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CERLIS Series
Volume 1

Stefania M. Maci & Michele Sala (eds)

Genre Variation in Academic Communication
Emerging Disciplinary Trends

CELSB
Bergamo

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CRISTINA MARIOTTI

Genre Variation in Academic Spoken English: the Case of Lectures and Research Conference Presentations

1. Introduction

The first extensive studies on the salient features of lectures delivered in English were carried out with the purpose of helping non-native-speaking students develop effective listening skills based on the observation and the description of authentic speech events. The initial focus of research was therefore on the needs of students who enroll in university courses where English is used as a medium of instruction and on providing English for Academic Purposes (EAP) instructors with authentic teaching material (Flowerdew 1994; Young 1994; Flowerdew/Miller 1997). In the last two decades, the proportion of students pursuing studies in a foreign country has seen a rapid spread as an increasingly wide number of European universities have started offering internationalisation programmes where English is used as a medium of instruction. In his study on the status of English as a global language, Graddol (2006: 76) reported that, as far back as 2006, over half the world's international students were taught in English and forecasts concerning global international students suggested that the major English-speaking destination countries would receive a declining proportion of the world's students in the following 15 years. By way of example, Graddol pointed out that in 2005, four out of five UK universities reported a drop in the number of international students. This trend, which has very likely continued to the present day, may be connected with the fact that an ever increasing number of non-English-speaking European and Asian countries have been raising the level of their tertiary provision and have started offering courses taught in English, thus providing a cheaper, yet qualifying, alternative

to the courses offered by the major English-speaking countries (Coleman 2006: 4). In these higher education institutions, nevertheless, very rarely do lecturers receive professional support in the use of English as a medium of instruction. Only few universities, mainly located in Northern Europe and Spain, offer courses and professional support specifically tailored to the needs of academics who accept to teach courses in English. In other countries, such as Italy, lecturers often participate in internationalisation programmes without receiving specialised training and relying solely on their ability to deliver speeches at international conferences (Klaassen/ Räsänen 2006: 245; Fortanet-Gómez 2010: 260; Costa 2012). This does not provide a favourable solution for students, who may find subject matter concepts difficult to break down and process in effective ways. The lack of adequate English language skills represents a critical issue for many universities wishing to attract foreign students. In their survey of international programmes in European tertiary institutions, Wächter and Maiworm (2008: 41) found that 'lack of academic staff members with sufficient foreign language skills' ranked second among the most frequently stated reasons why universities and colleges do not offer programmes in English, the first reason being the lack of financial resources for the development or operation of English-taught programmes. In her report on teacher training practices at the Universitat Jaume I in the bilingual Spanish-Valencian area, Fortanet-Gómez (2010: 269) states that when faced with a questionnaire on what should be included in a lecturer-training course in English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI): "some content teachers were skeptical about the effectiveness of teaching the same contents in English, or about their own capacity to teach in that language."

Nevertheless, proficiency in the language used to teach in internationalisation programmes is only part of the problem. In his state-of-the-art study on English-medium teaching in European higher education, Coleman (2006: 7) underlines that:

> even if staff have an adequate command of English (and questions often remain over verification and appropriate staff development opportunities),

> they are unlikely to have specialist knowledge of the particular demands of university-level education through an L2.

Likewise, researchers in the field of teacher training claim that lecturer preparation for higher education English-medium instruction should focus on three main aspects: problems related to communication, and specific purpose language use; problems related to pedagogy and didactics; issues related to multilingualism and multiculturalism (Fortanet-Gómez 2010: 262). Considering the changes the academic scenario is undergoing, it might be useful to reconsider the studies that describe the distinctive features of spoken academic English, shifting the focus from its recipients to the subjects who produce it and on the professional requirements imposed on them. Since research in English-medium instruction at the tertiary level (Klaassen/Räsänen 2006: 245; Fortanet-Gómez 2010: 260; Costa 2012) has shown that internationalisation programmes often rely on the assumption that being able to deliver oral presentations in English at international conferences is a sufficient pre-requisite for successfully teaching non-linguistic subject matter in academic courses through the medium of English, we believe that the debate on what should be included in a lecturer-training course for English-taught programmes may benefit from the analysis of the genre-specific features that distinguish lectures with respect to other types of academic speech events such as research conference presentations. For this reason, in the following paragraphs we will analyse some representative macro-structural and micro-linguistic features of the two genres, highlighting the function they perform in each of them.

