Designing Prospective Professional Identities
Multimodal Meaning–making in Video Curricula

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Abstract

This article explores multimodal meaning-making in a small corpus of 47 video curricula, recorded by undergraduate students in a Business English course at the University of Trento. The adopted methodology combines tools derived from genre analysis, multimodal analysis, and narrative analysis. The research question is the following: how do students select and integrate semiotic resources in a video curriculum to design their prospective professional identities? The results show that academic students as job applicants use a range of modes and modal resources (e.g., speech, eye contact, angle, icons, music) to design and communicate their future professional identities and to engage with their potential recruiter. A pervasive and noteworthy technique in the dataset is that of storytelling. Multimodally realized through speech, writing, gestures and other modes, storytelling is used to perform self-narration and to shape prospective professional identities. Hence, the examined multimodal texts show a tension between genre integrity and creativity, that is, between the adoption of standardised guidelines offered by tutorials and lectures, on the one hand, and more innovative and distinctive solutions, on the other hand. Prospective job applicants seem to pay particular attention to post-production elements such as keywords, icons, images, animations and less attention to *mise-en-scène* aspects including clothing style and setting.

1. Introduction

This article seeks to explore multimodal meaning-making in a small corpus of 47 video curricula (hereafter video CV), recorded by undergraduate students in a Business English course at the University of Trento, in Italy. The materials derive from an academic experience of ESP learning, in which a Business English course was integrated with a seminar offered by the university Job Guidance staff. In order to explore the dataset, the paper adopts a mixed methodology, combining tools derived from genre analysis, multimodal analysis, and narrative analysis. The research question is the following: how do students select and integrate semiotic resources in a video CV to design their prospective professional identities?

This article aims to fill a gap in the specialised literature on recruitment discourse. While the digital dimension and the role of the Internet in the recruitment process have been widely studied (e.g. Kluemper et al. 2015; Oostrom et al. 2013; Roulin and Bangerter 2013), scholarly research on the topic of the video CV is still rare (Goel and Awasthy 2020, 138; Gissel, Thompson, and Pond 2013, 2449). Overall, studies on the audiovisual text genre have adopted either the job seekers' or the recruiters' perspective (Hiemstra and Derous 2015, 51) to examine issues including fairness and privacy. Further lines of research in the video CV literature have compared recruitment text genres or addressed the video genre as part of an educational process. To the best of my knowledge, no multimodal studies have been conducted so far on the video CV as a means of shaping future professional identities.

The article is organised as follows. Section 1 provides an introduction; section 2 reviews previous literature on the recruitment genre of the video CV, while section 3 illustrates the video CV as a multimodal genre. Section 4 then presents the dataset and the software used for text annotation and data collection, and section 5 outlines the integrated research design. An analysis and discussion of data is offered in section 6, followed by concluding remarks in section 7.

2. Literature review

While the digital dimension and the role of the Internet in the recruitment process have been widely studied (e.g. Kluemper et al. 2015; Oostrom et al. 2013; Roulin and Bangerter 2013), scholarly research on the topic of the video CV is still rare, as observed by Goel and Awasthy (2020, 138) and by Gissel, Thompson, and Pond (2013, 2449).

The main expert in the video genre is Annemarie Hiemstra, Associate Professor in Methods and Skills at the Department of Psychology of the Erasmus University Rotterdam, who has primarily worked on diversity in admission, selection and applicant responses (e.g. Hiemstra and Derous 2015; Hiemstra et al. 2012). Unsurprisingly, the area of employee recruitment, selection and assessment has been extensively researched within the disciplinary field of work and organisational psychology and in specialist journals such as the *International Journal of Selection and Assessment,* which explore all aspects of personnel selection, staffing and assessment in organisations, with a focus on work psychology and human resource management (e.g. Bangerter et al. 2023; Wang et al. 2022; Hiemstra et al. 2012).

In this area, studies on the audiovisual text genre have adopted either the job seekers' or the recruiters' perspective (Hiemstra and Derous 2015, 51). Through the applicants' lens, studies by Gissel, Thompson, and Pond (2013) and Hiemstra et al. (2012) examined applicants' intentions to apply with a video résumé and their fairness perceptions of the screening form.

More recently, Goel and Awasthy (2020) inspected issues of fairness, validity and privacy in the perceptions job seekers have towards video curriculum interface features.

A further line of research in the video CV literature adopts a comparative approach to recruitment text genres. For example, Hiemstra and Derous (2015) compared the video curriculum and the job interview as popular forms of selection, yet operating at a different stage of the recruitment process. Meanwhile, video and paper curricula were compared by Waung, Hymes and Beatty (2014) in their effects on personnel assessment, and by Apers and Derous (2017) with a focus on the accuracy of recruiters' personality assessment.

Finally, some studies have addressed the video CV as part of an educational process, inspecting students' perceptions of the genre as a tool for self-promotion (e.g. Cojocariu, Cirtita-Buzoianu and Mares 2020) or examining the communication strategies, such as body language and intonation, adopted by students in their audiovisual products (Zuraina et al. 2022). To the best of my knowledge, no multimodal studies have been conducted so far on the video CV as a means of shaping future professional identities. This article aims to fill this gap.

