indication of what is forthcoming. Then, the main character of the story "I" and the situation (when and what) are introduced (lines 2-3), which is followed by an evaluation of the situation: *it was very dull and boring* (line 4). The negative attitude of the lecturer/ narrator is stated from the very beginning and appears throughout the story. This attitude can be transmitted to the audience who may therefore position themselves on the lecturer's side. In this excerpt the evaluative component is employed by the lecturer to convey her strong criticism of Parsons' approach and to introduce her own standpoint. Furthermore, the other characters' voices –*the doctor* and *the nurses*, also referred as *they*– are reproduced by means of direct speech (lines 6, 10, 14 and 21) which makes their contribution more realistic. Although the most common style is direct speech, free direct speech is also employed in one turn (line 17).

Bearing in mind the object of the lecturer's criticism –the doctor and the patient have different expectations and different roles (the doctor is the expert, the professional, and the patient has to adopt "the sick role")–, she questions this relationship stressing the valuable contribution the patient, as recipient of the illness, can make. However, the analysis of the narrative seems to show that the lecturer goes further in her understanding of the situation and, instead of depicting a doctor-patient relationship of "mutual contribution", she builds the identities of the two parties in a way that the patient seems to become "the expert". In the excerpt, the lecturer tells a personal experience about an examination during her pregnancy. In this example she is showing her expertise as a pregnant woman in contrast to the non-experts –the doctor and the nurses–, scorning the doctor's behavior. It seems the doctor is not so professional as he spends *just ages* to check the baby's position (lines 5-6), while the patient knows *exactly* how things work since she is carrying the baby for months, which turns her into an expert (line 7-8). After that, the lecturer complains about the doctor's attitude: *but this kind of attitude* (line 9), making explicit her disagreement and describing a possible interaction between the two parts –doctor-patient– that actually does not occur: *they don't say to you* (line 10). This negative statement is a strong criticism, a negative evaluation of "the real" relationship doctor-patient, which is emphasized by the fact that this *always* (line 11) happens.

This pattern is repeated. From line 12 to 17, the example of the doctor's examination continues, who *brings the nurses* (line 13) and even needs *a third opinion* (line 16). Remarkable expressions in the representation of the doctor's speech are *and da, da, da.* (line 15) or *is that a foot, or is it a hand?* (line 17), expressions that reflect the lecturer's critical attitude. The patient may consider they are wasting time since *you know very well that it's a heel, ok?* (line 18). Once again she is showing expertise, which

is followed by a forward reference to Parsons' approach –the doctor is all-knowing– introduced by *but* (line 19), that contrasts with the lecturer's approach. After that, an actual unsuccessful attempt to share knowledge with the other party is made by the patient: *well, yeah, actually, it is a heel, it is a heel* (line 20). The answer to this intervention (line 21) shows "they" share Parsons' position and disregard the patient's opinion. The first part of the answer *um, yes, my dear*, is a remarkably negative evaluation that shows indifference. This is reinforced by the comment that follows it, *we'll just get someone else to check*, someone who is really well trained, a professional who will be able to provide a qualified opinion.

The lecturer ends the narrative in line 22, first with the micro-marker *okay* –with the semantic value of segmentation– which marks the end of story and the change of the generic value. Then, *this idea a classic example* reiterates the function of the narrative on the one hand, and reinforces her position using the adjective *classic*, on the other. This type of evaluation is presumably employed to provide the audience with the idea that, the narrative is not an isolated example of the relationship doctor-patient but a representative one.

3.3. *Hypothetical narratives*

A third type of narrative is a story of fictional events, events that are not real and where the lecturer, the students or ordinary people are the characters. The lecturer also plays the role of a narrator who is commonly involved in the story.

In order to illustrate Hypothetical narratives I have chosen an excerpt from a Law lecture about Potential Defect in the Contract (BU-law2, narrative # 2). The lecturer connects the topic of the lecture with other topics of the subject that will provide students tools to attack a contract. After defining the term "mistake" in the context of a contract, the lecturer aims to show that a contract is not just an agreement between two parties but rather it can be attacked on the basis that a mistake has been made. The narrative is employed to exemplify this situation.

