Storytelling in English and Russian-language lecture discourse

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Abstract
The advantages of using storytelling as a communication strategy are currently discussed in marketing, psychology, advertising, medicine, and education. It is described as an inborn skill that people relate to and which makes people listen. Storytelling is also described as an educational method (Dumović 2006, Pedersen 1995) and as a communication tool (Dahlstrom 2014, Sundin 2018) that can be used widely in education.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze features and functions of storytelling used in academic lectures. For this purpose, three lecturers in Russian and three lecturers in English were analyzed. By means of a mixed-method approach, including discourse analysis and content analysis, it was established that all the lecturers used storytelling as a communication strategy for explanatory and contact-establishing purposes. The conclusion is made that storytelling was used by the Russian and the English-language lecturers to provide their audience with clear and engaging explanations. The lecturers constructed their stories using factual information, emotional and evaluative lexis, verbs of action, as well as discursive strategies that helped them to engage the audience in the topic of the lecture (e.g., the inclusive pronoun *we* and different kinds of questions). Though the stories have much in common, some differences between the stories in Russian and in English are identified. Based on these results, it is suggested that further contrastive studies of storytelling in academic settings can benefit those who are planning on presenting to an international audience or preparing to teach in an intercultural context.
Key words: storytelling, narrative, lecture discourse, communication strategy, persuasion, establishing contact

1 Introduction

Telling stories is a communication strategy that people have been using for thousands of years for a number of purposes. We tell stories at work, at home, in social networks to share our experiences and make our audience see something in a new way. Because a good story can keep listeners focused, storytelling is also a popular rhetorical tool in many professional settings. For example, Jeff Bezos, the Amazon founder and CEO, banned PowerPoint presentations in executive meetings to the advantage of narratives. This was the right decision, according to Carmine Gallo (2018), as people are hardwired for narratives: they tend to listen to stories. Gallo concludes: "Stories inform, illuminate, and inspire – all the things entrepreneurs strive to do" (Gallo 2018). To be effective and move the audience, storytelling should take into account a deep understanding of human emotions, motivations, and psychology (Peters 2018).

Indeed, storytelling is a real "buzz" at present, as everyone is telling their story on social networks or in talk shows (Mlynarczyk 2014). Being described as a modern communication technology / strategy, storytelling relies on long-

established narrative theory and is referred to as "something we all do naturally" (Peters 2018). In essence, narratives rely on oral traditions, "the default mode of human thought" (Dahlstrom 2014), but are adapted by modern marketing techniques (Lux 2019). Basically, storytelling implies a process of creative narrative embedded in professional discourse in order to persuade and inspire (Choy 2017). Successful storytelling has a number of features. Among these features are: the universality of a story, a clear structure and purpose, a character to root for, and an ability to touch emotions (Peters 2018). Choy, citing Sinek (2011), argues that a powerful story should develop around three main categories: Why, How, and What (Choy 2017).

It is worth noting that the terms storytelling and narrative are sometimes used interchangeably. In fact, some researchers specifically argue that storytelling is the same as narrative (see e.g. Hyvärinen 2008, Mlynarczyk 2014). However, a majority of researchers define storytelling as a communication strategy that is implemented via narrative structures (Dahlstrom 2018, Choy 2017, Lin 2014, Lux 2019). Thus, the study of storytelling relies on narrative theories.

The study of narrative has a long history and draws on numerous theories and approaches, including narrative poetics based on the morphological method of study that originated in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century and was further developed by Russian formalists, who decomposed the story into obligatory components (Herman 2005). However, storytelling had appeared long before linguists began to study it. All cultures have stories of greatness and heroism (Chaitin 2003), such as myths, fables, and folktales (Friday 2014). As an ancient oral tradition, storytelling was widely used to impart important truths about life, to entertain, to share memories, and to teach cultural values to both children and adults (Crampton 2020). As argued by Friday, an international school teacher, literacy consultant and professional storyteller: "storytelling was the reason language developed in the first place, as our minds began to inquire, wonder, think" (Friday 2014).

