



A Narrative Analysis on Vlogs

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ABSTRACT

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The vlog has become an increasingly popular genre, being found most often on the YouTube platform. Starting from the premise that it has a narrative form, we randomly selected five texts that we segmented, following the discourse marks related to each sequence and we quantified the number related to each one. The next step is represented by noting the numbers in pie chart type graphs in order to see which is the predominant one. For a better visibility of the sequences, we opted for the use of different colors for each of them, colors that can also be found in the charts. Thus, starting from the theory of narrative genres (according to W. Labov and J. Waletzky) and the three-level analysis model developed by Sophie Moirand, we proposed a discursive analysis aimed at showing that vlogs fall into the category of narrative genres. We mention that this article does not pretend to present a complete analysis but it is the starting point of a larger one, with a relevant oral corpus, which will thoroughly debate the vlog category.

Purpose: Analyzing vlogs from a narrative approach.

Patients and methods: Sequential analysis

Results: Narrative sequence is predominant

Conclusion: Vlogs can be considered a narrative genre

KEYWORDS

sequence; oral narration; argumentative/explanatory sequence; genre study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The following article aims to analyze the vlog category from the point of view of genre theories, with the aim of placing it in a genre, be it narrative or descriptive. To do so, we selected several vlogs from the www.youtube.com platform, sliced them, and marked the discursive marks found in each of them in order to recognize the types of sequences. After sequencing, we counted the words related to each one and plotted them in a graph to see which sequence is predominant, therefore to determine what type of text it is, narrative or descriptive. However, we start from the premise that vlogs are oral narratives and try to prove this hypothesis. For each sequence we will use a distinct style, to make it easier to visualize. Note that we will not put all the transcripts here, only one to serve as a model but we will insert the link together with the related analysis. The purpose of this study is not to present a complete overview of the vlog category but it is an early stage of a more complex one that will analyze several such videos in order to be as relevant as possible.

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II. VLOGS

A vlog is a form of online expression, a video blog, in which a person narrates various stories, either from an ordinary day or a trip. Usually, this type of content is made on platforms such as YouTube or, more recently, Instagram, Tik Tok or Facebook. There are several vlog categories, including travel, cooking, makeup and unboxing vlogs.

The difference between a vlog and a traditional blog lies in the fact that the former is more personal in its orality and the form of address used. Its narrative character is given by the use of narrative verbs and the chain of events related by the vlogger.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

For the theoretical framework, we consulted the literature on discourse analysis, citing three linguists we consider the most relevant to our research: William Labov, Joshua Waletzky and Sophie Moirand, whose analysis model is the one we will apply for the analysis of the selected vlogs.

According to W. Labov (1967), there are two types of narration: written or oral. The linguist defines oral narration as a way of relating past events, based on the chronological order of the facts. (Labov 395)

Maria Simina-Suciu, A Narrative Analysis on Vlogs

Narrative genre can also occur in oral discourse structures, when it is about recounting past experiences. W. Labov raises the problem of such situations in his article *Some Further Steps in Narrative Analysis* (1997). Labov and Waletzky (1987) have shown that the effort to understand narrative is subject to a formal framework, particularly in the basic definition of narrative as a choice of a specific linguistic technique of reporting past events.

The framework developed by Labov and Waletzky for oral narratives of personal experience has proven useful in addressing a wide variety of narrative situations and types, including oral memoirs, traditional folk tales, avant-garde novels, therapeutic interviews, and, most importantly, narratives of everyday life. Labov sees narrative as a speech act consisting of a beginning, a middle and an end. (Labov 395)

Another author who addresses the analysis of oral texts is Monika Fludernik (2013), in the article *Conversational Narration - Oral Narration*.

According to the author, oral narration is a term that covers several types of stories, such as biographies or day by day conversations, in different contexts (informal or legal/administrative conversations).

For the narrative analysis, we used the three-tier model proposed by Sophie Moirand (2003), according to which each text, oral or written, contains three levels:

1. Macrotextual: global, the type of text;
2. Mezo: level of sequence type;
3. Microtextual: level of linguistic marks, which determine the type of sequence.

These three levels are connected one to another, in the sense that starting from the linguistic marks, then determining the type of the sequence we will observe the genre in which the analyzed text falls.

