Introducing nursing conference presentations: A step forward

Miguel F. Ruiz-Garrido
Universitat Jaume I (Spain)
mruiz@uji.es

Abstract

Research on how paper presentations in academic settings are structured and delivered has been carried out in the last decades, mainly focused on verbal components. In recent times, this research has progressed and presentations are studied from a multimodal discourse analysis perspective, which is the concern underlying this paper. Our research deals only with the set-up stage of a conference presentation. Some literature on the topic (Räisänen, 1999, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005; Fortanet-Gómez, 2008; Piqué Angordans, Camaño Puig & Piqué Noguera, 2011) and textbooks addressed to the disciplinary field of Nursing (Ribes & Feliu Rey, 2010; Giba & Ribes, 2011) describe some expected and recommended requirements to develop the speaker's persona and catch the audience's attention.

The aim of the study is to determine whether there is a common pattern to start oral presentations in an international Nursing conference, and to analyse the initial stage from a multimodal perspective. Based on previous research on the topic (Hood & Forey, 2005; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005), a dataset of 16 invited conference presentations on nursing are analysed, looking at their structural, metadiscoursal and non-linguistic features. Results indicate that findings from previous research need to be reconsidered. Additionally, metadiscourse and non-linguistic features show diversity in the promotions of speakers' persona and audience engagement. Finally, the paper offers some suggestions for further research.

Keywords: conference presentations, set-up stage, metadiscourse, multimodal discourse analysis, Nursing.

Resumen

La introducción de ponencias en enfermería: Un paso adelante

En las últimas décadas se han publicado diversos trabajos sobre la estructura y la forma de ofrecer una presentación oral académica, centrados principalmente en

componentes verbales. En los últimos años, la investigación en este campo ha evolucionado y este tipo de presentaciones se estudian desde la perspectiva del análisis multimodal del discurso. El presente artículo versa sobre la fase inicial de las ponencias, la conocida como set-up stage. Algunos trabajos previos sobre este tema (Räisänen, 1999, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet y Carter-Thomas, 2005; Fortanet-Gómez, 2008; Piqué Angordans, Camaño Puig y Piqué Noguera, 2011), así como algunos manuales del ámbito de la Enfermería (Ribes y Feliu Rey, 2010; Giba y Ribes, 2011), describen ciertas recomendaciones para elaborar la personalidad del hablante y captar la atención del público.

El objetivo de este estudio es determinar si existe un patrón común para comenzar una ponencia en un congreso internacional de Enfermería y analizar esas secciones iniciales desde una perspectiva multimodal. Con base en trabajos previos sobre este asunto (Hood y Forey, 2005; Rowley-Jolivet y Carter-Thomas, 2005) se han analizado 16 ponencias invitadas del campo de la Enfermería de acuerdo con su estructura metadiscursiva y sus características no lingüísticas. Los resultados muestran que es necesario revisar algunas recomendaciones previas. Del mismo modo, algunas características metadiscursivas y no lingüísticas muestran diversidad en la promoción de la imagen pública del hablante y de la implicación y el compromiso por parte del público. Finalmente, el artículo sugiere algunas propuestas para futuras investigaciones.

Palabras clave: ponencias orales, fase inicial, metadiscurso, análisis multimodal del discurso, Enfermería.

1. Introduction

As Bosher (2013: 263) said, "English for nursing is a relatively recent specialty within the field of English for specific purposes". Historically speaking, it seems that medical language was an umbrella term integrating the different fields of the Health Sciences, until recent times when other "specific languages" have come to the fore (English for nurses, for example). Languages for Specific Purposes (LSP) is mostly related to the pedagogical scope of the discipline, although our interest is in the LSP that nurses use, more specifically, academic language. The need to conduct linguistic research on communication in Nursing using discourse analysis was identified some years ago (Crawford & Brown, 1999).

The status of English as an international language led to research in many fields. Not much research has been carried out on English for Nursing, and the closest field is English for Medical Purposes. According to Ferguson (2013), for instance, research on spoken communication is relatively scarce,

and even non-existent for Nursing. The reason may be due to the fact that Nursing research is a recent field in academia, which needs to be studied from a discourse analysis standpoint.

Over the last few decades, nurses have worked hard to occupy a niche they have long deserved, and they have now taken their place and are consolidating their research field worldwide (Zabalegui Yárnoz & Maciá Soler, 2010; Grove, Gray & Burns, 2015). Piqué Angordans et al. (2011) promote and support nurses' research and the dissemination of their work to other scholars and professionals. Through the idea of genre and discourse communities (Swales, 2016), they make it clear that Nursing is a discourse community (Bosher, 2013; Macian & Salvador, 2017). Those communities of practice[1] have a common goal as well as some specific ones, together with specific lexis, a series of mechanisms allowing members the community to communicate with one another, a set of known genres, and an adequate ratio of experts with respect to novices. We agree with Macian and Salvador (2017) that language has an influence on everything, although it is not everything. The different discourse practices (linguistic or multimodal) are the main tool to build up a profession, and Nursing can be an example of this.

2. Academic Conference Presentations (CP)

Following on from the line of reasoning outlined above regarding the search for academic support for medical discourse spoken genres, some authors have already explained the features of CP, sometimes comparing them to other spoken academic genres (lectures), or even to genres in the field of written academic discourse (Dubois, 1987; Räisanen, 1999; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002; Webber, 2002, 2005; Ruiz-Garrido & Fortanet-Gómez, 2008; Ruiz-Garrido, 2015). A CP is an oral event, although it lies somewhere in the middle of a continuum between a more objective, impersonal style, with formal elements (such as a research paper), and a more personal style, showing insights and beliefs, with more informal elements, such as in confidential interviews with researchers (Swales & Burke, 2003; Wulff, Swales & Keller, 2009). It should be mentioned that some CPs are written previously and rehearsed many times, most of the presentation therefore being planned in advance (except for the discussion after the presentation). However, many things can happen during a presentation which may require some improvisation or that cannot even be prepared properly.