Storytelling and its impact on culture has been widely examined in films and literature (Mizrahi 2019), and in different cultural contexts, such as health promotion (Manchaiah & Zhao 2012) and when sharing diverse cultural experiences for the purpose of cross-cultural understanding (Stevenson 2019). Storytelling has also been studied as a communicative device in science and teaching (Dahlstrom 2013, Dujmović 2006, Lin 2014, Mlynarczyk 2014, Slater & Rouner 2002, Sundin 2018). However, its relevance for the academic lecture has not yet been explored, and few studies compare storytelling in two languages. This paper focuses on storytelling as a communicative strategy used by English-language and Russian-language university professors in their lectures. The purpose of the study is to identify the discursive strategies that help the lecturers construct their stories and also to define the role of storytelling in their lectures.

2 Theoretical background

Recent studies have investigated the beneficial role of storytelling in various professional contexts. It has been pointed out that storytelling is on the rise in marketing and advertising as it creates empathy and connection, and inspires motivation among consumers. Lux points out: "Because of its primal roots, storytelling is a powerful, timeless means to convey important information […]" (Lux 2019).

Much research focuses on the persuasive nature of storytelling. For example, Esther Choy, an expert in business storytelling, observes that " […] at the heart of persuasion lies storytelling" (Choy 2017). This feature is highly valued in advertising and marketing, where storytelling makes consumers relate to the topic at hand. According to Woodside, Sood & Miller (2008), people think narratively; exciting stories based on personal experiences are retrieved episodically from memory. Listening to these stories, people tend to relive the described experiences, which enables them "to experience one or more archetypal myths" (Woodside, Sood & Miller 2008:99) and thus become interested in a product or service.

The persuasive nature of storytelling, often based on personal experiences, is also discussed in research on science settings, where storytelling is considered to be a very effective strategy, for instance, in healthcare where it can be used as a tool "[…] for diagnostics, therapeutics, and the education of patients, students, and practitioners" (Sundin 2018).

Further, storytelling is used as a research method to obtain narratives in order to better understand personal or group perceptions and interpretations. For instance, Vovides & Inman (2013) used video recorded storytelling to obtain collective perceptions of medical education, and argue that storytelling is an effective way of data collection allowing for sophisticated qualitative data analysis. In their study, they found a better understanding of collective intelligence and identified key issues in a Medial Education Partnership Initiative development project (Vovides & Inman 2013). Further, Boldyrev & Dubrovskaya (2016) used interviews and storytelling of the surveyed participants (58 video narratives) to identify thematic nodes and sub-nodes related to the topic of the research. Storytelling is also used in psychology, where individual perceptions and attitudes can be reconstructed by listening to narratives (Zotova 2006).

Another area in which the advantages of storytelling are discussed is education. In this context, it is defined as a scaffolding strategy, a literacy strategy (Lin 2014), and as a pedagogical method (Pedersen 1995). It provides students with a reflective form of academic discourse capable of incorporating various voices and perspectives. Lin summarizes the benefits of storytelling in a classroom: 1) stories appeal to students; they are thematically organized; when students contribute, they feel valued and at the same time they learn to develop "a sense of rhetorical structure"; 2) as storytelling utilizes a wide variety of literary skills, it teaches students to engage the audience; and 3) storytelling teaches students to "exercise their freedom and imagination". Storytelling, described by Lin as "multi-genre, multi-literate, and multi-modal" (Lin 2014:59), encourages students to create and

share their interpretation, structure their narratives and, in general, makes learning more fun.

In particular, storytelling is considered to be a very effective method when teaching young learners. Being absorbed in the stories, the young learners learn important lessons about life. Philp mentions how ubiquitous storytelling is as it appears via different mediums and modes: "Children today experience stories repeatedly via picture books, television, computers, mp3 players and play-stations. Stories are retold by being read aloud, acted out, captured in claymation, or on MTV" (Philp 2009:7).