> Excerpt 3
>
> […] we've got to try and work out what is needed to attack a contract on the basis that a mistake, in quotes, has been made, which gives rise to some type of legal remedy. now, the first question we need to ask is and this goes right way back to the start of the course we know that contracts are agreements, but how do we determine whether an agreement has been reached? ... well, because on one level we've got things like offer and acceptance, haven't we? if there is an offer and an acceptance, we would say an agreement has been reached.
> 1 but supposing, for example, that [S name] and I have a conversation leading to the conclusion of a contract.
> 2 I say to [S name] I will sell you a chair for five pounds

3 and [S name] for some strange quirk in her brain thinks that when I use the word chair I am referring to this article here.

4 in fact, we all know it's a table,

5 but she thinks that when I say I offer to sell you a chair for five pounds,

6 I am referring to this article [L points at table].

7 so, she says yes.

8 now, we have offer and acceptance, haven't we?

9 I've offered to sell her a chair for five pounds,

10 and she's offered to buy it.

11 as far as I am concerned, there is agreement.

12 I'm going to sell her this [L points at chair] for five pounds.

13 but as far as she is concerned,

14 she is going to buy this, this table, for five pounds.

15 therefore, if you actually ask each of us what we have intended to sell and buy,

16 you find that there is no agreement, there is no actual meeting of minds.

17 and you'll find [L writes on board]. this idea of meeting of minds referred to in the book and the cases as *consensus ad idem*.

it is said to be an essential part of a contract that there should be this meeting of the minds, this *consensus ad idem*. […]

In excerpt 3, line 1 introduces the story. The contrastive micro-marker *but* opens the narrative, followed by the expression *supposing, for example* which reveals the nature of the events, i.e. fiction. Then, the characters of the story and the situation are introduced. The lecturer makes up a story where he and one of his students are the main characters, a fact that may increase the audience's involvement.

In the complication stage of the narrative (lines 2-10) the mistake in the agreement that leads to the contract is portrayed. The lecturer is an all-knowing narrator and character of the story. When he introduces the two parts involved in the contract –the student and the lecturer– he stresses the student's role in the story by using her proper name (line 1). This form of address that is used all throughout the narrative can be seen as an evaluative mechanism to create distance between the two characters. The lecturer –the one who is making up the story his own way and building the characters' identity– is presented as the expert, in contrast to the student who is responsible for misunderstanding the offer. In line 3, the lecturer uses the expression: *[S name] for some strange quirk in her brain thinks that*, which evaluates the student's behavior as something *strange*. The idea that she is the only one who misunderstands the offer is reinforced in lines 4 and 5 saying: *in fact, we all know it's a table, but she thinks that*. In this intervention the lecturer uses the inclusive 'we' where he and the rest of the class are the referent (as shown by Fortanet (2004) the inclusive 'we' is more frequent in lectures than the exclusive type).

Polyphony is also present in this narrative, with the use of direct speech when reporting the characters' talk (lines 2 and 7), and indirect speech when reporting the student's thoughts (lines 3 and 5).

After the complication stage, where the main body of the narrative is presented, the lecturer makes an evaluative analysis of the story. From line 8 to 10 the lecturer summarizes the conditions of the contract described throughout the narrative. As well as the conclusion that leads to a simple interpretation of it: *as far as I am concerned, there is agreement* (line 11). However, the interpretation of a contract can be more complex than that (lines 12-14). This is the idea that the lecturer wants to transmit to the class and the aim of the narrative. The resolution of the story is stated in lines 15 and 16, since no agreement is reached: *therefore, if you actually ask each of us what we have intended to sell and buy, you find that there is no agreement, there is no actual meeting of minds*.

The narrative is then linked to the content of the lecture in line 17 by the segmentation micro-marker *and* that introduces a forward metadiscursive reference: *and you'll find [L writes on board]. this idea of meeting of minds referred to in the book*, and here he ends the episode with a technical phrase in Latin.

3.4. *Event narratives*

An Event narrative tells a story of real-life or events considered as potentially real, experienced by well-known people, organizations, or non-human characters. In this type of narratives the lecturer is exclusively the narrator of the story. A remarkable feature of these narratives is that they are told from a historical perspective, and so the tense used is past.

Excerpt 4 illustrates an Event narrative used in a Biology lecture, an Introduction to Evolution (LEL175SU098, narrative # 2). The narrative appears at the beginning of the lecture where the lecturer makes a reference to the historical perspective of the content of the whole lecture. After presenting Darwin's position and his philosophical influences, the lecturer moves to Lamarck's theory introducing a brief description of its main ideas. After that, as can be read at the beginning of the excerpt, she stresses pitfalls in the mechanism proposed by Lamarck. The narrative is used here as an example to criticize this mechanism.