The main aim of scientific research communication is twofold: informative and rhetorical/persuasive, regardless of the medium. However, this fact has

a different effect on the audience. Because in CPs there is little distance between the audience and the speaker, there is a need to set up "a feeling of connivance. Too detached a monologue would be ill-suited to the communicative context and appropriate interpersonal strategies are important" (Carter-Thomas & Rowley-Jolivet, 2003: 60). Some sections of the CP may be more likely to include this interactional aspect.

Other common features of CPs have been found in many other studies. Some have found that speakers in CPs can apologise and admit mistakes (Rowley-Jolivet, 1999), heavily hedge their discourse (Poos & Simpson, 2000) and frequently signpost the discourse by means of discourse markers (Swales & Malcewski, 2001). Likewise, the frequent use of first person pronouns, active verb forms, sequencing words, repetition, or episodes of humour and self-irony, are other relevant topics studied (Ruiz-Garrido & Fortanet-Gómez, 2008; Hyland, 2009).

In addition to the linguistic nature of CPs and their purposes, the scientific CP is a multimodal genre, in which visual communication also plays an important role. Semiotic modes are a requirement so that the audience can follow the oral and visual information easily. Thus, verbal and non-verbal features should be considered as a whole when studying spoken academic discourse (Ventola et al., 2002; Rowley-Jolivet, 2004; Hood & Forey, 2005; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005; Crawford-Camiciottoli & Fortanet-Gómez, 2015; Forey & Feng, 2016). This is also confirmed in textbooks and guides addressed to the disciplinary field of Nursing (for example, Ribes & Feliu Rey, 2010; Giba & Ribes, 2011).

Along these lines, Valeiras and Ruiz-Madrid (2015) and Valeiras, Ruiz-Madrid and Jacobs (2018) show how speakers in CPs try to get their audience's attention in order to create a convincing message by orchestrating a variety of semiotic modes into persuasive multimodal ensembles. It seems, then, that adopting an MDA (Multimodal Discourse Analysis) (Querol, 2011 or Valeiras-Jurado & Ruiz-Madrid, 2015) approach could afford a more comprehensive understanding of the generic description of the initial stage of Nursing conferences.

3. The set-up stage of Conference Presentations

In the CP, the fact that the audience is physically present in the venue means that actions must be performed immediately and entails a different

relationship with the audience. Thus, it seems necessary to shape the talk "to (inter)act interpersonally with their audience" (Hood & Forey, 2005: 292) in order to build up a relationship of solidarity (Hood & Forey, 2005; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). The use of appropriate interpersonal strategies is required in order to make the CP more involving for the participants, and "In setting up this relationship, the role of the introductory section is obviously crucial" (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005: 50). According to Hood and Forey (2005: 294), "The set-up stage functions on the one hand to situate the talk in the immediate context, and on the other to provide the point of departure for the presentation 'proper'". If the aim of scientific research communication is to inform and persuade, this initial stage seems to require even more skills to be performed successfully.

Furthermore, this initial stage also represents an important situation in which speakers must "resolve inherent tensions" (Hood & Forey, 2005: 292). Speakers are supposed to be, at least to some extent, on their topic, and the success of their presentation relies on the acceptance, approval and positive judgement of the audience. However, the audience have other tensions, as they need to "feel accommodated in the presentation, as part of the discourse community, set-off against the cost of attendance" (Hood & Forey, 2005: 292).

Thus, what we are concerned with is the set-up stage of the CP. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005) propose the following model for CP introductions:

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A. Setting up the framework
     Interpersonal framework              1a      Listener orientation
                              and/or       1b      Acknowledgements
     Discourse framework                  2a      Announce Topic
                              and/or       2b      Outline Structure/
                                                   Indicate Scope

B. Contextualising the topic
                                          1a      Conference context
                              and/or       1b      General research context
C. Stating the research rationale
     Motivation                           1a      Problems/ gaps/ counter-claims
                              and/or       1b      Relevance/ centrality/ need
                              and/or       1c      Continuation of previous work
     Response                             2a      Question-raising/ hypothesis
                              and/or       2b      Preview results or solutions
                                          3       Outline research goal
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Figure 1. A move model from scientific conference presentation introductions (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005: 51).

There are three moves, each with its own purpose, and several sub-moves and steps. Our interest is in the first move. It serves some important functions in the academic communication process because speakers prepare the audience to receive the message of the talk "by generating expectations as to how the speaker will handle the communicative situation (Interpersonal framework) and by mapping out the structural contours of the talk (Discourse framework)" (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005: 53). In this paper, we are dealing more specifically with the "Interpersonal framework", although sometimes it is not easy to make a clear-cut separation between sub-moves and steps. Within this sub-move, which is audience-oriented to get the listeners' attention and their involvement in the presentation, there are two steps. "Listener orientation" "includes all remarks addressed by the speaker to the chairperson, to the audience or the conference organisers, thanking them, greeting them and generally making contact" (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005: 52). This sub-move could also occur throughout the presentation, but it is at this point in the speech delivery when the speaker tries to make an effort to establish a rapport with the audience, and to create a feeling of solidarity. Additionally, this is also the time to create the speaker's persona for the presentation (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). It may happen when speakers tell a joke, explain a personal anecdote or utter some light-hearted remarks. The second step is the verbal and/or visual acknowledgement of co-authors, collaborators, companies or funding agencies. Through persuasive strategies, speakers can project a courteous, friendly image through the "Listener orientation" step, while speaker modesty is reflected in the "Acknowledgements" step (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005).