Philp's ideas of using storytelling as a teaching method are shared by Dujmović (2006), who considers storytelling an important teaching method when working with those students for whom English is not a native language. She argues that storytelling helps to effectively learn a language as it makes it possible to create meaningful contexts and negotiate meanings in those contexts (Dujmović 2006:75). Thus, using stories in language education can provide "[a] motivating and low anxiety context for language learning" (Dujmović 2006:76). Specifically, she argues that since stories are fun, they help learners develop a positive attitude towards learning another language and that stories exercise imagination and help learners share a social experience – to laugh and be angry together. By using inspiring stories, teachers can expand learners' vocabulary, and teach new grammar. Dujmović concludes: "A simple narrative will always be the cornerstone of the art of teaching" (Dujmović 2006:6). In fact, the absence of storytelling has been pointed out as dangerous. For example, referring to tertiary education, Mlynarczyk (2014) argues that not using storytelling would lead to a "[…] disconnect that students experience between their own private worlds and the world of the university with its preference for an 'academic' approach" (Mlynarczyk 2014:10).

In addition to creating emotional involvement, a friendly and creative atmosphere, increased audience attention, and focus, storytelling has entertainment value, something that is arguably also very persuasive, and can be used at different educational stages. For example, Slater & Rounder (2002) speak about "entertainment education" based on narratives and its impact on learners' beliefs and attitudes, claiming that entertainment narratives are very persuasive. The authors argue that people are drawn to entertaining narratives and this can be used in entertainment education with a focus on information processing strategies, that is, "on the variables that determine how persuasive content within narratives may be processed" (Slater & Rouner 2002:176). They state that the degree of the recipient's involvement in the narrative depends on "how well the narrative serves the needs and goals of the reader or viewer" (Slater & Rouner 2002:176), which would create an interest in the plot, the storyline and identification with the characters. The authors conclude that identification with characters and recipients' engagements with the storyline can predict how persuasive the story is going to be. They claim:

> We expect a persuasive impact of this narrative, to the extent of the recipient's sympathetic response to the character's own development and experiences, may lead to at least temporary acceptance of values and beliefs that represent a shift from the individual's existing beliefs. (Slater & Rouner 2002:177)

Summing up, storytelling is argued to be a beneficial communication and educational strategy, and an effective method of data gathering. The main features of storytelling that make it persuasive in communicating science are inductive reasoning, context dependence, and the triumvirate of causality, temporality, and character. Also, as storytelling usually uses situation-based examples from individual experience, it has been argued to facilitate comprehension and empathy (Dahlstrom 2013), a quality that, according to Tannen (2007:46), enhances understanding by creating "an emotional experience of interpersonal involvement". Against this background, this paper focuses on how storytelling is used in lecture discourse in higher education.

3 The study
3.1 Research corpus and methodology
To investigate the use and role of storytelling in lectures, a corpus of three lectures in Russian and three lectures in English was compiled. These are all open lectures presented by well-known linguists to a wider academic audience. The Russian corpus includes an open lecture by Svetlana Ter-Minasova "Language, communication, and national security" presented on 28 April, 2014 at Moscow State University, an open lecture by Tatiana Chernigovskaya "Brain as a great deceiver. How our brains trick us" presented at theBioCard company in St. Petersburg on 3 June, 2017, and an open lecture by Valeria Chernyavskaya "Is communication without language possible: a polycode text" presented on 27 April, 2018 during linguistic readings at the Institute of philology and language communication at the Siberian Federal University.

The English corpus includes the following lectures: a lecture by Lera Boroditsky "How languages and cultures shape the way we think" presented at the School for Advanced Research, Santa Fe, NM on 18 May, 2017, a lecture by Claire Kramsch "Translating culture in the language classroom: an historical challenge" presented at Boston University, Department of Applied Linguistics on 28 February, 2018, and a lecture by Deborah Tannen "The language of friendship: the role of talk in an understudied relationship" presented at the University of California (Berkeley) on 31 October, 2017.