IV. ANALYSIS

For the analysis, we delimited the sequences on the basis of the linguistic marks (micro level) specific to each one. Thus, for the delimitation of the narrative, we took into account event verbs in cause-effect relation (in past tenses, but also in present tenses), adverbs of time. To delimit the descriptive, we followed and marked nouns accompanied by verbs of state, and adjectives. For the argumentative, the keys to analysis were evaluative and justificatory linguistic marks. For the transcription of these texts, we used the same conventions as for the whole oral corpus. Thus, the ascending intonation has been marked by the / sign and the descending intonation by the \ sign. Each text will have a technical box containing information about the source of the text. To mark the sequences, we used the following: orange color for narrative sequence, blue color for descriptive and red color for argumentative/explanatory. Also, we didn't use capital letters or punctuation.

Link: [VLOG💖: last days of summer, reading & bookstore vlog, running errands & more fall decor shopping! - YouTube](#)

Author: Karla Espinosa

Transcriber: Maria Simina-Suciu

Duration: 10min47s

thank you \ what's up guys / welcome back to my channel \ welcome back to another vlog \ this Vlog / **i think is going to be a combination of just spending a couple days together \ and then also sort of like a mini reading vlog / i've been choosing** to read over being on my phone over watching my show / *which is not always the case but it has been the past couple of days i feel like i've regained my obsession with reading \ i'm actually on my way* to the bookstore right now so you guys will be joining me for that too but i came to Starbucks really quick to pick up this drink \ *this is the iced pumpkin chai tea latte \ it's like really creamy / and it has just a slight flavor of pumpkin / i'm gonna take you* guys with me to a few places today / but the first one is the bookstore \ so let's go \ technically / i'm not here for like a big bookstore trip i plan on getting two books / *one of them is the house made / and the second one is practice makes perfect / but we'll just have to see how many books i come out with this (showing the books) was not supposed to happen / let me give you guys a little book haul / so the two books that i initially wanted to get / i did end up getting them / this book right here is called the housemaid this is actually the book that we're going to be reading in my book club / so i wanted to come pick it up to have it ready for september / this is supposed to be a really really good thriller / so i'm super excited to read this book \ this is practice makes perfect by sarah adams \ if you guys watched my last reading vlog you might have seen that i read when in rome / and this is the book after one in rome \ i've heard so many people say that this one is better than one in rome / *so i'm really really excited to read this one \ and this is technically where i was supposed to stop / go to the checkout line / walk out of that store / come back to my car and drive away \ however / i did not do that / instead i ended up picking up four more books \ i didn't even realize i did this / but all of these books right here are the sequel to another book that i've already read \ the first one is this one this is scarred / this is the second book in the never after series \ i find this series to be really really interesting because it takes stories that we already know / and puts a dark twist to them \ so yeah i picked up scarred / this is another one that i'm so incredibly excited to read this series / is called kings of sin / the first book was king of wrath / i loved king of wrath so freaking much / if you guys haven't read king of wrath i could not recommend it enough / it is so good / it's a billionaire romance it's like an arranged marriage / it's enemies to lovers \ it's just a little bit of everything / but it's so good my expectations for this one are a little bit high / so here's hoping it's good \ another sequel that i finally got is daisy hates \ i read magnolia parks a few months ago / and i still have not read the second book in magnolia parks / **which i don't know****