Hood and Forey (2005) proposed a different, more detailed list of components in this first stage of CPs (Table 1), which fits perfectly within the so-called "Interpersonal framework" move.

Hood and Forey (2005) add two more aspects to complete their analysis. First, they study grammatical and lexical features to promote the interpersonal meanings. Secondly, they are concerned about the multimodal nature of the stage. They explain that discourse strategies co-occur with gestures to construct and enhance the (interpersonal) meanings, aimed at the different purposes of the phase. Now, we will see how to classify some possible linguistic resources used in the set-up stages of CPs.

- Introduce self as presenter
- Introduce co-presenter
- Thank convenor
- Greet/thank audience
- Check technological support
- Refer to support resources (e.g. handout)
- Check composition of audience
- Discuss conference location
- Identify topic
- Contextualise the presentation
- Preview the content/structure of presentation
- Refer to contribution of others (include others present)
- Joke/humour
- Signal transition to next stage

Table 1. Components of the set-up stage of the presentations (Hood & Forey, 2005: 295).

4. Metadiscourse

The set-up stage of any CP promotes interaction, uses different strategies for interpersonal communication, establishes solidarity, constructs the identity of the speaker and even encourages alignment between speakers and audience. According to Hyland's seminal work (2005a: 59), "metadiscourse offers a way of understanding the interpersonal resources writers use to organise texts coherently and to convey their personality, credibility, reader sensitivity and relationship to the message". Thus, it can be useful to detect the textual devices that identify the presence of the author, explicitly establish the relationships between all the parties involved, engage the audience and signal the attitude of the speaker.

Although previous research has been conducted on metadiscourse in academic CPs (Heino, Tervonen and Tommola, 2002) or metadiscourse and MDA (Bernad-Mechó, 2017), the work by Baumgarten (2012) following Hyland seems to fit our study better. Hyland (2005b) divides metadiscourse into two categories: "interactive" and "interactional". The former makes explicit the organisation of the text applied to the audience's knowledge, interests and needs, and can be performed by means of transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. The latter involves the audience and the speaker adopting "an acceptable persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the community" (Baumgarten, 2012: 163). It can be performed by stance through hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers (explained below).

Regarding interactional features, Baumgarten (2012) focuses on academic presentations of L2 novices and L1/L2 experts. She proposes an extensive

model of Hyland's (2005b) stance (referring to the speaker) and engagement (referring to the audience). As she points out (2012: 163-164):

> In this model, stance captures speaker positioning in terms of the expression of affect, attitudes and evidentiality. Engagement describes audience positioning. It refers to the ways speakers express (dis)alignment with the audience by including the audience as discourse participants, focusing their attention on specific information in the discourse or the physical surroundings and anticipating their reactions towards the unfolding argument.

The following table shows the categories she uses:

Stance category: Function
"Hedges": Epistemic uncertainty signals serving to withhold commitment to a proposition
"Boosters": Epistemic certainty signals expressing conviction in the truth of the proposition
"Attitude markers": Express speakers' affective attitude
"Self-mention": Encodes speakers as referents in their discourse
"Speaker orientation": Encodes speaker orientation towards own talk

Engagement category: Function
"Hearer pronouns": Include the audience as discourse participants
"Asides": Interrupt the flow of the argument to comment on what has been said or done; introduce information not directly related to the main line of the argument
"Shared knowledge": Present information as familiar or accepted
"Directives": Instruct audience to perform a physical or cognitive action
"Questions": Rhetorical: Demand cognitive involvement from audience Real: Invoke direct interaction with the audience
"Apologies": Express regret for violating conventions, disappointing expectations
"Thanks": Thanking for attendance and attention
"Greeting": Acknowledging the audience's presence
"Repair": Coping with production difficulties and online planning

Table 2. Stance and engagement sub-categories (taken from Baumgarten, 2012: 164-166).

This taxonomy of interactional metadiscourse maintains the essentials of Hyland's taxonomy, but also adds other categories, which apply specifically to spoken discourse, such as "speaker orientation", "apologies", "thanks", "greeting" and "repair". Studies on metadiscourse tend to focus mostly on written discourse, although Hyland (2005a) explains some potential written and oral non-verbal expressions of metadiscourse. Among the oral ones, Paralanguage, Proxemics and Kinesics are considered, confirming that a multimodal analysis can also be useful to complement textual analysis.

Even though multimodality in academic settings has been studied, to our knowledge nothing has been done on Nursing academic discourse as a thriving professional field within LSP. The aim of this study is to build upon

previous studies on the set-up stage of conference presentations, but applied to the Nursing field. We would like to test whether previous findings about the section analysed are also observed in our dataset, understanding that every kind of discourse is multimodal in its own nature. Therefore, we will analyse the interactional and interpersonal features of set-up stages and the effect they may have in combination with the paralinguistic and kinesic resources used. This study attempts to describe the presentation deliveries and uncover patterns, although our hypothesis is that speakers will try to follow a similar structure but their own personal traits will make the difference. Our research questions are:

1. Can Hood and Forey's sub-stages be taken for granted?

2. What interactional metadiscourse features can be found in our dataset?

3. How are non-linguistic resources used to convey or support interpersonal meaning according to the speakers' purposes?

5. Methodology

The present study aims to explore linguistic and non-linguistic features (Kinesic and Paralanguistic items) in a set of spoken academic conference presentations. The data selected for analysis belongs to the FEND association (the Foundation of European Nurses in Diabetes), the pan-European non-profit organisation for nurses working in the specialty of diabetes, as they present themselves on their website (www.fend.com). They hold conferences annually, and since their 15th Annual Conference (2010), they have compiled, uploaded and given open access to the basic components of all CPs: video files and supporting visual aids.