There are approximately three hours of analyzed lecture discourse for each language. The final parts of the lectures in which the linguists answered questions were not included in the study. All the lectures are accessible as videos on YouTube and were chosen for the corpus based on their topic and popularity. All the lectures are devoted to different aspects of communication. The popularity of the lecture is determined by how many times it has been viewed and how many "likes" it has gained. Another criterion for the selection of the lectures is the fact that they are open academic lectures. This means that the linguists present to a varied audience

in terms of background knowledge. The lectures were chosen for the study based on these criteria with the intent to determine whether storytelling was used by well-known linguists in their lectures.

All lectures were transcribed prior to analysis, following a general procedure of recording, transcribing, studying and analyzing the data (see e.g., Tannen 2005:50). By means of discourse analysis, the lecturers' main communication strategies were identified. After that, more attention was paid to the functions of these strategies and the linguistic means that allow the lecturers to apply them. For the analysis of the stories, content-analysis was applied: tables were created in which structural components of the stories and their linguistic representations were specified.

Each story was divided into the three parts identified by Choy (2017): the beginning, the complication, and the ending. In the beginning, the setting of the plot occurs: we are getting acquainted with the context and the characters. In the middle, some complication occurs, and in the ending, the problem is solved and some conclusions about the situation are drawn. All the identified stories in the lecture discourse have this three-part structure.

As mentioned, the stories are identified based on their structure – beginning, complication, and ending. In addition, the inclusion of real characters in the discourse and the use of the past tense when narrating the stories were used as criteria for defining a discourse structure as 'a story'. The decision to include the past tense as a criterion is based on Tannen's (2005:124) decision to "[…]count as stories only those accounts that adhered to the strictest definition, that is, those that told about past events."

Next, the story parts were analyzed in terms of their structures and the linguistic means used in these structures. With the help of context analysis, the role of these means in the story was identified. A further qualitative study allowed me to sum up typical features of storytelling in the lectures in the two languages included in the study, Russian and English.

3.2 Storytelling in Russian-language lecture discourse

The distribution of the stories in the Russian lectures and their approximate total duration in the lecture are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Distribution of stories and their total duration in the Russian lectures

Lecturer	Number of stories	Stories with "villains"	Number of stories with lecturer's involvement	Total duration (min)
Chernigovskaya (LR1)	2	0	2	2.7
Chernyavskaya (LR2)	2	2	1	6.92
Ter-Minasova (LR3)	3	3	3	10.15

The Russian lecturers used a number of similar strategies in their storytelling. The introductory part of the story is used to set the scene and to explain the context. In

this part of their stories, the lecturers use factual information profusely. Examples include: *...the 90-s during the times of economic changes[1]* (90-е годы в эпоху экономических перемен); *MMM, various investment funds* (МММ, всякие финансовые фонды); *Hermes and the like* (Гермес и тому подобное); *entered post graduate school in 1992 in Herzen university* (в 92-ом году поступила в аспирантуру в РГПУ имени Герцена); *near Gostiny Dvor* (рядом с Гостиным Двором) (LR2); *university of Bergen* (университет Бергена); *in 2008* (в 2008 году); *Hokdal* (last name) (Хукдал) (LR1).

While reconstructing the context and describing the complication of the story, the lecturers use emotive lexis to enhance the level of their personal involvement with the story. In the following example from LR2, the lecturer uses the words *proud, smartly, deftly, profitably* to convey her and other people's emotions when they trusted all the information the got on television, only to be swindled by monetary funds later on:

> I remember being very proud that I had sold my voucher so smartly, deftly, and profitably near Gostiny Dvor, the voucher that I was given as a property equivalent right after the collapse of the Soviet Union (…)
> Я помню, как я была горда собой, что я свой ваучер, который мне дали как вот такой эквивалент права на собственность после разрушения Советского Союза, как я умно, ловко и выгодно – думала я – для себя продала возле этого Гостиного Двора… (LR2)

