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Gender differences in the use of oral narratives of personal  
experience by EFL learners

Tesis para optar al grado de Magíster en Lingüística con mención en Lengua Inglesa

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## **Abstract**

The main purpose of the present study is to account for the oral narratives of personal experience in the interlanguage of Chilean Spanish speaking male and female learners of English. More specifically, the study intends to describe gender differences and similarities in the use of structure elements, the use of extra thematic details, and types of outcomes.

The analyzed corpus consists of 30 narratives of personal experience in English. These narratives are made of 502 clauses, 289 of which were produced by male learners, and 213 were produced by female learners. The eliciting technique was a structured interview, where the informants were asked to narrate about an experience of fear of death, their happiest or saddest experience, and the most embarrassing situation they had experienced.

The results confirm the presence of gender differences in the interlanguage of the Spanish speaking learners of English, which are consistent with the literature about gender differences in monolingual studies. Also, even though gendered patterns were detected, the results suggest that there is a need to account for the intragroup differences, as indications of an important internal variation was also present.

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## **Introduction**

In this research work, the distinguishing features between men and women found in the interlanguage of Spanish speaking learners of English will be described. This has been attempted by means of the analysis and comparison of the oral narratives of personal experience from a group of male and a group of female English L2 learners.

Narratives of personal experience have received an important focus in linguistic studies in the last 20 years, especially since Labov and Waletzky (1967) proposed a model of narrative structure. The subject of study has mainly addressed the issues of linguistic development and narrative development. Furthermore, in the area of language learning, they have been interested in the lexical variation, morphosyntactic precision, crosslinguistic influence and length of the narratives in intergroup comparisons (Pavlenko, 2008). Nevertheless, little information is available regarding the oral narratives in the interlanguage of learners of English.

Coupled with narrative discourse, studies of gender have been conducted using narratives of personal experience to find out differences and similarities in the discourse of men and women. Mainly, the focus of this body of research has been put on issues such as length, coherence, topic selection, use of details and social relations (Kashdan et al., 2007; Buckner and Fivush, 1998; Knight et al., 2005, just to name some). As a result, a lot of insightful information has been gathered and published. Nevertheless, this information has largely been elicited from monolingual speakers, and the differences and similarities in the discourse of men and women have mostly been accounted for in their first language.

At the same time, the English of nonnative speakers has increasingly gained attention from linguists (Tarone, 2005), as English has become a widespread language used all over the world. Correspondingly, the study of these Englishes' developmental system (or interlanguage) of nonnative speakers has become relevant so as to provide information about the different varieties of L2 acquisitional patterns.



In Chapter 2 of this thesis, the structural elements of the narratives of personal experience and some prominent and representative studies are examined. Also, the topic of gender differences in general and gender differences in narratives are addressed. Additionally, the subject of interlanguage and second language learning are described and discussed. The discussion in this chapter attempts to establish the theoretical foundations to support the rationale and analysis for the study reported in this thesis. In Chapter 3, the methodology which guides this study is introduced in detail. A description of the corpus and the informants as well as the procedures of collection and data analysis are described and explained. Chapter 4 is then devoted to report the data analysis and the results of the study. This section includes tables and figures to illustrate the differences and similarities found in the data. This chapter is organized in subsections which are number of clauses, narrative structure, extra thematic details and outcomes. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn from them. This chapter is organized using the research questions as a guide to present the main findings. Additionally, the limitations and projections of the present study are discussed.

# **1 Objectives**

In order to delimit the scope of the present research work, the following objectives have been established:

## **1.1 General objectives**

On the basis of Labov and Waletzky (1967)'s descriptive model of the oral narrative of personal experiences, the present study aims at accounting for the systematic differences in the discourse structure of the oral narratives of personal experiences of adult male and female speakers of English as a foreign language. Furthermore, based on Johnstone (1993)'s descriptive model, the study is intended to give an account of the use of extra thematic details, the social representation that they elaborate of themselves and others, and the action of the protagonists, mainly in terms of the notions 'being there' or 'intervening,' as proposed by Johnstone (1993).

## **1.2 Specific objectives**

1.2.1. To describe the discourse structure of the oral narratives produced in English as a foreign language by adult male and female persons, following Labov and Waletzky (1967)'s descriptive model of oral narratives.

1.2.2. To describe a) the use of 'extra thematic details' in the oral narratives of personal experience made by adult male and female persons who are non-native speakers of English, and b) the manner in which the narrator presents himself / herself and others as 'personas' in their narratives.

1.2.3. To determine, by following Johnstone (1993)'s model of oral narratives, whether the respective personal narratives referred to above represent or involve 'community constructions', (i.e. narrative constructions that involve more than one participant taking part of the action and resolution of the problem in a cooperative way) or 'contest constructions' (i.e. narrative constructions where there is a challenging situation)

1.2.3. To compare the discourse structure of the oral narratives of personal experience of adult male and female persons who are non-native speakers of English on the basis of both Labov and Waletzky (1967)'s and Johnstone (1993)'s descriptive models, in order to determine the gender differences and similarities.

1.2.4. To make a quantitative description of the similarities and differences found in the oral narratives of personal experience, made by adult male and female persons who are non-native speakers of English.

1.2.5. To determine the frequency of occurrence of the extra thematic details found in the oral narratives of personal experience made by adult male and female persons who are non-native speakers of English in order to establish any possible systematic tendencies followed by each gender group.

1.2.6. To make a qualitative comparison between the findings made in the study proposed here and those made by Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Johnstone (1993) in their studies of the performance of native speakers of English.

## **2 Literature review**

Narratives have been widely used as tools to elicit language for different uses. There are two basic types of narratives used for language studies, namely: fictional and of personal experience (Pavlenko, 2008). These two types of narratives share characteristics, but the purposes for which they are used differ considerably.

On the one hand, fictional narratives are narratives elicited by the use of non-verbal prompts such as flashcards or videos. They are normally used to study cross linguistic influence in the development of language learners, in terms of grammar use, vocabulary and narrative competence (Pavlenko, 2008). They are particularly useful to keep a fixed referent as stimuli and thus they help in obtaining similar and comparable samples of language for the purposes of analysis.

In turn, obtaining comparable information facilitates the establishment of similarities and differences between samples and subjects. Nevertheless, it has been observed that the retelling of fictional narratives creates a breach between children of different social classes. This breach can arguably be overcome when narrating about personal experiences (Shiro, 2000). This is so because narratives of personal experience are based on the speaker's own background experience and knowledge. Also, narratives of personal experience offer the possibility to study language socialization (Pavlenko, 2008) and for the study of sociolinguistic variables that affect language learning.

In the arena of language learning and development, the factors of age, social class and gender have been described as affecting sociolinguistic variables. Several studies have been conducted in order to determine the ways they affect language learning and development (Pavlenko, 2007; Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990; Labov, 1972). The purposes of these studies were to report inequalities or to overcome the difficulties detected in the classroom. For instance, male students holding the floor for long periods make it difficult that women participate too during communicative

interaction. The results have led to theories of social stratification (see section 2.3.2 below) and frameworks of analysis of gender differences (described below in sections 2.3.3 and 2.4).

In this context, Pavlenko (2008) claims that to learn a second or foreign language allows people to perform their gender in a different way from the way in which they do in their native language. This is an interesting claim as it suggests that it might be possible to describe particular gender behaviors by examining the interlanguage of people (see section 2.2 below). Gender differences have mostly been described in monolingual psychology studies (see Buckner and Fivush, 1998) and also in relation to language learning as an aspect of classroom interaction (see Pavlenko, 2008). Despite this work, there is yet little research on the description of gender differences in the state of interlanguage of advanced learners of English.

Correspondingly, the following sections attempt to describe the work done regarding narratives of personal experiences (see section 2.1 below). Additionally, the definition and delimitations of the term interlanguage (described in section 2.2 below) is provided, followed by the description of the most important sociolinguistic factors that affect language studies (see section 2.3 below). Finally, relevant studies regarding gender differences found in discourse studies and studies of gender differences in narratives are presented and discussed (see section 2.4 below).

## **2.1 Narratives of personal experience**

Some studies have been developed using the narratives of personal experience as the source of data, as explained by Pavlenko (2008). The author describes that the elicitation techniques can vary: some correspond to the use of key words to elicit certain specific information (e.g. Berman, 1995), questions in an informal or formal interview to direct the topic selection (e.g. Labov, 1972), and the request to tell specific stories about a particular topic (e.g. Pavlenko, 2003).

Regarding the selection of languages to be elicited for a study, Pavlenko (2008) states that it depends on the research questions that have been established for individual studies. Some bilingual studies elicit narratives in the first and second language (e.g. Koven, 2002). On the other hand, other studies require to elicit narratives in one of the languages of the bilingual informants (e.g. Schmid, 2004).

A good example related to the elicitation of both languages from bilingual informants is Koven (2002), who gathered the data in both the first and second language of his 23 informants. To this purpose, the author applied a formal interview and then compared the information with the data gathered in informal conversations. The narratives were elicited in Portuguese and French and, when compared, they revealed a similar narrative schema, but also noticeable cultural differences in the use of context.

On the other hand, an interesting example of elicitation of narratives in the first language is Schmid (2002). In this study, the researcher collected narratives in the German spoken by 35 German Jewish that were forced to move from their country and learn a new language because of the holocaust. The second language of the informants differed, depending on the country that received them. The objective of the study was to examine the effects that the desire of distancing from Germany had in their first language. The results suggested that the attrition displayed depended on

the attitudes that the informants showed towards their country and the oppression they suffered.

Conversely, an instance of elicitation of the second language of bilingual informants can be seen in the study conducted by van Hell, Bosman, Wiggers and Stoit (2003). In this study, two groups of children were requested to tell two stories about a familiar topic for each group and a common topic, in Dutch. One of the groups was formed by monolingual Dutch children, and the other was formed by a group of bilingual children from ethnic minority immigrant families in the Netherlands. The results of this study showed that the story length and coherence in the narratives were influenced by the familiarity with the topics to be narrated.

All in all, the evidence from these and other studies (e.g. Appel & Muysken 1987; Labov, 1972; Johnstone, 1993) suggests that narratives of personal experience are useful elicitation techniques, and thus they have been applied to many bilingual studies. This technique offers several advantages over fictional narratives, as it provides samples of real language in use. Also, this technique has been implemented with several variations depending on the purposes of the study. Factors and elements as varied as structure elements, language attrition, language variation, cultural differences, topic development and gender differences have been studied through the use of this elicitation technique. As illustrated by the examples of research just reviewed above, the main findings obtained research have proven the consistency of this technique, as many studies have been replicated and similar results have been obtained (see Guerrero, 2009; Da Gama, 2010).

In relation to the structure elements and the study of oral narratives and storytelling, several models have been proposed (e.g. Stein and Glenn, 1979; Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Van Dijk, 1975; Shiro, 2008). These models offer different approaches to narrative analysis, based on the commonalities they share and objectives of the narrator (further described below), the cognitive aspects involved in the narratives (below, see section 2.1.2), the structure elements present in them (see

section 2.1.3 below), or the evaluations found in them (see section 2.1.4). All of these models present a different point of view and, as a result, they can complement each other to give an exhaustive account of oral narratives. In order to address the description of oral narratives, the next section will introduce the story grammar proposed by Stein and Glenn (1979). This is a convenient starting point as it constitutes a simplified version of what Mandler and Johnson (1977) propose as a general grammar for stories.

### **2.1.1 Stein and Glenn's story grammar**

Stein and Glenn's work is mostly concerned with what the stories have in common. These authors presented a model in which a story is formed by a setting category and an episode system (1979). They essentially propose that the structure of the stories is based on the goals that the protagonist has in mind. Therefore, the basic components that they propose are the setting and, inside the episode system, the categories of: initiating event, character's internal response and plan, character's attempts to solve the problem and consequences (Stein and Glenn, 1979).

The structure they presented to analyze narratives can be further explained as follows:

1. Setting, where the main characters are introduced and both the context where the story takes place is described, both physically and temporally. Behaviors and social characteristics are included if they correspond to a habitual pattern. Setting statements can occur anywhere in the story, but they are generally found at the beginning. It creates the conditions for the story to take place.
2. Initiating event, which is said to origin the main character's reaction. This initiating event can be caused by an internal event, an action or a natural occurrence.
3. Response, which corresponds to the protagonist's reaction to the initiative event. It is used to inspire the protagonist to have a plan or sequence. The types of



internal responses can correspond either to an affective response, a goal or thought.

4. Final application, which is an action or plan of the protagonist to solve the problem, and may contain several sequential actions.
5. Consequence, which is where it is manifested if the character has or has not attained his or her objective.
6. Reaction, which contains similar characteristics to the consequence, but has broader repercussion, and it can be an affective response, thought or action.

In the following table, the elements of structure previously explained are exemplified:

Element	Example
Setting	<i>Once upon a time there were three bears, the momma bear, the popa bear, and the baby bear. They all lived in a tiny house in a great big forest.</i>
Initiating Event	<i>One day a little girl named Goldilocks came by.</i>
Internal Response	<i>She was surprised to see the house and noticed it was empty.</i>
Final application	<i>She went inside to find the three bears gone and ate the baby bear's soup, broke the baby bear's chair, and fell asleep in the baby bear's bed.</i>
Consequence	<i>The bears return to find things eaten and broken and to find Goldilocks in the baby's bed.</i>
Reaction	<i>Goldilocks ran away.</i>

Table I: Story elements defined by Stein and Glenn (1979)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from <http://red6747.pbworks.com/w/page/8523119/Story%20Grammar>

As table I shows, the predicted elements of the story grammar can be applied to a simple story as *Goldilocks and the three bears*. These elements serve as a basis to understand the interrelationships between the different components in a narrative or story. However, these elements do not account for the surface structure of narratives and may be successfully applied mostly to fictional narratives, rather than oral narratives. This is so because in order to account for oral narratives, a more flexible model needs to be used (see section 2.1.3). Also, the actions taken in an oral narrative are not taken into account, representing narratives with a passive perspective. With this in mind, the action discourse and the cognitive aspects of narratives are considered in the macrostructures defined by van Dijk (1976) in the next section.

### **2.1.2 Narrative macrostructures**

Van Dijk (2000) proposes that macrostructures are a type of abstract scheme that establishes the global order of a text. This order is, in turn, composed by several categories and is ruled by conventional rules. These conventional rules are known and used by most speakers belonging to the same speech community. This way, van Dijk (1976) points out that the categories presented by Labov and Waletzky (1967) (see section 2.1.3 below) are to be defined in a more detailed and logical fashion. The main assumption underlying this proposal is that it is possible to account for the fact that when people narrate, they are actually performing an action.

In his model, Van Dijk (1976) proposes that, in order to give a complete account of narratives, it is necessary to take into account the concepts of *action* and *action discourse*. These concepts account for the cognitive processes that take place during the recall, summary and recognition of the narratives. For Van Dijk (1976), narrating corresponds to a type of action discourse defined in cognitive terms as a representation of action. This way, actions are defined as “A change of state brought about intentionally by a (conscious) human being in order to bring about a preferred

state or state change” (van Dijk, 1976: 550). As the author points out, a narrative usually consists of more than one action, which are linked causally or rationally. The elements of rational action described by van Dijk (1975) are intention, person, state or possible worlds, change, bring about or cause, and purpose. The author claims that the macrostructures define their function as “a part of the text and with respect to the text as a whole” (1976: 555).

The different macrostructures in a narrative are not necessarily single propositions or sentences; they can correspond to zero or several propositions or sentences (van Dijk, 1976). An action discourse can be contrasted with states, events and process descriptions. States are defined as “certain number of properties and relations” (1975:277). These properties and relations become a state when they describe a possible world in a certain time. Events correspond to state changes that happen when certain conditions are met such as the addition or removal of objects or if properties gain or stop having some properties or relations.

Regarding discourse action, the author points out that not all discourse action correspond to a narrative, but only if a certain condition applies, that is that it should be more or less spectacular. This means that the narrated events do not normally occur in the regular possible worlds, or, in other words, “a narrative is an action discourse which is non-trivial or interesting” (Van Dijk, 1979, p.62). Labov (1972) defines this characteristic as *reportability* as the most reportable event is what makes the narration justifiable. This is so because, when telling a story, the narrator holds the floor for a certain extended period, and the audience needs to be captivated by something out of the ordinary (Labov, 2008).

With all these complexities in mind, however, it seems adequate to describe a model that accounts for structural characteristics of narratives in simpler terms, in order to be able to establish the cognitive implications underlying their components. Such a need has been recognized by Labov and Waletzky (1967), whose simplified narrative model is presented and discussed in the next section.

### **2.1.3 Labov and Waletzky's descriptive model**

Oral narratives are, as Labov (2008) points out, a significant device for human's transfer of knowledge and thus it is necessary to pay attention to this inherent ability and the way in which we use it. Labov and Waletzky's (1967) work revealed that the personal experiences delivered orally have a homogeneous semantic pattern regardless of the society or language where they are narrated (Maranhão 1984, as cited in Labov, 2008).

In particular, Labov and Waletzky (1967) analyzed 14 tape recorded narratives elicited by means of face-to-face interviews. In their study, informants were requested to narrate experiences related to situations of danger such as a situation when they thought they could die. Informants included speakers of English from white and black communities who did not finish high school education. They were from rural and urban sectors and represented a wide range of ages, from 10 to 72 years old.

The results from this study made possible for the authors to isolate the basic components of narratives and then propose a model of analysis of narratives of personal experiences. The model of analysis proposed is based on the clause level. In other words, the different structural elements are assigned to independent and dependent clauses. This model sheds light on the relation of the components and the function in narratives (Labov, 2008).

Labov (1972) defines a narrative as a system to sum up past experiences by joining verbal clause sequences with sequences of events. The clauses that do not show temporal juncture are called free clauses. The following example, taken from Johnstone (2001), corresponds to a narration with temporal juncture:

- (1) a. *I punched him*  
b. *and he punched me*

The example shows that all of these clauses are related by a temporal juncture, which is said to exist when a change in the order of the clauses affects the interpretation (Labov 2008). Consider example (2):

- (2) a. *He punched me*  
b. *And then I punched him.*

We can see that in example (2), a different sequence of events is implied, and a different chronology is presented.

As part of his seminal work, Labov (1972) suggests that the use of narratives of personal experiences is the most effective way to access the vernacular (i.e. natural spontaneous language) of the subjects who participate in experimental studies. The purpose of his work was to describe the deep structure of narratives relating them with the social characteristics of the speakers. On the basis of his findings, he proposes an overall structure of narratives which comprises the following componential elements:

1. Abstract. It is a brief explanation of what is going to be narrated. It is normally found at the beginning of the narration. This element works to insert the narrative into a conversation context. Free clauses are usually used to construct it, and it is a mechanism to synthesize the story to be narrated, shedding some light on the results.
2. Orientation. It sheds light on the time, place, the people involved and the general context. This section answers the questions: *Who? When? Where? What*

*were they doing?*. The orientation normally takes place in the first narrative clauses, but they can also take place in free clauses.