Excerpt 4

[…] he essentially saw um, what Darwin later talked about. Unfortunately Lamarck came up with the wrong mechanism for how to describe what was going on here. he said that these changes that were adaptive, occurred through what he called inheritance of acquired characteristics.
1 and probably the example you heard about in relationship to Lamarck
2 when you learned in high school was um,

3 the giraffe. stretching its neck to reach higher and higher, um leaves.
4 and eventually it got a longer neck
5 and then it was able to pass on those changes in its longer neck to its offspring. um
6 this is not correct you know that, certainly that
7 you can't make a change in, your body that isn't part of your gametes and see a change in your offspring.
8 but, um, it was the right idea just the wrong mechanism. um
if you wanna think about it in a different way, he um he talked about it in terms of something called environmental induction […]

The beginning of this narrative is a reference to the students' cultural background knowledge (lines 1 and 2). The lecturer introduces information that is familiar to them to exemplify her criticism to Lamarck's theory. The micro-marker *and* opens the narrative marking the change of the generic value.

In lines 3-5 the lecturer narrates the main body of the story where a generic character, a giraffe, experiences events that were potentially considered real by Lamarck. The use of temporal markers is a narrative feature employed to tell the events of the story, i.e. *and eventually*, *and then*. However, even though polyphony is a feature commonly used in other types, in Event narratives the narrator is the only voice projected.

The narrative ends with the lecturer's conclusive evaluative comment *this is not correct* (line 6); however, although her position is clearly expressed, she looks for the audience's support *you know that, certainly that*. This is followed by the scientific explanation that refutes Lamarck's arguments (line 7). The narrative is further linked to the content of the lecture in line 8. The micro-marker *but* introduces a contrast between the criticism the lecturer makes in previous lines, and the stress she puts on Lamarck's contribution, moving backward to the original idea that introduces the narrative.

4. NARRATIVE TYPES AND ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES

Regarding the use of narratives in the four different academic disciplines, this small scale study shows that Biology is the discipline where narratives are more frequent (34%), followed by Law (28%) and Sociology (22%), whereas in Business lectures the use is lower (16%); however, these data need confirmation in a larger corpus.

The results also show that the four narrative types were not employed equally in the disciplines. As indicated in Table 3, while Experience narratives only seem to appear in Law lectures, Hypothetical and Event narratives seem to be used in the four disciplines. Regarding Personal narratives, it appears lecturers only use them in Law and Sociology.

	Biology (%)	Law (%)	Sociology (%)	Business (%)
Experience	-	67	-	-
Personal	-	4	23	-
Hypothetical	25	24	51	8
Event	75	5	26	92
Total	100	100	100	100

Table 3. *Narrative types and academic disciplines*.

The limited data used in this study seems to indicate a tendency where Event narrative predominated in Business and Biology, Experience in Law, and Hypothetical in Sociology. Thus, in the narratives analyzed in Biology and Business lectures a historical perspective is adopted where real-life events are experienced by well-known characters, organizations or non-human characters. In Law lectures legal theoretical issues are commonly illustrated by the presentation of real cases that happen to ordinary people. Finally, Sociology lectures often deal with human relationships; thus, narratives where the lecturer and the students take part can be expected.

5. THE STRUCTURE OF THE NARRATIVES

The structure of personal narratives was examined by Labov and Waletzky (1967) in their analysis of the answers to a series of particular interview questions. These authors described the narrative skeleton giving the textual aspects of discourse. According to them, a narrative may show the following stages: a) *abstract* (hereafter A) is optional and summarizes the story; b) *orientation* (O) identifies the time, place, characters, and their activity or situation; c) *complicating action* (C) is the main body of the narrative, d) *evaluation* (E) reveals the attitude of the narrator; e) *resolution* (R) resolves the action; and f) *coda* (Co) is optional and signals the end of the narrative linking the story to the present time. Labov and Waletzky (1967: 40) also commented on the variations of this structure, revealing differences in the degree of complexity, the number of stages and the functions carried out. The results obtained in the present study have shown that the structure of personal narratives postulated by these scholars, although valid for the four types of narratives, needs an adaptation to the exploration of this rhetorical value in lectures.