The stories in Chernigovskaya's lecture, although short, combine emotional lexis with direct speech for a stronger effect. To exemplify, in one of her stories she discusses her surprise about the information that she learned in one research paper:

> I am saying: "So you are the author of this horror?" He says: "Yes, I am the author of this horror." I say: "Can it really be true?" He says: "That's true, nothing can be done." What a calamity.
> Я говорю: «То есть ты автор этого ужаса?» Он говорит: «Да, я автор этого ужаса». Я говорю: «Что, неужели, правда?» Он говорит: «Правда, ничего не поделаешь». Ну, в общем, беда (LR1)

Ter-Minasova, who includes more stories than the other two lecturers in her lectures, supplies factual information with her emotions related to the events described:

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[1] All the examples are translated from Russian into English by the author.

> I was in Japan as a lecturer (…) It started with some kind of a fiasco as I came to give a lecture at the department of international relations in Hokkaido University in the city of Sapporo for the first time. I stood up, spread my papers(…).I had to sit down which made me deeply unhappy as the classroom there was not like here, an amphitheater. It was flat (…)
> (…) я была в Японии, читала там лекции. (…) Началось все с некоторого фиаско, потому что я пришла читать лекции на факультет международных отношений в университете Хоккайдо в городе Саппоро, в первый раз. Ну, встала, бумажки разложила (…). Мне пришлось сесть, что сделало меня глубоко несчастной, потому что аудитория была не такая как тут, амфитеатром. Она была плоская, ровная (LR3)

> But on one beautiful day I was in a bad and quarrelsome mood and, having read this document, I thought: "And why am I mentioned somewhere in between the students' dormitory and the cafeteria?"
> Но вот в какой-то прекрасный день у меня было плохое и склочное настроение и, прочитав этот приказ, я подумала: «А что это я где-то между общежитием и комбинатом питания?» (LR3)

As we can see from these examples, the factual information about the context is used together with emotional vocabulary such as *fiasco, deeply unhappy, flat* (about a classroom), *beautiful day, bad and quarrelsome mood.*

In the explanatory part of the story, the lecturers often use action verbs (rather than stative verbs) that help the audience visualize the story. Some examples of these verbs include *a document arrived* (приходил приказ), *it was written* (было написано), *provide with translators* (обеспечить переводчиками), *to present* (выступить) (LR3).

The lecturers also use direct speech in their stories imitating the voices of those involved in the narrative. This use arguably enhances the feeling of a dialogue with the audience. Tannen, for example, refers to such use of direct speech as "constructed dialogue" and argues that it makes communication "more vivid, more effective" (Tannen 2007: 39), and elaborates thus on the reasons why constructed dialogue is effective:

> I believe it is because the creation of voices occasions the imagination of the scene in which characters speak in those voices, and that these scenes occasion the imagination of alternative, distant, or familiar worlds, much as does artistic creation. Finally, the casting of ideas as the speech of others is an important source of emotion in discourse. (Tannen 2007:39)

Further strategies used in the direct-speech sequences are embedded questions and exclamations where the lecturers express their emotions. These seem to have the effect that the audience become more engaged in the topic of the lecture. Further, the lecturers also used contact-establishing means to enhance the explanatory potential of their stories.

Table 2 summarizes and exemplifies the above-mentioned strategies.

Table 2. Contact-establishing strategies used by the Russian lecturers in their stories.