why i haven't just ordered it on amazon \ i'm not gonna lie / i almost didn't get it because of the covers \ i've seen this book with a different cover and *it's so much prettier* / *i feel like* but i'm still really really excited to read / this okay last book i picked up / this one is not a sequel / i'm pretty sure this book is called the nanny / i don't know what it was about seeing it today / but i was like i just have to read this book \ and i think this will be a good one for like a quick little read / including practice makes perfect \ i ended up getting four sequels \ i've been wanting to read these for like the longest time / but i find that *i am the worst at reading series* / like i'll like the first book i'll really really enjoy it but i just always procrastinate reading the next one in the series / because i just want to read another one and like get into something else / but all of these i'm incredibly excited to read i just stopped at the cutest little juicery place i got \ **i don't even know** what's in here but it sounded really healthy when i picked up two little juice shots / this one's called the scorpion / and this one's called prisoners \ this one has apple cider / vinegar / lemon / ginger / garlic / turmeric / cayenne / and oregano oil \ yum / and the prisoners one has green apple / lemon / ginger / and cayenne \ that one was good this looks like the painful one done / i decided to start this book tonight king of pride / also i just have to quickly talk about a book / **that i finished a few days ago** / but i read this book right here love theoretically i honestly can't even tell you guys / how much i enjoyed reading this book / *i thought it was so freaking good* \ something about these ali hazelwood book covers / they always make me assume that it's going to be like a really cringy / sort of romance read \ but i honestly love this book so freaking much \ i've read love hypothesis / **i've read** love on the brain / and now **i've read** this one \ and *in my opinion i feel like* this book is the best one out of all three of them \ the whole vibe of this book / is basically that the main character girl has like the biggest reason to not like the main male character \ but no matter how hard she tries to not like him / he makes it impossible \ it might just be one of my favorite reads of the year so far \ that's a bold thing to say *it is 97 degrees* right now / and i'm doing some fall shopping \ i really wanted to get some fall things at the dollar tree / and i remember last year around september when i came and looked / it was already too late \ and like a bunch of things were already gone \ i'm not gonna go to like target or tj maxx yet / but i am going to check out what dollar tree has for fall things \ thank you (to the cashier) *i am having the best night* / i'm about to watch pretty woman / which is seriously such a good movie obviously \ you can't watch a movie without a snack / **so i have some ice cream** \ *this is a trader joe's cookie butter ice cream so freaking good* / **i have a little bit left in there** \ also **i've been reading** king of pride all day long / **i've been editing** all day / doing chores / cleaning around the house \ but throughout the entire day **i've been reading** this book / **i'm probably gonna finish it tonight** \ **i have like 50 pages left** / but i don't want to finish this book \ i've just **i've been reading it** all day / and it literally feels like i'm watching a movie with this book and i don't want to

finish it \ like i'm so in love with these characters and with the story / i really don't want to move on to something else \ i saw some people say / that they didn't like this one as much as the other one and i could honestly kind of see why it's at least for making a rap / is still my favorite like this one is really really good / but it's not as good as king of rap / and **i think** that's because king of wrath had so much more drama / like that book just had \ so much there was just so much going on in that book / and it was so intense and interesting the entire time for me \ but this one was just a *little bit less dramatic* / and i feel like that's kind of the entire point of this book / because the main male character is supposed to be like this incredibly nice and polite and intelligent man / so he's not dramatic or like problematic or anything / but yeah i have that much left i'm about to finish it \ **this is why my sleep schedule is so messed up** / **i finished** king of pride / *and it was so freaking good* / also i loved how so many of the characters from her other books showed up in this one / if you guys **have read** the twisted series / alex and ava from twisted love are in this book for like a chapter / christian harper from twisted lies was in this book / i just loved reading about these other characters that i really really love too / but yeah this was *so good* / and i'm so excited to read the third one which i'm pretty sure is king of greed \ now **i'm going to choose** the book that **i'm going to start** tomorrow / and then **i'm gonna go to bed** \

The text proposed for analysis is divided into three sequences: narrative, argumentative/explanatory and descriptive. For the narrative sequence, we have marked verbs, in different tenses, in the text, such as: "I've been choosing" (present perfect progressive tense), "I've heard", "I've read" (present perfect tense), "I finished" (simple past tense), "I'm going to start", "I'm gonna go" (simple future tense). The descriptive sequence focuses on nouns accompanied by adjectives and the verb *to be*: "I'm incredibly excited", "favorite reads", "less dramatic", "this was so so good", marked in the text by italic letters. The argumentative/explanatory sequence was delimited by information containing further explanations, triggered either by narrative or descriptive sequences. As discourse markers, in this sequence we underlined "I feel like" and "so".

The sequences are unevenly arranged and some of them overlap, such as descriptive and argumentative/explanatory. Their share can be seen in the pie chart below (fig 1) followed by its legend:

Narrative sequence: 595 words out of 1594, representing 38,4%.

Argumentative/explanatory sequence: 535 words out of 1594, representing 34,5%.

Descriptive sequence: 394 words out of 1594, representing 25,4%.

YouTube commentaries: 25 words out of 1594, representing 1,6%.

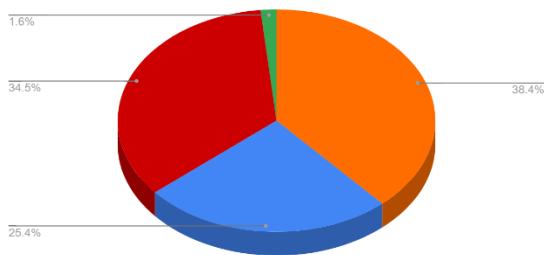


Fig.1

As the pie chart displays the results, after counting the words associated with each sequence, we can see that the narrative sequence is predominant, while the descriptive sequence is the least used in the vloggers' speech. We mention that, being a vlog text, there are discursive markers specific to the genre, which we have left in black, but we have included them in the graph.