We selected the presentations from the 20th annual conference, held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 2015. All presentations at FEND conferences are delivered by invitation. In 2015, not all the sessions were of the same nature. We have chosen the individual research presentations, as some others did not fit our objective (they were the institutional welcoming, the opening and closing remarks, the awards ceremony, some patient narratives and some masterclasses).

Our dataset includes 16 individual presentations delivered in morning and afternoon sessions but on two different days. All the presenters were

professionals in Nursing or closely related fields, as proven by their qualifications and affiliation, as well as being competent speakers, regardless of their nationality. There were three male (CP9, CP10, CP15) and thirteen female speakers. All knew beforehand that they had 30-minute slots to deliver the presentation, including time for discussion, and most of them adapted to this time. However, in this research, we only analyse the first sections of the presentation and the lengths vary slightly (see Table 3 below). The CP transcripts and the corresponding video recordings were analysed. The total size of the corpus is 20.58 minutes. The size of the corpus does not allow for quantitatively-based generalisations, but it is valid for qualitative analysis. It is also consistent with previous multimodal studies, which, due to their minute level of detail and the lack of automating tools, cannot afford to use larger corpora (for example, Querol-Julián, 2011).

	Set-up stage duration (minutes)	No. of words
CP1	0.53	95
CP2	0.28	93
CP3	0.36	71
CP4	2.32	215
CP5	0.23	55
CP6	0.41	89
CP7	0.42	81
CP8	2.23	358
CP9	1.35	101
CP10	2.37	405
CP11	0.38	118
CP12	0.34	68
CP13	1.01	119
CP14	0.58	110
CP15	1.29	252
CP16	3.05	378

Table 3. Dataset used for the study.

So as to decide where the introductory section finishes, we distinguished between the end of this section and the beginning of the subsequent one by means of discourse markers, lexical signals or even gesture or positioning.

Regarding the physical settings of the presentations, the arrangement is the same for all speakers (Figure 2). Speakers and chairpersons are on a dais in front of the audience. All speakers are standing behind a podium, on which they may place their notes or electronic tool, as well as the wireless USB presentation clicker to change the slides or point to the screen. On the right-hand side of the presenter, there is a table with the committee and the

chairpersons. Then, there are two useful screens (dual-screen), one for the audience (also to their right, but behind them) and another in front of speakers, slightly to their right, down on the floor. This arrangement is important to understand better that speakers may look to their right to see the chairpersons or the screens (up to the right or down to the right). All speakers are introduced before they start talking.

Figure 2. Arrangement of the venue.

Once the dataset and the sections had been selected, we marked the components in the transcripts to later analyse co-occurring non-linguistic features. For metadiscourse, we used AntConc (3.5.7), and then revised the wordlist and keywords identified in their context. As the dataset and the number of items to analyse were limited in size, the paralinguistic and kinesic analysis was performed manually, using the video recordings to observe non-linguistic behaviours that occurred together with linguistic expressions.

As for the analysis of non-linguistic resources, following previous research on multimodality and spoken academic discourse (Querol-Julián, 2011; Querol-Julián & Fortanet-Gómez, 2012), the non-verbal resources investigated had to be restricted. However, because of the varying durations of the sections and the individual characteristics of each participant, in the present research we decided to make some changes. After identifying the components and the most frequent metadiscourse elements, we examined how each speaker performed different non-linguistic features. We searched

for any common pattern across the whole dataset and, finally, we analysed how those non-linguistic features combined with the textual ones, paying attention to their function. Among the modes that could be analysed, the position of the speakers behind the podium allows us to study three salient aspects in oral genres: gestures (hands and arms) and head movements (kinesic features) (Kendon, 2004), and intonation/pitch or silence (paralinguistic features) (Brazil, 1997). To do so, and to avoid subjective interpretations, all samples were watched by two different researchers (an external one and the author of this paper) who agreed, first, on the non-verbal resources used in those introductory sections, and second, on the role and function of those non-linguistic resources. When disagreements arose (which only occurred in a few cases), the analysis of a third external researcher was solicited and consensus was reached.

6. Results

6.1. Components of set-up stages

The first part of the analysis followed Hood and Forey's components (2005) and how they were shown in the current dataset. Some differences appear in our analysis. Only 13 out of 14 components were taken into consideration. The last one ("Signal transition to next stage") was not considered as this step is only transitional. It was clearly marked by using non-linguistic signals, such as silence, uttering a discourse marker like "OK" or "Well", or specifying the outline, the aim or the start of the content. "Joke/humour" is not a component either. Some humorous situations are identified, but as part of an anecdote or part of a problem explained in the presentation. Humour cannot be a component by itself like the others, but is instead a kind of transversal resource (humour can even appear in a self-introduction, for example), as it cannot be considered a structural item but is content-determined. Those humorous comments are included in the new component "Narrative/story". Additionally, one of the components, "Discuss conference location", was not found. The rest were identified, although with certain minor changes or nuances, which are explained in their description, and some new components have also been added (the last five in Table 4). Thus, a description of the components found in our dataset (and their frequency) is presented in Table 4:

Components and new descriptions	No. of CPs
"Introduce self as presenter" includes any reference to speakers themselves in any sense, referring to their name or to their career, or any other self-reference	5
"Introduce co-presenter"	2
"Greet/thank convenor" modifies the label to join greeting and thanking, which tend to appear together, and to be parallel to the following component	15
"Greet/thank audience" is considered when the words are explicit and when the gestures show this speech act	12
"Check technological support" refers to any allusion to the technical tools used	1
"Refer to support resources"	1
"Refer to composition of audience" comes from "Check composition of audience"; although speakers know in advance the kind of audience attending, some references are made to them and their role or job	3
"Identify topic"	12
"Contextualise the presentation"	10
"Preview the content of presentation" has deleted "structure"	4
"Refer to contribution of others (include others present)"	3
"Narrative/story" refers to the stories told by the speakers, not necessarily related to another component, but which make sense in the presentation; sometimes they involve a humorous narration	3
"Showing feelings/attitudes" is a component explicitly expressed before the audience about the speakers' feelings and/or emotional state	9
"Direct involvement of audience" deals with explicit situations in which the speaker tries to involve the audience	7
"Acknowledgements" is the occasion when speakers thank a third party for their support in the work presented	1
"Discuss conference organisation" occurs when speakers refer to the degree of relevance of the meeting/conference	1

Table 4. List of components and the number of CPs in which they appear.

From a metafunctional perspective, 14 speakers include at least one sub-stage focusing on ideational meaning ("Identify topic" or "Contextualise the presentation") and all speakers focus on the interpersonal meaning (introduce, greet/thank; refer to contribution of others). Apparently, the duration of the set-up stage does not have a great effect on the number of components used. An average of 5.5 components out of 16 are used by all speakers, within a range between 4 and 8, but there is no correlation between duration and number of components.

Another important feature that emerges is that the order of appearance of the components does not have a common pattern among the CP set-up stages analysed. Of the most common components, greetings to convenors and audience tend to appear at the beginning, but occasionally the first one is repeated throughout the section. The other two most common components, used to identify the topic and contextualise it, tend to appear in that order as well. The rest of the components exist all through the set-up stage, mixed with the previous components. It is also relevant to admit that some components hardly ever appear, probably because the context of this conference does not call for them (such as the lack of co-presenters, no

need for comments on technological aspects, or a previous knowledge of the audience composition and the organisers).

6.2. Metadiscourse features

For the analysis of metadiscourse features, we have followed Baumgarten's taxonomy (2012). The term "occurrences" may mean one single word or a multiword element (such as, "you guys"). Therefore, although the figures may not represent precisely the number of metadiscourse elements found, they serve to exemplify the patterns of occurrences. The following table shows the frequency of stance and engagement as metadiscourse elements and their variation among speakers:

CP1	CP2	CP3	CP4	CP5	CP6	CP7	CP8
29	22	9	30	20	17	18	48
CP9	CP10	CP11	CP12	CP13	CP14	CP15	CP16
55	93	17	9	16	21	33	67

Table 5. Overall number of occurrences in each CP.

Those results, compared with the duration of the set-up stages (Table 3), show that all stages over 2 minutes are the ones that include a larger number of metadiscourse features (CP4, CP8, CP10 and CP16), except for CP9 which lasts 1.35 minutes and uses metadiscourse widely. For the rest, there is variation proving that length and quantity are not a clear match. In other words, some short presentations, such as CP2 (0.28 minutes) uses 22 metadiscourse occurrences, whereas CP13 (1.01 min.) includes 21 examples.

The following tables show the results divided into categories and appearances in CP.

Category: Function	Total No. of occurrences	No. of CPs
Hedges	36	12/16
Boosters	42	13/16
Attitude markers	72	16/16
Self-mention	191	16/16
Speaker orientation	2	2/16

Table 6. Stance subcategories.

Category: Function	Total No. of occurrences	No. of CPs
Hearer	93	16/16
Asides	10	6/16
Shared knowledge	12	8/16
Directives	6	5/16
Questions - Real	1	2/16
Questions - Rhetorical	3	1/16
Apologies	4	3/16
Thanks	23	15/16
Greeting	8	7/16
Repair	1	1/16

Table 7. Engagement subcategories.

Although Baumgarten (2012) focused on the whole presentation, she found out that for most speakers (experts or novices) "Self-mention" and "Hedges" were the most frequent stance subcategories, and "Hearer pronoun" and "Shared knowledge" were the most common ones for engagement. In our dataset, and according to previous literature, speakers should be more inclined to use the set-up section analysed to create a more personal environment, build rapport with the audience, and use interpersonal strategies as a key feature.

Regarding those strategies, "Self-mention" and "Attitude markers" are the most frequently used. The pronoun "I" is the most highly used (113 occurrences in all CPs). This result is quite predictable because the speaker's persona needs to be created, and the use of first-person pronouns/adjectives are the most common strategy for positioning before the audience, explicitly expressing propositional information or interactional moves or sounding more personal and closer to the audience. Other expressions involved are "my" (26), "me" (17), and "myself" (3). As regards first-person plural pronouns, "we" attests 27 occurrences (17 inclusive and 10 exclusive), "us" 5, and "our" 2, but none of them appeared in all samples analysed. In these cases, speakers opted for a strategy to make the audience feel more integrated rather than detached. Those cases only happen when speakers present facts or data, which result from the work carried out by their teams, as a collective entity.