3. Complicating action. It is the nucleus of the narration. It is determined by the result of the (main) protagonist(s) action(s). Here, the narrator tells about what happened before the resolution.

4. Evaluation. It involves the personal opinion of the narrator, which is the break between the complication and the result. The authors claim that evaluation “is the attitude of the narrator towards the narrative emphasizing the relative importance of some narrative units as compared to others” (Labov and Waletzky, 1967). Thus, the narrator uses this resource to validate his or her narration, to clarify the reason why he or she decided that it was worth telling it. These narratives make use of *irrealis* predicates, usually containing clauses that are conditionals, futures, negatives of events that did not happen or might happen (Labov, 2008). Evaluation may answer to the question: *So what?*

5. Result or resolution. It is the manner in which the conflict is solved. It normally appears by the end of the narrative, usually in the last narrative clause.

6. Coda. It is “a device for returning the verbal perspective to the present moment” (Labov 1972). It answers the question: *And what happened then?*

The following table illustrates a narrative of personal experience using the previously described structural categories, including clauses for every category.

Category	Example
Abstract	<i>Once I participated in a beauty contest</i>
Orientation	<i>I was ten and I was fat</i>
Complicating action	<i>my family insisted that I should take part in it, and I had to go up on that stage</i>
Evaluation	<i>It was awful because all of the girls were really nice girls, and I was there like a monster</i>
Result or resolution	<i>Of course, I didn't win</i>
Coda	<i>I hate beauty contests</i>

Table II: Categories of narrative structure

The descriptive proposal made by Labov and Waletzky (1967) present a variety of benefits, as the structure of a simple narrative is included. The elements of abstract, orientation, complication, evaluation and coda offer a comprehensible characterization of narratives of personal experience and fictional narratives as well, as they account for the many possibilities in narratives of personal experience. This model focuses on global functions rather than specific textual units, offering a useful functionality to group functions for further analysis. It also offers the flexibility of its units, that can be present or not in the narratives to be analyzed. Moreover, some of them can be described in different positions in the narratives. Another central factor is related to the fact that it is a widely used model (e.g. Guerrero, 2009; Da Gama, 2010) and thus it facilitates the comparison of results with other works based on the same model.

Another relevant work related to Labov and Waletzky (1967)'s structure elements is the one proposed by Shiro (2000). This work refers to the evaluative function (Labov and Waletzky, 1967), as opposed to the referential function (see section 2.1.4 below). Shiro (2000) proposes a series of classifications to Labov and Waletzky (1965)'s structure element *evaluation*. These classifications are called evaluative expression and they reflect different perspectives to this function. These evaluative expressions help account for narratives in depth.

#### **2.1.4 Evaluative categories**

Narratives are characterized by the subjectivity of the emotions and feelings of the narrator (Jimenez, 2006), who expresses his/her perspective by the use of evaluative language. This is, in turn, described by Labov (1972) as having two main functions, namely: referential and evaluative. The referential use corresponds to the sequence of events reported in the narration, description of characters, events and the setting. On

the other hand, the evaluative function corresponds to the narrative perspective, where the author states why the audience should listen to their story. According to Shiro (2000), the narrative perspective is created by making reference to emotions, thoughts and the talk of the narrator and the characters. She proposes the following categories for evaluative expressions:

1. Emotion: Expression of affection or emotions, such as in the example:  
She felt excited.
2. Cognition: it represents thoughts and beliefs. For instance: *He thought it was a good idea.*
3. Perception: the representation of the things that can be perceived by the use of the senses, such as in the example: *He heard a big noise.*
4. Physical condition: it represents a state which is more physical than emotional, as in: *I was very tired.*
5. Intention: It represents the intentions of the protagonist of doing something, as in: *She tried to climb.*
6. Relation: it illustrates the action with emphasis in the interpretation of the relation between characters, or between the characters and an object. For example, *the letter was delivered.*
7. Reported speech: it corresponds to the language that reports speech, both directly and indirectly.
  - a. Direct: the words are reported textually, as in regular quotation.
  - b. Indirect: the words are reported indirectly, as in *she said that she liked it.*
  - c. Free: it reports an oral exchange, without making the words used explicit, just reporting the communicative purpose. For example, *she lied.*

In her monolingual research work, Shiro (2000) studied 20 Spanish speaking adults. Every informant participated in four narrative tasks, two fictional narratives and two narratives of personal experience. The author found out that the use of evaluative expression was mostly used in narratives of fiction, rather than in narratives of personal experiences. The two types of narratives also differ in the kind of evaluation



used to create either fiction or personal experience. The author also found out that the evaluative expressions were used mostly by adults and that they were most frequently used in the fiction narratives than in narratives of personal experience (Shiro, 2000).

It is important to mention the fact that although the use of these evaluative expressions has been barely accounted for in bilingual studies (Chen and Yan, 2011), the information they provide seems useful and insightful. This is so because it reveals that bilingual and monolingual informants differ in the quality and number of evaluative expressions used. In order to account for the narratives of personal experience in full, these categories of evaluative expressions can shed light on the variation in specific groups. These evaluative expressions can also account for the variation found between groups of speakers.

With all these ideas in mind, the concept of *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972) becomes prominent when leading the discussion of narratives and gender studies towards the reality of L2 users. This is so because of its character as a developmental system or middle ground between the first language and the target language (see section 2.2 below). This property makes it an interesting and variable system to be accounted for, especially because it also depends on the first language.

Correspondingly, the following section intends to give an account of the notion of *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972) studies of learners of English as a second or foreign language. It also intends to account for the notion of world Englishes (Tarone, 2005), as systems with the right to be studied on their own (ie without taking the target into account) as they become increasingly significant in all areas of knowledge.

## 2.2 English as a foreign language

As a language spoken all over the world, English comprises many different varieties. Every variety involves distinctive regional and social characteristics, on account of the different social communities and ethnic groups involved. Moreover, the different aspects involved in all these varieties of English motivate their study. So do the Englishes of nonnative speakers, as Tarone (2005) expresses in the quotation below, with particular reference to the study of English for specific purposes:

“The construct of discourse community on interlanguage pragmatics can also be helpful in that it naturally shifts the focus of analysis away from the “idealized native speaker” of an idealized target language and allows us to analyze instead the actual performance and interpretation of expert members of real discourse community and not on native speaker background. This is important because in today’s world, given the increase in world Englishes, and the use of English among nonnative speakers of English worldwide, it seems less and less relevant to focus solely on the native speaker variety as the goal of learning.”

(Tarone 2005:157)

As Tarone (2005) points out, focus on the ideal native speaker can be shifted into the many nonnative users of the language over the world. This way, it seems relevant to provide a description about their developmental systems or *interlanguage*, in order to expand the knowledge of the different varieties. Accordingly, it seems that there is a need to account for these nonnative speakers of English in their own right and to compare their performances to those of native speakers based on the results found in other monolingual studies (e.g. Johnstone, 1993).

Other pertinent factors to consider when studying the second or foreign language of learners are the possibilities to construct a different self with the new language, as Pavlenko (2008:168) points out: “Additional languages may offer second language

learners access to symbolic and material capital and resources to perform gender and sexuality differently than they would in their native language". As Pavlenko suggests, gendered behaviors can be affected by the language used by the bilingual speaker, and thus, it offers the possibility of displaying a different way of acting. This possibility suggests that interesting information could be obtained from non native speakers performing in their second or foreign language. This way, it seems reasonable to consider that the interlanguage of learners of English as a foreign or second language may reveal interesting information about gender construction and possible differences when compared to the opposite gender.

Related to the English of nonnative speakers of English, it has been indeed argued that its state of development, as advanced as it can be, is necessarily incomplete and imperfect and thus can be influenced by the interference of learners' native language (Spolsky, 1989). As a result, the development of the second or foreign language is considered to be, by definition, in progress or transition (Nemser, 1974; Selinker, 1972). This transitional system has been termed *interlanguage* (Selinker, 1972).

The *interlanguage* development is said to be affected by the competence of the learner (Selinker, 1972). Other factors that affect the interlanguage of learners are the different communicational functions, learning experiences and personal characteristics among others (Nemser, 1974). Most relevant for the discussion in this chapter, the interlanguage is considered a system in its own, with its own structure (Selinker, 1972). More specifically, the structure of the interlanguage is constructed with elements from the native language and elements from the target language (Selinker, 1972). In later studies, Gass y Selinker (2008) propose that in the interlanguage system of a learner, it is possible to find new elements that do not correspond to the native or to the target language, thus confirming the notion of a separate system. Also, there are other variables that come into play when describing this separate system, which correspond to sociolinguistic variables, such as age, gender and social class.

## **2.3 Sociolinguistic variables**

An important branch of linguistic studies has been widely concerned with the social factors which have an impact on the linguistic variation, mainly, social class, age and gender (Lopez Morales, 2004). These factors are referred to as extralinguistic variables (Labov, 1966). These variables work differently in different speech communities and therefore they have to be linked with the community where they take place (Lopez Morales, 2004).

The following sections provide some insight on gender, age and social class as factors that explain linguistic variation. These variables are said to affect language performance (Meyerhoff, 2006) and need to be controlled in order to isolate the sociolinguistic factors arguably affecting the interlanguage of L2 users. Also, the inclusion of social factors in linguistic studies provides valuable insights, as they place individuals in a community and provide background that helps to understand their linguistic behavior within that community (Meyerhoff, 2006).

### **2.3.1 Age as a factor**

As Eckert (1997) points out, age is a central component of human experience. It affects the capacities, abilities, participation and role in the society of people because it represents moving through time in relation to a social order. This way, when age and language variation are related, the stage in which a person or a group of people are can be studied and portrayed (Eckert, 1997). The studied speakers or individual speaker are thus said to represent a stage in life and a specific time in history (Eckert, 1997). As Mannheim (1928, cited in Mac-Clure, 2011) points out, a group who shares a stage in the life cycle would face a similar position with others with respect to the social environment of a specific time. This could be the case, for example, of the change in the global economy. This way, the possibilities of a group of people

who belong to the same generation can be delimited by the access they may have to the workforce or education.

As Moreno Fernandez (1998) points out, as time goes by, the social habits and character of people, including the linguistic and communicative habits, change. These changes make possible to distinguish different stages in the linguistic life of an individual. In other words, children, young people and adults differ in their use of language, as they are going through different experiences. For example, Blas Arroyo (2005) has claimed that, as middle aged people are immersed in a world of contest in the areas of professional development and economic growth, they tend to present a clear self-correction profile. This tendency is opposed to what young people do, as they opt for vernacular language in order to belong to a group and show intragroup solidarity.

### **2.3.2 Social class as a factor**

In his work on the use of /r/ in New York, Labov (1966) proposes that the normal activities of society build differences between people and institutions. He also states that general agreement ranks these differences in social position and prestige. Labov (1966) suggests that occupation is one of the most salient indicators of social stratification, rather than income.

According to Mac-Clure (2011), social class can be delimited by the use of a typology that is based on the occupations, distinguishing eleven categories. These categories are a combination of three criteria, namely: property and control of the productive media, autonomy of service and the degree of qualification required for craft. The middle class can thus be defined as conformed by professionals, administrative personnel, sales people and some independent workers (Martinez and Tironi, 1985). Nevertheless, Blas Arroyo (2005) claims that these criteria are subjective due to the multiple dimensions involved in the categorisation, which may

not be concurrent. Consequently, the author suggests determining the classes based on the prototypical members for every class rather than considering the peripheral members.

### **2.3.3 Gender as a factor**

As stated by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), gender is a social construction affected by some physiological constraints that give rise to the definition of what male and female mean. This distinction is also determined by the social roles, opportunities and expectations of language users (Bratt and Tucker, 2003). As Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) point out, “gender builds on biological sex” (p. 10), but the differences are driven to a point in which the biological differences are irrelevant.

Gender started to be considered as a research variable in linguistics mainly since 1952, when the publication of a magazine called *Orbis* took place. In this publication, the convenience of using women as informants and the character of their speech was discussed (Moreno Fernández, 1998). Regarding the convenience of using women as a model, their suitability to answer surveys was thought to be of great utility. Referring to the characteristics of their speech, the conservative style of women was described as the main tendency.

Since the early seventies, specialists have focused their work on the analysis of gender as a sociolinguistic variable, especially in the field of conversational analysis. Gender-specific differences are usually characterized as bipolar and opposite (Talbot, 2003) and very much related to the construction of stereotypes. In the arena of conversational analysis, it has been described that men, for instance, differ from women in the length of their interventions in certain contexts and that the purpose of men’s discourse is to report facts and information, in opposition to women’s discourse, which serves to create rapport with others (Tannen, 1990).

At a practical level, then, taking into account the three previously accounted variables (i.e. age, social class and gender) becomes a necessity for sociolinguistic studies as they allow us to characterize what groups of people are under study. Also, this information helps to draw conclusions about the observed behaviors of participants in a research study, as it provides the background of the informants. Furthermore, this sociolinguistic information facilitates the comparison of results with other studies, as it serves as a categorization of population.

The next section puts a focus on the most representative studies in the area of gender-specific discourse studies (Buckner and Fivush, 1998; Johnstone, 1993; Lakoff, 1975; Pavlenko, 2008; Tannen, 1982, 1990). The studies reviewed here are part of three different frameworks of gender studies, which are dominance, difference and diversity frameworks (see section 2.4 below).

## **2.4 Gender differences in discourse**

It has been pointed out through extensive studies that men and women tend to differ in the ways that they interpret and use language (see, for example, Tannen, 1982; Johnstone, 1993). As Buckner and Fivush (1998) point out, “One of the most salient components of identity is gender. The extent to which we define ourselves as female or male plays an enormous role in how we view the world.”(p. 408). This way, gender is seen to play an important role in defining the identity of people, and these identities are constructed through discourse (Buckner and Fivush, 1998). As such, gender studies have taken different ways to approach differences and similarities in the discourse of men and women.

Pavlenko (2008) points out that research in gender discourse studies have been categorized into three main frameworks throughout the years: first, the framework of dominance, presented in the early seventies by Lakoff (1975). Secondly, there is the framework of difference, which explains the dissimilitude in the discourse through the variation in the socialization process of men and women (Tannen, 1990). Third, the diversity framework, which considers that to compare men-as-a group and women-as-a-group is not valid because it does not consider the intragroup diversity (Baxter and Wallace, 2009). In order to account for these frameworks, the following section explores these different approaches and summarizes the main claims and findings that have resulted from them.

In the work of Lakoff (1975), the dominance of men-as-a-group over women-as-a-group is described and criticized. She points out that language and gender should be studied in the societies where they are used, since the social factors play a crucial role in determining the characteristics of gendered behaviors (see section 2.3 above). The differences in discourse are explained to be caused by women’s lack of access to power. This work describes the ways in which women speak and the ways in which people talk about women. Her data was based on media, her own speech and the speech of her acquaintances. The data was analyzed by the use of introspection



method. The use of evaluative adjectives, nouns, intonation patterns and tag questions were addressed as characteristic of women's discourse. Also, the ways in which women are addressed in marked sexist ways is criticized and alternatives are proposed. In spite of the fact that this work was one of the first to address sexism in language, it was criticized because empirical data was not presented to support the claims (Pavlenko, 2008).

In the framework of difference, for Tannen (1990), the notion of 'genderlects' is introduced to describe the differences in men and women's discourse. These differences are described as having roots on the differences in the socialization process since very early in the process of language development. In most studies conducted under this framework (see, for example, Johnstone, 1993), men are found to be the ones who talk more in mixed group conversations and at meetings. Other examples of settings where men are found to talk more are academic conferences, where they talk more by asking more questions, and talking for longer periods. The author points out as well that men are found to talk more often and longer when they intervene in conversations.

Conversely, in the case of women, Tannen (1990) describes that the settings where they feel more comfortable to talk are private settings. These settings include being at home, on the telephone or with friends. In these settings, women are found to talk a lot more than men do. Tannen (1990) explains that these differences lie on the fact that men use language to report facts, while women use language to build rapport with other people.

Under the diversity framework, gender is defined as a social construct rather than a biological determination (Pavlenko, 2008). The focus of the research under this framework is mainly to contrast different varieties of the same gender in order to account for the effects of race, class, age, sexuality and ethnicity affect their discourse. In this area, there is Baxter and Wallace's (2009) work on same sex middle-aged working class builders in the UK. The data was gathered by one of the

authors, as he participated in summer construction works, and had access to conversations with the previously described group. The conversations were audio recorded in conversations of 3 men, who were being transported to their place of work. The results showed that men can be as highly collaborative in constructing narratives as women (as reported in Tannen, 1996, for example). The authors also point out that people are capable of presenting cooperative behavior, usually described as feminine and competitive behavior, usually described as masculine, whenever the situation needs it. This behavior was observed when they aligned against other groups they saw as a threat.

In brief, it can be said that the study of gender can be approached from different perspectives, all of which provide useful information and insightful views. Gender-specific discourse has thus been characterized as providing evidence of dominance, socialization processes and dialectal diversity. To consider all of them helps to have a broader view of what the study of gender and discourse can reveal. However, current research conducted in the area of gender and discourse has not paid much attention to the gender differences that can be manifested in the *interlanguage* (see section 2.2) of learners of English. Consequently, further research is needed in order to provide information to enrich the pool of knowledge about this system and about world Englishes in general.

The next section is a description of gender differences found in discourse analysis (e.g. Buckner and Fivush, 1998; Coates, 2004; Johnstone, 1993). As will be seen, all of the works presented are monolingual studies, and the informants correspond to English speaking men and women. However, these results are useful in the sense that they serve as a starting point of comparison for bilingual studies or reports of *interlanguage*.

### **2.4.1 Narrative discourse and gender differences**

When discussing the differences found in the discourse of men and women, some explanations have been put forward that attribute the sources of differences to be based on psychological, social or cultural differences (Johnstone, 1993). According to Johnstone (1993), all of these variables are not exclusive, but are all explanations of how men and women live in different worlds, and thus, their talk is shaped differently in many senses.

When describing the behaviors of women telling stories, Coates (2004) states that “women frequently tell stories which focus on things going wrong, rather than on achievement” (p. 94). This is contrasted with the behavior normally described for men, who tell stories about success and skill. Also, Coates (2004) describes the action of telling stories in the discourse of women as something out of the ordinary or, in other words, unusual. This is so as it implies the action of holding the floor for an extended period, which goes against women’s collaborative group talk.

An example of gender differences is found in Buckner and Fivush (1998), who examined auto autobiographical narratives of 22 middle class children in their native language. 11 of the informants were male children and the other 11 were female children. The findings of the study showed that female children’s narratives surpassed male children’s narratives in coherence, use of details and length. Another difference was that girls used more descriptions of people and described more emotions than boys. They also tended to place the narrative in a context more frequently than boys.