2. Genre variation analysis

Albeit all aspects of register are equally relevant for the description of the distinctive features of a class of texts, for the purpose of the present study particular emphasis will be placed on the

communicative aim of lectures and research conference presentations. As a matter of fact, considering genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes" (Swales 1990: 58), it is possible to say that a key role in determining what constitutes genre is represented by the aim with which a text is produced. Bhatia observes that "each genre is an instance of a successful achievement of a specific communicative purpose using conventionalized knowledge of linguistic and discoursal resources" (1993: 16). In other words, the goal with which a communicative act is initiated can be a particularly reliable indicator of the connection between contextual constructs and language choices. Adopting a Systemic Functional perspective to genre description, the following paragraphs will discuss how the analysis of field, mode and tenor can account for similarities and differences between lectures and conference research presentations. Particular attention will be given to personal and functional tenor, showing how it varies across the two genres.

2.1. Field

Describing register variation in academic spoken presentations, Ventola (2002: 37) observes that variation in field is perhaps "the easiest aspect to understand" as "conference talks on medicine may be organised differently than, for example, talks on linguistics, sociology, or history." Campagna (2009: 375) argues that the high degree of field variation makes it difficult to identify the relative rhetorical and discursive features which characterise the communicative process involved in the oral delivery of a research paper. Moreover, for each discipline research findings can be presented in many different forms including, but not limited to, plenary lectures, section papers, round table talks and poster presentations. For these reasons, conference situations may entail an array of related genres, defined as 'agnate genres' (Ventola 2002: 27). Notwithstanding the high degree of variation in the way the language of research conference presentations can be structured, general agreement has been reached on the fact that

research conference presentations tend to reproduce, although with some variations, the Introduction, Materials & Methods, Results, Discussion, Conclusion (IMRDC) pattern observed in research articles. In conference presentations, typically the chair introduces the speaker, who starts by thanking for the introduction, contextualizes the paper and then goes through its various phases. As Heino *et al.* (2002: 130) observe, and as excerpts (1) and (2) illustrate, an opening signal is typically a greeting or a statement of the title:

(1) Right. Well, erm … Hello everyone.

(2) The study I want to speak about today is a study investigating the impact of attribution retraining delivered by a computer-assisted instructional program

There can be variations in the sequence of the segments, especially in multilingual and multicultural situations where, for instance, the speaker may forget to thank the chair for the introduction (Ventola 2002: 30).

In the case of lectures, researchers are debating whether the medium of spoken discourse takes precedence in the spectrum of features that influence linguistic variation, or whether disciplinary differences mirroring those found in academic writing persist in speech (Simpson-Vlach 2006: 295). In recent years researchers (Nesi 2001; Poos/Simpson 2002; Simpson-Vlach 2006; Thompson 2006) in academic spoken English have carried out several corpus-based, empirical investigations into large quantities of data, to reflect on the features that account for cross-disciplinary variation in the structuring of lectures. While some found that it is the context and the purpose of the lecture, rather than its discipline, that influence delivery style (see, for instance, Nesi 2001), corpus-based studies mainly focus on micro-linguistic discipline-related differences such as lexico-phraseological distinctions and pronouns (Simpson-Vlach 2006), part-of-speech categories (Thompson 2006), and hedging strategies (Poos/Simpson 2002; Simpson-Vlach 2006). From the macro-structural point of view, however, research on the features of lectures seems to be pointing more in the direction of a common pattern. As already pointed out, the aim of the first studies dedicated to the description of lectures was to