Discursive strategies enhancing the explanatory potential of the story	Examples of these means
Different kinds of questions addressing the audience and stimulating the thinking process	What are we to do in this situation? Нам что делать в этой ситуации? (LR1) Why are you bothering us? What did we say wrong? What did we do wrong? What do you want to write in your report? Что вы к нам пристали? Что мы сказали не так? Что мы сделали не так? Что в протоколе вы хотите написать? (LR2)
Exclamatory sentences which are often combined with questions, and help demonstrate the lecturer's involvement with the story	Phillipe who was 5 then, now 6, shouted at me: "Grandma, you don't understand! Monsters are good. People are bad!" Do you realize what it means?! Филиппок, 5 лет было тогда, сейчас 6, закричал мне: «Бабушка, ты не понимаешь! Монстры хорошие. Это люди плохие». Вы представляете?! (LR3)
The inclusive pronoun *we,* which unites the audience with the lecturer and the addressing pronoun *you,* which enhances the dialogue between the lecturer and her audience	We, ex-Soviet citizens, took our money. We reacted to these messages because they were broadcast on TV. Мы, бывшие советские граждане, относили свои деньги. Мы реагировали на эти сообщения только потому, что они транслировались по телевидению. (LR2) And you know that before the elections there is the quiet day on which the constitution forbids any kind of agitation … . И вы знаете, что перед выборами всегда есть день тишины, когда

	конституционно запрещена всякая агитация … . (LR2)
Introduction of a constructed dialogue	I say: "In what sense?" "In the sense – sit down and give your lecture while sitting." Я говорю: «В каком смысле?» «А вот в таком – сядьте, читайте сидя». (LR3)

Of the seven stories that were identified in the Russian lectures, only one story is not about the lecturer's personal experience (LR2). However, Chernyavskaya provides an explanation why this story is relevant to the topic of the lecture and how she learned the story. Thus, 86% of the stories are based on the lecturers' personal experiences.

The characters involved in the stories in the Russian lectures include: post-Soviet people being deceived by monetary funds; people of the Khanti-Mansi Autonomous District tricking the police during the last days of governor elections (LR2); a colleague from the university of Bergen; the lecturer's friends and some gardening society (LR1); students and colleagues from Hokkaido University; the rector of the university where the lecturer works; her grandchildren and their infatuation with monsters (LR3). In five out of seven stories (71%), the lecturers are struggling with some kind of injustice performed by so called "villains" in the complication part. In the end of the stories, the lecturers win and this produces a great explanatory effect. At the same time, the story seemingly increases the audience's level of empathy, its emotional involvement, and its identification with the lecturer.

3.3 Storytelling in English-language lecture discourse
The distribution of the stories in English and their approximate total duration in a lecture are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of stories and their total duration in the English lectures.

Lecturer	Number of stories	Stories with "villains"	Number of stories with lecturer's involvement	Total duration (min)
Boroditsky (LE1)	5	0	2	6.92
Kramsch (LE2)	8	1	2	17.73
Tannen (LE3)	9	2	5	10.25

As can be seen, the English-speaking lecturers have more stories than their Russian colleagues. Interestingly, their stories are not about a struggle with a "villain" or an

unfair situation, but are mostly (86%) concerned with fragments from reality that vividly illustrate the lecturer's point.

In the introductory part of their stories, the lecturers use information that describes the context of the events in the story. Thus, the true-to-life effect, as in the stories of the Russian lecturers, is constructed by means of factual information. For example, Tannen uses her colleague's real name *Amy Shalden* with the evaluative adjectives *very creative, so young*. Further, concrete language with verbs illustrating actions help the audience visualize the story. Examples include *recorded, were playing, weren't born* (LE3).

The complete stories abound with emotional and evaluative words that help the lecturers express their attitudes towards the described events and, hopefully, elicit similar emotions in the audience. For instance, when Boroditsky discusses the many ways in which the same story can be presented, she uses the story in which Dick Cheney shot his lawyer friend in the face in a hunting accident. The phrase "So that's very nice of him" makes the audience laugh; it expresses the lecturer's sarcasm towards this situation, and this fully resonates with the audience:

> This is Cheney's interview where he took full responsibility for the event. He said: "Ultimately, I'm the guy who pulled the trigger and fired the round that hit Harry. And you can talk about all the other conditions that existed at the time, but that's the bottom line. And it was not Harry's fault". So that's very nice of him. (LE1)