First, two more stages were identified, i.e. *introduction* and *teacher's comment*. *Introduction* (I) introduces the narrative and can state the purpose to use a narrative at that point of the discourse. Example 1 illustrates this stage with one Introduction from each discipline.

(1) I'll give you some more examples that show you how, complicated it can be. okay. (LEL175JU086, # 2)

The other point to make, was that […] (BU-bus1, #2)
Now, you have a very good example of this objective test being used in the case of Tamplin and James […] (BU-law2, #3)
In other words, Parsons characterization is that […] (BU-soc3, #2)

Teacher's Comment (T's Cm) appears all over the narrative (within and between the different stages). The most frequent comments either introduce further explanation or information, or refer to students' background knowledge. In Example 2, two comments (boxed) appear in the narratives.

(2) […] an exchange rate system which was known as the 'Bretton Woods System'. Most of you have been told all that. .. So, after the Second World War, […] (BU-bus2, #1)

[…] the plaintiff Jones, sought unemployment benefit, and was turned down. So, he was refused unemployment benefit. Now, I don't know if any of you have been in a position of needing to seek benefit, but there is a statutory framework for appealing. So, Jones appealed against the refusal […] (BU-law3, #2)

Secondly, regarding the stages described by Labov and Waletzky the analysis has revealed some differences worth mentioning. These authors already defined *abstract* as an optional stage; however, in the narratives examined, even in personal narratives, its use is incidental. *Orientation* does not fully identify time, place, characters, and their activity or situation; but it always focuses on the situation. *Resolution* is commonly used to end the narrative when *coda* is not employed (see Example 3 from biology).

(3) [a pizza delivery kid, backed his car, (kinda skew jumped it s-) into the driveway, of my neighbor,] **(O)** [you know how sometimes they're a little sloppy getting parked.] **(T's Cm)** [and he got out of his car, and he tripped over something, and he fell, pizzas and all, [right] **(E)** on a rosebush, and [really] **(E)** did a lot of damage to, those pizzas. <SS LAUGH> and to himself and to that rosebush and he was so, flummoxed by all of this, that, he got into his vehicle, and backed out of the yard as fast as he could go, driving right over the rosebush,] **(C)** <SU-F LAUGH> [and you know what?] **(E)** the next spring, that rosebush, came back to life and grew, thrived and had roses **(R)** (LEL175JU154, #1)

Coda signals the end of the narrative linking the story to the theory and content of the lecture. This function is accomplished by means of a summary or conclusion of the whole story (see Example 4).

(4) […] If you're ICI, for instance, and you pop into your local Barclays, and ask them for some money, .. they'll get a slightly different reaction than you will

if you pop into your Barclays and ask for more money. Big bluechip companies find it easier, they find it cheaper, to borrow for capital funding. *For certain industries you simply have to be big* […] (BU-bus4, #1)

The role of *evaluation* in narratives was stressed by Labov and Waletzky (1967: 33) saying that a complete narrative without evaluation "has no point". Later, Labov (1972) made a thorough description of *evaluation* based on two criteria, i.e. the mechanisms of evaluation and the syntactic devices. More recently, evaluation has received full attention of researchers. Some of the most influential frameworks for the analysis of the lexico-grammatical resources that express evaluation are those of Biber *et al*. (1999), Hunston and Thompson (2000), Hyland (2005), and Martin and White (2005). In the present study, two types of evaluation were distinguished: external evaluation (after Labov 1972), when the lecturer stops the narrative to tell the students the point of their narration; and internal evaluation when the lecturer evaluates the characters, the situation, the action of the story. External evaluation frequently appears in Teacher's Comments. The teacher uses sentences that generally begin with *I think*. Internal evaluation is slightly more frequent, and normally occurs in the Complication. Teacher uses adverbs, adjectives and modal verbs such as *really*, *extremely difficult* or *might*. The evaluative functions accomplished in the narratives are to express opinions and attitudes (relevance markers), and to establish and maintain relations (affect markers).