For the following example, we applied the same analysis mechanism but we randomly chose a different YouTuber, as we did for the other three texts analyzed in this article.

Link: [a day in my life in nyc \(doing things that make me happy\) - YouTube](#)

Author: Itsyuyan

Transcriber: Maria Simina-Suciu

Duration: 10min47s

today **i am going to be doing** a day in my life / but doing things that make me happy \ we're off to a good start / **got** my morning coffee also **made** myself some breakfast / we got a croissant \ **that i warmed up** \ **i feel like** recently i've been just kind of in the same routine / wake up / work \ **i'm gonna go** for a workout watch some TV and eat some dinner and go to sleep \ **so i thought** today would be fun if i just did the things that i love and then the things that made me happy to reset my routine \ i feel like as we are adulting and growing up every day just starts to kind of feel the same \ and there's a lack of excitement so today was something that i really looked forward to / **it's actually 80 degrees** today so very warm but not sunny \ **it's not gonna** stop us \ what's on the agenda today is i'm going to take kobe to the park \ **that always makes me really happy** to just see other dogs play \ and then i'm gonna come back make myself some food and i'm gonna take that to go to central park \ central park is probably like one of my **happiest places** in the city i just have a lot of **good memories** there \ in the summertime **i'm going to read** my book of a little picnic by myself / other than that i honestly don't have that much plan \ we'll just see where the day leads us and i kind of love that i love going with the flow \ i'm sorry buddy [to the dog] thank you [to the cashier] okay want some water thank you [to the cashier] **i made it** to central park **got** myself a little salad actually from citizens of gramercy / **it's a little kale salad** \ and then i also got an ice oat milk matcha / **that**

actually **got really sunny** and there is so many people here / it actually fully feels like summer today \ **which** is so nice i just love summer in new york \ everybody was just like so happy that winter is over so everybody's just out and about enjoying life / i love it / i just had like this moment of gratitude and appreciation / like i feel like five years ago i just never would have imagined myself to be where i am today **i didn't know** what i wanted to do i hadn't graduated / yet i don't know \ **life was just like so confusing** / like sometimes i feel like i / is a little bit deep \ i feel like life isn't real / and we're just all like living in a movie / and we're all trying to have our main character moment \ and just now i felt like i had that having like a little solo day to myself enjoying the weather in new york city \ **it felt very unreal** and felt very appreciative at the moment / **i think** sometimes we are just so inclined to chase the next thing / we forget to just kind of step back and see where we are now \ so this was actually a quote that **i found** last year it really stuck to me there's actually two books that i wanted to share / one is remember when you wanted what you currently have / **which** is literally how i feel right now / but the other fault is i will never have this version of me again let me slow down and be with her / i feel like those two are just like nice to remember when you're thinking of what you were currently lacking that you forget to appreciate what you have \ **that was a little deep** \ i know sometimes i feel like randomly i just get very deep for no reason maybe it's the capricorn in me oh / i thought you like didn't see me (to her boyfriend) / you want to see something funny / sams mr samson **has joined** me (what'd you do today babe) i took kobe to the dog park / and **he just sat** there watching the other dogs playing as usual \ and then when i was trying to leave / he started running away and try to play with the dogs every time \ for dinner today we decided to eat out at one of my favorite restaurants / called chili / and it's like sichuan food but it is really good and you like spicy / i highly recommend \ probably one of our top three chinese food places in the city / right / yeah \ well we don't try that many / **we don't go** to the same ones every single time / **because** we know it's good / so why wouldn't we so today i'm making a video on things that make me happy this is one of the places \ **which** is why i suggested it \ **this one's my favorite lamb** yeah it's so good it's spicy / all right i'm gonna try it / everything we got is spicy that's why we love this place / get our spicy fix on / we have a friend that claims eating spicy food makes you forget things and have bad memory / **and we both have bad memories** / but imagine it was so if we stopped eating spices is our memory going to get better / i don't think so maybe it'll stop getting worse / **we are going to end** this night with a little self-care we're gonna do my favorite shampoo / **this is the detox shampoo** from whey / **which is amazing** / when you kind of just like have a bunch of dry shampoo in your hair and you want that gunk out \ and i'm going to go in with a living proof repair mask / **i'm also going to go** in with a little scalp serum afterward again from waves \ giving you guys at my whole like full on shower routine it isn't a full-on shower until you

have some body scrub \ this is from capari the museum \ it's just like i don't know what is this called body exfoliating i don't know it feels so good though this is the combo one of my favorite things to do ever / especially when i'm feeling like down or just like \ want like a picnic \ it's just to take that full on shower and basically just scrub every part of my body and ladder myself in salt butter i'm gonna end the night with a face mask / that sounds like my ideal night \

