

Conventional metaphors in English as a Lingua Franca: an analysis of SPEECH metaphors in three academic seminars

Abstract

In the present article, I study the language used in three English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) digital marketing seminars, in which the tutor gave feedback about the ‘pitches’, (i.e., short marketing speeches), presented by students in the same session. As this activity involved making reference to what students said in their ‘pitches’, the seminars provide ample evidence for the metaphorical construction of SPEECH activity by the participants in the seminars. The analysis shows that these ELF speakers mostly adopted pre-existing and conventionalised metaphorical models used in English and that they do not attempt to incorporate other source domains, except for one, which I have labelled STORYTELLING, as it associates pitch delivery with telling a story. However, at the level of linguistic metaphors used, greater use of unconventional metaphors can be found although mostly adapted and consistent with the conceptual models identified. In general terms, metaphor innovation in this English as a Lingua Franca context seems to be ‘norm following’ rather than ‘norm transcending’.

Keywords: Metaphor, English as a Lingua Franca, Speech activity, English Medium Instruction

1. Introduction

Classified under the category of ‘semasiological conformity’ (Schmid 2020), metaphor is one of the many linguistic devices used by speakers to show semantic compliance with linguistic norms. As with the rest of norms, conventional metaphors make explicit or implicit reference to a speech community, which would be the one sanctioning the metaphors that are acceptable in a specific language (see, e.g., Philip 2017 for a comparison of acceptable metaphors in English vs Italian). The problem arises when communication takes place in English being used as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Cogo 2009, Mauranen 2012, Seidlhofer 2011). Which conventions or norms do these speakers adhere to? English, those of their L1 or, as the ELF literature suggests (Hall 2018), a set of pragmatically determined conventions arising from interaction in these multilingual contexts?

To answer these questions, the main difficulty lies in that conventionality is an elusive issue. Unlike, for example, lexis or grammar, metaphor is not usually codified in reference works, among other things because metaphorical mappings or conceptual metaphors¹ can be described at different levels of generality (Grady 1997). Besides, there are few inventories of conventional metaphors (e.g., MetaNet²) and, in the case of the few studies dealing with ELF (Pitzl 2018; Franceschi 2013), the focus of attention has been put on creativity and not conventionality, probably as a result of the above indicated problems in establishing a community of reference that sanctions a specific metaphorical use.

There is, however, an important prediction made in connection with the special status of certain conventional metaphors that is worth exploring in depth, especially because it is

related to the multilingual nature of ELF contexts. According to it, ELF speakers would show a preference for a group of conventional metaphors, those with more basic and embodied meaning (i.e., primary metaphors) at the expense of those more culturally specific. Pitzl (2018), the researcher who proposed this hypothesis, provided evidence mostly based on idioms. However, additional research is necessary to expand the scope of analysis and include single-word metaphorical expressions. Simultaneously, it seems appropriate to limit the analysis to a specific target domain in order to facilitate a more comprehensive exploration of how ELF speakers employ metaphors.

To this end, I analyse the metaphors produced during the interaction of three different groups of international students attending an EMI seminar dealing with the subject of digital marketing at a Spanish university. In the seminars, participants were required to give feedback to their peers, which obviously meant referring to their colleagues' pitches³. As a consequence, these sessions provided a privileged context to study a particular target domain, SPEECH, and the language, metaphorical or not, that participants used to refer to it. Moreover, the choice of the SPEECH domain made it possible to draw on the extensive literature that has already identified its most typical conventional mappings (Reddy 1979, Lakoff and Johnson 1980, Johnson 1987, Grady 1998, Semino 2005, 2006).

The article is organized as follows: after reviewing existing ELF literature on metaphor and the main analyses of Speech as a target domain, with special attention to the most important source domains mapped onto it, I provide a detailed account of the corpus used and of the procedure used for the identification of speech metaphors. Next, in the results section, I first compare the metaphorical and non-metaphorical language employed to refer to speech events in the corpus and then I identify and exemplify the most important metaphorical source domains used in the seminars. Finally, in the conclusion section, I discuss some of the main implications of the analysis carried out.

2. Metaphor in ELF

In keeping with Seidlhofer's (2002) initial focus on 'unilateral idiomaticity', i.e., idiomatic language not understood by the participants in lingua franca interactions (e.g. 'let's call it a day' interpreted as 'what a nice day', [Prodromou, 2007]), the scarce ELF metaphor research has mostly focussed on idioms (Pitzl 2009, 2012, 2018; Franceschi 2013), defined by Pitzl (2018) as "semantically opaque or semi-transparent conventionally [sic] metaphorical expressions" (p.45). This means that the general approach in ELF has been to focus on multiword metaphorical expressions, which inevitably leaves out many other one-word metaphors⁴ and is in contrast with many mainstream metaphor researchers, who adopt a much more comprehensive approach (MIP, Pragglejaz 2007, MIPVU, Steen et al. 2010), from which ELF could also benefit.

Moreover, the focus by ELF researchers has been placed on the lexical, syntactic and morphological variation of idioms and therefore on how conventionality may have been violated at the level of the linguistic form (e.g. 'draw the limits' instead of 'draw the line' or 'to my head' instead of 'to my mind', see Pitzl, 2018, p. 107). Indeed, the conceptual level has not remained unnoticed and an example can be seen in Pitzl (2018), who undertakes, in chapter 6, an exploration of why "concepts like spatialization, embodiment or container metaphors [...] would be more likely to be

shared by speakers with different L1s” (Pitzl 2018: 56). She showed that this may be the case by searching for terms (e.g., feet, toes, faces, eyes, head, etc.) relating to the source domain of the BODY. However, this attention to the conceptual level is not typical in ELF researchers, as their approach to metaphor often diverges from the interests, methodologies, and topics that capture the attention of mainstream metaphor scholars.