Other discourse differences were found by Kashdan et al. (2007) in relation to the topics of gratitude and willingness to express gratitude. In a study conducted in 70 different countries (Schwartz and Rubel, 2005, as cited in Kashdan et al., 2007), significant differences related to emotions and value assignment were found. On the one hand, men were found to give priority value to achievement, hedonism,

stimulation on new things and power. Women, on the other hand, were found to assign priority values to relationships, tolerance and to be benevolent towards other people. These characteristics are said to be important because the expression of emotions is closely related to the values (Kashdan et al., 2007). Men and women were shown to differ in that women handle and show positive emotions such as gratitude, while men normally handle and show emotions that are related to power and social status (Kashdan et al., 2007).

As illustrated in these studies, evidence suggests that men and women show marked gendered behaviors. As the evidence suggests, these differences seem to be rooted, mainly, in the social and psychological experiences of men and women, which shape their differences in discourse. In the next section, a review of Johnstone (1993)'s work will be provided in order to present a model of analysis for the present study.

#### **2.4.2 Johnson's study of gender differences in narratives**

Several studies have been conducted using the technique of eliciting information through the narration of personal experiences, both orally and in writing (see, for example, Buckner and Fivush, 1998; Johnstone, 1993; Knight et al., 2005; Bittick and Chung, 2011). Nevertheless, there are few studies that also take gender differences into consideration. Most of these studies are, in addition, related to the area of psychology (Buckner and Fivush, 1998; Kashdan et al., 2007) rather than discourse.

In Johnson's work (1993), the oral narration of personal experiences is told to create worlds of different kinds because people "make sense of human actions by telling stories about them" (Johnstone, 1993:69). Depending on the types of resolutions they describe, they can be said to be based on the intervention of supernatural forces. These include the action of a deity or ghost; by people acting together, such as a pair

of police officers rescuing a child; or by competing, showing the narrator's capacities and abilities in a contest with others.

In Johnstone (1993), through a qualitative and quantitative description, middle-class North American adult male and female persons' differences are accounted for, based on their elaboration of oral narratives. The narratives correspond to 58 unplanned narratives of personal experience, distributed in 33 told by women, and 25 that were told by men. The samples were collected by university students in conversations with their family members. The people belong to a community in Indiana, and the narratives are told in English, their native language.

When describing the differences in narratives, Johnstone (1993) develops a parallel between the two groups. On the one hand, in their narration of events, men create a *contest construction*, meaning a challenging situation, or contest that is overcome by the use of the intelligence, physical strength, power of will or any personal characteristic of the main protagonist. On the other hand, women's narratives are based on *community constructions*, characterized by their cooperative or communal resolution by the aid of a friend or the action of the law or morality, among other means.

Also, men's narratives are normally resolved by the main protagonist acting alone, while women's narratives are usually resolved by groups of people. These differences can be confirmed by the results found in a study of the oral narratives of religious conversion (Knight et al., 2005). This study revealed that men center their narratives on themselves as the main character, and they characterize themselves as clever. In contrast, women focused on someone else and characterized themselves as foolish.

Other differences, which Johnstone (1993) points out, involve the discourse choices that male and female narrators make about the topics of their narratives. For instance, in her research work, the author found that women talk about their fears,

embarrassing situations and their breaking the law or the social norms. Alternatively, men tend to select stories about themselves and their own achievements achieved entirely, or mainly, on their own.

Related to the outcomes of the narratives, Johnstone (1993) analyses them depending on the action of the protagonist, whether they are acting alone or with others. In men's narratives, when acting alone, the outcome was good in most cases. In contrast, in women's narratives when acting alone, most of them resulted in a bad outcome, such as discomfort, panic, disturbance or failure. Also, in men's narratives when acting with others, the role of others in their narratives was not significant, while in women's narratives, the action of others corresponds to help and advise to solve the difficulty, in most cases.

In order to classify the actions found in the oral narratives into group action or individual action, Johnstone (1997) proposes the following options:

1. Protagonist acts alone:
  - a. With a bad outcome. e.g. *I crashed into the tree.*
  - b. With a good outcome. e.g. *I got the major prize.*
2. Protagonist acts with others:
  - a. Others are just there. e.g. *We were there together, but I decided to talk.*
  - b. Others help and advise. e.g. *She told me not to trust anyone, so I refused the invitation.*

At the same time, coinciding with Labov (1972)'s dimension of *orientation*, Johnstone (1993) proposes a detailed classification of the *extra thematic* details found in narratives, as it is presented below:

1. Specification of place. e.g. *We were at El Quisco.*
2. Specification of time. e.g. *It was six in the morning.*
3. Descriptions of objects. e.g. *She had a lovely blue scarf.*
4. Titles of events. e.g. *It was Christmas.*
5. People's names. e.g. *Sara helped me.*

6. Narrated reports of speech acts. e.g. *He said "I don't think so."*

The use of these extra thematic items in narratives, according to Johnstone (1993), also differs noticeably. However, both adult male and female narrators tend to provide a great deal of extra description in their narratives, such as the previously mentioned, or the background events. Her findings show that women include more information about other people, while men include more details about objects, times and places.

Johnstone (1993)'s work can be considered as a particularly useful model of research, because it offers a variety of elements to be considered when comparing narratives of both male and female persons. These elements include the use of details, specification of place and time, and the types of outcomes that the narratives have. Nevertheless, her model of comparison does not account for the differences in crosslinguistic studies or in the interlanguage of learners of English. Therefore, there is still a lot to describe and report with respect to gender differences in narratives of personal experience.

## **2.5 Research questions**

In this review of the literature, it has been pointed that sociolinguistic studies of gender differences have shown interesting findings. Some of those findings include differences in turn-taking patterns, politeness strategies and topic selection patterns (Tannen, 1983). A series of models have been proposed to accommodate these findings, such as those by Coates (2004) and Tannen (1993). However, it has also been pointed that there is a lack of information regarding the way in which gender differences may be reflected in the interlanguage of English learners. This is an unfortunate situation, as L2 learners have to incorporate some of these differences as part of their interlanguage development in order to achieve communicative competence in full.

Correspondingly, this thesis reports a study that attempts to contribute with information on the possible differences between male and female learners of English as an L2. The study is guided by the following research questions:

Research Question 1. In the context of oral narratives of personal experience, can the gender differences identified in monolingual studies be found in the interlanguage of learners of English?

Research Question 2. *Are there any differences or similarities regarding the number of clauses used by male and female learners of English when they elaborate their oral narratives of personal experience?*

Research Question 3. *What are the main narrative discourse elements used by adult learners of English to elaborate their oral narratives of personal experience? Are there any differences or similarities in the use of male and female learners?*

Research Question 4. *What are the extra thematic elements found in the oral narratives of male learners of English and female learners of English? Are there any differences or similarities in use for male and female learners?*

Research Question 5. *What kinds of outcomes are found in the oral narratives of male learners of English and female learners of English? Are there any differences or similarities in use for male and female learners?*

The next chapter describes and explains the collection and analysis procedures designed and applied in order to address these research questions here proposed.



## **3 Methodology**

### **3.1 Corpus**

The basis for the present study is a small corpus of 30 oral narratives in English of personal experiences. The use of this corpus is intended to account for the interlanguage (Selinker, 1972) of the Spanish speaking informants. These narratives were elicited by means of a structured oral interview. These oral narratives were audio recorded and transcribed following Labov (2008)'s procedure (see section 2.1.3 for details). The corpus was subsequently analyzed using the categories of the models presented by Labov and Waletzky (1976) and Johnstone (1993), discussed and detailed previously (in sections 2.1.3 and 2.4.2 above).

### **3.2 Informants**

Ten informants were selected to participate in the present study. Five of them were male persons and five, female persons. Their ages range from 26 to 35 years old. With the objective of controlling the variables of first language, all of the selected informants are from Santiago, Chile, and their native language is Spanish. The reason to determine this selection was to reduce the possible variances that varying first languages might introduce to the sample (see section 2.3 for details).

In order to ensure a similar level of proficiency in English, their second language, the selected informants correspond to teachers of English as a second or foreign language. The objective to establish this criterion was to obtain a reasonably homogeneous sample in terms of second language proficiency.

On that account, it was necessary to select advanced learners of English, in order to make sure that the level of proficiency in the language did not mean a difficulty for

the informants to narrate the oral experiences they wished to communicate. Nevertheless, it is essential to mention the fact that, for the purposes of the present study, their lexicogrammatical proficiency in the narratives was not considered. This is so because the analysis corresponds to the narrative macrostructures proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967), which operate regardless of grammatical and lexical mistakes. Consequently, grammatical mistakes or errors in lexical selection were not analyzed and no comments are made regarding them.

In order to ensure that the sample was comparable to the one obtained by Johnstone (1993) (see section 2.4.2 above), all of the informants correspond to middle class individuals. This categorization is based on Mac-Clure (2011), based on the informant's level of education and occupation. All of the informants have a bachelor's degree in English and four of them have a master's degree in English linguistics.

Overall, it can be said that the informants for this study share similar socio-demographic characteristics and a relatively similar level of proficiency in English as L2. This means that gender can be reasonably considered a more significant variable affecting the variation in the participants' narratives expected in the study.

### **3.3 Data collection procedure**

As indicated in section 3.1 above, the data was obtained by conducting a series of oral structured interviews. In the first stage of the oral interview, the informants were requested to detail orally information about their age, educational level, their city of origin and their current occupation. This information was audio-recorded using an Mp3 Samsung YP-U digital recording device and then tabulated in a MS Word document (See appendix A) This procedure was conducted in order to verify that the informants shared similar socio-demographic characteristics (as explained in 3.2

above), in order to obtain a sample that could be compared with the results obtained by Johnstone (1993).

In the second stage of the oral interview, the subjects were requested to answer the following questions in English, following Labov (1967)'s procedure. These questions are intended to obtain narratives of personal experience and they are stated as follows:

- a. What has been the happiest/saddest moment in your life?
- b. Have you ever been in a situation where you thought you were going to die?
- c. What has been the most embarrassing experience in your life?

The informant's narratives were audio recorded. Following Labov (2008), the narratives were then transcribed orthographically and separated into individual clauses (see appendix B). It is important to mention that pauses and hesitations, which are characteristic features of the oral discourse, were not transcribed or signaled in any way. As explained in Labov (2008), these characteristics are not part of the structural organization and contents that correspond to the focus of the present study.

### **3.4 Data analysis procedures**

The data analysis procedure was conducted mainly to account for the frequency of occurrence of the different categories described in sections 2.1.3 and 2.4.2 in the oral narratives of personal experience of both male and female informants. The information was organized in the grid shown in Figure I. The detailed explanation about the different procedures followed to organize the information, and the different components in the figure are found below.

Narrative				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome

Figure I: Grid for the analysis of oral narratives of personal experience.

Firstly, the orthographic transcriptions of the oral narratives of the informants were separated into clauses. These clauses were placed separately under the heading of *clause* in the second column. The different clauses were then numbered in order to count them in every narrative by female and male informants, in the first column seen in Figure I. This way, the narratives of male and female informants were compared in terms of the number of clauses, to determine what group made more use of clauses to construct their narratives (see appendix B for the complete data set).

Secondly, the narrative discourse elements presented by Labov and Waletzky (1967) (see details in section 2.1.3) were labeled in the table, for every clause in every narrative. These labels were placed under the heading of *structure elements*, in the third column seen in Figure I, using the following signaling in parenthesis:

1. Abstract (A)
2. Orientation (O)
3. Complicating action (CA)
4. Evaluation (E)
5. Result (R)
6. Evaluation/Resolution (ER)
7. Coda (C)

Thirdly, every clause labeled as *orientation* was classified and labeled based on Johnstone's (1993) descriptive model (see details in section 2.4.2). It is necessary to explain here that the item *Description of people* was added to Johnstone (1993)'s categories in order to account for the narratives in greater detail. As discussed in

section 4.3.1 below, this characteristic was found in some of the narratives analyzed. This extra thematic information was labeled in the table under the heading of *extra details*, in the fourth column seen in Figure 1, using the following signaling in parenthesis:

1. Specification of place (Ex-SP)
2. Specification of time (Ex-ST)
3. Description of objects (Ex-DO)
4. Description of people (Ex-DP)
5. Titles of events (Ex-TE)
6. People's names (Ex-PN)
7. Narrated reports of speech acts (Ex-SA)
8. Other not included (Ex-NI)

After that, every clause labeled as *evaluation* and *result* was classified to determine whether the *outcomes* in relation to the action of the protagonist, alone or with others, were good or bad (see description in section 2.4.2). These clauses were labeled as follows, using the signaling in parenthesis, under the heading *outcome*, in the last column seen in Figure I:

1. Protagonist acts alone/ with a good outcome (PA-good)
2. Protagonist acts alone/ with a bad outcome (PA-bad)
3. Protagonist acts with others/ with a good outcome (PO-good)
4. Protagonist acts with others/ with a bad outcome (PO-bad)
5. Protagonist doesn't intervene (PDI)

As part of the quantitative data analysis, a count and analysis was conducted regarding the presence or absence of each category. First, the number of clauses used for every narrative component (i.e. orientation, complicating action, evaluation, result, evaluation and coda) was counted. Second, a count was computed of the

number of clauses used for *extra thematic information*. This count included categories such as specification of place, specification of time, descriptions of objects, descriptions of people, titles of events, people's names, and narrated reports of speech acts.

As pointed above, the objective of the previous analysis was to determine the frequency of occurrence of each of the component, in the oral narratives of male and female informants. Male and female informant's results from the oral narratives were tabulated separately and compared to establish differences and similarities. The comparison was also intended to determine the elements used predominantly by male informants in comparison with those predominantly used by female informants.

Finally, based on the *extra thematic information* (Johnstone, 1993) and the *outcome* of the narratives, it was determined whether the respective personal narrative involved *community constructions* or *contest constructions* (Johnstone, 1993) (see description in section 2.4.2). This analysis was intended to account for a possible tendency in male and female's oral narratives of personal experience, as was seen in Johnstone (1993), where it was observed that men tended to make use of contest constructions and women tended to create community constructions (Johnstone, 1993).

## 4 Data analysis and results

As indicated in section 3.1 above, the collected corpus consisted of 30 oral narratives of personal experience produced in English by learners of English as a foreign language. From these, 15 correspond to narratives produced by male learners and 15 to narratives female learners. The following chapter is devoted to reporting the results of the analysis applied to this data presented in section 3.4. The section starts presenting the analysis related to the number of clauses found in the narratives of male and female learners, then deals with the analysis of the narrative structure, with every element described in detail. Thirdly, the extra thematic details are revised. Finally, the analyses of the types of outcomes are presented.

### 4.1 Number of clauses

A total of 502 clauses were analyzed, from which 289 correspond to the oral narratives produced by male learners, while 213 correspond to the oral narratives produced by female learners. The distribution of clauses in both male and female groups can be seen in Figure 1.

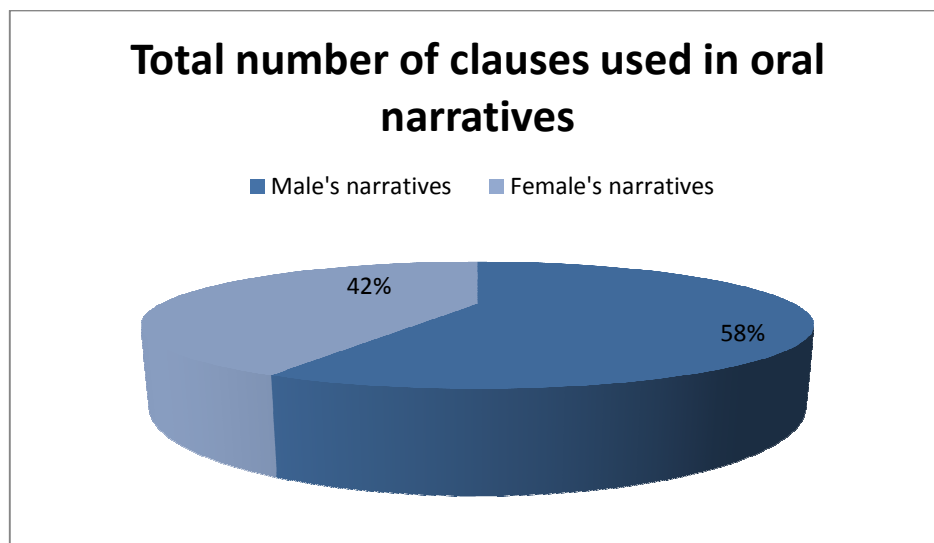


Figure 1: Total number of clauses used in oral narratives of personal experience

The mean of use of clauses for male speakers is 19 (SD 7.2), while the mean of use of clauses for female speakers is 14 (SD = 8.4). A Wilcoxon's test for related sample indicated that male speakers produced a significantly higher number of clauses as compared to women ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that their narratives are systematically longer, as can be seen below in figures 2 and 3.