find out why second language learners may experience listening comprehension difficulties and how those difficulties could be prevented. Researchers tried to answer those questions analysing academic lectures from a rhetorical perspective (Chaudron / Richards 1986; DeCarrico / Nattinger 1988; Flowerdew / Miller 1992; Nattinger / DeCarrico 1992; Dudley-Evans 1994; Flowerdew 1994; Young 1994). Flowerdew and Miller (1997: 38) highlight discourse strategies that enhance lecture comprehension in general, such as establishing clearly the theme of the lecture right from the start, using a narrative thread to hold the lecture together, asking rhetorical questions to signal lecture structure, using micro-level discourse markers such as *and*, *so*, *now* and *okay*, and pauses to signal tone groups and propositional boundaries, and signposting the correlations between concepts through the use of macro-markers (for example, "Okay, let's get started", or "now here / we'll put up our last slide / and come to the conclusions"). Flowerdew and Miller also stress the relevance of macro-markers which refer outside the lecture, to previous or future lectures, courses or training, and remind students how the information in one lecture can be linked to other aspects of their courses of knowledge (1997: 38). Other insightful studies on the effectiveness of macro-markers for lecture comprehension are the ones conducted by Chaudron and Richards (1986) and by Nattinger and DeCarrico (1992). A more recent study by Simpson-Vlach (2006: 311) based on the MICASE[6] corpus (The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English) confirms the function of micro-markers (for example, *well*, *ok*, *now*, *so*) as structuring and signposting devices, but it also underlines the fact that they tend to occur with higher frequency in the hard sciences, which are characterised by dense procedural discourse and real-time, face-to-face problem-solving activities. Finally, in a seminal research paper on the structure

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1 The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) is a collection of nearly 1.8 million words of transcribed speech (almost 200 hours of recordings) from the University of Michigan (U-M) in Ann Arbor, created by researchers and students at the U-M English Language Institute (ELI). MICASE contains data from a wide range of speech events (including lectures, classroom discussions, lab sections, seminars, and advising sessions) and locations across the university.

of lectures Young (1994) observes that rather than being simply described as having a beginning, a middle, and a conclusion, lectures should be seen as series of interweaving 'phases' that recur discontinuously throughout the speech event. In other words, "phasal analysis suggests that there are many beginnings, many middles and many ends" (1994: 164-165). Young claims that this phasal structure is consistent across disciplines and characterises the spoken productions of both native and non-native lecturers. In Young's study, phases are divided into two groups: metadiscoursal phases, that can be applied to all types of discourse, and phases which specifically characterise university lectures. The first group includes discourse structuring (where addressers indicate the direction that they will take in the lecture), conclusion (where lecturers summarise points they have made throughout the discourse), and evaluation (where the lecturer evaluates information which is about to be, or has already been transmitted) whereas the second group features interaction (which indicates the extent to which lecturers maintain contact with their audience), theory or content (used to reflect the lecturer's purpose to transmit theoretical information), and examples (in this phase "the speakers illustrate theoretical concepts through concrete examples familiar to students in the audience") (1994: 167-168). Among the most relevant features of university lectures, Young particularly stresses the importance of making information clearly accessible to students in several ways, and underlines the relevance of redundancy and explicitness for academic didactic spoken discourse.

2.2. Mode

Concerning the way in which mode affects modal choices in lectures and research conference presentations, it can be said that both genres are highly informational in purpose, as is academic prose, but at the same time they are subjected to real time-processing constraints. For this reason, they feature false starts, redundancies and repetitions that are typically found in face-to-face conversation (Biber 2006; Csomay 2002; 2006). This high degree of mode variability and the continuous contamination of the spoken and the written dimensions have led

researchers to talk about genre hybridity and to describe both lectures and presentations as being at the interface of an oral/literate continuum. In these genres, the oral performance is strongly associated with the development of a parallel written text, as they integrate the actual spoken text with other media, such as slides or videos. In the literature on research conference presentations it is observed that some elements of speech are realised very much as ‘spoken’, almost as if they were casual conversations; while others are realised as ‘written’ (also referred to as ‘read-out-loud’ presentations), or are realised with little or no accompanying language, e.g. when slides or pictures are shown (Ventola 2002: 43).