Similarly, when Kramsch talks about her research at the start of the lecture and begins her explanation about how she got interested in studying culture and linguistics, she uses a story about her own personal experience. It is not just an enumeration of events, but a vivid story filled with emotions in which she uses exclamations and direct speech:

> And I found all of a sudden one day a transcription of German conversations transcribed in a conversational analytical way. And I said: "That is conversation! That is real living language!" And that was the beginning of my launching interest in discourse analysis, conversation analysis and the whole field of second language acquisition and Applied Linguistics. (LE2)

Evaluative emotional lexis can be found in most of the lecturers' stories. Below is an example from one of the stories told by Tannen in which she expresses her evaluation using the expression "So very creative at so young an age…":

> Well, you know, they tell you in many of these nursery schools: "You can't say you can't play". They know that. So they told her she could play and one who was assigning roles said: "You can be the baby brother, but you weren't born yet." She gave her a non-speaking part. So very creative at so young an age…" (LE3)

To help the audience visualize the story, the lecturers use verbs of actions: *he popped the balloon; he broke the pencil* (story 2, LE1); *she came to America; some*

of the things that we asked and some of the things that we did (story 3, LE2); *are walking around the lake; she stopped in her tracks* (story 8, LE3).

Similarly to the stories told by the Russian lecturers, the ending of the stories have strong explanatory potential. Interestingly, many story endings make the audience laugh, which is something that never occurs at the end of the stories in Russian. Below is the example from story # 1 told by Tannen in her lecture to demonstrate the different conversational styles of men and women:

> So wives get together, guys get together. And one evening his wife said to him: "Isn't that terrible that they're getting divorced?" And he had no idea! He said they had played tennis every week for months, years. "But", - he said, "the topic of his marriage never came up." (LE3)

In sum, the main features that the English-speaking lecturers demonstrate when constructing their stories are: 1) emotions and real characters; 2) involvement in the story to demonstrate events from personal experience; and 3) situation complication which, when solved, affects the audience's understanding. A clear structural organization of a story, typical of a good narrative, keeps the audience focused and willing to learn what is going to happen next.

The discursive means that help the lecturers establish contact with the audience are similar to those used by the Russian lecturers. Table 4 summarizes and exemplifies these strategies:

Table 4. Contact-establishing strategies used by the English-speaking lecturers in their stories.

Discursive strategies enhancing the explanatory potential of the story	Examples of these means
Different kinds of questions addressing the audience and stimulating the thinking process	So this is like a police lineup, like eyewitness memory lineup. Can you remember who did it? (LE1) She didn't know what to answer. "I'm white" – was that the answer to this question? (LE2) Anybody's here from South Carolina? This friend of mine is from South Carolina. (LE3)
Exclamatory sentences that help demonstrate the lecturer's emotions about the story	So there you have a French person teaching a Chinese how to teach German in the United States. Now, that was interesting! (LE2)

	And she said: "I can't believe it! I told them I couldn't do it and they put me on the committee anyway." (LE3)
The inclusive pronoun *we,* which unites the audience with the lecturer and the addressing pronoun *you,* which enhances the dialogue between the lecturer and her audience	There's only so much stuff that *we* can pay attention to. And what *we* see here are speakers of different languages witness exactly the same events but come away remembering different things about that event. (LE1)

…because there was someone in the audience who said *we* don't need to read Kafka or anybody else in German anymore, we can read him in English. (LE2)

Like dried kiwis, dried apricots – things *you* take with you on a hike. (LE1)

I can't resist telling *you* though that I also encountered a very direct observation where it didn't work with someone who didn't share that style. (LE3) |
| Introduction of a constructed dialogue | When I asked her: "Have you ever tried to share your experience as a Korean in your language class?" And she answers: "I wonder if this example can be the answer." (LE2)

So she said: "Fine, I'll call her up and see if she wants to see up, if she's free." She called the other person, the other friend, said: "So and so is in town, he'd like to see you, do you wanna see him?" She said: "Yes, sure, bring him over." (LE3) |

The English-speaking lecturers use fewer exclamations in their stories (not in their lectures) than their Russian colleagues who often combine exclamatory sentences

with questions. By way of comparison, there are no exclamations in Boroditsky's lecture. It should also be mentioned that Tannen does not use inclusive *we* in her stories (she does in her lecture, though).