The second most frequent stance sub-category is "Attitude markers". This also seems to be predictable. As a complement to setting up the speakers' persona, they show their affective attitude to the audience as a good persuasive strategy. As for the rest of the sub-categories, "Hedges" and

"Boosters" tend to appear in all the presentations (both appear in 13 presentations), combining the certainty of boosters and the uncertainty of hedges (key words marked), as the following examples show:

> *I'm sure maybe* all of you … (CP1)

> it *could be* a psychological state, it *could be* a geographical state, but *it is certainly* about … (CP8).

The most frequent engagement sub-category is "Hearer". As expected, the most direct way to connect to the audience is by mentioning them, calling them and making them participate in the event. In that sense, not only "you" (as subject or object) or "your" (followed by a noun) have been identified for this subcategory, but also other references to a specific addressee or an impersonal one have been considered, so that the audience feels involved. The most common expression used is the pronoun "you" (93 times). Most of them (55) were used as subjects/objects, while the other 38 occurrences have other uses, such as:

- the impersonal "you" (generic or indefinite) is used to refer unspecifically to anyone, sometimes within the audience or even including the speakers themselves

- when "you" or its derivatives are not used but there is a reference to certain people or participants, by adding their names or roles, such as "participants", "ladies and gentlemen", or "everyone". In those cases, "you" has required a complementary analysis of the video-recordings and the gestures involved to confirm that interpretation

- in the expression "you guys", and

- "your + noun"

Overall, we think this represents a good number of opportunities and options to make the audience feel part of the presentation and to create solidarity.

The second most frequent sub-category is "Thanks", used by all speakers except for one (who greets instead). This is an expected result, as part of the politeness rules usually happening in academic events, and an example of interaction between audience and presenters. "Thanks" and "Greeting" would be two options that could be used by most speakers to start their talk,

although in our case "Greeting" has not been widely used (only in 7 presentations). Among the rest of the sub-categories, no common patterns are found, showing a great diversity of use. "Shared knowledge" is used in half of the presentations, but the rest of subcategories are only used occasionally.

It is worth noting that only 7 speakers use over half of the engagement sub-categories, whereas the rest of them use a few, thereby proving that, in general, the higher number of metadiscourse features used, the higher the number of engagement strategies included. Despite that, all speakers seem to use different strategies to capture and hold the audience's attention and to make them feel involved in the presentation from the very beginning, in an effort to establish the grounds for the rest of the presentation. Variation in stance and engagement use among speakers suggests that everyone follows a different idea of how to position oneself and the audience in one's talk.

6.3. Gestures

As regards MDA, we will concentrate on describing the gestures that can be of interest in terms of making contact with the audience and the creation of the speaker's persona. We have analysed the most frequent components and metadiscourse features, but now we attempt to combine those results with the most notable gesture traits, with attention given to their functionality. Although presentations can be practised and rehearsed in advance, this set-up stage seems less predictable and less likely to be rehearsed and therefore become more spontaneous depending on the speaker's mood or emotions at that time. In this sense, it seems to lie more at the conversational end of the continuum (as mentioned earlier) and could involve more improvisation than rehearsal. The results are similar to the ones obtained earlier: it becomes difficult to find common patterns. Without the intention of providing a detailed analysis, the diversity and personal way of delivering presentations among speakers can be different, some reflecting a more self-secure image, while others appear nervous and share that feeling with the audience.

Despite all this, some aspects are worth detailing. Among the common components and metadiscourse features, "Thanking" and "Greeting" (convenor/audience) are similar. Concerning frequency, they are the most common recurrent components among the engagement sub-categories. In our dataset, the arrangement of the venue seems to play a relevant role. The position of the convenors, the podium and the speaker's screen down on the

dais (see Figure 2), make most speakers (14 out of 16) look to their right to greet or thank the convenors and to the front to greet the audience. When they look to the right, this is performed mostly with just a simple head and/or body movement, but often speakers accompany it with a nod (4 cases) or even use their arms/hands as a deictic to point to chairpersons (2 cases). When looking at the audience, all speakers tend to scan them from right to left, which seems the logical trend. In those moments, speakers look directly at the audience in a relaxed way, with a slight or half smile (except for two of them, who do not smile at/from the very beginning). Additionally, even if they smile, some speakers touch or look down at their notes or touch the microphones, which are actions that may make them feel more relaxed or comfortable before they start the talk. This smile is usually kept throughout all this section. However, some speakers (5) change their smile into a serious expression when identifying the topic. There is even a case (CP15) in which this change of the face turns back into a smile when a direct involvement of the audience occurs.

The individual characteristics of each speaker evidence variation and differences among them. However, it is a fact that gestures help to transmit the message and show how a person feels at that moment (intentionally or unintentionally). In these first steps of the set-up stage, speakers try to feel relaxed, to convey a nice image by means of linguistic and non-linguistic features, generally to start projecting their image and make the audience feel closer. Their individual traits illustrate the variety in a few of the cases and possibilities displayed.

A moment where speakers may feel more relaxed and gesticulate more is when "Showing feelings/Attitude" and the category of stance "Attitude markers" appear. In this sense, eight speakers take advantage of a selection of diverse paralinguistic and kinesic features and use them to confirm their attitudinal expression. For example, CP1 uses a couple of sentences showing that she is not very comfortable or secure: "This is really a difficult job now for me" and "It's not easy". Particularly, the first sentence (attitudinal component and category) is accompanied by a more serious facial expression, pitch emphasis on "job" and a nervous laugh at the end of the sentence. We only see her face, and with no remarkable traits, she has a half smile and makes a head movement scanning from side to side, apparently showing that bit of shyness she is feeling.

| Speaker starts saying "This is really..." | Speaker emphasises "job" | Speaker scans and shows a half smile |

Figure 3. Example of CP1.