Another important aspect, also related to conventionalisation of metaphor, is the role in ELF interaction of accommodation, defined as “the systematic use of the same or similar metaphor vehicles across turns” (MacArthur 2020: 352). This can be anticipated by its attested status not only in L1 (Cameron 2008), but also in L2 contexts (MacArthur and Littlemore 2011, MacArthur 2016). In the case of novel metaphors, this systematic use is like a ‘temporary pact’ (MacArthur 2020) made by interactants to refer to and convey certain concepts, ideas or attitudes that are important for the discourse. As suggested by Pitzl, accommodation is essentially a ‘pragmatic process’ (2018: 166) in which interactants deliberately or unconsciously converge with their interlocutors in their use of metaphor.

Finally, the pragmatically oriented thrust of metaphor analysis in ELF has led researchers to increased attention to the functions of metaphor. Pitzl (2018) enumerates a series of functions which can be ascribed to two main groups: a) interpersonal/social, which would include rapport, solidarity, humour, mitigation, or projecting stance; and b) ideational/transactional, which would comprise emphasizing, summarizing, discussing abstract concepts. These two groups of functions roughly correspond to the social and communication functions proposed by Franceschi (2013), which in turn allude to the broad Hallidayian ideational and interpersonal functions (Pitzl 2018: 155). However, as pointed by MacArthur (2020) these two main functions need to be completed with the textual function, also mentioned by Halliday (1994) and extensively substantiated in L1 discourse (Herrmann 2013).

3. SPEECH metaphors

By speech I not only include those metaphors referring to a speaker's verbal activity (e.g., from the corpus used in this article: ‘anything you wanna point out about her speech?’), but also metaphors used for the whole communication process, including the communication response or reception (e.g., ‘the main purpose of the speech is to catch the audience's attention’). This perspective is shared by Kövecses (2010) and Sweetser (1987), among others. Research on SPEECH in a narrower sense has focused mainly on verbs, but this research only deals with speech acts and not with other word categories such as nouns that refer to speech activity more generally, which are also important for the present study.

The main metaphorical model for explaining human communication belongs to Reddy (1979), who proposed the CONDUIT metaphor. According to this view, communication involves sending or transferring ideas (or any other mental content, which Reddy refers to as Repertoire Members) by means of linguistic signals (e.g., words) with the aim of being understood by our interlocutors. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) expanded on this model and disaggregated the metaphors making up the CONDUIT metaphor into three main mappings, i.e., IDEAS AND MEANINGS ARE OBJECTS; LINGUISTICS EXPRESSIONS ARE

CONTAINERS; and COMMUNICATION IS SENDING. Grady (1998), in contrast, rebuts both these accounts and suggests that many of the mappings involved are not exclusive to the speech domain but are the result of basic mappings (i.e., primary metaphors) used in many other contexts and not just communication. According to Grady, it is not possible to posit a “unified scenario involving the transfer of containers from one person to another” (1998: 14). Semino (2005, 2006) agrees with Grady's view, but takes a corpus-based approach and finds that many Speech metaphors can be interpreted in terms of a physical scenario. The physical scenario is not based on a set of conceptual metaphors, but on the different source domains that speakers resort to when referring to Speech. These source domains, ordered by their relative frequency are TRANSFER (of Objects), VISIBILITY/VISUAL REPRESENTATION, PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION (of Objects), PHYSICAL AGGRESSION, MOVEMENT, PHYSICAL PROXIMITY, PHYSICAL PRESSURE, and PHYSICAL SUPPORT. In the present article, I will primarily draw on this classification, mostly because it is based on a corpus study and because it integrates the main findings of the previous studies.

4. Methodology

Data and tools

The data analysed in this article comes from a subsection of UNDISCLOSED NAME corpus (Author et al. 2021) that contains nine EMI seminars on marketing and business administration topics at six European universities in six different countries (Spain, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway). The analysis focuses on the three EMI seminars at a Spanish university (35,414 tokens), which consisted of presentations of an “elevator pitch”. The seminars lasted 90 minutes each and followed a similar structure with a short 30-second pitch followed by feedback and a longer 90-second pitch followed by group comments. The seminars were preceded by theoretical classes on the pitch and digital marketing communication.

Linguistic metaphors were tagged in the corpus following the MIPVU procedure (Steen, et al. 2010). The researchers participating in the UNDISCLOSED NAME project extensively analysed the corpus for metaphorical expressions using the guidelines outlined in this procedure, although with slight variations (Author, forthcoming) mostly referring to the consideration of certain multiword expressions (e.g., phrasal verbs) as analysable given the processing preferences of L2 speakers. Primarily focusing on open-class words, they identified both the basic and contextual meanings of each word. If these meanings differed significantly and exhibited distinct semantic features, the word was flagged as being used metaphorically.

To ensure the reliability of the coding process, a similar triangulation procedure to the one proposed by Stampoulidis et al. (2019) was followed. Thus, after the initial marking of metaphors was completed by the author of this article, i.e., a first person method or 1PM (ibid.), the results were cross-checked by another researcher from the UNDISCLOSED NAME team completing a second person method or 2PM (ibid.). By comparing their findings and resolving any discrepancies through discussion and consensus, a high level of coding consistency was achieved in the process of metaphor tagging. This was finally completed by a quantitative analysis where the interpretation of the researchers was subjected to a reliability test (third person method or 3PM).

In the 3 PM stage, the researcher's metaphor tagging was compared to those generated by two other team members, different from those involved in the 2 PM stage discussion, by selecting a sample of 1,500 words from the seminars. Given that the procedure involved multiple researchers (or raters) and was centered around assessing a categorical variable (i.e., determining if a word qualifies as a metaphor), we applied the Fleiss Kappa test using the irr package within the R programming environment. The results of the test are highly significant ($p < .000$) and show a strong agreement (cf. Bolognesi, 2017) between the raters ($\kappa = 0.797$).

The source domains of conceptual metaphors referring to SPEECH were then identified by the author by analysing the linguistic metaphors in context and establishing their target. The reliability of this analysis was done by carrying out a comparison of this categorisation with that of two other researchers of the team. In this case, the categories used were the same that will be developed in the article (i.e., MOTION, CONTAINMENT, SIGHT, REIFICATION/CONSTRUCTION, TRANSFER, STORYTELLING, OTHER) and the reliability test applied was also the Fleiss Kappa. The results were also significant ($p < .05$), but the kappa value ($\kappa = 0.542$) lower. This moderate agreement is probably more related to the difficulty in identifying the metaphors referring to SPEECH than to the actual discrepancy in the categorisation.