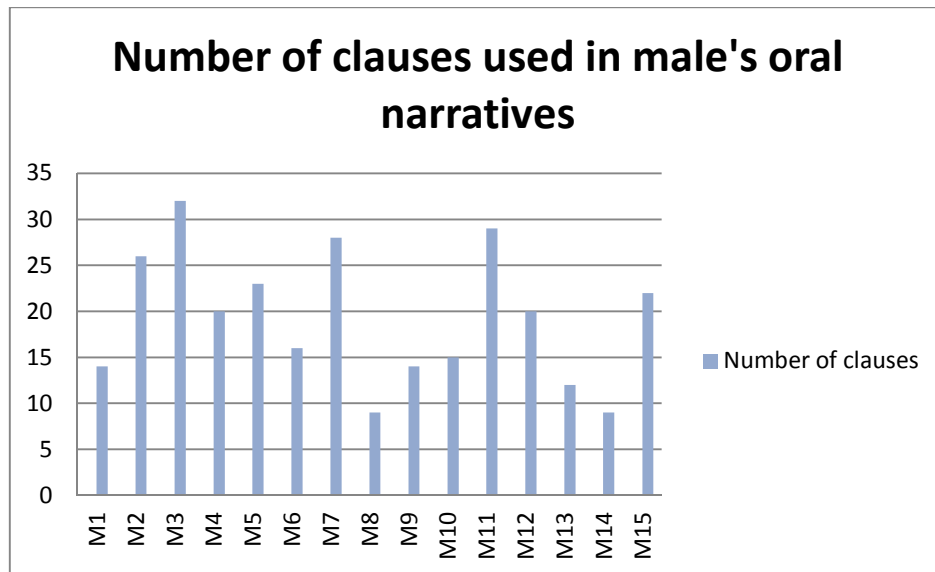


Figure 2: Number of clauses used in male's oral narratives

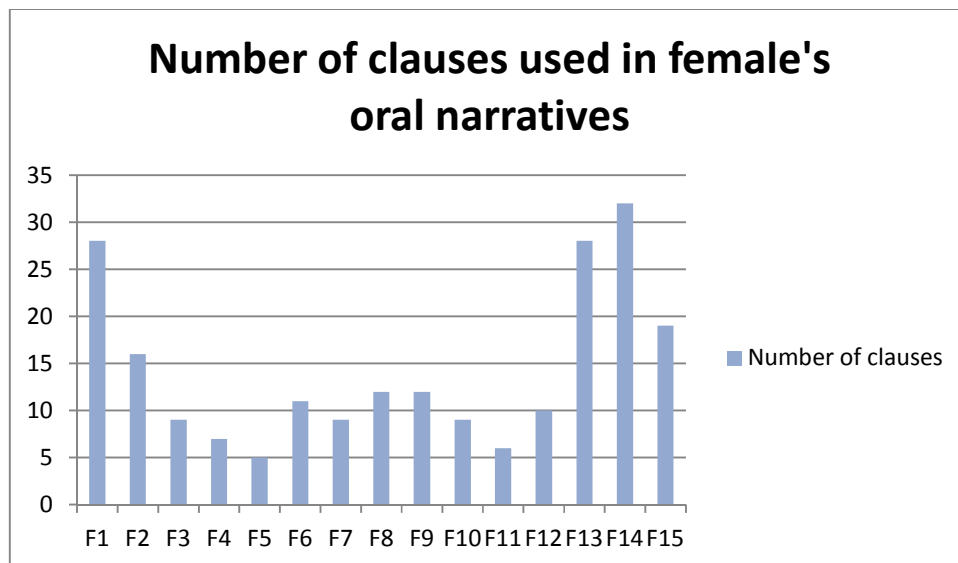


Figure 3: Number of clauses used in female's oral narratives



The distribution of narratives with 10 clauses or less, corresponds to 2 narratives of male learners and 6 narratives of female learners, which indicates that an important number of female learners' narratives (40%) coincide in this range of clauses, contrasted with a 13% of male learners' narratives. In other words, an important number of female's narratives are composed of few clauses.

In the case of narratives with 10 to 20 clauses, 7 and 6 narratives for male and female learners respectively, this suggests that this range is preferred by both groups similarly, and in an important percentage. These narratives correspond to the 47% and 40% of the narratives of male and female learners.

For the case of narratives of 20 to 30 clauses, the uses of both groups differ. A high percentage of male learners' narratives (33%) are in the range, while just a little number of female learners' narratives (13%) were on this range of clauses. These results, together with the previous ranges, indicates that male learners' narratives make use of more clauses than women in all ranges.

Finally, the narratives with over 30 clauses correspond to 1 for each group ( $SD = 0$ ). This result shows that the use of a significantly large amount of clauses for the oral narratives of personal experience was not the preferred tendency.

## **4.2 Narrative structure**

Regarding the different constituents of the narrative structure proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1967) (see section 2.1.3 for details), the counting generated the following information in each oral narrative for both groups:

Male's narratives							Total number of clauses per narrative
	Abstract	Orientation	C Action	Result	Evaluation	Coda	
M1	1	3	7	1	2	0	14
M2	1	3	18	2	1	0	25
M3	0	2	23	0	7	0	32
M4	1	1	8	3	5	1	19
M5	0	3	12	8	0	0	23
M6	0	5	7	1	3	0	16
M7	2	5	15	4	1	0	27
M8	1	1	4	0	3	0	9
M9	1	0	5	2	4	1	13
M10	0	5	4	3	3	0	15
M11	3	11	8	5	2	0	29
M12	0	6	11	1	1	1	20
M13	1	2	4	3	1	1	12
M14	1	0	2	1	4	1	9
M15	1	9	7	1	3	1	22
Total	13	56	135	35	40	6	285

Table 1: Narrative structure in oral narratives by male speakers

Female's narratives							Total number of clauses per narrative
	Abstract	Orientation	C Action	Result	Evaluation	Coda	
F1	1	2	20	1	4	0	28
F2	0	2	10	2	2	0	16
F3	2	4	1	1	1	0	9
F4	2	2	1	0	2	0	7
F5	1	0	3	1	0	0	5
F6	1	0	6	1	2	1	11
F7	1	4	1	0	3	0	9
F8	0	4	6	0	1	1	12
F9	0	2	4	4	0	1	11
F10	2	2	2	1	2	1	10
F11	1	1	2	1	2	0	7
F12	0	3	5	1	1	0	10
F13	1	2	18	1	5	0	27
F14	1	3	19	3	6	0	32
F15	1	7	5	1	3	1	18
Total	14	38	103	18	34	5	212

Table 2: Narrative structure in oral narratives by female speakers

Regarding the structure elements observed under Research Question 2.5.2.1 (see section 2.5 above), Figure 4 below shows that all of the structure elements appear in the narratives of both groups. No significant differences were found between the frequency counts of under each category of structure element. Nevertheless, in the

following sections, the variations and similarities will be discussed inter and intragroups.

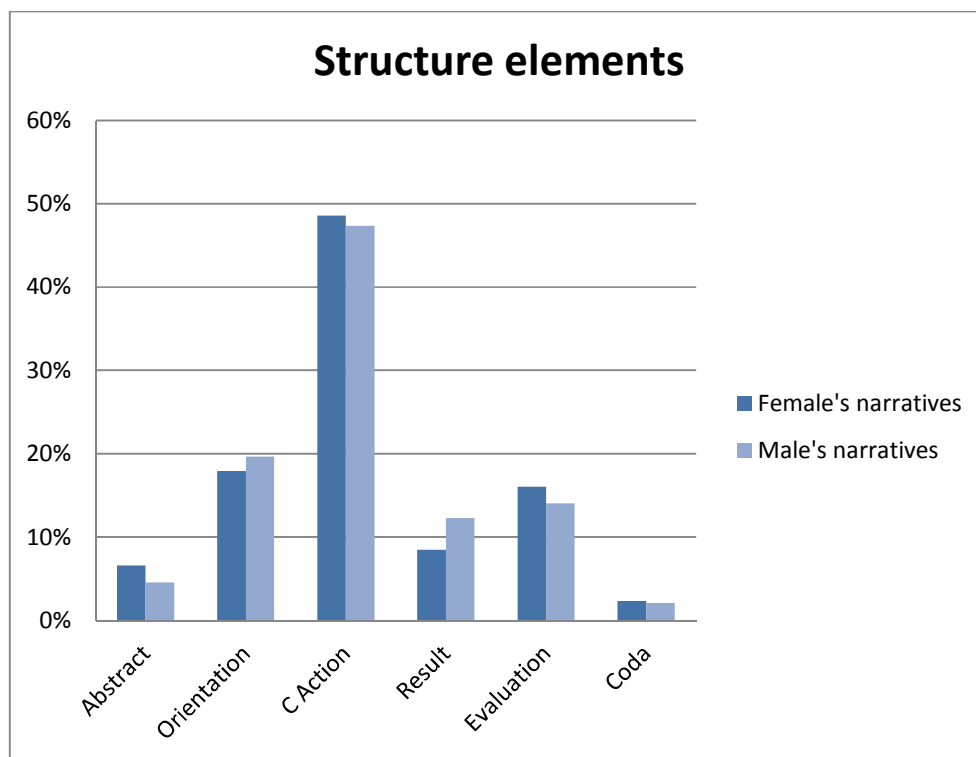


Figure 4: Number of clauses used for every structure element

#### 4.2.1 Abstract and coda

As can be seen in Tables 1 and 2, the category of *abstract* and *coda* comprise the smallest group of clauses in both groups. Although it can be seen that the elements of *abstract* and *coda* correspond to less than 10% of the clauses for both groups (see figure 4 above), these elements are present in several narratives, in 90% and 47% of them respectively. According to Labov (2008), it can be indeed expected to find just a few clauses in that function, as they are optional and used as an introduction and to close a narrative.

These categories also show very little internal variation. In the case of the use of *abstract*, it ranges from 0 to 2 in most cases for both groups. They correspond to a

4.6% of clauses for male learners' narratives and to a 6.6% of clauses in female learners' narratives. In the case of *coda*, the use of clauses ranges from 0 to 1, corresponding to a 2%) and a 2% for male and female learners' respectively.

Some examples for *abstract*, signaled with M for male's narratives and F for female's narratives, are shown below. As can be seen in examples 1 – 3, the clauses present a simple summary of what the narrative is going to be about, while example 4, exceptionally, includes a lot of details in the summary.

- (1) M: *The saddest story in my life is when my grandmother died.*
- (2) M: *I don't know if scared is the definition, but when my dad had a heart attack.*
- (3) F: *I think the saddest story in my life would be when my mother got sick.*
- (4) F: *I can say that the most embarrassing situation was when my two older daughters were in primary school and we, all the mothers in one of the classes, prepared a dance to celebrate something.*

The following examples correspond to the *coda* found in the narratives of both groups. These representative examples suggest a tendency for the narrators to finish their stories with a simple sentence which takes them back to the present, as also described by Labov and Waletzky (1967):

- (5) M: *life is still beautiful.*
- (6) M: *Next time I'm going to say no.*
- (7) M: *Now I know the gym is not for me.*
- (8) F: *And every time we get together they remember that time when I must have looked like a crazy girl.*

Taken together, these results may indicate a tendency of the learners to justify the telling of their stories by providing a summary, or *abstract*. This abstract establishes that it is worth listening to their narratives, because they consist of a reportable event (see section 2.1.3). Also, these results suggest that the learners also consider *coda* to

be a useful resource to take the past experiences to the present, in order to imply learning from the experience.

#### **4.2.2 Complicating action and orientation**

As can be seen above in Figure 4, the most widely used elements correspond to *complicating action* and *orientation*. In both groups, these elements concentrate much of the use of the clauses in the texts. Figure 4 also shows that there are no significant differences between male and female's use in oral narratives, with a 19% and a 17% for *orientation* and a 47% and 49% for *complicating action*. Nevertheless, it was observed that there is great internal variation of use in both groups of learners. In particular, male learners' narratives include a mean of 3.7 (SD = 3.1) clauses for *orientation*, and for the *complicating action*, they use a mean of 9 (SD = 5.8). In the case of female learners' narratives, the mean of clauses for *orientation* are 2.5 (SD = 1.7) which does not represent a considerable variation. For *complicating action*, in contrast, the mean of clauses is 6.7 with a standard deviation of 6.7, which is the highest of both groups.

With reference to the internal variation in the group of male learners of English, Figure 5, showing the use of *orientation* indicates that most narratives include less than 6 clauses in this function, but there are two cases, that correspond to the 13% of the narratives, in which the narratives include a larger number of clauses for the same function.

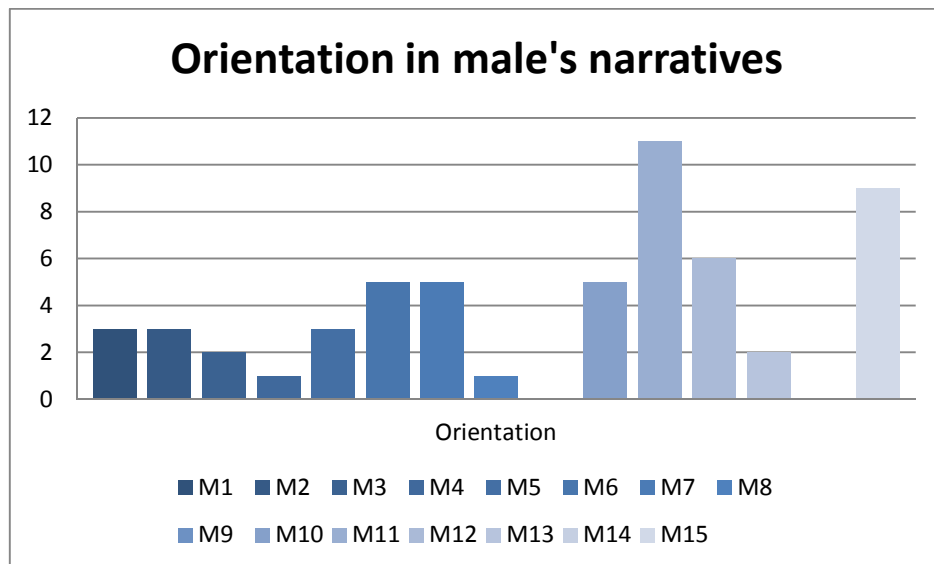


Figure 5: Internal variation of use of orientation in male's oral narratives

Some examples of orientation found in the function of *orientation* in the narratives of male learners can be seen below. Examples 9 - 11 show the simple style in which most of the *orientation* clauses were included in the male learners' narratives.

(9) *I live in the 8th floor.*

(10) *It was New Year's Eve.*

(11) *I don't remember, third year or fourth year.*

With regard to the use of *complicating action*, great internal variation is also shown, which is illustrated in Figure 6. It can be observed here that 33% of the narratives includes from 0 to 5 orientation clauses, 40% ranges from 6 to 10 clauses and the other 27% makes use of 11 or more clauses for this function.

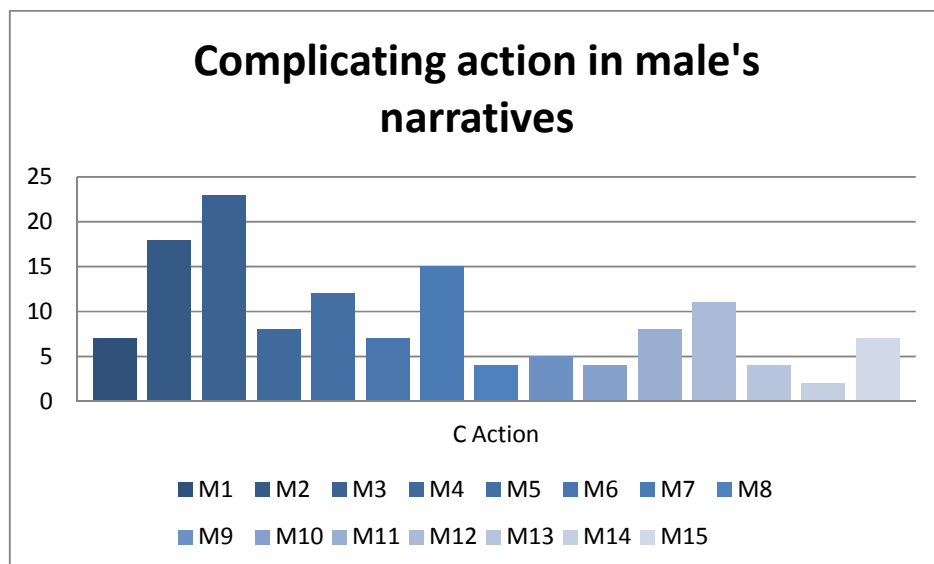


Figure 6: Internal variation of use of complicating action in male’s oral narratives

Below, some examples of the *complicating action* from male learners’ narratives are shown. In examples 12 – 14, the tendency of most narratives from this group can be seen. The *complicating action* starts with the action of a natural force or with the action of another person:

- (12) *I was sleeping and I woke up with the noise and movement of the quake.*
- (13) *And then a friend said that it was probably a heart attack.*
- (14) *And I remember one of my teachers selected me to present, me and other student from the other group.*

With respect to the internal differences in the group of female learners of English, it can be said that the *orientation* does not show considerable variation, as stated before. As can be seen in Figure 7, most of the narratives include 0 to 3 orientation clauses, and just the 20% of them go above that number, with 4 and 7 clauses.

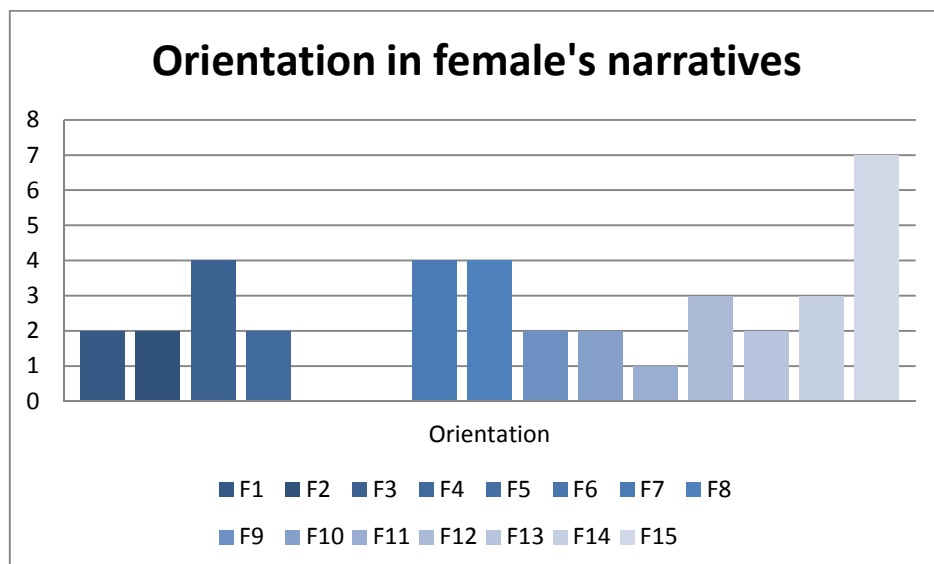


Figure 7: Internal variation of use of orientation in female's oral narratives

Some examples to illustrate the use of *orientation* clauses by the group of female learners can be seen in 15, 16 and 17. These clauses exemplify the variety of information provided by this group, which includes description of objects, description of places and descriptions of time:

(15) *And she was connected to a lot of machines and things.*

(16) *Once, my family and I were at the beach.*

(17) *I don't know, six years ago.*

On the subject of internal differences in the use of *complicating action* clauses, Figure 8 illustrates that 27% of the narratives range between 10 and 20 *complicating action* clauses, while the other 73% ranges from 1 to 9 clauses. Nevertheless, as the standard deviation shows (SD = 6.7), the greatest internal variation is shown in this category.