Another example of insecurity is shown by CP5 (Table 8). In this case, the words are conveying the self-doubt of the speaker, when using hedges such as "feel", "maybe" or "I hope", and the expression "I feel like someone from another planet in this context". These feelings are shared with the audience with a main twofold purpose: to be comfortable in front of others and to make the audience feel compassion for her. This may be done unintentionally, but this strategy works to engage the audience, it makes them feel sympathetic towards her. These utterances are accompanied by some gestures, which are not helping her to mitigate but instead quite to the contrary, emphasise her diffident attitude.

Text	Body / Arms / Hands	Head / Face
Verbatim	Initial position: body is stiff, and arms are stuck to the body (or even slightly behind it)	Neutral face; looks at audience
So, I	Same position (body and arms)	Head looking right; sound with the mouth/ lips stuck together; closes eyes
got a bit scared	Opens arms a bit, moves body backwards a bit, and shakes it in a metaphorical way	Gazes at audience; slight smile
in the previous talks.	Central position	Looks at audience and closes eyes
I feel I'm … ehhhh	Left arm moves up	Looks right; smile
– what would you say – the…	Back to central position Hands, palm down, get closer starting from outside (as representing something round)	Looks to the front; smile
we had the –	Right hand up, brings finger tips together and palms down	Looks right
maybe the … the	Right hand/arm moves up quickly and fingers positioned as if taking something upwards and down to join left hand	Looks to audience; smiling
someone from another	Hold hands at a medium position; presses left over right	Voice pitch lowers and looks right
planet or something like that.	Right hand up a bit and opens it to join hands again; moves to central position	Looks down at notes

Let's start with this. But	Still holding hands Separates finger left hand and back to joined position	Looks up to audience
I hope ...	Rubs hands a bit	Keeps frontal look and presses lips together Slight smile, and presses lips together again
	Opens and closes arms quickly, palms towards her	
yeah ...		Moves slightly to the right
	Moves hands to holding position	
that you will		Serious expression and looks down to notes
	Right hand on clicker	
like it.		Voice pitch lowers

Table 8. Example of the co-occurrence of linguistic and non-linguistic features.

The feeling of belonging to the same discourse community involves attitudinal components, metadiscourse and gestures, sometimes of nervousness, perhaps because of the pressure of being judged, sometimes of relaxation because of a feeling of familiarity and a sense of belonging to that community. Although a Nursing association is the organiser of the conference and the target audience consists of nurses, two of the speakers were not nurses. However, they make no attempt to conceal the fact; on the contrary, they try to preserve their persona, prevent any misunderstandings and, at the same time, transmit to the audience that they are aware that they are "outsiders", thus building a feeling of solidarity, at least during the time the conference lasts. Both speakers make it clear that they do not belong to the community of practice ("I'm not a diabetes person" (CP10) or "this is probably not a type of presentation you hear often and I'm neither a nurse" (CP14)). However, they create a common ground with the audience through a combination of words and gestures:

- CP10, almost immediately after saying what he is not twice, goes on to say "I study obesity. I don't have to rehearse with you why we should actually care about obesity to begin with". This extract appears in the component "Introducing Self as presenter"; stance metadiscourse "Self-mention", including 2 samples of "I", but one inclusive "we", very close to the pronoun "you", which integrates the audience. Additionally, the engagement metadiscourse "Shared knowledge" happens when the speaker is not explicit in the information given; all this is co-occurring with some sporadic facial movement, a serious expression, eyes closed before the utterance, and hands/arms open in a quick movement and palms facing

inwards, like pointing to the audience, showing overall a humble feeling that indicates he can feel part of the same discourse community for the day.

- CP14, after the sentence uttered – a kind of "Apology" – she goes on by "Introducing Self as presenter" together with the use of "Self-mention", to reinforce her persona, using "Hedges", when referring to the kind of presentation delivered but also, later, when ironically she states that she could save lives after 20 years without medical practice. Previously, her face displayed a serious expression; she moves her eyebrows upwards just before saying "I do have a medical degree", and uses short movements with her left hand from the podium towards herself, palm facing up to her when the movement happens. Finally, she finishes this excerpt by saying what she is ("civil servant", "bureaucrat"), but being explicit that she knows "who the experts are and who I can ask for advice", enhancing this last idea with a movement of her left hand from the podium upwards towards the audience, palm facing up and partly inwards, at the end of the movement. Altogether, she seeks the solidarity of the audience to allow her to be part of the same discourse community for the duration of the talk.

Speaker says "I'm neither a nurse"

Speaker emphasises "I do have a medical degree"

Speaker tell the audience she knows "who the experts are"

Figure 4. Example of CP14.

All these examples are simply a glimpse of the diversity of kinesic and paralinguistic features found combined with the language used and the interpretation of the intention of the message. Thus, no common patterns are found except for a few traits, which may rely more on the personality and context of the speaker than on the CP itself.

7. Conclusions

Clearly, the limited number of speakers in the sample, and the lack of depth of the analysis conducted preclude any definite conclusions from this study. As mentioned earlier, in a study that involves individuals, results may be affected by several factors that are beyond our control. Nevertheless, we believe that this kind of study focused on the analysis of real academic conference presentations from a long neglected field of research (Nursing), allows us to gain some further insights into the multimodal dimension of CP. More specifically, it provides additional knowledge of the set-up stages, thus making an important contribution to applied linguistics and, hopefully, to the field of Nursing.