Participants

The seminars studied clearly fall within the features identifying ELF as can be seen by the participants involved (see Table 1) and the distribution of home countries and mother tongues (see Figure 1 and 2).

Table 1

Participants background information

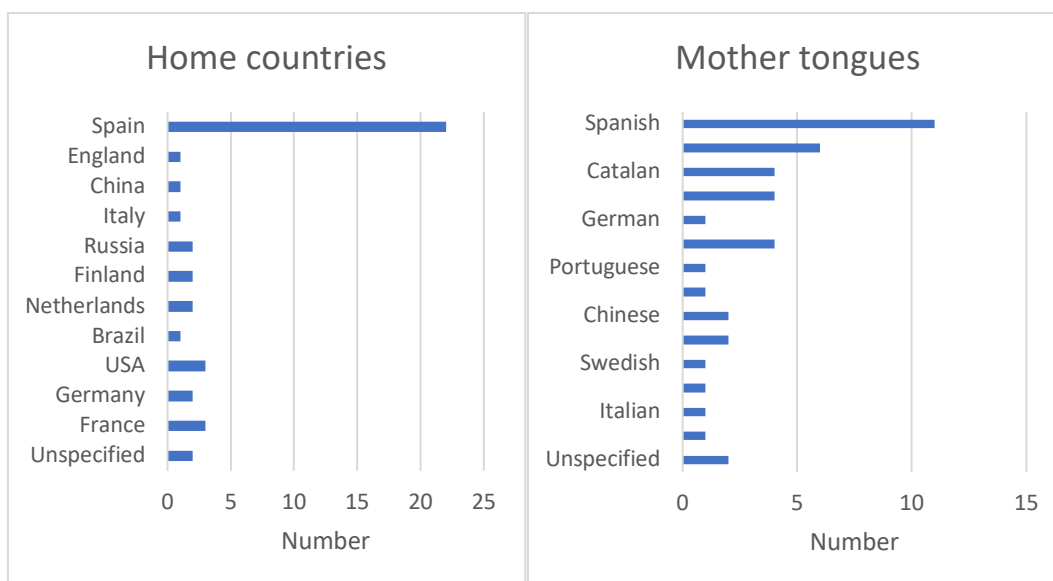
Seminar	#	Home countries	International students	Mother tongues	Gender	Average age
Seminar 1	14	6	6	8	7 F 7 M	21
Seminar 2	14	7	6	8	11 F 3 M	21.1
Seminar 3	11	6	4	5	7 F 4 M	21.6

Figure 1

List of home countries

Figure 2

List of mother tongues



5. Results

5.1. Metaphorical vs non-metaphorical SPEECH

a. *Speech or pitch*

First, the data were analysed to identify the extent to which participants referred to their presentation in non-metaphorical terms (by using the word ‘speech’) or metaphorical terms (an [elevator] pitch). The analysis of the two expressions showed that they were used almost interchangeably and were considered close synonyms, which shows that speakers were not aware of the metaphorical meaning of the second word. The frequency of use of both expressions was similar, with "speech" appearing 125 times and "pitch" appearing 112 times. The lack of exploitation of the source domain BASEBALL in the discourse supports the hypothesis that the speakers were using "pitch" in a terminological way with no awareness of the cultural references as source domains.

b. Non-metaphorical SPEECH

The words used to refer to the domain of SPEECH in a non-metaphorical way are the ones to be expected (see Table 2). I only deal with nouns and verbs as it is difficult to find other word classes expressed literally. Thus, the most frequent verb is ‘say’, which is used 257 times, followed by other general SPEECH verbs like ‘talk’, ‘tell’, ‘speak’, typically used by participants to refer to the presentation their colleagues have made (e.g., *cut the part where you say you are Dutch*). Similarly, they use nouns like ‘speech’, used to talk about the actual presentation, ‘name’, whose frequency is due to the self-introduction students make at the beginning of the speech (*My name is Raul and...*), and other vocabulary items like ‘word’ and ‘question’, used to refer to elements in their pitches. In general terms, the non-metaphorical vocabulary referring to Speech that was found in these seminars would seem to follow the lexical simplification strategies characteristic of ELF contexts: “the most frequent items tend to be even more frequent” (Mauranen 2012: 116-7).

Table 2

Frequency of non-metaphorical and metaphorical types in the corpus

	Verbs	Nouns
LITERAL 925 (52.8%)	Say (257) Talk (55) Tell (39) speak (32) read (31) ask (24) mention (22) hear (17) explain (12) understand (12) prove (12) differentiate (11) listen (11) agree (8) develop (4) pronounce (3) state (3) improvise (3) specify (3) convince (3) discuss (2) summarize (1) list (1)	speech (125) name (47) word (29) question (18) voice (17) example (16) speaking (15) tone (11) language (10) message (10) anecdote (9) comment (8) statement (8) speaker (4) introduction (4) answer (4) sentence (4) argument (3) advice (3) listener (3) detail (3) talk (2) phrase (2) critique (1) adjective (1) conversation (1) silence (1)
	Total tokens: 566; Total types: 23	Total tokens: 359; Total types: 27
METAPHORICAL 828 (47.2%)	give (51) add (31) make (29) catch (16) get (15) break (14) put (13) go (13) run (12) keep (12) have (10) miss (9) do (9) express (9) pull (9) hit (9) apply (8) set (7) feel (7) take (7) build (6) allow (6) settle (5) move (5) connect (5) transmit (5) sound (4) prepare (4) bring (4) share (4) stop (4) let (4) aim (4) acquire (4) structure (3) flow (3) change (3) attract (3) sell (3) polish (3) come (3) leave (3) split (2) project (2) cut (2) separate (2) fill (2) mix (2) stand (2) follow (2) stress (2) link (2) emphasise (2) shorten (2) lose (2) introduce (2) switch (1) end (1) wrap (1) play (1) exchange (1) combine (1) treat (1) form (1) skip (1) present (1) start (1) generate (1) stretch (1) base (1) throw (1) condense (1) understand (1) reinforce (1) develop (1) relax (1) align (1) rise (1) engage (1) bear (1) stick (1) rush (1) area (1) say (1) carry (1) appeal (1) act (1) send (1) fix (1) deliver (1) twist (1) hurry (1) work (1) inject (1) avoid (1) internalise (1)	pitch (96) thing (69) part (31) structure (14) end (14) mark (12) sense (12) stuff (9) area (8) pace (7) story (6) script (6) feedback (6) middle (6) asset (5) content (5) message (5) account (5) touch (4) aim (4) storyteller (3) stage (3) turn (3) ice (3) contact (3) strength (2) emphasis (2) answer (2) job (2) name (2) engagement (2) bit (2) speed (2) piece (2) magic (2) voice (2) capture (1) baggage (1) feeling (1) set (1) summary (1) side (1) trick (1) feature (1) back (1) package (1) subject (1) start (1) break (1) stop (1) treat (1) approach (1) section (1) intrigue (1) vehicle (1) actor (1) sandwich (1)
	Total tokens: 446; Total types: 96	Total tokens: 382; Total types: 57