As far as lectures are concerned, there are important differences in the extent to which they are interactive or informational, depending on factors such as the type of students, the influence of cultural models, and the degree to which the lesson is scripted. For example, lectures addressed to undergraduate students may contain information which is less dense than that found in those addressed to graduate or undergraduate students. Moreover, Fortanet-Gómez (2010: 261) observes that the degree of interaction might be a reflection of national, or even individual styles:

> In some countries, university classes are mainly lectures delivered in large theatres in front of an audience of over 100 students, which often implies a very formal language characterized by high mitigation, words coming from Latin, and a distant attitude with scarce or no interaction. However, in other countries, lectures are combined with other forms of teaching, such as seminars or tutorials, where the language can be more informal, and there is a higher interaction between the teacher and the students.

Research carried out in internationalisation settings has shown that lectures delivered to non-native-speaking students depart from the monologic model provided by traditional frontal lectures (Anderson/ Ciliberti 2002), as they feature interaction sequences that are usually initiated by academics to check for comprehension and to balance asymmetrical roles through signs of cooperation and identification with the audience (Flowerdew / Miller 1997; Veronesi 2007; Klaassen 2008). Interaction with audience in university lectures has also been investigated in several corpus-based studies such as Piazza (2002),

Crawford Camiciottoli (2004, 2008) and Fortanet-Gómez (2004) to name but a few. It is important to observe that in teaching contexts where a second language (L2) is used as the medium of instruction, interaction sequences can contribute to making input more comprehensible because they can contain repetitions, extensions, reformulations, rephrasings, and expansions which immediately follow learner utterances and maintain reference to their meaning (Long 1996: 452). The structural and semantic repetition of L2 forms leads to their 'recycling' in the input and to a greater probability of their becoming salient and being noticed by learners (Mariotti 2007: 61). Moreover, semantic repetitions can foster cognitive processing on the part of the learners, thus favouring content elaboration. See for example the following exchange (3) taken from MICASE:

(3) S1: mkay. everybody agree with that? that you have, replication the S-phase prior to mitosis and meiosis one.
S13: no. why's this? why isn't it in mitosis, i mean (meiosis two?)
S1: why what? why not be be, okay think of what you end up with after meiosis, one. you end up with, haploids. <WRITING ON BOARD> but they're duplicated already right? they're still duplicated because the centromere has not divided. […] mkay so, they wouldn't duplicate again. you're trying to reduce the amount of genetic information, during meiosis two. okay and that is what happens.
S13: so, the answer is, mitosis and meiosis one?
S1: right.

In excerpt (3), the long turn produced by the lecturer (S1) in response to the question asked by a student (S13) ("no. why's this? why isn't it in mitosis, i mean (meiosis two?)") contains both syntactical repetitions (e.g. "think of what you end up with after meiosis, one. you end up with, haploids") and paraphrases or semantic repetitions. For instance, the concept expressed in "they're still duplicated because the centromere has not divided. […] mkay so, they wouldn't duplicate again", is then summarised as "you're trying to reduce the amount of genetic information, during meiosis two" and further synthesized as "that is what happens". The turn produced by the lecturer thus aims at helping the student validate a hypothesis and re-organise the information.

2.3. Tenor

Features of tenor can be studied as linguistic realisations of stance and identity construction. Stance shows a speaker's commitment to the status of the information that he or she is providing (Jaffe 2009: 10), whereas identity can be defined as the social positioning of self and other in interaction (Bucholtz / Hall 2005: 586). In the description of the linguistic realisations of stance and identity in the two genres, a distinction should be made between the impact of personal tenor and that of functional tenor.

As far as personal tenor in research conference presentations is concerned, Heino *et al.* (2002: 134) observe that presenters tend to be naturally cautious about the authoritativeness of their statements and suggest that their stance is reflected in validity-oriented metadiscourse, i.e. items that signal the speaker's attitude towards the forms of expression used (validity of expression) and that indicate how assured or modalising the speaker is about the actual content (validity of content). Validity of expression is reflected in the use of approximators (*sort of*, *more or less* and *something like that*) and definition hedges (consisting of phrases which mitigate a definition by indicating that it is only preliminary). Excerpt (4) provides an example of use of an approximator:

(4) That was *sort of* the first attribution

Excerpt (5) provides an example of use of a definition hedge:

(5) at one level it basically is a reaction to *what you might call* expository teaching or didactic teaching a very traditional approach to teaching.