Our research has shown that the combination of all the elements analysed, the structure of set-up stages, the metafunctions (ideational and interpersonal), and the use of non-linguistic elements (paralinguistic and kinesic), overall prove the multimodal nature of spoken academic discourse and the need to analyse the different factors altogether. The results reveal that the study of certain items in isolation does not have the same value as when they are contextualised. Some language expressions, disregarding the move where they appear in the text, the function they play, the metadiscourse they represent or the gesture accompanying them, may have a more comprehensive explanation when studied as a whole.

Going back to our research questions, some conclusions can nevertheless be drawn. Our findings have shown that in most set-up stages, there seem to be certain moves or steps that are part of the standards in academic conference presentations. Hood and Forey's proposal (2005) was an accurate one but, as we observed, those components may not be a complete list or a list of pre-established ordered components, even though we expect certain sections to appear, probably at the beginning (thanks and/or greeting).

Those first components, including showing feelings or directly involving the audience, are already promoting the creation of the speaker's persona and the construction of the best relationship with the audience, although the particular context of the conference may modify the components used. Yet the metadiscourse features analysed play a crucial role in the conveyance of interpersonal and interactional meanings. Our findings show some common traits at the same time that they underline the diversity in their use depending on the individual speakers. Some sub-categories seem to be more common and probably more expected than others ("Self-mention" and "Attitude

markers"). Most stance subcategories are used in all CPs, promoting the speaker's personality (especially through "I") and establishing part of the ground for the rest of the presentation. As for engagement metadiscourse, its use is recurrent (mainly "Hearer" by means of "you", and "Thanks", plus "Greeting"), and the results are more varied. All speakers have their own strategies and combination of linguistic forms that enable them to pursue the same goal by means of different tools. Their final aim is to create the rapport, engage the audience and relieve or release both the speakers' and the listeners' inherent tensions.

Another issue mentioned is that the duration of the set-up stage might have an influence on the components or the metadiscourse features included. The results do not completely match this idea. Some longer set-up stages have the highest numbers of components and metadiscourse features, but this is not always the case, since some shorter stages have the same or higher number of elements. Hood and Forey (2005) stated that certain stages in CPs are more likely to show interpersonal features, such as in introductions, greetings and the thank-you discourse, when referring to the contribution of others or when using humour on purpose. However, other examples of audience involvement and building up a feeling of solidarity have appeared in this stage.

Finally, the use of non-linguistic features seems fundamental to complete our analysis. Nevertheless, no clear and conclusive common patterns have been found, so that we can propose a categorisation of the non-linguistic resources used with language. As Hood and Forey (2005: 302) state, "Analyses reveal that the extent and nature of the gestures used vary markedly from speaker to speaker". Those differences suggest the influence of both individual and contextual variables when using gestures. We have observed that Paralinguistics and Kinesics play a relevant role when speaking in public, and in our case, when supporting the creation of the speaker's persona and the relationship with the audience by means of words. In our analysis, pitch or silence, on the one hand, and head and hand/arm movements and gestures, on the other, were used to support the spoken language. The position of the chairpersons, the audience, the screens or even the podium lead speakers to use certain paralinguistic features to fit in such a physical context. Additionally, whether the speaker feels nervous or relaxed (as the two extremes of speakers' feelings), paralinguistic and kinesic traits in combination with words generate the creation of the speaker's persona and rapport with the audience. When speakers display nervousness, they may

gain compassion from the audience and feel protected by the discourse community; when speakers can be seen as more relaxed, audience engagement is easier and their inclusion in the discourse community is taken for granted. At both ends of the same situation, the objective is to prove the speaker's role, to connect with the audience and to create a common feeling of community belonging.

Some limitations must be pointed out. The use of specialised software in multimodal analysis (such as ELAN or Multimodal Analysis Video Software), instead of carrying out a manual analysis, is a future improvement in this study. However, the small number of CPs studied allowed us to focus on a qualitative-based analysis. This sample of presentations needs to be extended in an attempt to reach conclusions that are more practical.

Nonetheless, the step ahead in CP set-up stages, as well as in the discourse of the Nursing field, may lead to some further ideas. We have not studied the effect some gestures or expressions used may have on the audience or the effect that speakers wanted to produce. Although very relevant for the usefulness of verbal and non-verbal features, this research would require an immediate ethnographic study (not possible in our case). Some studies could include the textual dimension related to the one already studied, the use of persuasive strategies or the influence of other visual modes in some other sections of CPs. Finally, yet equally important, this research can also be applied to the classroom, to make Nursing students aware of the existence and co-occurrence of those elements to improve their presentation skills. Our teaching practices cannot leave aside our research, and nurses preparing for a research career may require some training on how to deal with those situations, which are relatively new for their discourse community.

Acknowledgements

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Miguel F. Ruiz-Garrido, PhD, member of GRAPE, is an associate professor at Universitat Jaume I (Castellón, Spain). His main research fields are English for professional and academic purposes. He co-edited *Intercultural and International Business Communication: Theory, Research and Teaching* (Peter Lang, 2006) and *English for Professional and Academic Purposes* (Rodopi, 2010). His latest works appear in *Business and Professional Communication*

Quarterly (2014) and in the book *Multimodal Analysis in Academic Settings. From Research to Teaching* (2016, Routledge).

NOTES

[1] In this paper, we use "discourse community" and "community of practice" as synonyms, even though we do understand the differences they may have.