c. Metaphorical SPEECH

The situation of verbs and nouns used to refer to SPEECH metaphorically is different. Not only are there a number of tokens that is very similar to those used non-metaphorically but, what is more significant, the number of types for both parts of speech is greater, which indicates that in the case of metaphorical framing of Speech there is greater variation, and therefore less lexical simplification, than in its non-metaphorical counterpart.

However, repetition is still found in the most frequently used metaphorical lemmas and they correspond to semi-fixed conventionalized combinations belonging to two main groups: *light verb constructions* and particle/prepositional verbs. Thus, light verbs such as ‘give’, ‘make’, or ‘put’ collocate with nouns such as ‘facts’ or ‘point’, which generally correspond to what Reddy (1979) calls Repertoire Members, i.e. the material that is communicated (see Table 3). For their part, particle/prepositional verbs are also frequently used metaphorically with the frequent use of verbs such as ‘give away’, ‘point out’, ‘put out’, or ‘get through’.

Table 3

Frequent light verb constructions with a metaphorical meaning

Light verb	Repertoire Members (RM) found in the corpus
Give	Fact/number/sense/speech/example/pitch/information/something/idea
Make	Point/sense/contact/explicit/clear
Put	Emphasis/information
Get	Attention/feedback/sense/comment/advice/message

Overall, I found a greater proportion of metaphorical words (47.2%), which is indicative of the importance of this figure of speech in the seminars.

5.2. Main metaphorical source domains used in SPEECH representation

My approach to analysing the metaphorical sources related to SPEECH is based on Semino's (2005, 2006) work, which differs from the common practice of finding specific conceptual metaphors, as most of the studies discussed in section 3 do. Following her example, I will organize this section according to the main categories of source domains that were used in the seminars to talk about this specific domain (see Table 4 for a summary of their distribution in the corpus).

Table 4

Quantitative distribution of source domains in the corpus

SOURCE DOMAINS	Tokens		Types	
	#	%	#	%
SOURCE AND PATH OF MOTION	117	13.2	36	16.1
GOAL OF MOTION	31	3.4	4	1.8
CONTAINMENT	116	13.1	29	13.0
SIGHT	91	10.3	30	13.5
REIFICATION/ CONSTRUCTION	223	25.1	34	15.2
TRANSFER	195	22.1	14	6.3
STORYTELLING	24	2.7	8	3.6
other	90	10.1	68	30.5
Total	887	100	223	100

a. Source and path of MOTION: thematic initiation and progression

An important preliminary remark should be made so that the scope of this source domain is properly understood. In the seminars, there is no rich description of SPEECH activity as motion. To be more specific, JOURNEY metaphors, which is how other researchers (e.g., Semino et al. 2018) have referred to this systematic use of metaphor, are not fleshed out in the most typical manifestations found in their corpora (e.g., journey, route, path, pathway). In contrast, the metaphors identified in my corpus display a more limited range of types and a narrower variation in the vehicles used, mirroring the metaphorical patterns observed by Cameron (2003) in classroom discourse. More strictly speaking, they could be connected to the source-path-goal schema and the related primary metaphor ACTION IS MOTION ALONG A PATH, or rather to a subcase that could be phrased as SPEAKING IS SELF-PROPELLED MOTION ALONG A PATH since the perspective adopted is ego-moving.

The reference to this schema is reflected, in the first place, in the use of two very general, or neutral, motion verbs like *go* and *move*. The use of *go* in the seminars, as is

also the case with *continue*, is mostly connected to interaction management, i.e., to indicate when to start (or proceed with) a pitch, usually in student-student exchanges ('Do you wanna go first?').

Move is used by the lecturer to refer to the progress made by the students in their delivery of the pitch. The implication is that the different elements in the speech are like stages in the progression of the discourse:

- (1) I think it was very good [the pitch]...because you move forward from questions (Lecturer [Lect], L1=Spanish)
- (2) when you have to pause two seconds breathe in breathe out and move forward (Lect, L1=Spanish)

The last example also shows how the idea of motion is sometimes implicitly combined with its opposite, i.e., the lack of progress in the speech. The lecturer conveys the idea that it is sometimes necessary to 'stop for air' before 'moving forward'. This idea is taken up by two students when they say:

- (3) when you 're going to say something important stop and then (Student [St] : EOR, L1=Spanish)
- (4) you could make some stops like before you said before you say this random fact ... it will catch even more the audience's attention (St: EAN, L1=Catalan/Spanish)

As a result, the idea being emphasized, both by the teacher and the students, is that this shift between motion and stasis is important in making a good speech.

A second set of metaphors in this group focusses on the manner of movement. This is the case of a verb like *skip*, which is used to convey an idea that is usually associated with the journey scenario, i.e. the obstacles typically found 'en route'.