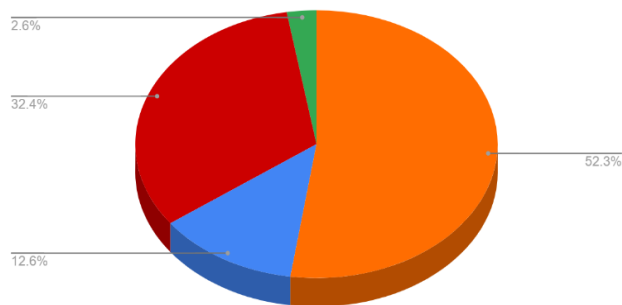


Fig. 2

The second vlog proposed for analysis has the same particularities as the first one, having the sequences arranged in the same way, but also presenting overlaps (especially narrative with descriptive and descriptive with argumentative explanatory). For the narrative sequence, we have delimited verbs such as “I am going to be doing”, “made”, “he just sat”, “we don’t go”, “I’m also going to go”. The argumentative/explanatory section of this text has different lexical elements from the first text, e.g., “because”. In addition, the relative which also appears in this sequence marks the overlap with the descriptive: “which is amazing”. Also, also in the argumentative/explanatory sequence, we find the verb *to think* in the present tense (“I think”) used in order to introduce additional information about some events or information presented in the argumentative sequences. Descriptive sequences delimit lexically, micro, nouns and adjectives used in descriptions of places or events, triggered by narrative sequences.

The percentage distribution can be seen in the pie chart below (fig 2), with the narrative sequence again being predominant. Narrative sequence: 555 words out of 1071, representing 52,3%.

Argumentative/explanatory sequence: 344 words out of 1071, representing 34,2%.

Descriptive sequence: 134 words out of 1071, representing 12,6%.

YouTube commentaries: 28 words out of 1071, representing 2,6%.

Looking at the pie chart (fig. 2), we observe that the descriptive section is the least used, leaving aside the comments specific to the youtube channel, which is probably motivated by the fact that, in general, comparing the vlog with

other texts analyzed, people do not tend to describe, but to tell and argue.

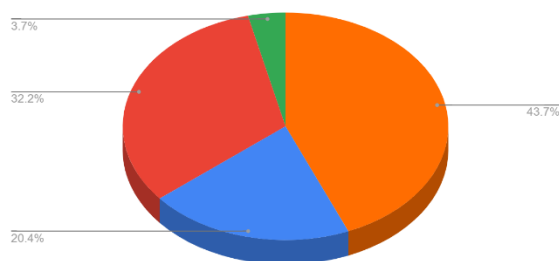
For the remaining three texts, we will only present the analysis and the related graph, due to the limited space allocated to the article. Therefore, the third vlog selected and transcribed by us (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJah6_xG_w) belongs to youtuber Meg, the fourth belongs to Clarisseintheclouds ([productive school days in my life | getting organized, working at the library & study vlog - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJah6_xG_w)), and the fifth to Emma Marie ([6AM DAY IN MY LIFE ☁️ productive day, sunrise, morning run, work & the gym - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJah6_xG_w)), containing similar lexical elements to the other two texts analyzed above.