Finally, two groups of stages are identified regarding the function they fulfil and their location in the narrative, what I have called *core stages* and *peripheral stages*. Core stages are Introduction, Abstract, Orientation, Complication, Resolution and Coda. Due to the relationship of dependency they have, they occupy fixed positions in the narrative. Peripheral stages are Evaluation and Teacher's Comment, they appear all throughout the narrative since they evaluate or comment on the other stages. It is necessary to note that though E and T's C are peripheral stages they are not less important; on the contrary, their contribution to the narrative is crucial for its interpretation. Figure 1 shows the structure of the narratives in academic lectures.
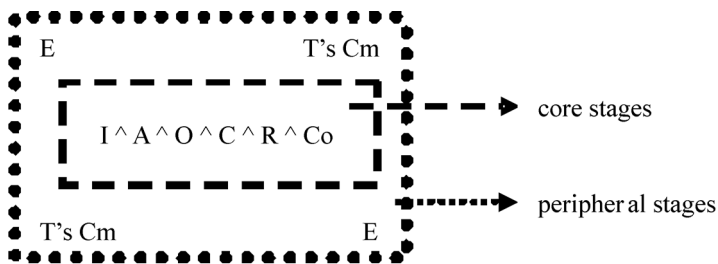

Figure 1. *The structure of the narrative*.

In addition, the results reveal there are four stages of the narrative that use a non-narrative mode of discourse to convey the information, i.e. Introduction, Coda, Evaluation, and Teacher's Comment. The four stages have a common ground: they do not properly tell the story, their contribution in the narrative is different. As already commented, Evaluation and Teacher's Comment are peripheral stages that show the teacher's contribution to the narrative. Regarding Introduction and Coda they create the frame of the narrative, opening and closing it.

6. Discussion

As stated in the introduction, the main aim of this study was to describe the use of narratives in lectures. The description was based on three criteria: nature of the events, characters of the story, and lecturer's role in the story. Regarding the nature of the events, my understanding is that real-life events, or those that at least are projected as being real, give lecturers authority since they then become knowledgeable narrators. However, when lecturers make up the story (that is in Hypothetical narratives where linguistic expressions mark the story as unreal, e.g. *imagine, suppose*), although they are still in command of it and they are still looked at the most learned person on the lecture's topic, the perception of the story could be different since the audience may disbelieve it. The second variable is the characters that take part in the story. When the lecturer is a character, the narrative becomes a first-hand story which brings realism to the classroom and may be designed to make the lecturer appear more accessible,–or at least closer to the students. This narrative approach could also help lecturers to create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom by moving from the professional to the personal sphere. Furthermore, audience involvement may be increased when the audience gets a place in the story becoming a character. In contrast, other people outside the context of the classroom could also participate in the story. These characters would contribute to give authority to the narrative since their connection with the events will certainly be relevant. When the lecturer is not the only character in the story it is interesting to see how s/he builds up relationships with the other characters. As regards the last variable, the role lecturers play in the story, lecturers are always knowledgeable narrators with full information and command of the story. However, the audience's perception may change and their involvement may increase when lecturers also become characters. According to previous assumptions, narratives whose characters are the lecturer and/ or the students will foster higher involvement in the discourse. If this is so, Hypothetical and Personal narratives would accomplish this aim. On the other hand, results of the study of the narratives used in the different disciplines showed there is a close connection between the content of the lecture and the narrative type. The analysis of the 20 lectures indicates that few different narrative types were employed, with the personal narrative being the least common.

The second aspect analyzed in the study was how the narratives are embedded in the lecturer's discourse. In this respect, the narrative is framed by discursive chunks that link the content of the lecture to the story –to mark the beginning–, and the story to the

content of the lecture –to mark the end. The narrative primary function is closely connected to how narratives are introduced in the lecturer's discourse. That is, after a theoretical exposition the lecturer considers necessary to focus attention on one of the aspects presented; to do it s/he uses a narrative. The narrative is commonly introduced by micro-makers of contrast (*but*), or expressions that emphasize the narrative function (*for example* or *an example*). On the other hand, the end of the narrative is generally signaled by micro-markers of segmentation (*and, now, okay*) preparing the audience for a change in the discourse content and the rhetorical value. The narrative is linked to the content of the lecture by a backward reference, reintroducing the theoretical exposition.

Regarding the pragmatic dimension of narratives in lectures, five functions were identified: one primary function and four secondary functions. Narratives in lectures accomplish a content-oriented goal, as postulated by Strodt-López (1987) in her study of personal narratives. They are used to *exemplify* or/and to *focus attention* on one part of the content of the lecture. The study shows a break is produced in the lecture when introducing a narrative. A break originated by a change of the dominant rhetorical value. The interruption of the lecture flow is used by lecturers to stress part of the content of their discourse, by introducing an example in the form of a narrative. Therefore, it can be said that the primary narrative function identified in this small-scale study is to exemplify.