- (5) yes so like skip the never that then like (St: ESE, L1=Swedish)

In contrast, participants use another manner verb, *flow*, to map smooth steady motion onto pitches and to indicate that the pitch does not meet significant obstacles in its thematic progression:

- (6) going to well it 's going to flow more naturally okay (Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (7) have to read it anymore it will flow more naturally i think okay but (Lect, L1=Spanish)

Finally, attending to the structure of the MOTION domain (Sullivan 2013), a relevant element, also related to manner, is the 'speed of motion', which is profiled in many of the expressions referring to SPEECH. This dimension is expressed by means of different linguistic resources like the use of verbs like *hurry up* and *slow down*, nouns like *pace* and *speed*, or adjectives like *fast* and *slow*. The emphasis on this element is connected with an important characteristic of 'elevator pitches': their compact nature. Since students only have 30 seconds for the pitch delivered for the whole group and 90 seconds, for the one given to the split group, it is important that they strike a balance

between the need to provide information in such a short time and the need not to give the impression of being rushed.

Overall, the importance of MOTION in the corpus used is highlighted not only by a great number of tokens (117, making up 13.2% of speech metaphors) but also by the highest number of different types (36). This high number of types indicates that the model is really productive in this context. Its main function would be to refer to and evaluate one of the main difficulties students are faced with in their delivery of their pitch: time.

b. Goal of MOTION: successful pitch

This group of metaphors is also related to MOTION, but I deal separately with them because they are used to focus on the destination of that movement, fitting the primary metaphor ACHIEVING A GOAL IS REACHING A DESTINATION. Most of the metaphors in this group are used to frame the criteria describing a successful pitch and they are fundamentally related to two aspects: time constraints and main point(s) addressed in the pitch.

As already indicated, time is of the essence in the production of ‘elevator pitches’ given the scarce time available in business communication. Thus, many of the expressions produced refer to the need to stick to the time limit trying not to go over or under it. This idea is mostly emphasized by the lecturer, who repeatedly uses the expression *hit the (ninety/thirty-second) mark* (7 times) to remind students of this requirement. In other cases, the *hit the mark* metaphor is mixed with a reference to the time constraint as an explicit destination:

- (8) you have long words that can give you like more the sense of desperation about about not hitting the time and also when you have so much information well you are you get anxious about well i 'm not getting there i 'm not getting there i 'm not getting there (Lect, L1=Spanish)

The second ingredient for a successful pitch refers to the clear identification by students of what they want to communicate or as the lecturer puts it in the slides introducing the theoretical part of the lesson “knowing your goal will allow to communicate more efficiently and confidently” (personal communication).

- (9) what straight to the point straight to the point yeah (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (10) she can offer and it was very straight to the point but but clear (St: EBB, L1=Catalan/Spanish)

Some of these metaphors are reminiscent of the CONDUIT metaphor described by Reddy (1979):

- (11) to well to have your message well straight through through people ok (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (12) that helps you to get your message straightforward eh through people yeah (Lect, L1=Spanish)

In general, it can be said that, although participants are using quite a lot of conventionalised motion metaphors as seen in the previous section, GOAL metaphors are less frequent (only 31 tokens) and mostly the result of repeating the same types (4).

c. Combining MOTION and CONTAINMENT: amount of information in the pitch

Even if the CONDUIT metaphor as a unitary whole has been subjected to criticism (Grady 1997), the idea of metaphoric containment is undoubtedly present in the language used to refer to everyday communication: “You are *putting* too many ideas *into* a single sentence” (Kovácses 2010: 26). The question that arises is whether this same metaphor is present in the language ELF speakers use to refer to specialized forms of communication like the ‘elevator pitch’.

As can be seen from the following examples, which are all from the lecturer’s speech, the metaphor is mirrored by the participants in the seminar, with the pitch acting as a CONTAINER:

- (13) things that you can pull out to give or well put in the pitch to give a more sense about
(Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (14) what can you take from the ninety second to put into the thirty second one what can
(Lect, L1=Spanish)

This mapping is reinforced with the use of other verbs, in combination with prepositions, which can be considered as variations on the basic notion of CONTAINER :

- (15) can use on your ninety-second pitch is to inject a-little bit of emotion to it so think
(Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (16) to be condensed a little bit yeah so maybe take out some erm some things some facts
(Lect, L1=Spanish)

Sometimes, this metaphorical model is so entrenched, as shown by the 116 instances (13.1%) found in the corpus, that participants produce metaphorical expressions that are unconventional although perfectly understandable from the context in which they are used (Gibbs 2017, Pitzl 2018):

- (17) to see you are going to notice if you need to pull out some things from the speech so
(Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (18) what you can do is when you check on it again pull out some things that you might
(Lect, L1=Spanish)

The metaphorical construal of the pitch as a CONTAINER also brings with it the associated metaphor of CONSTITUENTS ARE CONTENTS (Grady 1998). In this case, this means that the pitch is not just a recipient, but it also has the function of holding a whole array of communication contents, which go beyond the ‘ideas’, ‘emotions’, ‘thoughts’ or ‘meanings’ originally pointed by Reddy (1979) as Repertoire Members and are also built metaphorically. In a way, the CONTAINER metaphor is also profiling the reification of the discourse in which ELF speakers seem to follow the conventional patterns of use typical of academic language (Herrmann 2013).

d. Visual metaphors: main ideas

Visual metaphors have usually been listed under the conceptual metaphor –also classified as a primary metaphor– UNDERSTANDING IS SEEING, which have been shown to be so productive in general discourse (Danesi 1990, Sweetser 1991) and in the academic language used with L2 speakers (MacArthur et al. 2015).

According to Semino (2005), a first group of visual metaphors is closely associated with the CONTAINER schema, as “understanding corresponds to the emergence of the meanings/contents from the words/container” (p.21). However, in my corpus there is only one use of *reveal*, and even so, the sentence used is not completely conventional (see ex.19).