The speaker's stance towards content is mainly expressed by means of hedges (which include the use of lexical verbs such as *think* or *guess*, adverbs such as *really* or *actually*, modal auxiliaries, time adjuncts such as *often*, and attitudinal disjuncts such as *perhaps*) and emphatics (Heino *et al.* 2002: 135). Hedges have the function of downgrading the speaker's subjective commitment to the truth value of statements, as shown in excerpt (6)

(6) so it on surface *seems like it perhaps would be* a good tool for delivering attributional retraining.

On the contrary, emphatics (which include lexical items such as *really*, *indeed*, the auxiliary *do*, or comment clauses) reinforce the speaker's subjective commitment to the truth value of the propositional content. Heino *et al.* (2002: 136) observe that in the corpus of conference presentations they collected, hedges and approximators appear as more prominent with respect to emphatics, and that this hints at the fact that conference presenters do not wish to make over-authoritative statements thus avoiding to violate the negative face of the audience.

In conference presentations tenor can also be described as interpersonal, as "relations between the presenter, the chair and the members of the audience as discussants may take place at any time as the social activity unfolds (Ventola 2002: 41)" and as the social positioning of self and other is constructed in interaction. The predominance of face-to-face spoken interaction in research conferences requires academics to be able to manage interpersonal communicative skills and politeness, as well as to be able to deal with potentially face-threatening acts as they arise during the discussion that normally follows every presentation. Heino *et al.* (2002: 128) observe that an academic conference presentation is particularly demanding since conference presenters must perform in front of peers, (and often in front of listeners with expertise greater than their own) and suggest that interaction-oriented metadiscourse is revealing of how speakers position themselves with respect to their audience. Excerpts (7) and (8), taken from their corpus, show that speakers can position themselves in opposite ways with respect to the audience and the general academic community:

(7) that's where my difficulties have arisen and in some ways I really wish that I'd never gone down this road.

(8) I'm a special educator, I , I teach special education at the (…) and I've also been a special education teacher in my erm previous career.

These excerpts show that the speaker can either assume a position that is open to judgment and criticism by the addressees, or might opt for a more 'self-oriented' strategy and focus on their authority and professional expertise.

When teaching, lecturers produce linguistic realisations of stance with several purposes, such as guiding students through the steps of complex explanations; indicating the extent to which information is known or doubtful; providing historical contexts (and indicating the source of information); and conveying personal attitudes about course content (Biber 2006: 116-117). In addition to this, lecturers often use directive stance expressions like *I want you to*. These phrases are usually used to direct student activities, make assignments, or tell students about course expectations, but they can also be used to emphasise some aspect of a lecture that the instructor regards as especially important, as in (9):

(9) This is, because, one of the things we're gonna work with, today, and *I want you* to make this distinction, is between grouped, [WRITING ON BOARD], and ungrouped.

As regards epistemic stance, i.e. stance towards subject matter content, according to Biber (2006: 118) instructors tend to express certainty more than likelihood or possibility, whereas students tend to express likelihood more than certainty. Excerpts (10), (11) and (12) illustrate this heavy reliance on certainty expressions (e.g. 'conclusion that', 'in fact', 'we know'):

(10) now by either route you get the *conclusion that* the underlying means are the same between the two samples.

(11) And *in fact* the attorneys who defend most of these defendants will be attorneys hired by the insurance company.

(12) OK, and *we know* that the per unit relationship is still, OK, the same percentage.