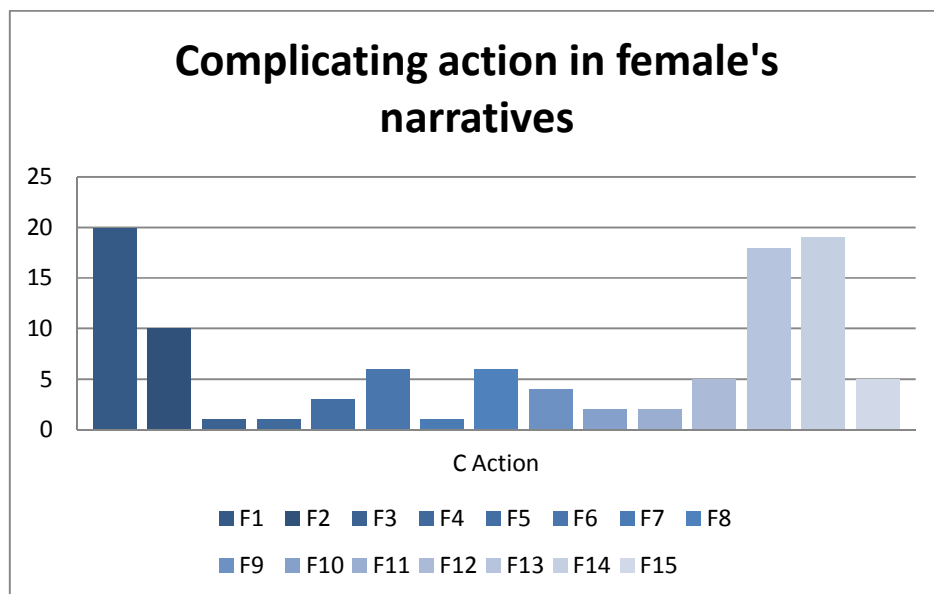


Figure 8: Internal variation of use of complicating action in female’s oral narratives

To exemplify the use of *complicating action* clauses found in female learners’ narratives, examples 18, 19 and 20 are presented. In these examples, the action of natural forces, the intervention of others and the action of the protagonist can be seen to show the variation in female learners’ narratives.

(18) *I was going to the university and the bus crashed.*

(19) *But the day of the presentation just two mothers arrived, me and another mother.*

(20) *And when I started riding it I realized that I didn’t know where the breaks were.*

### 4.2.3 Evaluation and result

With respect to the use of *evaluation* clauses, both groups present a similar distribution, which can be seen above in Figure 4. In the case of male learners’, they make use of a 14% of the total clauses (SD = 1.8), while the female group uses a

16% of the total clauses (SD = 1.4). Figures 9 and 10 illustrate that there is little internal variation on this feature.

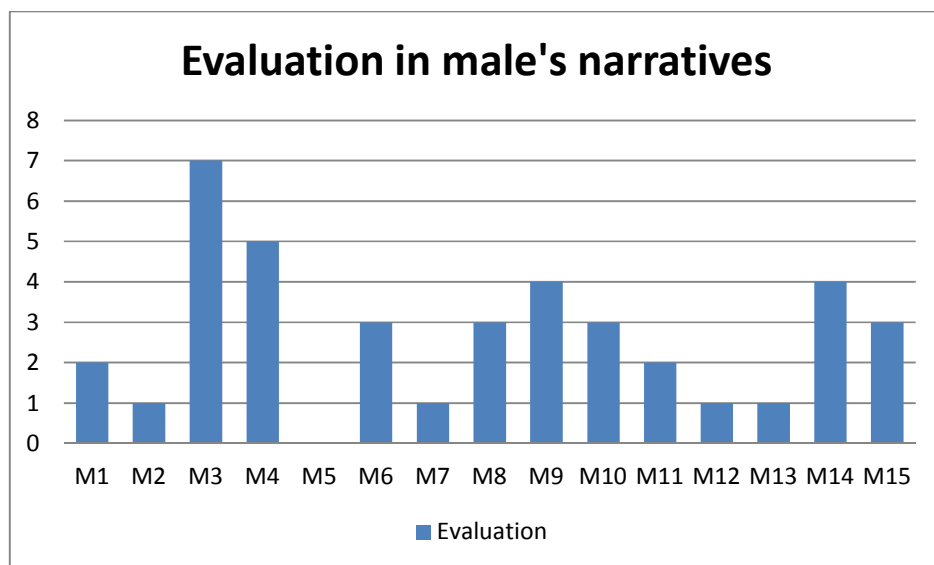


Figure 9: Internal variation of use of evaluation in male's oral narratives

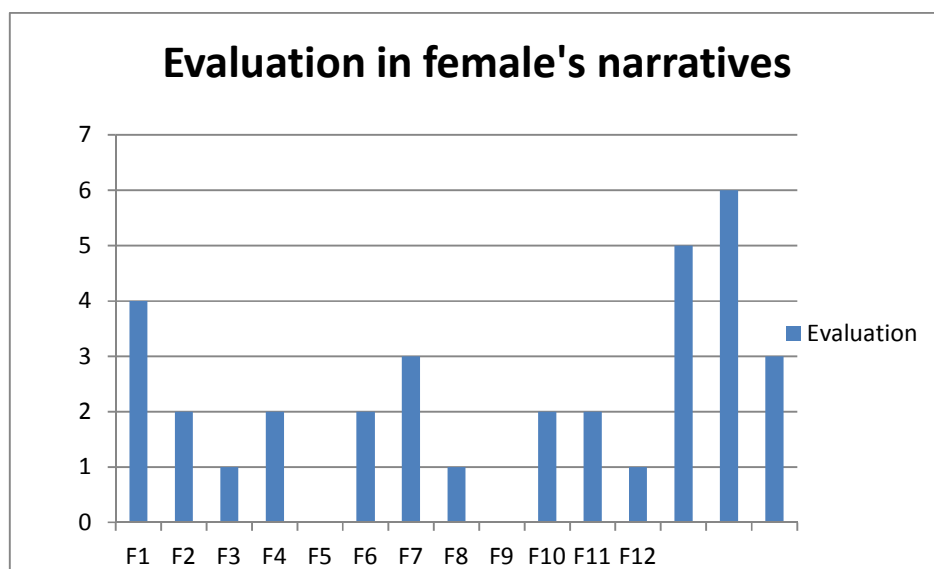


Figure 10: Internal variation of use of evaluation in female's oral narratives

Some examples to illustrate the use of *evaluation* clauses are presented in from 21 to 24. Male narratives' examples are signaled with M and female narratives' examples are signaled with F:

(21) M: *I was very amazed by all that was happening and the movement.*

(22) M: *It is very difficult to explain, but it was an amazing moment.*

(23) F: *It was awful because all of the girls were really nice girls.*

(24) F: *And I can say that that was the most embarrassing situation I have ever lived.*

Examples 21 and 22 show the tendency of positive evaluations of male learners, while examples 23 and 24 show the tendency of negative evaluations in female learners' narratives, which was the tendency displayed by both groups.

In the topic of *result*, in the group of male learners, it corresponds to a 12% of the total clauses, contrasted with an 8% (SD = 2.8) of the total clauses used by female learners to illustrate the *result* in their narratives. Nevertheless, when we refer to the actual number of clauses produced by male and female learners in the category of *result*, male learners double the number of clauses produced by female learners.

Regarding the internal variation of male and female learners, figures 11 and 12 show that there is no significant variation, with a mean of 2 clauses (SD = 2.1) per narrative in the group of male learners, and a mean of 1.2 clauses (SD = 1) per narrative in the group of female learners. Nevertheless, it can be noted that female learners showed a remarkably homogeneous tendency to report the result of their narratives, in a simple final clause, while men ranges differ, from 1 to 3, and from 4 to 8 clauses.

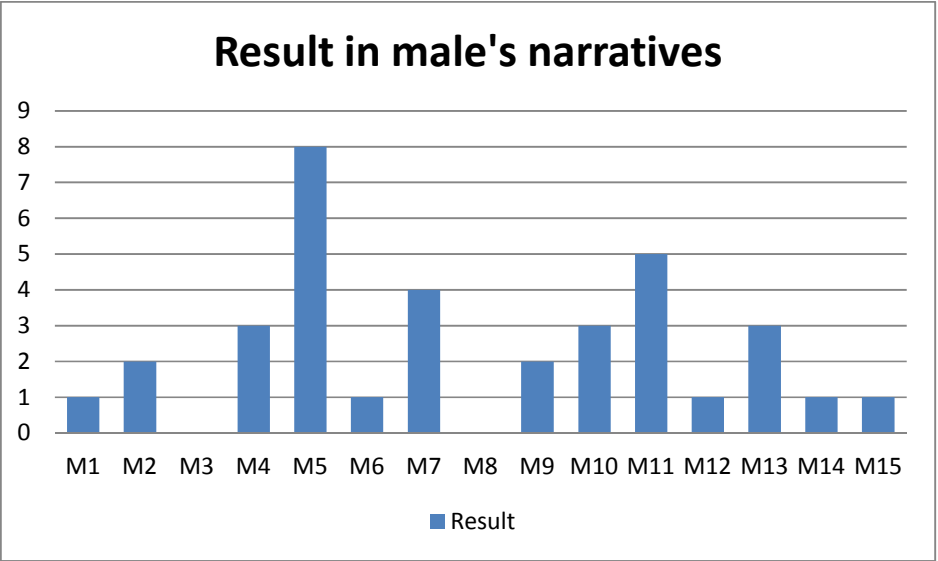


Figure 11: Internal variation of use of result in male’s oral narratives

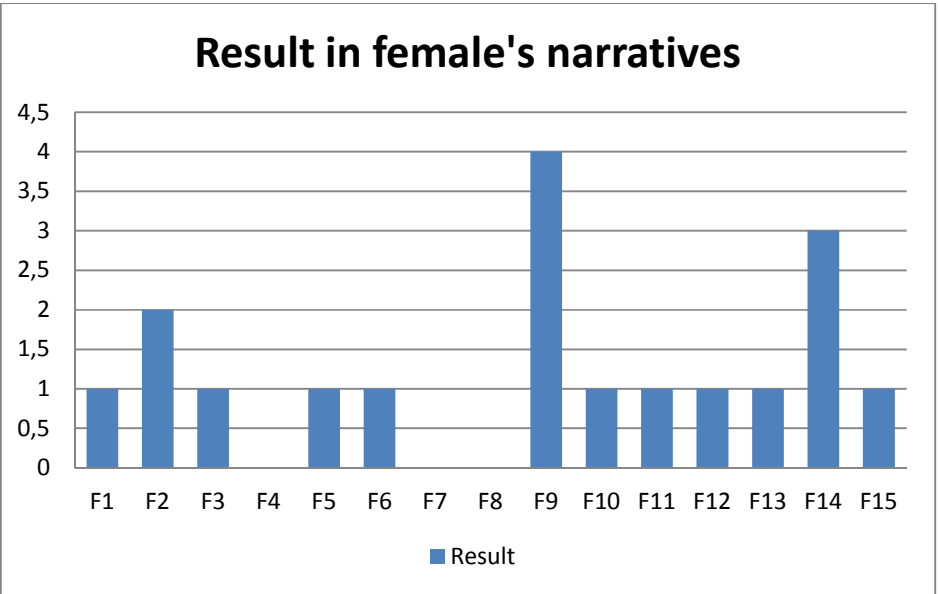


Figure 12: Internal variation of use of evaluation in female’s oral narratives

In the case of the component of *result*, examples 25 to 28 illustrate its use. Examples 25 and 26 correspond to male learners’ narratives where the result consisted of 1 clause, although it was not the typical behavior. Examples 27 and 28 are representative of the *result* clauses found in female learner’s narratives, which mostly corresponded to 1 closing clause:

(25) M: *The thing is that after a month, perhaps, one night she passed away.*

(26) M: *I finished that presentation and I didn't say anything.*

(27) F: *So when the doctor said that it wasn't cancer, I felt relieved.*

(28) F: *It was very life threatening for me, but at the end I survived.*

All things considered, the results support the idea of gender differences in several uses of structures. Nevertheless, similar use of the element of *abstract* reveals a common ground for both groups, which corresponds to the need to express the *reportability* of their narrative (see section 2.1.3). Also, the use of the element of *coda* expresses that male and female learners consider important to bring the consequences to the present as a learning experience. In the case of the element of *orientation*, female learners show a relatively uniform pattern, which suggests a similar use of details in their narratives. Contrary to these results, men show significant internal variation, which suggests mixed styles of use of details. However, female learners vary the most in their use of *complicating action* clauses, which is the core of the narrative.

### **4.3 Extra thematic details**

Regarding the counting of extra thematic details proposed by Johnstone (1993), the following results were obtained for both groups:

	Male's narratives							
	Specification of place	Specification of time	Description of objects	Description of people	Titles of events	People's name	Narrated reports	Other
M1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
M2	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
M3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
M4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
M5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
M6	1	0	1	3	0	0	0	0
M7	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
M8	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
M9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M10	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2
M11	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	5
M12	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	2
M13	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
M14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Total	8	8	5	8	1	1	1	17
%	16%	16%	10%	16%	2%	2%	2%	35%

Table 3: Male learners' use of extra thematic details

	Female's narratives							
	Specification of place	Specification of time	Description of objects	Description of people	Titles of events	People's name	Narrated reports	Other
M1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
M2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
M3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
M4	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
M5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
M7	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1
M8	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	1
M9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
M10	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
M11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
M12	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
M13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
M14	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
M15	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	4
Total	3	6	3	9	0	0	0	16
%	8%	16%	8%	24%	0%	0%	0%	43%

Table 4: Female learners' use of extra thematic details

It is important to note that the additional classification of *other*, which comprises the *orientation* clauses, described in section 3.4 that did not correspond to any of Johnstone's extra thematic details, include an important number of the clauses

produced by both groups (see tables 3 and 4). It is for this reason that this topic will be discussed further in this section, including a detailed account of the proposed classification, illustrated in the next section (see section 4.3.1).

Based on the information from tables 3 and 4, no statistically significant differences in the *extra thematic details* provided by male and female learners of English were found. However, in the category of *specification of place*, the group of male learners of English doubled the clauses produced by female learners in proportion to the total number of clauses produced by each group. These results are in accordance with Johnstone (1993)'s results (see section 2.4.2 above) where it is stated that men provide more information about places in their oral narratives. Examples of clauses considered as *specification of place* can be seen in examples 29 and 30 below. In these examples, a female tendency, described by Lakoff (1975) (see section 2.4.1), is illustrated, where the evaluation provided by female learners in their specification of place differentiates their narratives from those of male learners.

(29) M: *My family and I were on holidays in la Serena.*

(30) F: *It is a beautiful cabin by the lake Rapel.*

Other differences that go in accordance with Johnstone (1993)'s description of oral narratives can be seen in Figure 13 below. The extra thematic detail of *description of objects* was slightly superior in number in male learner's narratives, with a difference between the groups of a 2%. For this category, examples 31 and 32 are provided:

(31) M: *It was about 1995 or so when I was 15.*

(32) F: *And she was connected to a lot of machines and things.*

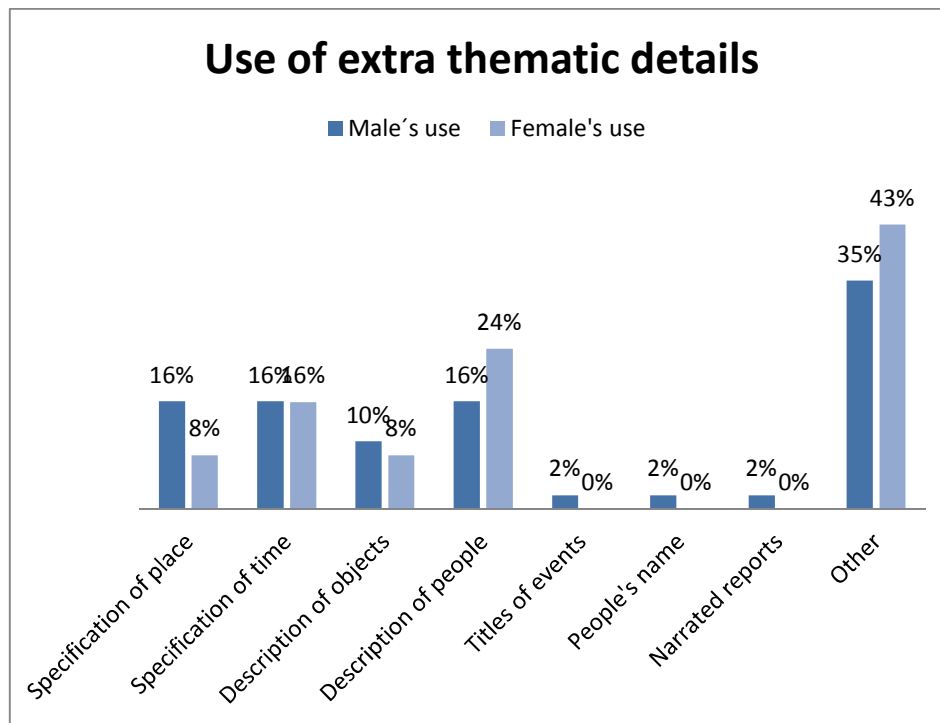


Figure 13: Use of extra thematic details based on Johnstone (1993)

Regarding the *description of people*, it can be seen that female learners used more clauses in this function in their oral narratives, exceeding their counterparts in 8%. This is also something to be expected, based on Johnstone (1993)'s work, described in section 2.4.2 above, where the author describes women to provide *community action* and description of people in their narratives.

The other categories of *title of events*, *people's name* and *narrated reports* were only found in the narratives of male learners, though in just 3 clauses, in 2 narratives. These results may be indicative of men's tendency to report events (see section 2.2), thus providing more details. These clauses are shown in examples 33, 34 and 35 respectively.

(33) *It was New Year's Eve.*

(34) *It was when Lorena said yes, I want to be your wife.*

(35) *And they asked me "what about your dogs, did you find them?"*



On the whole, it can be seen that both male and female learners made use of extra thematic details, but their particular styles were reflected by the types of information they provided. It could be seen that Johnstone (1993)'s categories reflected more men's style of reporting details in narratives of personal experience, that include a description of places and objects, titles of events, people's names and narrated reports. Women's use of details included mainly information that was not categorized by the author. These types of details are described in the next section.