- (19) interesting story can use Cosme to reveal the the speech what about the being a (Lect, L1=Spanish)

It is interesting to note here the case of *give away*, used 17 times by the lecturer. Its most conventional and frequent meaning in Native English⁵ contexts would lead us to assimilate it to *reveal*. However, its contextual meaning, obviously related to unconventional use, is certainly one of TRANSFER, not to the unveiling or disclosure of concealed information, as there is a reference to the handling over of information to the audience during the pitch:

- (20) yeah this is very hard to to accomplish to give away a lot of information without e giving the sense that we 're running e against time (Lect, L1=Spanish)

Most frequently used are other visual metaphors, very conventionalized in ENL contexts, already present in the lectures introducing the seminars. There, the lecturer, as shown in his slides, defines ‘elevator pitch’ as “a short speech that communicate[sic] a clear message” or advises students “to have certain things cleared before writing your speech”. He obviously does not refer to a message that is 'easy to see' but to one that is 'easy to understand' (MacMillan Dictionary, senses 5 and 2 respectively). It is then no surprise that examples like the following can be found:

- (21) but erm it 's not that it 's not very clear okay but it was a great great exam (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (22) but otherwise the information was clear for me i would xxxx contentwise it is (St: ETB, L1=French)

Another group comprises conventionally used expressions from the visual domain. They include metaphors already mentioned by Semino (2005): *point out*, *show*, *focus* or *look for*. This last expression is particularly useful to highlight the main objective, or message, of the pitch (see also Cameron 2003):

- (23) I just missed what you are looking for (St: EMS, L1=Spanish)

Less conventionalized are those metaphors referring to examples where the visibility of the ideas to be communicated is achieved not as a result of the emergence from a CONTAINER but as a product of a non-specified movement resulting in physical isolation. Thus, speakers convey the idea of distinctiveness or salience, which are so important in the business world to achieve ‘market visibility’, or as in the present case, to achieve ‘personal visibility’ in the labour market. Physical distance or separation are, in consequence, a good means to express this:

- (24) a human being e can help you to well to separate and differentiate you from the rest (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (25) along life that help you to set you apart from the rest okay yeah (give it up) (Lect, L1=Spanish)

- (26) that can help can help you to set you apart because if you have been studying in (Lect, L1=Spanish)

In the corpus analysed, visual metaphors are the least frequent of all source domains. I have identified only 91 instances amounting to 10.3% of the total speech metaphorical tokens. As the main use of these metaphors is to highlight the main ideas in the speech, it seems safe to say that the ideational function is predominant.

e. Reification and physical construction: speech planning

So far, the metaphorical language used by both the lecturer and the students has mostly made reference to the delivery of the pitch. But there are other metaphorical expressions that are intended to refer to the conscious work students need to do to prepare their pitches. One could say that the focus here is more on the pitch as a 'product' than as a 'process'.

Some of the metaphors used in this group –*make* and *add*– were already pointed out by Semino (2005). As in her corpus of written English, the main metaphorical uses of these two verbs are also conventionalized in the spoken language of ELF users. However, it is possible to see here a certain degree of variation in the use of these verbs with the introduction of metaphorical *do* (*did a speech*) and the use of verbs like *connect* or *break*.

However, it is also possible to find other expressions mapping, onto the pitch, the specific domain of BUILDING. This would parallel the conventional metaphor ARGUMENTS ARE BUILDINGS (e.g., 'we need to construct a strong argument for that' Lakoff and Johnson 1980: 125), which emphasizes the idea that the pitch is also a rhetorical artifact that needs to be designed as a house or a building:

- (27) pieces of context that helps you to build the story so that would be one thing (Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (28) the sides because it helps you like reinforce your message okay great great (St: EMS, L1=Spanish)
- (29) when you e when you give away strong statements with a-lot of (Lect, L1=Spanish)
- (30) i really liked that the way you structured it it shows very motivation and (St: EAM, L1=Catalan/Spanish)

This metaphorical model accounts for the highest number of tokens (223) and a high number of types (34). Indeed, this tally is related to the inclusion in this group of one of the metaphors most frequently used in academic spoken discourse (Swales 2001), i.e., the word *thing*, when used as a synonym for 'word'. However, the diversity of types used also indicates that it is a truly productive source domain. Besides, it is within this particular domain that the textual function is most evident, as numerous metaphors are employed to describe various elements of the pitch as a genre.

f. Transfer: the audience

I have already explained that the seminars had as their goal to practice the ‘elevator pitch’ as part of students’ training in digital marketing and that the use of the word pitch already implied that the idea of transfer was present. The pitch would thus be a type of speech that is ‘thrown’ like a baseball at an audience. This can clearly be seen in the following example from the lecturer:

- (31) if you use the ninety seconds pitch just to give and throw away a lot of information it’s going to the the the other person is going to feel overwhelmed about the how much information you are giving them (Lect, L1=Spanish)

However, the word ‘pitch’, as it is used in the seminars, is a clear example of a terminological metaphor. The participants, not even the lecturer, seem to be aware of its metaphorical motivation. No examples where the word is used in a context suggesting its origin or where its meaning is ‘opened’ (Knudsen 2003) can be found. Not even the use of *catch*, which could be considered as the reverse side, seems to explicitly refer to this conceptual metaphor as this verb is mostly found under the form of the very conventional collocation ‘catch someone’s attention’. Look, for example, at this exchange where the formal variation of the verb (catch/ caught/ caught/ capture) can only be considered as an example of metaphor (in this case, lexical) convergence or alignment:

- (32) St. [ECF, L1= Spanish]: well i really like the way she start because em it 's a way to catch our attention
 Lect.[EPF, L1=Spanish]: okay yeah <propername> elsa </propername>
 St. [EEP, L1=not provided]: i think the same because i i think that is so original the beginning and catched up my my attention
 Lect.[EPF, L1=Spanish]: okay great i <propername> seija </propername> were you
 St. [ESE, L1=Swedish]: i was just thinking about the really strong start like you caught the audience interest that deal with asking a question it 's
 Lect.[EPF, L1=Spanish]: how did e how how did she managed to to capture your attention at the start at the beginning

This does not mean that the transfer meaning is not frequent. On the contrary, metaphorical transfer expressions are very frequent in the seminars as they are instantiated by the regular use of light verbs mentioned above (*give* and *get*). These verbs, although delexicalized, express the idea that the production of a pitch by a student can be construed “in terms of the transfer of physical objects from one person (the speaker) to others (the addressees)” (Semino 2006: 48). Other verbs used similarly, but clearly not as frequently, are *deliver*, *transmit*, or *share*.