This data shows an opposite trend with respect to what Heino *et al*. (2002) observed about research conference presenters, who tend to be naturally cautious about the authoritativeness of their statements

As far as identity is concerned, research on the language of lectures has pointed out that in these contexts expressions of identity may vary along a continuum whose poles are represented by the need to project an authoritative self-image and the desire to show solidarity and empathy with students. This happens in particular when students are non-native speakers of English. Flowerdew and Miller (1997: 35), for instance, report that the lecturer they observed tried to appear non-threatening because he was well aware that the students found it difficult to listen to a lecture in a second language. Similar findings are reported in more recent studies, where lecturers try to engage students and create a friendly atmosphere by using attitudinal stance markers, hedging devices, informal language and even self-mockery (Dyer / Keller-Cohen 2000; Fortanet-Gómez 2004; Walsh 2004). For instance, Walsh and Crawford-Camiciottoli (2001: 180) describe a non-native lecturer's attempt to address in a friendly way an audience of undergraduate students comprising both native speakers and non-native speakers of English at a Faculty of Economics in Italy, reported in (13):

(13) But let's have a look at some numbers cause you know I like numbers.

In this example, the lecturer draws on informal language and self-mockery to lighten the atmosphere and create complicity with the students.

Like conferences, anyway, also teaching settings can be extremely face-threatening for academics, especially for non-native speakers of English. Internationalisation settings, for instance, can greatly challenge their need to appear in control of the ongoing situation. In these contexts, the audience may comprise students who are proficient in the L2 used as a medium of instruction, or even native-speakers of the language. Therefore, a considerable threat for the face of lecturers is represented by the fear of producing speech that does not conform to what is considered standard in the L2 ('proficiency face' in Ahvenainen 2008) and by the fear of not being able to react to student-initiated interactions, such as requests for clarification of subject matter contents or language forms. It has been observed that in these contexts even slight violations of the L2 at any

level (i.e. lexis, syntax, or pronunciation) can be perceived as a menace for one's public image and can affect the perception of the speakers' identity as efficient users of English (Cook 2002; Jenkins 2007; Spencer-Oatey 2007).

As far as functional tenor is concerned, academic conference presentations are characterised by a central rhetorical goal which consists in conveying information effectively and in facilitating the listener's efforts to construct an internal representation of the content. In addition to this, there is also a pragmatic goal that consists in establishing or preserving the speaker's position in the discourse community while, at the same time, showing respect towards the listeners and the community as a whole (Heino *et al.* 2002: 128). The aim of didactic speech, instead, is to help non-experts in a field become knowledgeable on the subject. This requires great experience and specialised skills which can be grouped into two main categories, i.e. the ability to present information clearly and explicitly and the ability to understand the degree to which a concept or a term has to be made clear and explicit depending on the audience's linguistic competence and reaction to the discourse produced by the lecturer.

At a first glance, the above mentioned assumption according to which academics who can deliver a speech about their discipline in front of an audience of peers can do so also in front of a class of university students may seem partially admissible considering that at the surface level the two genres show some structurally similar features. For instance, the same lexical verbs, auxiliaries and adverbs are used to express attitudinal and epistemic stance; both genres allow for interaction with the audience and pose relevant potential face threats for the identity of academics. Nevertheless, if we deepen the level of analysis and consider the relevance of communicative purpose, it appears evident that the production of the two genres requires different skills on the part of academics. Concerning interaction sequences, for instance, lecturers must be ready to answer questions any time the students ask for clarification of concepts or terminology and must re-phrase even basic concepts or terms in a clear and effective way. On the contrary, in conference presentations interaction is generally expected to take place only at the end of the academic's speech and it would be considered both inappropriate and

unlikely for the audience to enquire about basic disciplinary contents and terminology. Finally, both genres are highly informational and deal with the display of results of scientific research, but lectures also entail a directive and orienting function that is typical of didactic discourse and that is generally missing in research conference presentations.