In only three (14%) out of the 22 stories, the English-speaking lecturers struggle with a so-called "villain" in the complication part. Many stories have a humorous effect and make the audience laugh. The lecturers are present in nine stories out of 22 (41%). This is much lower than the presence of Russian lecturers in their stories (86%), which are mostly based on their personal experiences. English lecturers include stories about their research – how they gathered data, and how they conducted experiments – more often than their Russian counterparts

4 Conclusions

The use of storytelling in an academic context has several obvious advantages. Among these advantages are: connecting with the audience (Colmenares 2017); engaging the audience "to understand the process and credibility of scientific reasoning in communicating science while preserving its objective nature" (Dahlstrom & Scheufele 2018); creating compelling science stories that are understandable to those who make decision about funding (Sundin 2018); communicating the findings of research (Enfield 2018); and, finally, strengthening students' and scholars' thinking and writing skills, inside and outside of academic contexts (Mlynarczyk 2014). Dahlstrom (2014) views storytelling as an important strategy when it is necessary to communicate science to a wider audience. Storytelling helps to cut through the "information clutter" and resonate with the audience.

This study shows that three Russian-speaking and three English-speaking lecturers use storytelling as a communication strategy in their lectures in similar, but also different ways. For all six lecturers, their stories, being emotional, evaluative, and filled with true to life information from their own experiences help provide their audience with clear and engaging explanations. We can sum up the similar features as follows; all stories include:

- a clear-cut structure with a beginning, a complication in the middle, and an epilogue;
- the presence of real-life characters (sometimes so-called "villains") that complicate the situation;
- the use of emotional lexis and verbs of action;
- a connection to the lecturers' personal experiences: it might be a situation they were personally involved in, or something they read about or observed. There are also stories about how research or experiments were conducted.
- the use of different kinds of questions, exclamatory sentences, inclusive pronouns *we*, addressing pronoun *you*, constructed dialogue.

The results also show some differences in the use of storytelling by the Russian- and English-speaking lecturers, summarized as follows:

- The stories by the Russian-speaking lecturers tend to be more dramatic in the sense that 71% of their stories involve "villains" as characters of their stories;
- The Russian lecturers prefer to use stories from their own personal experience;
- The English-speaking lecturers use more work-related stories about how they conducted their research or how they organized their experiments. Their stories often have a humorous effect and make the audiences laugh at the end. Russian lecturers do not have such stories.

Further, the results show that storytelling is a more popular strategy with the English-language lecturers than with their Russian counterparts, suggesting that there might be a typical English or Russian 'lecture narrative' of interest for further contrastive studies of storytelling in an academic setting. The description of such typical 'lecture narratives' would be of benefit to those who are planning on presenting to an international audience or preparing to teach in an intercultural setting. In sum, the topic of storytelling can be further developed in terms of its intercultural specifics. That said, to draw verified objective conclusions, it is essential to expand the research corpus to include lectures from different disciplinary fields.

As a last note, it is of interest that the stories can be defined as 'persuasive' in the sense that Aristotle's three modes of persuasion – ethos, pathos, and logos are all clearly present. The stories use ethos by introducing a character whose actions are understandable to the audience; this is someone who the audience sees as "being credible and trustworthy" (Leighfield N/A). Pathos is the emotional component of the story. Emotionally charged language helps speakers make their audience feel what they want them to feel, and empathize with them. Logos represents the logic of the story. The data that the lecturers use in their stories appeal to the audience at the logical level and convince it of the presented viewpoints.

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