This is yet another metaphorical model which, by presenting the pitch as the transfer of objects, is objectivizing or reifying communication. But in this new metaphorical model, where ditransitive verbs are frequent, a new element is being incorporated. The thing being transferred is profiled together with the audience or the listeners, i.e. the recipients, to use the term from Frame Semantics. As highlighted by verbs such as *get* or *catch*, which already perspectivized the transfer from the point of view of the recipients, when delivering the pitch, the audience is of paramount importance:

- (33) giving away the important information that you want to share with the with the public
 okay oh yeah (Lect, L1=Spanish)

Together with PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION, this source domain ranks among the most frequently used (195 tokens and 22.1% of the total speech metaphors). The smaller number of types (14) makes it, however, a bit less productive. Again, the explanation may lie in the fact that a frequently used word like *pitch* is classified in this category.

g. Storytelling or drama: enacting the pitch

Apart from a few metaphors drawing on BUSINESS (like *sell*, 3 times, or *asset*, 5 times), this source domain is the only one not included in the list compiled by Semino (2005, 2006). Besides, it is also the only model where the very few direct metaphors found in the corpus to refer to SPEECH can be identified. This indicates a conceptualization of the pitch being made explicit, although surprisingly this conceptualization is not present in the lecturer's notes (i.e., slides) in the introductory class to the seminars studied here. Here is the example where the lecturer makes this comparison explicit:

- (34) she is looking for a new experience and all that stuff and that helps you to give more sort of a storytelling figure to the to the pitch great great (Lect, L1=Spanish)

And this comparison is echoed by a student, who relates it to the streamlining process that is necessary to produce the pitch:

- (35) in thirty or ninety seconds you're not going to explain your whole life or your whole cv it's like a story yeah (St: EJR, L1=Catalan)

Naturally, the model is also used, this time indirectly, in many other cases:

- (36) brand and telling compelling brand stories are two of my main skills an (St: ESE, L1=Swedish)
 (37) but as Annelie told er told us she is a storyteller all right so you can say (Lect, L1=Spanish)

And it is also extended to include elements of fiction:

- (38) forward from e questions i mean from some kind of intrigue to you were talking about (Lect, L1=Spanish)

However, the story being told is not written on paper, it is more a story represented as a theatre piece:

- (39) remember e i told you you can practice like the actors do e in front the mirror so you can t-- you can see yourself and see what kind-of gestures you are (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (40) moving she was he was sorry he was acting in in the stage very natural and so one thing (St: EAN, L1= Catalan/Spanish)

This association is further reinforced by the use of the word *script* to refer to the notes students can use while giving their speech:

- (41) one of the things you can do is to look at the script and look for things (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (42) so em when you have your well the content the script of your ninety-second pitch (Lect, L1=Spanish)
 (43) you have way too much information on your script or maybe you have very long words (Lect, L1=Spanish)

While the quantitative results may imply a limited significance of this source domain (accounting for only 24 tokens and representing 2.7% of the total), it is essential to highlight qualitative aspects that could provide a clearer indication of its importance in the discourse. In this regard, STORYTELLING not only is a model that clearly moves away from the conventionalized patterns described by Semino (2005, 2006) and but it is also the only one where a direct metaphor is employed. Using Müller's (2008) terminology, one could say that these are 'cues' of this model's greater metaphoricity. Since many of these metaphors are used by the lecturer, their main function is interactional, i.e., trying to persuade students that just delivering the pitch is not enough, that they need to craft it and engage the audience in experiencing it. It seems very likely that this last conventional metaphor conforms a coherent scenario that is pragmatically developed and adapted for the context of the seminars. In preparing their pitches, students need to first write a script that contains the ingredients of a good play, which means incorporating moments of intrigue and other fictional resources that are particular to any type of storytelling. After that, like actors, students need to rehearse their script in front of a mirror, and do it again and again, which is why the lecturer emphasises the idea of practice ("Practice, practice, practice" he repeats). Finally, when delivering their pitch, students need to be very aware that they are doing it in front of an audience whose attention needs to be caught. This coherent scenario is clearly a pedagogical device particular to this context, although it is clearly based on a metaphorical framing that the specialised literature on the pitch as a marketing genre has previously pointed out as a crucial rhetorical resource to be successful (e.g., Daly & Davy 2016, Kreutzer 2022, Morgan & Wright 2021).

6. Conclusion

The present article has studied the metaphors used to refer to SPEECH in the context of three EMI seminars. In this specific setting, I have been able to examine the extent to which participants in the seminars have drawn on conventionalized metaphorical models described for ENL contexts, a type of analysis missing in the ELF literature.

A first conclusion concerns the fact that the corpus analysed shows a balance between the literal (52.8%) and the metaphorical expressions (47.2%) referring to SPEECH. There is little research against which these figures can be compared, essentially because metaphor density has not been a subject in the ELF literature, and the studies from other areas such as L2 written discourse (e.g., Nacey 2013) calculate densities taking into account the whole text rather than a specific domain. Semino's (2006) work stands as the most comparable reference available for evaluating these figures, but it should be taken into account that she analyses L1 discourse. In her work, she reports a density of 22% in the category of Narrative Representation of Speech Acts, i.e., the verbs used by the narrator to report the speech act performed by a character. Compared to Semino's figures, the results obtained in the present study show a notably higher percentage of metaphor use. Although no apparent reason can be found for these results, it can be hypothesised that salience of SPEECH in feedback discourse makes it necessary for participants to draw on different expressive resources (metaphorical and non-metaphorical) and that metaphors would be used to introduce variety. However, in both literal and metaphorical expressions, a similar process of lexical simplification or overrepresentation of the most frequent expressions is in place as expected from an ELF context (Mauranen 2012).