We will present the results of the analysis in tandem, discussing each sequence and drawing examples from each of the three texts. In this sense, the predominant narrative sequence has verbs in present, past and future tenses: “I want to say”, “I posted”, “I have been working”, “I’m going to”, “I’m gonna go” (vlog 3), “I just recently started”, “I’m just gonna write”, “I just finished”, “I was working” (vlog 4), “I woke up”, “we left”, “I finished my makeup”, “we’re gonna go”, “I’m getting ready” (vlog 5). For the argumentative/explanatory sequence, the three texts mark lexically the conjunction “because”, the verb *to think* in order to insert an explanation (“I think making this video” – vlog 4, “so I think we’re good” – vlog 5). These vlogs are no different in terms of sequence overlapping or interfering because we marked some discursive markers that can be related to argumentative/explanatory and descriptive sequence, such as the relatives “which” (“which also everybody like lego” – vlog 3), and “that” (“that I needed” – vlog 5, “that I got assigned” – vlog 4, “that are the simply roasted black” – vlog 3). Also, in the descriptive we marked adjective such as “really excited”, “small talk”, “these are good”, “she’s a little bit expensive” (vlog 3), “I was hesitant”, “I’m gonna be pretty busy”, “I’m looking forward” (vlog 4), “it’s so pretty”, “one of the best runs”, “the makeup very very light”, “it was a really really good”, “chunky little guy” (vlog 5).

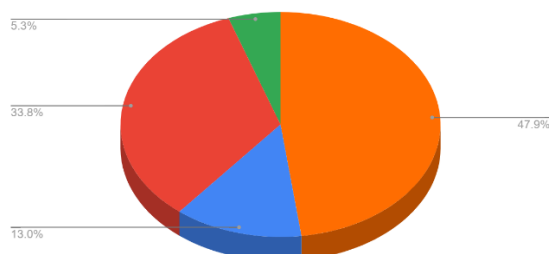
Notable are also the discourse specific markers, as we see in the examples, such as the usage of “gonna”, instead of “going to”, the repetition of the adverbs “really” and “very” in descriptions.

After counting the words associated to each of the sequences, we came up to these results:

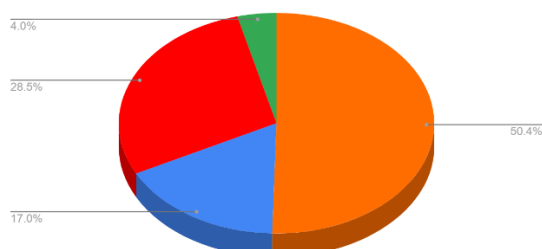
1. For vlog number three, the narrative sequence is predominant (43,7% equivalent to 530 words out of 1213), followed by the argumentative/explanatory sequence (32,2% equivalent to 391 words out of 1213), and the descriptive sequence (20,4% equivalent to 247 words out of 1213). The YouTube commentaries, specific to vlog genre, represent 3,7%, equivalent to 45 words, as we can see in the chart below (fig. 3):



- Vlog number four displays the sequences as follows: narrative sequence 43,9%, representing 218 words out of 455, argumentative/explanatory sequence 33,8%, meaning 154 words out of 455, descriptive sequence 13% corresponding to 59 words out of 455. The YouTube commentaries represent 5,3% (24 words out of 455). As in the cases above, the numbers are written in the chart in figure 4:



- For the last vlog, we came up to the following results: narrative sequence 50,4%, meaning 578 words out of 1146, argumentative/explanatory sequence 28,5%, equivalent to 327 words out of 1146, descriptive sequence 17% corresponding to 195 words out of 1146, while the YouTube commentaries, the last part of the text, represent 4% (46 words out of 1146), as displayed in the following pie chart (fig. 5).



The commentaries, as we labeled them, are, in all five vlogs we analyzed, the smallest part, while the narrative sequence is the biggest. This section doesn't have a fixed position, as it can be in the beginning, end or spread out throughout the text. In addition, the vloggers use "like" very frequently, not only for comparisons, but also for inferring their opinion ("is awful but like so refreshing" – vlog 5, "like I feel like" – vlog 2,

"two are just like nice to remember" – vlog 2, "I'm not here for like a big bookstore" – vlog 1).

V. CONCLUSION

As conclusions, even though our research is not a is not exhaustive, being only the starting point of a more detailed and complex one, we observe that the narrative sequence is predominant, registering the highest percentage, which proves the premise I started from, namely that vlogs are a sub-genre of the narrative genre. An interesting thing noted is that the descriptive sequence is the smallest in size, a fact that demonstrates that, in oral speech, we are more inclined to narrate events than to describe them. Important to note is that the oral speech is not homogeneous, which explains the overlapping of the sequences extracted from the analyzed vlogs and also the oral discourse markers used by the speakers.

We strongly believe that vlogs as a subgenre of the narrative genre represent a pertinent category for the analysis of relevant aspects important both for the theory of genres and for the oral analysis focused on discursive markers.

VI. DISCLOSURE

For this article, I report no conflicts of interest in this work. I don't have any financial interest or any other conflict of interest.

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