### 4.3.1 Extra thematic details not included in Johnstone's description

The extra thematic details found in the oral narratives of personal experience which do not correspond to Johnstone (1993)'s model of description (see details in section 2.4.2) correspond to a high percentage of the clauses labeled as *other* (see figure 9 above). As stated in the previous section, the analysis of male and female's oral narratives lead to the categorization of extra thematic details that were not included in the selected model of description (Johnstone, 1993). In order to account for the oral narratives of personal experience in greater detail, Figure 14 is presented:

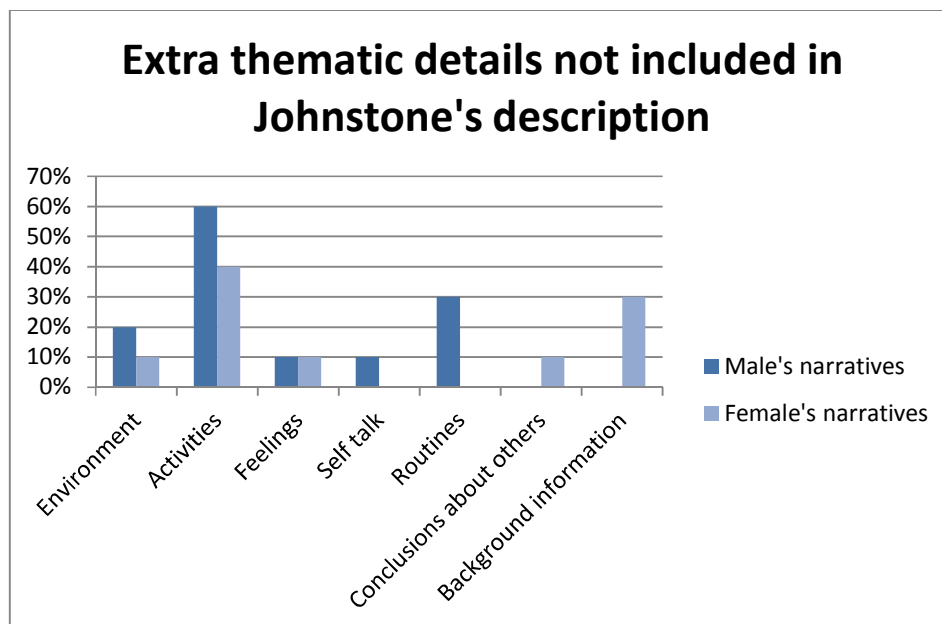


Figure 14: Use of extra thematic details not included in Johnstone (1993)

The types of details found in both groups were description of *environment*, description of *activities* and *feelings*. As can be seen in Table 5, the most widely used description was that of *activities*. As can be seen in examples 36 and 37, the type of description of *activities* consists of a description of what was taking place during or before the main action of the narrative took place.

(36) M: *I was chatting with some friends in Facebook.*

(37) F: *I was talking with the girls about boys.*

In relation with the descriptions of *environment* and *feelings*, examples 38 and 39 show, respectively, one of the characteristics that brought about the main action of the narrative, and a consequence of the main action.

(38) M: *The sea was quite rough.*

(39) F: *I felt terrible.*

Regarding *self talk* and *routines*, it was found that they only appear in male learner's oral narratives, though just in 4 of them. These are shown in the examples below. Example 40 is a clear characteristic of men's discourse, where self capabilities are enhanced (see section 2.4.1), while example 41 corresponds to a simple routine that is performed by someone else.

(40) *I thought "how difficult can it be?"*

(41) *And my father walks them normally.*

Related to *conclusions about others* and *background information*, they were found only in 4 clauses from female learner's narratives. The use of the conclusions about others, found in example 41, may be a result of women's style to build rapport (see section 2.4.1 for details) which includes evaluations of the other's intentions.

Example 42 corresponds to a case of use of background information. Although it is highly informative, it only corresponds to orientation in the narrative where it is found.

(42) *He was just being polite, that's why he said that.*

(43) *Well, my baby was born after 7 months of a terrible pregnancy.*

In brief, these results indicate that the different styles adopted by male and female learners to express extra information or, in other words, orientation information, differ. These differences are in accordance with the descriptions provided by the framework of difference (see section 2.4.1). These differences can be detected mostly when paying attention to details, rather than based on the numbers provided by the quantitative analysis.

#### **4.4 Outcome**

With regards to the action of the protagonists, the oral narratives of personal experience were analyzed to determine whether the protagonists acted alone or in groups, and the type of outcomes for their actions, based on Johnstone (1993)'s proposal, described in detail in section 2.4.2 above.

In order to account for the narratives of both groups of learners of English, Tables 5 and 6 are presented. In both tables, a third category was included so as to report the narratives where the outcome did not depend on the action of the protagonist. These cases correspond to a great percentage of the narratives in both groups, as can be seen in Tables 5 and 6 and illustrated below in Figure 16. These cases are discussed by the end of this section.

Male's narratives					
	Acting alone		Acting with others		Protagonist doesn't intervene
	good outcome	bad outcome	good outcome	bad outcome	PDI
M1					1
M2			1		
M3					1
M4					1
M5	1				
M6					1
M7					1
M8					1
M9					1
M10		1			
M11					1
M12	1				
M13			1		
M14	1	1			
M15					
Total	3	2	2	0	8
	20,00%	13,33%	13,33%	0,00%	53,33%

Table 5: Action of the protagonist in male learner's oral narratives

Female's narratives					
	Acting alone		Acting with others		Protagonist doesn't intervene
	good outcome	bad outcome	good outcome	bad outcome	PDI
M1					1
M2					1
M3				1	
M4					1
M5					1
M6					1
M7		1			
M8		1			
M9		1			
M10		1			
M11	1				
M12					1
M13			1		
M14					1
M15		1			
Total	1	5	1	1	7
	6,67%	33,33%	6,67%	6,67%	46,67%

Table 6: Action of the protagonist in female learner's oral narratives

In accordance with Johnstone (1993)'s results (see section 2.4.2 for details), Figure 15 shows that when men act alone, it is usual to have a good outcome, with a 20% of the narratives ending positively. Male learners' results can be contrasted with female learners' outcomes that correspond to 6.7% of good outcomes when acting alone. It can be seen that for women, when acting alone, the events have predominantly a bad outcome, with a 33% of cases, contrasting with a 13% of bad outcomes for male learners' narratives.

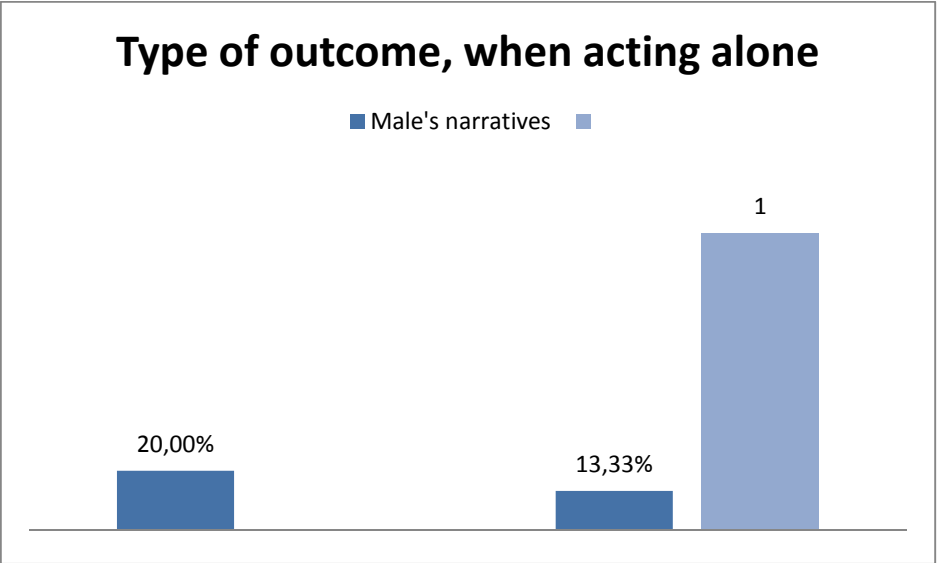


Figure 15: Types of outcome, when the protagonist acts alone

Differing with Johnstone (1993)'s results that indicate that women are the ones that tend to act with others in their narratives, Figure 16 shows that both groups have a similar distribution of actions with others, but they differ in the results. For male learners, the outcomes are only good when acting with others, while for female learners the outcomes are good and bad in the same proportion when acting with others.

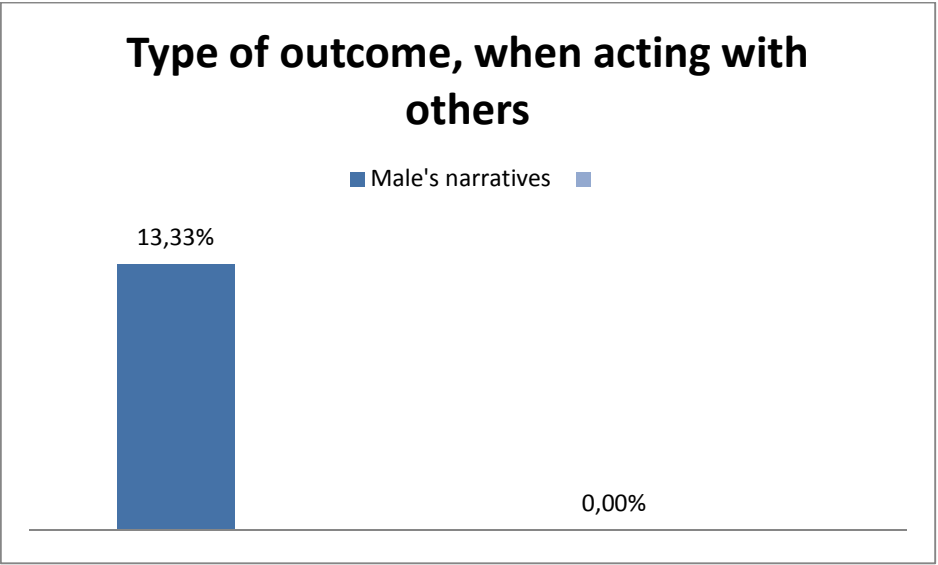


Figure 16: Types of outcome, when the protagonist acts with others

Regarding the narratives where the protagonist does not intervene for the outcome, Figure 16 shows that male learners prefer this type of outcome in most cases, while female learners just fall behind in a 7%.

Johnstone (1993)'s model of analysis, which is used as a basis for the comparison of gender differences in the present study, does not account for these cases. Nevertheless, a brief description of the reasons for the outcomes is provided in Figure 17 below.

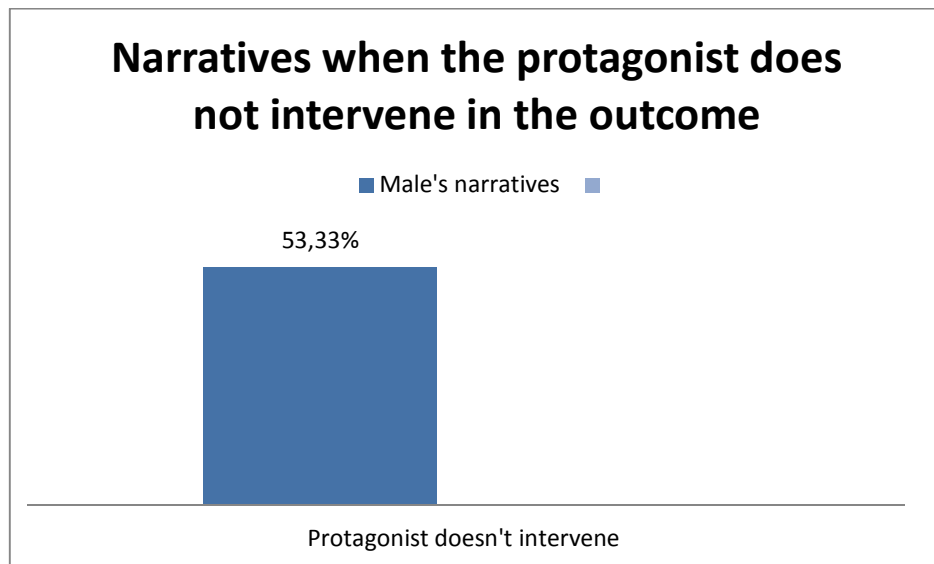


Figure 17: Reasons for the outcome, when the protagonist does not intervene

Below, in Figure 18, it can be seen that there are two main reasons that promote the resolution of the narratives of male and female learners. These reasons are the action of others and the action of natural forces. Example 44 is a typical example of the action of others intervening to solve the situation, while example 45 makes reference

to an earthquake, which is a situation that most of the informants had experienced. This way, to find the resolution by natural forces, is something to be expected, as the narratives were elicited to elaborate on a life threatening experience.

(44) *So, she was operated the following day.*

(45) *After what seemed forever, it stopped.*

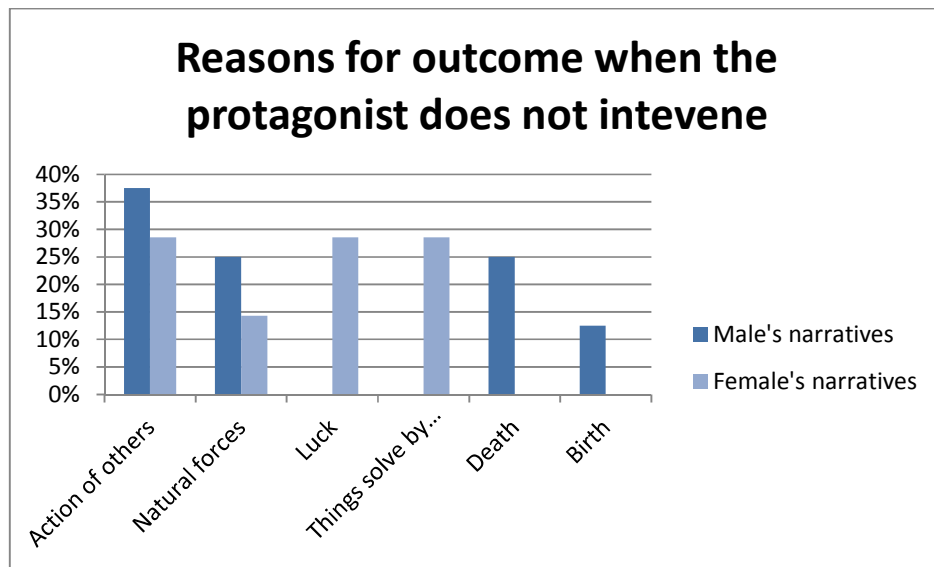


Figure 18: Reasons for the outcome, when the protagonist does not intervene

For female learners only, two important reasons correspond to the action of luck and the fact that things solve by themselves. Example 46 illustrates that the narrator survived an accident because of the action of luck that impeded the motorcycle to fall over her. In the case of example 47, it shows that the protagonist's problem, which was that she was choking, was solved by itself, without any kind of intervention described.

(46) *Luckily, the motorcycle had four wheels and the wheels landed two millimeters away from the trench border.*

(47) *It was very life threatening for me, but at the end I survived.*



For male learners only, death and birth are two reasons that resolve the action in their narratives of personal experience. In example 48, the narrator describes the resolution of a condition suffered by a relative, and example 49 corresponds to the resolution of a long waiting process.

(48) *The thing is that after a month, perhaps, one night she passed away.*

(49) *And my son was born.*

The overall picture provided by these results supports the idea of the existence of gender differences (Tannen, 1990) in the interlanguage of Spanish speaking learners of English. Also, these results may corroborate the notion that it is crucial to consider the differences in same gender groups, because stereotypes do not always explain the use of some discursive elements (Pavlenko, 2008).

In the case of the number of clauses used to construct oral narratives of personal experience, the framework of gender differences, described in section 2.4.1, explains the fact that male learners made use of considerably more clauses.

In the case of narrative structure elements, the differences lied on mainly on the use of complicating action clauses, which correspond to the core of the narrative. In this case, male learners made use of more clauses, and female learners' narratives showed the greatest internal differences.

In the case of use of extra thematic differences, it can be said that the comparison revealed gender differences which are in accordance with the findings made by Johnstone (1993). Also, it was found that these categories do not suffice for the description of orientation clauses in oral narratives, and thus, there was a need to create a different classification. For these alternative clauses, it was found that male and female learners' narratives share some characteristics, but slight differences were also found in the use of background information.

In the case of the section of outcomes, the differences found were in accordance with gender studies in general (see section 2.4.1), and men were found to include mainly positive outcomes, contrary to what women performed. In this respect, it was also necessary to account for results that were not part of Johnstone (1993)'s classification, due to the fact that her model does not account for instances where the action of the protagonist does not intervene in the resolution.

In the next chapter, a discussion of these results will be provided. The discussion will mainly deal mainly with the interpretations of the differences found for each of the categories under examination. The validity of these interpretations will be discussed in relation to both the expectations set in the Literature Review chapter and also against the methodological apparatus applied for this study.

## **5 Discussion and conclusions**

The present study has intended to account for a specific aspect of the interlanguage of learners of English, specifically regarding gender differences in oral narratives of personal experience. In order to accomplish this objective, the main studies about narratives, especially about narratives of personal experience, and about gender differences have been considered (see section 2.1). It has also been noted that that most of these studies have been conducted using monolingual informants and thus they have served as a target reference for the present study. More specifically, the model of Labov and Waletzky (1967) has served as the basis to characterize the structural components of the narratives. This model, described in detail in section 2.1.3, describes six components as the main constituents of a narrative. In order to determine gender differences, the study proposed by Johnstone (1993) has provided the main features to be considered as essentially distinguishing features between men and women in oral narratives of personal experience. The use of details and the types of outcomes described in section 2.4.2 have been the main focus of contrast of the present study.

In order to provide a detailed account of the most significant results, the following section is guided by the research questions posed in section 2.5 which are answered in a general to specific order.

### **5.1 Research Questions**

Research Question 1: *In the context of oral narratives of personal experience, can the gender differences identified in monolingual studies be found in the interlanguage of advanced learners of English?*

Although in most of the categories analyzed no statistically significant differences were found, it was possible to find tendencies that coincided with those found in monolingual studies (e.g. Tannen, 1990 and Coates, 2004). These differences were

reflected in the analysis of data conducted category by category (see section 3.4). The main differences are, in general terms, related to the length of the narratives, in terms of number of clauses. Additionally, differences related to the types of details provided in the narratives (see section 2.2.2) were found, as well as the types of outcomes of their oral narratives of personal experience.

Nevertheless, as the differences are not statistically significant, and the narratives analyzed constitute a small sample of the selected population, the conclusions drawn here cannot be generalized confidently.

*Research Question 2. Are there any differences or similarities regarding the number of clauses used by male and female learners of English when they elaborate their oral narratives of personal experience?*

The number of clauses used to elaborate the oral narratives of personal experience showed statistically significant differences. The results showed that male learners of English made use of more clauses to describe the actions that took place in their personal experiences than female learners did. Regarding the internal variation in every group, it was found that the narratives of male speakers showed little internal variation, while female learners showed cases where considerably more clauses were used.

As discussed in section 2.2, Tannen (1990) describes that this is a regular tendency in studies involving monolingual speakers of English in conversational interaction. Although these studies did not involve the study of narratives of personal experience directly, they are closely related by the fact that in conversations, normally, personal experiences and anecdotes are discussed. Consequently, it can be reasonably argued that the gender differences found in monolingual studies regarding the length of narratives or interventions, was corroborated in this study of the interlanguage of Chilean Spanish learners of English.

A possible explanation for this difference in length can be the fact that the level of English of the informants was not a limitation for them to speak as they naturally do in their native language, thus reflecting their natural tendency to hold the floor (Tannen, 1990) for a longer time. Nevertheless, these differences can be also attributed to the differences in proficiency from the part of women, as discussed below with respect to the limitations to the study.