Moreover, by focussing on what Schmid (2020) calls the level of the ‘underlying conceptual metaphors’, it is possible to conclude that participants in the seminars make use of many of the conventionalized models present in English (Semino 2006). Thus, in the corpus, it is possible to identify the presence of source domains such as PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION, TRANSFER, MOTION, VISIBILITY and CONTAINER that are frequently used in ENL contexts, even though the first three models seem to be more entrenched and productive. Equally noticeable is that these models seem to be connected to primary metaphors (Grady 1997, 1998) such as ACTION IS MOTION ALONG A PATH, ACHIEVING A GOAL IS REACHING A DESTINATION, CONSTITUENTS ARE CONTENTS and COMMUNICATION IS SENDING. Both these findings should be complemented by the absence of culturally rich models like BASEBALL. This would indicate that participants in the seminars do indeed draw on well-established models in English when referring to Speech and that Pitzl’s (2018) prediction that primary metaphors, in so long as they are embodied and based on experiential correlation common to all humans, would be shared by ELF users is probably an accurate guess. However, these conventionalised metaphors are complemented by the use of an additional model that is attuned to the particular communication needs of the seminars and is not typically used to talk about Speech more generally. This is the model I have labelled as STORYTELLING/DRAMA. Its use is not very frequent, but its importance derives from the fact that it is the only one where direct metaphors can be identified and that is mostly used by the lecturer, although with some convergence from a student, to persuade students of some the actions they need to undertake to improve their pitch. This persuasive use has a clear pedagogical function and conforms a coherent metaphorical scenario that previous scholarly work (Daly & Davy 2016, Kreutzer 2022, Morgan & Wright 2021) exploring the rhetorical structure of the pitch have already recognized as established and therefore as conventionalised within the field of Marketing.

At the level of metaphorical expressions, it can be said that a great majority of them can be described as conventional and that most probably, as in cases of terminological conventionality such as the word ‘pitch’, their metaphoricity is not noticed by the participants in the seminar. This would not be always the case as metaphorical extensions or variations identified in episodes of convergence (e.g., catch/caught/capture) could be considered as ‘cueing’ greater metaphorical awareness (see Müller, 2008). However, there are also examples of unconventional metaphors, although they mostly correspond to phraseological units and most importantly to phrasal verbs (e.g., *pull out*, *give away*). What is interesting in these cases is the fact that the context of use makes these unconventional uses perfectly understandable, among other things because they seem to fit perfectly conventional conceptual metaphors. Following Pitzl (2018), these examples could be labelled as ‘norm following’ innovations since they are not created from scratch.

Finally, the situated analysis carried out has allowed us to specify the different uses or functions that each of the models has in the overall discourse used in the seminars. These roles are the thematic progression towards a successful pitch that MOTION metaphors express, the reference to the main ideas of the pitch through VISUAL metaphors, the careful planning of the pitch incorporated into the discourse via PHYSICAL CONSTRUCTION, the incorporation of the audience by the use of ditransitive TRANSFER expressions and the comparison of the pitch delivery with STORYTELLING or DRAMA.

Overall, the approach undertaken in this study has provided a comprehensive depiction of the metaphors employed to describe SPEECH. It is important to acknowledge that this analysis only captures one aspect of metaphor use within the seminars, and that drawing broader conclusions regarding metaphor use in ELF requires examining a larger number of speech events and a wider range of metaphors.

Expanding the scope of research would enable exploration of aspects related to variation in metaphor use that are pertinent in lingua franca settings. A potential avenue for future exploration involves examining the extent to which metaphors originating from specific usage contexts are influenced by the speaker's native language (L1). Such an investigation would shed light on the interplay between L1 influences and the emergence of metaphors within ELF discourse, which can be related to many other elements such as the role of the speakers or their L2 level, to mention but two major constraints.

Moreover, an important aspect to consider is the type and frequency of the metaphors employed. Thus, it seems important to conduct further research on the significance of primary metaphors in ELF contexts. This investigation would shed light on the extent to which ELF speakers rely more extensively on these metaphors due to their heightened embodiment.

All in all, this study has attempted to lay the groundwork for a more nuanced understanding of metaphorical expression in ELF, yet further research encompassing a broader array of metaphors and speech events is essential to draw more comprehensive conclusions and address the complexities of metaphor use in lingua franca contexts

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¹ As well as being used in the more restrictive sense that indicates that they have a cognitive status (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff & Turner 1989), a controversial subject for the more linguistic-oriented research, the notion of conceptual metaphor is more generally used to refer to conventionalised metaphors. Thus, Cameron (2008), who defines conceptual metaphors as those that “are conventionalized across a speech community” (p.208), or Hampe (2017), citing Gibbs (2014), refers to them as “‘stabilities’ that ‘emerge’ in bigger groups and over larger timescales than that of face-to-face interactive encounters” (p.16).

² <https://metaphor.icsi.berkeley.edu/pub/en/index.php/Category:Metaphor>

³ The use of the term ‘pitch’ to designate this genre is metaphorically motivated:

Pitch has been usually defined using the baseball pitcher metaphor (Belinsky & Gogan, 2016) and the elevator pitch cliché (Denning & Dew, 2012). The baseball metaphor supposes a person (the entrepreneur) throwing an idea (pitching) to a specific audience (stakeholder) (Belinsky & Gogan, 2016). The elevator pitch cliché, on the other hand, represents the idea of an oral presentation occurring in the time lapse of an elevator ride (e.g., from the first until the tenth floor), in which an innovator has to be able to sell his or her idea to an investor on [sic] such a short time (Sabaj et al., 2020: 55)

⁴ Pitzl (2018) explicitly excludes from her analysis “examples for (creative) use of ontological or spatial metaphors” (p.90) and Franceschi (2013), although not excluding single words from her analysis (included when “based on an underlying metaphor” [p.82]), seems to have disregarded most of them given their scarce density (0.22%) in her corpus.

⁵ Throughout the document I will stick to the term English as a Native Language (ENL) to refer to the context where English is spoken by a majority of native speakers.