In addition, four secondary functions fulfill the narrative role in lectures. First, narratives may *increase the accessibility to lecturers*, as also pointed out by Strodt-López (1987). However, this function would be accomplished not so much by Personal narratives, but in the other three narrative types. A clear example is the use of polyphony where direct speech brings the lecture fresh language from other voices from outside the classroom –see Excerpts 1, 2 and 3, of Experience, Personal and Hypothetical narratives. Second, *lecturers build their professional identity* through the narratives. Dyer and Keller-Cohen's (2000) work revealed that lecturers position themselves as experts in the narration of personal experiences. The present analysis showed narratives where the lecturer is a character of the story –see Excerpts 2 and 3, of Personal and Hypothetical narratives– that fulfill this function. The mechanisms employed are: the use of pronouns, ways to address the others, reference words, and evaluative language. As commented above, evaluation is a valuable resource not only to construct lecturer's identity but to accomplish another narrative function, that of *introducing the lecturer's viewpoint*. Thus, narratives may be used by lecturers to criticize others' theories as in Excerpts 2 and 4, of Personal and Event narratives. Finally, the study also suggests that lecturers may use narrative to increase students' involvement in the topics. The mechanisms identified for doing this include addressing the students directly, evoking/ referring to students' background knowledge, seeking students' agreement, or turning students into characters of the story.

Especially relevant in the analysis of any narrative discourse is the use of polyphony and evaluation. Polyphony is a common feature in Experience, Personal, and Hypothetical narratives, used by lecturers to project the characters' voices and thoughts.

Direct speech is the common mode of representation which may bring realism to the narrative. On the other hand, evaluative language appears all throughout the narrative. As Labov and Waletzky (1967) noted, in the narration of personal experiences the speakers rarely give a report of the events as they occurred but evaluate them instead. Thus, these authors distinguished two functions of narratives: referential and evaluative. However, in academic narratives evaluation goes beyond the events and the characters of the story, to show lecturers' positions on any aspect of the lecture. Furthermore, this academic genre and the institutionalized relationship between the narrator and the audience demands other narrative stages, such as Introduction and Teacher's comments, which have not been described in previous studies of the structure narratives, that focus exclusively on personal narratives in conversational genres.

7. CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have described the use of narratives in lectures in four academic disciplines. Findings reveal four types of narratives are used in this academic instructional setting which seem to be disciplinary oriented, i.e. *experience*, *personal*, *hypothetical*, and *event*; where in the small corpus examined, personal narratives seem to play a minor role. The analysis has revealed the complexity of academic narratives at a functional and structural level. Evaluation together with polyphony and other features such as the use of personal pronouns, or forms of address are mechanisms lecturers use to engage the students, build identities or introduce their points of view.

This is a preliminary study of the rhetorical value of narratives in a teaching academic genre, where 79 narratives were examined. It would be interesting to analyze the narrative types employed in disciplines where discourse and content is rather different from those studied here. For example, the analysis of lectures from the field of Physical Sciences and Engineering would provide a wider view of the use of narratives in lectures. It would be also interesting to confirm the disciplinary differences found in the corpus. Finally, even though the corpus was constituted by two subcorpora that belong to two different cultures, this aspect was not considered in the analysis. The reasons were the limited number of lectures that fulfilled the criteria selection. However, a broader comparative study of narratives in American and British lectures could raise cross-cultural issues that might need to be considered in the description of narratives in lectures.

APPENDIX: TRANSCRIPTION KEY

Reference to characters	S L	S stands for Student. L stands for Lecturer.
Observer comments	[ ]	Explanation of what is happening at the moment the comment is introduced.
Foreign words	*italics*	Used for non-English words or phrases.
Pauses	,	Comma indicates a brief (1-2 second) mid-utterance pause with non-phrase-final intonation contour.
	.	Period indicates a brief pause accompanied by an utterance final (falling) intonation contour; not used in a syntactic sense to indicate complete sentences.
	…	Ellipses indicate a pause of 2-3 seconds.
Inaudible or unintelligible speech	(xx)	Two x's in parentheses indicate one or more words that are completely unintelligible.

NOTES

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