Research Question 3. *What are the main narrative discourse elements used by adult learners of English to elaborate their oral narratives of personal experience? Are there any differences or similarities in the use of male and female learners?*

The analysis of the formal structural elements (see section 2.1.4.) showed that the six categories or macrostructures (Van Dijk, 1979; Labov and Waletzky, 1967), i.e. abstract, orientation, complicating action, resolution and evaluation, formed part of the elicited oral narratives of personal experience. These results indicate thus that the structural elements were included in a highly similar fashion in both groups, as can be seen above in section 4.2, Figure 4.

The categories that included the fewest clauses were abstract and coda. These are in accordance with what Labov and Waletzky (1967) describe, as they are just optional components. Nevertheless, abstract is found in most of the narratives of the sample, in 67% of narratives by men and 73% of narratives by women. Coda, on the other hand, appears in 40% and 33% of the narratives respectively. The presence of abstract could be explained as the justification of the narrative by the authors, what Labov describes as reportability. The informants, who used an introducing clause as abstract, summarized the story to be narrated, so as to present the facts as worth to be told. In the case of some female narratives, the abstract also included some information about the resolution, as stated by Labov and Waletzky (1976).

The categories that comprised a higher number of clauses for both groups were those of orientation and complicating action (See section 4.2). The analysis showed that

the proportional frequency is remarkably similar for both groups under study. However, the group of female learners showed a considerable internal variation in the use of complicating action clauses, with a standard deviation of 6.7. Complicating action clauses correspond to the core of the narratives, and this variation can be due to personal differences, and may also be explained by the degree of familiarity with the topics. Besides, it could be argued that male learners were more familiar with the topics because, in most of the cases, male learners produced more clauses than female learners.

In the case of the orientation, which is an essential component of analysis for the present study, both groups showed a similar use, with male learners including slightly more clauses for this function (see results in section 4.2.2). However, regarding the internal variation in both groups, it was observed that female learners made a similar use of this structure element, while men differed noticeably, having cases with many clauses and cases with few orientation clauses. When addressing the next research question, this component will be described in detail as extra thematic information, following Johnstone (1993)'s categories.

The categories of result and evaluation showed marked differences. On the one hand, male learners doubled the number of clauses used for the function of result, showing a significant tendency for men to highlight the outcomes of their narratives. On the other hand, female learners showed a slightly superior use of the function of evaluation, suggesting that they tend to consider more the possible effects and consequences of their experiences, while men tend to focus more on the results of their actions. These results may indicate another gendered behavior, with female learners' narratives focused on the process while male learners' narratives are focused on the result (Macarie et al., 2008).

All things considered, the results in this study suggest that the narrative structure elements consider the communicative task over the possible differences between groups, as there is no fixed pattern or statistically significant differences. In spite of

that, some signs of gender differences were found in relation to the result and evaluation of the narratives.

Research Question 4. *What are the extra thematic elements found in the oral narratives of male learners of English and female learners of English? Are there any differences or similarities in use for male and female learners?*

The category labeled as orientation in structural analysis coincides with Johnstone (1993)'s classification of extra thematic details. These extra thematic details were described in detail in section 2.2.2 and include the uses of specification of place, specification of time, description of objects, description of people, titles of events, people's names and narrated reports. The analysis of these details revealed differences between the groups of male and female learners. The results obtained were similar to those observed by Johnstone (1993) described above in section 2.2.2.

In particular, it was found that male learners showed a tendency to provide more details regarding the setting, as the specification of places and time and also description of objects. The categories of title of events, people's names and narrated reports were exclusively used by male learners. This coincides with what Johnstone (1993) found in her monolingual study. Again, this may be explained by the proficiency level of the learners which allowed them to construct narratives that reflected their gender differences as advanced learners of English.

Regarding female learners' use of extra thematic details, the tendency was to use more details focusing on others, by using the feature of description of people more than male learners did. This can be a reflection of what Knight et al. (2005) found to be a typical characterization of women's narratives (See section 2.2.2 above). As explained above in section 2.2.2, Knight et al. (2005) found that men centered their narratives on themselves and their capabilities, while women focused their narratives on someone else. The results in this study showed a similar situation in that female learners provided a detailed description of people in their narratives, rather than other

kinds of details, as description of places, time or objects, widely preferred by male learners.

In spite of the fact that the elements considered by Johnstone (1993) served as a model of comparison, there were several clauses that did not match any of the proposed categories, and thus, they were labeled as other. These clauses corresponded to a high percentage of occurrences for both groups, and similarities and differences were found between them. In both groups, the description of the environment, description of activities and description of feelings were found in a similar proportion. However, clauses describing self talk and routines were only found in the male's narratives, and conclusions about others and background information were found only in the female's narratives. In spite of the fact that the topics of the narratives were circumscribed to three given topics of experiences for the present study, the variation may indicate that there is considerable variability and richness in the orientation clauses that were presented in the narratives of both groups.

Consequently, the results suggest that the categories proposed by Johnstone (1993) are useful to determine gender differences in oral narratives of personal experience, and that they account for the different styles that men and women display in narratives of personal experience. Despite that, it was necessary to propose alternative categories in order to account for the oral narratives in detail. This may suggest further work on the area, in order to be able to provide an exhaustive explanation of the differences and similarities in the oral narratives of personal experience, both in monolingual and bilingual studies.

Research Question 5. *What kinds of outcomes are found in the oral narratives of male learners of English and female learners of English? Are there any differences or similarities in use for male and female learners?*

The outcomes analyzed were those that involved the action of the protagonist in the resolution, as proposed by Johnstone (1993). The categorization of these outcomes



depended on whether the protagonist acted alone or with others and whether there were good or bad outcomes. In spite of the usefulness of this classification, the data found in the narratives made necessary to create another category to account for the narratives where the outcome did not depend on the action of the protagonist. These cases correspond to a 53% and 46% in male and female learners' narratives respectively. A possible reason for this may be the type of questions and topics addressed in the data collection procedure (see section 3.3). These eliciting questions left the possibilities of intervention of others open in the resolution of the complications. Thus, for instance, when describing an embarrassing situation, several informants in both groups described the action of others as the trigger of the resolution, which in this case, is mainly negative and detrimental for the protagonist. Other cases, for example, when narrating about a situation where they thought they could have died, they attributed the resolution of events to natural forces, as various informants reported their experiences during an earthquake. Finally, with regards to the topic of the happiest/saddest moment of their lives, some narratives ended with the action of others intervening, or the situations solved by themselves.

With regard to the outcomes related to the action of the protagonist, it was observed that men, when acting alone, were more successful than women. In the case of female learners, when acting alone, the outcomes were mainly negative. On the topic of the action of the protagonist with others, male learners obtain good results, while female learners showed good and bad results in the same proportion. Accordingly, the differences were a marked tendency, coherent with Knight et al. (2005), who point out the fact that men tend to characterize themselves as competent, while women tend to characterize themselves as foolish (see section 2.4.1).

Regarding the outcomes where the protagonist does not intervene, further differences can be identified. Both groups shared some common reasons that triggered the resolution, but they differentiated in critical fields. Female learners used as a trigger for the resolution the variable of luck and that things solve by themselves, showing a tendency to avoid the agency in the resolution of events. For male learners, the

reasons that were not in their control were death and birth, as well as the action of natural forces. These findings seem to indicate that, as women picture themselves as foolish (Knight, 2005), they preferred to attribute the results to other causes, and as men trust their abilities, they picture themselves as actively involved, except in cases where it is impossible, as in birth and death.

## **5.2 Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research**

The results discussed so far should be interpreted against a number of limitations in order to evaluate their usefulness. The first of these limitations is the fact that the number of subjects of the sample may not be as representative of the population that is intended to describe in the present study. In order to overcome this limitation, it would have been necessary to include a significantly higher number of informants, so as to be able to generalize on the findings. This possibility was not available for the researcher, as it is difficult to find informants that fulfilled the required characteristics, who were willing to participate in the study. However, the findings of the present study were consistent with previous work done in the area (Johnstone, 1993; Labov, 2008; Pavlenko, 2008; Tannen, 1990).

In addition, as the narratives presented were elicited using a structured interview, the selected topics were limited and might not be representative of what women or men normally narrate in their everyday lives. This fact might have affected their oral production, especially the length and the details included. However, the results obtained are thought to be more comparable, as they refer to similar experiences and related topics, contrary to other studies, which include topics and experiences of different kinds (see, for example, Johnstone, 1993).

Finally, the selection of the participants lacked a formal evaluation of proficiency in the target language. Conceivably, this may have affected the oral production of the narratives of personal experience, especially the length of the narratives. This could

be so because, in order to be able to express their ideas clearly and as naturally as possible, the learners need to have a certain level of command of the language. In order to overcome this limitation, it would have been necessary to test the level of proficiency using a standard test, which would involve a significant investment of time from the part of the informants, and money resources from the part of the researcher. Nevertheless, the researcher did not find evident difficulties for the informants to get their message across, and as the results are consistent with previous studies, it can be assumed that the data is valid.

### **5.3 Final comments**

Some possible suggestions for further research have to do with the different types of evaluation, as the presented by Shiro (2000), as it was something that was not address directly with our research questions. It would be interesting to obtain information about the gender tendencies in the use of these categories of evaluation, as the literature reveals that studies on this area have only been conducted considering age as a factor.

Also, regarding the use of narratives of personal experience, it would be interesting to report on the topic selection from the part of learners of English, when using their second or foreign language. Considering that the studies in this area have mainly been conducted in monolingual studies, these findings would provide useful information for classroom applications. These possible applications could provide opportunities for learners to feel confident with the topics of their interest and also with the ones that are not so familiar to them.

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### Appendix A: Description of the informants

Female informants	Age	Educational level	City of origin	Current occupation
1	27	Master's degree in English	Santiago	University teacher
2	27	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
3	30	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
4	34	Master's degree in English	Santiago	University teacher
5	32	Master's degree in English	Santiago	University teacher

Male informants	Age	Educational level	City of origin	Current occupation
1	33	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
2	26	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
3	28	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
4	29	Teacher of English	Santiago	University teacher
5	35	Master's degree in English	Santiago	University teacher



## Appendix B: Tables of analysis

Narrative 1M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The saddest story in my life is when my grandmother died.	A		
2	It was 4, 5 years ago	O	Ex-SP	
3	and I was kind of used to see her with lots of medical problems all her life so when she had the last problem, we said it could be another one	O	Ex-NI	
4	but it was the last one.	CA		
5	Actually, we got a phone call from one of her neighbors	CA		
6	and said that my grandmother was very, very ill.	CA		
7	So my mom went to her house to pick her up	CA		
8	and took her to the hospital,	CA		
9	and she stayed there for 2 or 3 weeks perhaps,	CA		
10	and, everyday, she got worse.	CA		
11	The thing is that after a month, perhaps, one night she passed away.	R		PDI
12	and it was very sad, because it was, I think, the first time I saw my mother crying	E		
13	and she cried a lot for 2 or 3 weeks, more o less.	O	Ex-DP	
14	And I think that is the worst moment in my life.	E		

Narrative 2M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It's not that sad, but I was about to die.	A		
2	It was the craziest night in my life	E		
3	I went to the south near XXX National Park with my friend XX	O	Ex-SP	
4	And one night we went out with one of his cousins called Patricio, the oldest cousin that he has actually.	O	Ex-DP	
5	And that night we went to a night club, in those places where these naughty girls get together	CA		
6	We stayed there for a couple of minutes,	CA		
7	but they didn't accept us there	CA		
8	I was quite drunk actually	CA		
9	Actually he stopped driving around the city and the town, actually,	CA		
10	and, all of a sudden, we were half naked with no T-shirt, driving	CA		
11	and messing around the town	CA		
12	And we came across a police car	CA		
13	So, the policeman started to chase us	CA		
14	And Patricio had to run away with us	CA		
15	and we were, actually, it was over 150 kilometers, more or less	CA		
16	and it was so fast that the police car couldn't follow us.	CA		
17	And in that way, we didn't realize that we passed the town	R		PO-good
18	and we got to the next one.	R		
19	So we had to return	CA		
20	and go home	CA		
21	it was 6 am in the morning	O	Ex-ST	
22	and Patricio fell asleep,	CA		
23	so he couldn't drive back	CA		
24	I took the car,	CA		
25	but I don't know how to drive very well	CA		
26	so it was a bit complicated for me to drive that car in a no pavement road.	E		

Narrative 3M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The saddest story in my life I think it was in 2004. Yep, July 2004	O	Ex-ST	
	We were in the middle of the Winter break I guess, that was at the university	O	Ex-ST	
2	and that weekend some friends from university and I went to the beach	CA		
3	We spent the whole weekend just drinking and chatting all day long,	CA		
4	and when we came back, next morning my father called home	CA		
5	and he told me that it was quite possible that one of my friends had died in an accident.	CA		
6	And then he told me to go to his house	CA		
7	and ask my friend's father about that.	CA		
8	And I was kind of shocked	E		
9	And when I was supposed to leave home my aunt came in	CA		
10	and told me that my friend had died in a car accident the previous night.	CA		
11	So I was still in shock	E		
12	I couldn't believe that	E		
13	And I was supposed to go to university to get some results of my exams I guess, from Z's exams.	CA		
14	And I got dressed	CA		
15	I left home	CA		
16	and when I was all my way to the bus stop, I came across my friends who gathered outside his house	CA		
17	and we saw each other, just to know what happened.	CA		
18	We hugged each other like when we were kids.	CA		
19	We cried for a little bit	CA		
20	and then I went to university	CA		
21	and then I wasn't clear about anything	E		
22	so I got to university	CA		
23	Z was giving my results	CA		
24	and he said that those were the highest results that anybody ever got	CA		
25	and I didn't give a damn.	E		

26	And next day I went to his funeral	CA		
27	and... we used to have a pet together when we were kids	CA		
28	and we played our very last show	CA		
29	We played together for the last time, as we used to play when we were kids	CA		
30	and it started to rain.	O	Ex-NI	
31	So it was kind of mystique and sad at the same time	E		PDI
32	And that is the saddest story I can remember so far.	E		

Narrative 4M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The saddest moment in my life was when my parents separated because I still believe in love	A		
2	I had the example there right beside me	CA		
3	Having my family	CA		
4	being together for twenty five years	CA		
5	They got married because of me, yeah,	CA		
6	and it was all happiness, happiness,	CA		
7	the fact of being there like devastated	CA		
8	the fact of realizing they were not gonna be together anymore	E		
9	stuff like watching a very beautiful building like going down, see?,	CA		
10	and that didn't make me not to believe in love anymore or in marriage, just the opposite,	CA		
11	and, well, that was I think, the saddest part of my life	E		
12	but it was like two weeks	O	Ex-ST	
13	time in which I was really sad	E		
14	then I could get over it,	R		
15	I have a tendency of getting over stuff and being happy	E		
16	Maybe I felt disappointment of life	E		
17	I didn't blame them	R		PDI
18	but I felt disappointment,	R		
19	but then I realized that disappointment shouldn't screw life in a way	E		
20	life is still beautiful	C		

Narrative 5M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	Well, I was driving to San Bernardo	O	Ex-SP	
2	I don't remember why	O	Ex-NI	
3	I was working with a friend fixing computers	O	Ex-NI	
4	so we were going to fix a computer or something	CA		
5	and suddenly we were going through an avenue	CA		
6	at about sixty or seventy	CA		
7	and I was in a row of cars	CA		
8	I was the last	CA		
9	and a guy was to my right with his car	CA		
10	and it drove his car in front of me because he wanted to turn	CA		
11	and I was driving through the middle of the street	CA		
12	and before I passed, the guy accelerated his car	CA		
13	and then I could avoid him	CA		
14	and instead of crushing against him in the middle, he crushed into our side door	CA		
15	he broke the mirror and the door	CA		
16	After that, the police came	R		
17	and at first he blamed himself	R		
18	but when the police arrived, he changed	R		
19	He started saying that it wasn't his fault, that I was driving very fast	R		
20	but he didn't even have a driving license	R		
21	and he said that I was maneuvering against him	R		
22	The owner of the car I was driving had an insurance that only covered her	R		
23	so the police registered that she was driving.	R		PA-good

Narrative 6M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I was sleeping and I woke up with the noise and movement of the quake	CA		
2	but I stood there by the door in my room	CA		
3	and I waited until it stopped	CA		
4	I live in the 8th floor	O	Ex-SP	
5	well, my dad lives with me	O	Ex-DP	
6	he is very quiet	O	Ex-DP	
7	so there wasn't any screaming or anything	O	Ex-DO	
8	we were there still	CA		
9	we looked at each other	CA		
10	there in the middle of the dark	CA		
11	and we waited	CA		
12	after that, we went downstairs	R		
13	the people in our building were very quiet too	O	Ex-DP	
14	so I didn't feel like it was the end of the world or anything	E		
15	but I was scared anyway	E		PDI
16	I didn't think I could die, though	E		

Narrative 7M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I don't know if scared is the definition	E		
2	but when my dad had a heart attack	A		
3	We didn't know if he was going to live or die	A		
4	You could tell I felt scared, yeah	E		
5	It was new year's eve	O	Ex-TE	
6	December 31st	O	Ex-ST	
7	My dad went out	CA		
8	he was performing on stage	CA		
9	he was performing and then he felt bad	CA		
10	I was backstage	O	Ex-SP	
11	I was in charge of the sound	O	Ex-NI	
12	then somebody told me my dad wasn't feeling alright	CA		
13	and then a friend said that it was probably a heart attack	CA		
14	so all of us went out running	CA		
15	and we got into our cars and went to the emergency room	CA		
16	Clínica Vespuccio I think is the name, yes	O	Ex-SP	
17	So he was seen immediately	CA		
18	and it was a heart attack	CA		
19	they gave him some things	CA		
20	morphine I think and some other things for the pain	CA		
21	but we had to move him somewhere else so that he could have surgery	CA		
22	and we had to wait for an ambulance	CA		
23	the ambulance took about two hours to arrive	CA		
24	and he was finally moved to Clínica Santa María	CA		
25	there he had surgery	R		PDI
26	everything went ok	R		
27	but we had to run to a public hospital after that	R		
28	because of how the health system works	R		



Narrative 8M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I would say that the day of the big earthquake here in Chile, February 27th	A		
2	that was the moment	CA		
3	it was a personal moment when I started thanking the Lord	CA		
4	it was a very special moment, even though my mother was freaking out	CA		
5	she was very afraid, but I was grateful	O	Ex-DP	
6	I don't know, my first reaction was to start thanking for everything	CA		
7	it was kind of a special moment	E		
8	I was very amazed by all that was happening and the movement	E		PDI
9	yeah, it was a special situation	E		