3. Conclusions and directions for future research

Concerning the debate on the requirements imposed on academics who deliver English-taught lectures in internationalisation courses, it is useful to draw a distinction between discourse produced at research conference presentations and discourse produced in teaching contexts. The purpose of the former is to spread scientific knowledge among peers, while the latter should focus on breaking down subject-matter content into comprehensible cognitive units and on making higher education students understand how to connect those units in meaningful ways. As genres at the interface of the oral/literate continuum, both lectures and research conference presentations may present similar linguistic structures, such as false starts, dysfluencies, micro-markers (for example *and*, *so*, *now*, *okay*), macro-markers (for example 'Okay, let's get started', or 'now here / we'll put up our last slide / and come to the conclusions'), pauses to signal propositional boundaries, and an extensive use of pronouns. What changes, though, is the function that these structures perform. Let us consider, for example, the role of discourse markers. In research conference presentations they perform the function of guiding an audience of experts in the comprehension of a half-an-hour speech about a topic that they are very likely already familiar with. In lectures, though, both macro- and micro-discourse markers perform the special didactic function of signposting, i.e. explicitating semantic relationships among concepts that to a great extent still have to be processed by an audience of non-experts. A lecture is normally longer than a standard

research paper presentation, with recursive phases organised in a rather unpredictable sequence, and students need to be guided and taught to make sense of what is said. Moreover, whereas conference presentations are mostly one-offs, lectures are tipically organised in cycles, and intertextual macro-markers referring back to previous parts of the text or pointing towards future speech events that will be encased in the frame of the university course are particularly useful to orient students in the processing of information. Academics need to be aware of these facts if they want to teach effectively, in particular to non-native-speaking students. As Young says:

> It is important to identify for foreign students, who have great difficulty in taking notes, that first, lecturers often explicitly announce all new topics, and to acquaint them with the more common ways in which they do so; second, that information is imparted in several ways, through theoretical discussion, through exemplification, and through summarization. If students know that the same information is revisited in a number of ways, and that if they miss it the first time they will be able to capture it later, they will be better able to cope with the information transmitted in lectures (1994: 174).

Despite their relevance for the structuring of language produced in teaching contexts, it should be noted that redundancy and explicitness as discourse structuring principles have not been extensively investigated in the analysis of lectures delivered in English. It would be particularly interesting to see whether academics who teach in internationalisation programmes are aware of the relevance of these strategies, and if they embed them in their teaching practice. The conscious deployment of language modifications that enhance comprehensibility would be particularly relevant in these settings, considering that the use of an L2 as a medium of instruction calls for an even greater degree of explicitness and redundancy with respect to lectures delivered in an L1. As a matter of fact, research carried out in the field of L2 acquisition and content-based language learning has underlined the importance of elaborative language modifications in didactic speech, such as repetitions, paraphrases, syntactic reformulations and exemplifications, which bring about both structural and semantic redundancy and salience. In particular, syntactic reformulations and semantic repetitions, or paraphrases, have been

described as key elements of didactic speech addressed to non-native speakers of English in various teaching contexts, ranging from ESL to Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). These types of input modifications are relevant for L2 learning because they enhance language comprehensibility and processability by providing elaborative modifications as opposed to simplifying input modifications. Simplification makes input less abundant and is therefore counterintuitive with respect to the main tenet of language acquisition, i.e. exposure to input that is rich in target-language forms (Long 1996; Baker 2001; Pica 2001; Pavesi 2002). Recently, the relevance of repetitions and reformulations for spoken academic English has also been taken into consideration in English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) studies (Mauranen 2010), and the ability to produce discourse that is syntactically and semantically redundant is also listed by Fortanet-Gómez (2010: 262) among the features that should characterise the spoken production of a lecturer who uses English as a medium of instruction since "it is important to support the introduction of new concepts with visuals and repeat explanations using different ways to enhance understanding".

Returning to the point of departure of the present discussion, it is important to acknowledge that the requirements imposed on academics in internationalisation settings are varied and complex, and that the skills expected of a non-native lecturer are the same as those expected of a native one. These skills range from the ability to write a peer-reviewed scientific paper to mastery of the interplay of language and pragmatics required to deliver a lecture about specialised topics. A clear awareness of the different types of competence required to deliver conference speeches as opposed to university lectures may provide further insight into the professional needs of both native-speaking and non-native-speaking academics involved in English-taught internationalisation courses and may lead to the creation of specialised training programmes to support them.

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