A Contrastive Analysis of Metadiscursive Devices in L1 and L2 university lectures:
Towards the development of a functional metalinguistic repertoire

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The context

- Internationalisation process in Higher Education

- In Spain, three types of "pro-CLIL" stages can be identified:

    - 1980s → private universities implemented international degrees for national students

    - 2000 → professors who individually decided to teach through English as a means to open up career opportunities, favour mobility, etc

    - 2005-present → public universities offer official programmes (known as "bilingual" or "multilingual" degrees)

The teaching/learning context

- Scarce attention to the linguistic implications of the phenomenon, especially as regards language teaching competences.

- Students are expected to have sufficient knowledge of the FL to operate smoothly in the specific discipline.

- Professors usually receive little or no specific training in the linguistic (and methodological) characteristics of this new scenario.

Present study objectives

- This study (part of CLUE Project –Content and Language in University Education – REF GR58/08) pursues a **two-fold objective**:

- (1) to identify the categories and functions of **metadiscursive devices** (MDs) used by professors in the **organisation** of lectures in Spanish (L1) and English (L2),

- (2) to account for **similarities** and **differences** in the use of these MDs, with the ultimate aim of developing a **functional-metalinguistic repertoire**.

The corpus

- Data: video-recorded lectures, questionnaires and interviews.

- Transcriptions of **six university lectures** (about 46,000 words), **delivered** by the same teachers **in English and Spanish**.

- The lecturers:
  - Two male professors and one female professor
  - Native speakers of Spanish at the Faculty of Aeronautical Engineering at the *Universidad Politécnica de Madrid (UPM)*.
  - Level of English high intermediate level.
  - Prior experience in teaching through English: one veteran and two novice.

The corpus

- **The lectures**:
  - English data: part of a summer course on *Formula One Engines* (international students).
  - Spanish data: part of the official curriculum in Aeronautical Engineering (native speakers of Spanish).

  - Similar topics (engines, composite materials…).
  - Length: 60 minutes approx.

Lectures as an educational genre

- Theoretical background: SFL and Genre Analysis.

- Lectures as a type of educational genre (Eggins, 1994: 27): analysis of structure and role of discourse markers in lecture comprehension (Chaudron and Richards, 1986).

- Functional analysis in terms of phases (Young ,1994): "stages" into which lecturing event is divided.

Lecture phases

Table 1: Comparison of phasal models

Young (1994)	Dafouz Milne and Núñez Perucha (2009)
Metadiscoursal	**Metadiscoursal**
Discourse Structuring	Discourse Structuring
Conclusion	Conclusion
Evaluation	**Interaction**
Non-Metadiscoursal	**Discoursal**
Interaction	**Evaluation**
Content	Content
Exemplification	Exemplification

Phases and MDs

Phases	Metadiscourse Category
Discourse structuring phase <DS>	**Openers**
	Sequencers
	Topicalisers
	Prospective markers
	Retrospective markers
Interaction phase <INT>	**Questions**
	Commentaries (help to establish speaker/listener rapport).
	Apologetic comments
	Contextual comments
Conclusion phase <C>	**Closing markers**
	Recapitulation markers
	Prospective markers
	Retrospective markers

Findings by phases

- **Discourse Structure Markers**

- Extensively used in both corpora to organise lectures and explicitly signal shifts in lecture moves.

- Occur mainly at the beginning of lectures, though cases of prospective and retrospective markers in other parts of the session

English   and   Spanish

Openers	Same form and function (initiate formally the beginning of the class and state content objectives). Ex. 1-2
Sequencers	Temporal markers Use of determinatives indicating order as part of NPs functioning as topicalisers (metadiscursive chain) Ex. 3-4

Discourse Structure Markers

English   *versus*   **Spani**sh

Topicalisers	Presentative devices (e.g. "we have") (Ex. 5-6)	
	Noun phrases as text-book headings (Ex. 7)	
	Rhetorical questions (Q-A / Q-S-A) (Ex. 8)	
	** Considerable repetition in the adjectives used ("important")	
	BUT nouns having generalised reference **in English** (e.g. "thing") versus narrower references **in Spanish** (e.g. cuestión /issue). (Ex. 9-10)	
Prospective markers	Future tense + "later" (Ex. 11) Present tense (cases of negative transfer) (Ex. 12)	Future forms ("be going to" and simple future) (Ex. 13)
Retrospective markers	Verbal form "remember" (Ex. 14)	More elaborated realisations Combined with prospective markers (Ex. 15)

Findings by phases

- **Interaction Markers**

English and Spanish

Questions	Wh-questions (reference to both previous or current content)
	Yes/no questions (address present content)
Imperatives	Engage listeners
Pronominal forms	Inclusive function ("we", "our")

Ex. 16

Findings by phases

Interaction markers

	English	versus	Spanish
Commentaries: Apologetic comments	Only in English Refer exclusively to lecturers' command of the FL Common to all professors at the beginning of the lecture Possible reason: specific teaching context (Ex. 17)	These comments are absent in the Spanish corpus for obvious reasons
Commentaries: Contextual comments	Absent perhaps due to . . . lack of familiarity between teacher-students? teacher's problems when communicating on subjects not related to the discipline	Only in Spanish Related to 3 situations: -Being recorded -Materials in laboratory -Students' feelings (Ex. 18)

- **Conclusion markers**

**English   versus   Spanish**

Partial recapitulations of some ideas.	Plenty of recapitulation markers:
↓	
Use of these MDs as a *microstrategy* (summarising certian parts) rather than as a macrostrategy (summarising the whole speech event).	-verbs such as "summarize", "recapitulate" - other markers (e.g. "in brief/short", "as a conclusion")
Mostly implicit and partial (Ex. 19)	More explicitness (Ex. 20)

Conclusions

SIMILARITIES:

- Lecturers utilised the same types of MDs to structure their sessions, irrespective of the language of instruction or the audience addressed.

- Professors replicate lecturing styles and transfer linguistic tools from L1 to L2.
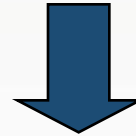
Language transfer

- in their choice of structuring MDs (e.g. prospective markers or topicalisers) → positive transfer

- in the linguistic realisations of these markers. Some instances have emerged as functionally adequate but formally deviant → negative transfer.

Conclusions

DIFFERENCES:

- L1 and L2 lectures vary in the degree of explicitness with which phase transition is signalled.

- In the Spanish data lecturers overtly use specific MDs to move from one section to another, to anticipate information and to summarise main ideas

- In the English data, these same lecturers often shift moves without explicit signalling.

- Stylistically speaking, in English there is less variety in the MDs employed as well as a lower level of specificity in the terms used to introduce a new topic.

Implications for Teacher Education

- Proposal of MDs as starting point (scaffolding) for a **linguistic repertoire** to signal each phase in lectures.

- Specific training in the generic conventions operating at a metadiscursive level.

- Effect on students: does the presence or absence of these MDs markers actually improves lecture comprehension?