Narrative 9M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	That's an easy one because, last year, 2011, July 27 <sup>th</sup> , at 8, my son was born	A		
2	He was being taken out of my girlfriend's womb	CA		
3	It was an incredible moment	E		
4	I was present	CA		
5	and I filmed the whole moment	CA		
6	When you see the video you can hear my "aw"	C		
7	and I could listen to his first cry	CA		
8	I was so happy	E		
9	it's incredible	CA		
10	It is very difficult to explain, but it was an amazing moment	E		
11	I can't think of a happier moment	E		
12	and now he's 1 year old	R		PDI
13	and I still remember his birth as if it were yesterday	R		
14	It changed everything for me, my perspective, my ideas of life, everything	C		

Narrative 10M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I remember, I think I was in third year, of secondary school	O	Ex-ST	
2	I don't remember, third year or fourth year	O	Ex-ST	
3	I was kind of a good student	O	Ex-DP	
4	I was in the humanistic area	O	Ex-NI	
5	there were two groups, humanities and sciences	O	Ex-NI	
6	And I remember one of my teachers selected me to present, me and other student, from the other group	CA		
7	we were chosen to make a presentation about the humanistic side to talk about the highlights and interesting things, why do the future students needed to chose this area	CA		
8	and that moment was very embarrassing because I had to present after a girl who did a great job talking about the scientific side	CA		
9	and then when I had to talk, that was the embarrassing thing	CA		
10	I was supposed to express myself in a better way	R		PA-bad
11	and I was, I did a very poor job	R		
12	I felt terrible	E		
13	I finished that presentation and I didn't say anything	R		
14	I didn't give the best of me	E		
15	and that was not nice	E		

Narrative 11M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The happiest moment I remember and I can tell you is a moment I think of to cheer up, when I'm not ok	A		
2	In fact, I think of that happy moment everyday	A		
3	It was when my little dog, la Catita, came back home after she had been lost for almost two weeks	A		
4	Well, one day..well, I have two dogs	O	Ex-DO	
5	I had two dogs then	O	Ex-DO	
6	Now I have four, but I had two	O	Ex-DO	
7	And the two are my beloved ones	O	Ex-NI	
8	Emilio and Catalina, They are like humans	O	Ex-PN	
9	And my father walks them normally	O	Ex-NI	
10	And they wonder around the backyard	O	EX-NI	
11	And one day I decided to walk them	CA		
12	And I took my guitar with me	CA		
13	And I sat playing the guitar while they were running	CA		
14	And when they go far, I just call them and they come back	O	EX-NI	
15	And I called them	CA		
16	And called them, but they didn't come back	CA		
17	And I went after them, but I couldn't find them	CA		
18	They got lost	CA		
19	They were missing for two weeks	CA		
20	And I was devastated because I lost my beloved dogs	E		
21	And I remember really well	R		
22	I was in my room	O	Ex-DP	
23	I was chatting with some friends in Facebook	O	Ex-NI	
24	And they asked me "what about your dogs, did you find them?"	O	Ex-NR	
25	And suddenly I hear a dog barking	R		
26	And my sister yells "Catita is back, Catita is back"	R		
27	And there was my little dog	R		PDI
28	She was happy and moving her tail	R		
29	That is the happiest memory I have	E		

Narrative 12M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It was about 1995 or so when I was 15	O	Ex-ST	
2	My family and I were on holidays in la Serena	O	Ex-SP	
3	As usual that summer, we were at the beach in the afternoon	O	Ex-NI	
4	The sea was quite rough	O	Ex-NI	
5	there was a warning sign published by the authorities but I didn't pay attention	O	Ex-DO	
6	and I went swimming in the sea	CA		
7	At the beginning it was fun	CA		
8	There were lots of big waves	CA		
9	I was diving through them	O		
10	After a while I was tired	CA		
11	and I decided to leave	CA		
12	and go to the shore, but I couldn't	CA		
13	I remember that big waves were coming one after the other	CA		
14	and it was very difficult to walk against the tide	CA		
15	Every time I walked towards the shore, a wave knocked me to the ground	CA		
16	It was awful	E		
17	I think this happened at least 9 times	CA		
18	I drank a liter of seawater or more	CA		
19	Finally, I could reach the shore	R		PA-good
20	I was exhausted, but happy to be alive	C		

Narrative 13M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It was when Lorena said yes, I want to be your wife	A		
2	I remember that we were in a park, just before sunset	O	Ex-SP	
3	We were talking about many things	O	Ex-NI	
4	and I wanted to propose to her	CA		
5	I said a couple of things but it was confusing	CA		
6	Lorena looked at me and said "yes"	CA		
7	I asked her "yes what?"	CA		
8	She said "I want to marry you too", and that was all	R		
9	We were silent for a couple of minutes, staring at each other	R		PO-good
10	Then we embraced each other	R		
11	and we felt that something special united us	E		
12	It's something difficult to forget	C		

Narrative 14M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It was once when I had to substitute my boss in a workshop he had to give	A		
2	Less than 24 hours before the event, he called me and asked me to take his place telling me that this workshop couldn't be canceled	CA		
3	Given that it was my boss, I had no option and I thought I couldn't say no.	CA		
4	Although I tried to prepare the presentation in the following hours I wasn't satisfied and confident enough with it	E		
5	When the time came to give the presentation, I was completely blocked in front of the audience	R		PA-bad
6	What a shame!	E		
7	I was so embarrassed!	E		
8	This was a day to be forgotten	E		
9	Next time I'm going to say no	C		

Narrative 15M				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	A happy experience was to be next to the Lake Tahoe and rent a jet ski	A		
2	I rented it for half an hour	O	Ex-ST	
3	And before I rode it, they explained me everything about safety, but I just wanted to ride it	O	Ex-NI	
4	I thought "how difficult can it be?"	O	Ex-NI	
5	Anyway, I listened to the limits I should be in	CA		
6	And that I should keep 200 feet of distance with any boat	CA		
7	And I wondered "how much are 200 feet?"	CA		
8	And I heard what I needed to do in case I turned over	CA		
9	And that they were going to charge me 400 dollars if that happened	CA		
10	Finally, after all that talk, I could ride the jet ski	CAg		
11	And I had to stop myself from accelerating and going out of the delimited zone	CA		
12	It was 30 meters away from the shore	CA		
13	I had to let the jet ski take me, without accelerating	CA		
14	It was forever until I finally went out of the zone and could accelerate	CA		
15	Wow! These jet skies have a lot of power	E		
16	I felt I was going to fall because it pulled really strong	CA		
17	I started testing how fast I could go feeling safe	CA		
18	And it was 65 kilometers per hour	R		
19	Although the jet ski could go faster, I didn't want to risk my life, so I decided that that would be the limit	CA		
20	And that if I wanted to go faster, I needed to go to the gym and make my arms stronger	E		
21	At the end it was a great experience	E		PA-good
22	Now it is another thing I could check on my to do list	C		



Narrative 1F				
	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I think the saddest story in my life would be when my mother got sick	A		
2	My mother had a brain tumor when I was like twenty four years old	CA		
3	and..well it was a very serious illness because well she almost died	CA		
4	and well I remember that this was like a process	CA		
5	it wasn't like from one day to another	CA		
6	and she started having like headaches	CA		
7	and she started changing her behavior because she was very independent	CA		
8	and suddenly she became like..she could do nothing by herself	CA		
9	she depended on us for everything and, well we didn't, I didn't notice it because I was studying	CA		
10	and I was working	CA		
11	and I was so busy that I didn't notice	CA		
12	thought that she is getting older, something like that	CA		
13	well one day I remember she was taking a shower	CA		
14	and she passed out, I mean, she fell down	CA		
15	and I heard a strong noise	CA		
16	and when I came into the bathroom she was on the floor	CA		
17	and well then we decided to take her to the doctor	CA		
18	and well the doctor told us that we had to, we had to take her to a... I don't know the name of that doctor "neurocirujano"	CA		
19	and well we took her	CA		
20	and he asked her to do some tests and analysis	CA		
21	and well she had a brain tumor	CA		
22	and it was quite serious	E		

23	so she was operated the following day	R		PDI
24	And I remember like seeing her with her shaved hair	O	Ex-DP	
25	and well It was awful. she looked like Frankenstein, it was awful,	E		
26	and she was connected to a lot of machines and things	O	Ex-DO	
27	and I actually thought she was gonna die, I thought she was gonna die	E		
28	and I think that's the saddest part of my life.	E		

Narrative 2F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	once, my family and I were at the beach	O	Ex-DP	
2	and one of my cousins had a new four wheeled motorcycle	O	Ex-DO	
3	I didn't know how to use it	CA		
4	how to ride it	CA		
5	but I insisted	CA		
6	and when I started riding it I realized that I didn't know where the breaks were	CA		
7	And I started going faster and faster	CA		
8	and I was going so fast that I went past the one fence	CA		
9	and I was actually flying	CA		
10	and I landed in a trench	CA		
11	The motorcycle was flying too	CA		
12	and it landed right over me	CA		
13	I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the big thing falling directly into the trench where I was	E		
14	Luckily, the motorcycle had four wheels	R	PDI	
15	and the wheels landed two millimeters away from the trench border	R		
16	and this saved my life	E		

Narrative 3F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I can say that the most embarrassing situation was when my two older daughters were in primary school	A		
2	and we, all the mothers in one of the class prepared a dance to celebrate something	A		
3	I don't remember what	O	Ex-NI	
4	and we agreed on presenting a dance	O	Ex-NI	
5	Of course, we rehearsed a lot	O	Ex-NI	
6	we rehearsed many times	O	Ex-NI	
7	but the day of the presentation just two mothers arrived, me and another mother	CA		
8	And we had to dance alone in front of about a hundred people	R		PO-bad
9	and I can say that that was the most embarrassing situation I have ever lived	E		

Narrative 4F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	Well, there are three times that I remember now, when I thought I could die	A		
2	and the first one was in a crash	A		
3	I don't know, six years ago	O	Ex-ST	
4	I was going to the university and the bus crashed	CA		
5	It wasn't that hard, but I thought I was going to die because the noise was so loud	E		
6	and people were bleeding	O	Ex-DP	
7	and I was ok, but I thought I could have died	E		

<b>Narrative 5F</b>				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	when I was diagnosed with my illness	A		
2	I thought I had cancer	CA		
3	so, for a few days I started to think of the things I hadn't done up to that time	CA		
4	and I thought that I had my days counted	CA		
5	So when the doctor said that it wasn't cancer, I felt relieved	R		PDI

Narrative 6F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It was two years ago, in summer, when I decided to go to the gym because I was too fat and I needed to lose some weight	A		
2	so I thought of going to the gym	CA		
3	and my heart wasn't working that well	CA		
4	and had high blood pressure, I think	CA		
5	and I felt really bad	CA		
6	I thought that my head was going to explode	E		
7	and many people noticed my condition	CA		
8	and they came to help me	CA		
9	but after a few minutes of rest, I felt better	R		PDI
10	Now I know the gym is not for me	C		
11	so that was the last time I thought I could die	E		

<b>Narrative 7F</b>				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	Once I participated in a beauty contest	A		
2	I was ten	O	Ex-ST	
3	and I was fat	O	Ex-DP	
4	and I didn't like myself	O	Ex-NI	
5	and my family insisted	O		
6	and I had to go up on that stage	CA		
7	It was awful because all of the girls were really nice girls	E		
8	and I was there like a monster	E		PA-bad
9	that was awful	E		



Narrative 8F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	When I started going to a new school in 7 <sup>th</sup> grade	O	Ex-DP	
2	I had many friends there	O	Ex-DP	
3	and they thought that it was going to be fun for me to be the queen of the class	CA		
4	and I didn't know how it worked	CA		
5	and the time each class presented their queen	CA		
6	I didn't know and I didn't bring any nice clothes	CA		
7	and I had to go on stage wearing my uniform	CA		
8	and the other girls were wearing nice dresses	CA		
9	they were wearing make up	O	Ex-DP	
10	and their moms were there taking photos	O	Ex-NI	
11	It was embarrassing	E		PA-bad
12	I blush when I remember that	C		

Narrative 9F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	When I went to the beach with a group of friends	O	Ex-SP	
2	there was a huge noise, form a truck	O	Ex-NI	
3	and suddenly a saw a dog sitting on someone's towel	CA		
4	and I shouted "the dog is sitting on the woman's towel"	CA		
5	and the noise suddenly stopped	CA		
6	and everybody listened to what I was saying	CA		
7	and everybody turned	R		
8	and looked at me	R		
9	it was awful	E		
10	All of my friends were laughing	R		
11	and again I blushed	R		PA-bad
12	and every time we get together they remember that time when I must have looked like a crazy girl	C		

<b>Narrative 10F</b>				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The most embarrassing situation was a couple of months ago, this year	O	Ex-ST	
2	it was when I decided to tell the guy that I liked that I was in love with him	A		
3	and it was very awkward, since this guy didn't like me back	A		
4	so after I said that I liked him and that I felt a kind of attraction towards him, he said that I was extremely good looking, that it was the wrong time, the wrong place to have a relationship with me	CA/R		PA-bad
5	After that he said "when you go to England guys will fight over you"	CA		
6	he was just being polite, that's why he said that	O	Ex-NI	
7	I think that I was talking to him for about 15 minutes	E		
8	those were 50 minutes under water for me	E		
9	After that experience, I don't think I will tell somebody about my feelings because it wasn't a very good experience	C		

<b>Narrative 11F</b>				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	Well, the happiest moment in my life happened recently, as far as I remember.	O	Ex-ST	
2	it was when I received the information that I was awarded with a scholarship to study in the UK	A		
3	I got emotional at that point and I cried	CA		
4	everybody was looking at me because I was at work	CA		
5	I felt so proud of myself because I prepared for a year	E		PA-good
6	and then, I mean, receiving that kind of award was, I don't know how to describe it, but I hope that I can receive news like that again	R/E		

Narrative 12F				
N°	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	I think I've been in a couple of situations where I thought I could have died	O		
2	but the most recent that I can remember was like two years ago	O	Ex-ST	
3	I was in the kitchen drinking some soda	O	Ex-NI	
4	and suddenly I noticed that something got stocked on my throat	CA		
5	and I couldn't breathe	CA		
6	it was impossible	CA		
7	think that I didn't breathe for a lot of time	CA		
8	I don't really remember	CA		
9	it was very life threatening for me, but at the end I survived	R		PDI
10	and I think it was quite an experience	E		

Narrative 13F				
	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	The happiest moment of my life was when I could hold my baby for the first time	S		
2	Well, my baby was born after 7 months of a terrible pregnancy	O	Ex-NI	
3	It was an emergency, I had to deliver or I could die	CA		
4	So I had a c-section	CA		
5	And I was in such terrible a condition, that I could not get up and see my baby.	CA		
6	When he was born, they only showed him to me for two seconds, literally	O	Ex-NI	
7	And I had to stay in bed for a couple of days	CA		
8	And only my husband could see him, because he was in an incubator	CA		
9	And my husband brought pictures of him so I could see him	CA		
10	And the day I was finally allowed to get up, I did all I was told so I could go to see him	CA		
11	I felt terrible, but I didn't tell the doctor	CA		
12	Otherwise, he wouldn't let me go meet my baby	CA		
13	So I sat on a wheel chair	CA		
14	and I was driven to this special care unit where my baby was	CA		
15	When we got there, I had to follow many hygiene procedures	CA		
16	And I could not stand	CA		
17	I felt like I was going to faint	CA		
18	So they said I should go back to my room	CA		
19	But my husband explained them that I hadn't met my son yet	CA		
20	So they allowed me to go inside on the wheel chair	CA		
21	And there he was, so small and beautiful	CA		
22	I saw him and I loved him even more	E		

23	But I could not hold him, just touch him for several days	CA		
24	Until one day one of the nurses offered me to hold him while they set the incubator ready	R		PO-good
25	That was the happiest moment ever	E		
26	After all we'd been through we were together again	E		
27	I felt like my heart was going to explode of happiness and love	E		
28	Those were the happiest 2 minutes in my life	E		

Narrative 14F				
	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	There have been at least a couple of times I thought I could die	O	Ex-NI	
2	But I have to say that the worst was for the big quake in February 2010	A		
3	My husband and I went to a friends' cabin that Friday to spend the weekend with his family	O	Ex-SP	
4	It is a beautiful cabin by the lake Rapel	O	Ex-DO/Ex-DP	
5	We were the first to arrive, so we prepared dinner	CA		
6	The rest of the family arrived	CA		
7	And we ate dinner	CA		
8	and chatted about lots of stuff	CA		
9	and watched the Festival de Viña	CA		
10	After that, we decided to go to bed	CA		
11	And we were preparing for that	CA		
12	we were all in our respective rooms	CA		
13	When the lights went off	CA		
14	And a few seconds later, the shaking started	CA		
15	It a cabin made of wood over piles	CA		
16	So we shook like inside a spin-dryer	CA		
17	Everything feel to the floor	CA		
18	We could not move	CA		
19	My husband was holding the two walls of corridor	CA		
20	And I was holding him	CA		
21	My sisters-in-law had their children in their arms	CA		
22	They were kneeling because they couldn't stand or move	CA		
23	It was so long and so noisy and so violent, that I thought we could die	E		
24	I thought that maybe something could fall over us	E		
25	Or that the floor could open and we could fall	E		



26	I don't know			
27	We were scared and we prayed together	CA		
28	After what seemed forever, it stopped	R		PDI
29	And we put on shoes and coats to go outside	R		
30	I couldn't believe what had just happened	E		
31	thank God nothing happened to us, but the house was badly damaged	E		
32	So we spent the night in our cars, thinking about our loved ones, and thanking that we were ok	R/E		

Narrative 15F				
	Clause	Structure elements	Extra details	Outcome
1	It's hard to think of an embarrassing situation, because they are something you want to forget	O	Ex-NI	
2	But a special occasion I could never forget was when I was at the beach with some friends	S		
3	It was more than 12 years ago	O	Ex-ST	
4	Two boys and three girls	O	Ex-DP	
5	We were camping that year, and having lunch at the beach	O	Ex-SP	
6	I was talking with the girls about boys	O	Ex-NI	
7	Describing the things we liked and the things we didn't like	O	Ex-NI	
8	The guys were near, but they were talking about other things	O	Ex-NI	
9	The problem was when we saw a guy walking by the sea	CA		
10	And the girls said that he was good looking	CA		
11	And I said "arg! He's so hairy. disgusting"	CA		
12	The other girls looked at me very serious	CA		
13	And I didn't know what was wrong	CA		
14	Then I realized that one of my friends sitting near us was very hairy too	R		
15	And that he might have been listening	R		PA-bad
16	I felt so embarrassed and ashamed	E		
17	In that moment, I wished I could turn back time	E		
18	And stop myself from saying stupid things	E		
19	Whenever I think of it, I feel embarrassed again	C		