3. The video curriculum

From the perspective of genre analysis (Bhatia 2017, 2004; Swales 1990), the video CV ('résumé' in North-American English) is a concise audiovisual message that can be used by job seekers to accompany a written curriculum at the earliest screening stage of a particular application process, or for a permanent self-presentation on their LinkedIn profile (Goel and Awasthy 2020, 138; Hiemstra and Derous 2015, 45). As such, it can be positioned within the system of business genres that constitute a recruitment process (Waung, Hymes and Beatty 2014), which includes, among others, the written curriculum, the cover letter, or the job interview. The following images position the video CV within the system of business genres that constitute a recruitment process, first when the video CV is prepared for a given position (Fig. 1), second when it is uploaded online for permanent self-promotion (Fig. 2).

| job announcement | cover letter, video/written curriculum | face-to-face/online job interview | email/letter/phone call job offer |

Fig. 1: The video curriculum answering a job announcement

| VC on LinkedIn profile | (phone/email) candidate call | (face-to-face/online) job interview | (email/letter/phone call) job offer |

Fig. 2: The video curriculum on a social network profile

Unlike the synchronous job interview, where the recruiter and the applicant are present together during the screening process, the video CV configures a monologic asynchronous discourse (Fortanet-Gómez and Beltrán-Palanques 2021, 19; Apers and Derous 2017, 9; Hiemstra and Derous 2015, 45): the human resources (HR) professional watches the video CV after it has been recorded and in the absence of the candidate.

Thus, the video CV seen by the HR professional is the final product of an extended and articulated preparation phase. The recording process often follows a previous stage of scripting/drafting, where ideas are gathered, organized, written and edited. An intermediate stage may include choosing and setting the scene (i.e., of the place where to sit/stand, of the background, of the camera position, distance, angle) and the preparation of the candidate (e.g. clothing, hairstyle, accessories, make-up). This is followed by the video CV recording and performance. A subsequent stage may include montage, when the video text is edited and the shots are assembled and linked together. In the latter post-production phase, a number of visual (e.g. keywords, icons, images) and audio (e.g. music, sound effects) elements can be added. In summary, the stages of video CV preparation are as follows:

- Script/draft writing
- Scene setting/candidate preparation
- Video recording
- Video editing

Once the video CV is finished, it is either uploaded online and made freely and instantly viewable, or it is sent to the HR professionals of the company the job seeker is interested in. This twofold form of distribution reflects the already mentioned dual function of the video CV: a specific application for a specific position or a permanent display on a LinkedIn profile.

If the preparation of a video CV is to be seen as an articulated process, then the structure of video CV is also composite. Hence, a video CV features a number of recurring moves (i.e., textual segments that fulfil a particular function) that can be arranged in the following or in similar ways:

- Introduction
- Who we are
- Aims
- Educational background
- Work experience
- Soft, linguistic and technological skills
- Conclusion

The multiple generic moves (Swales 1990) of video CV are multimodally framed, that is to say, they derive from the simultaneous use of a range of modes and modal resources to make meaning and negotiate identity (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021; 2001; Hiippala 2014; Kress 2010). For instance, speech may be adopted to narrate educational and professional experiences, while gestures may be used to punctuate the spoken narrative, and keywords and icons may anchor relevant information. Additionally, multiple interpersonal strategies may be deployed to address and involve a potential recruiter at the cognitive and emotional levels: when eye contact and size of frame may be used as engagement strategies, background music could accompany the self-narrative in a pleasant way (Wang et al. 2022; Zuraina et al. 2022; Goel and Awasthy 2020; Gissel, Thompson and Pond 2013).

The comparison with the written curriculum provides further insights into its description. On initial observation, the two genres exhibit specific characteristics. The traditional curriculum is printed or potentially printed, if distributed in PDF form, whereas the video CV is electronic and audiovisual (Apers and Derous 2017, 9). The simultaneously visual and auditory dimension of the video CV allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the applicant's personality, appearance, and oral language skills (Cojocariu, Cirtita-Buzoianu and Mares 2020, 1293; Goel and Awasthy 2020, 139; Hiemstra et al. 2012, 426). Nevertheless, the most relevant discrepancies between the two genres account for the textual content and internal textual organisation.

This paper argues that, when the written curriculum provides a list of discrete experiences, interests and skills, the video CV enables the prospective employee to perform self-narration, thereby imparting shape, structure and cohesion to the given information. It is evident that, due to its concise and compact form, the video CV does not provide a comprehensive account of one's life narrative. Instead, it offers partial, concise, short, 'small stories' (Georgakopoulou 2006, 2015; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008): it gives narrative structure to fragments about one's educational and professional experiences.

4. Materials

The materials for this study comprise a small corpus of 47 video curricula, recorded by undergraduate students enrolled in a Business English course delivered at the University of Trento, during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 academic years. The students have a basic C1 level of English-language competence, according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The Business English course includes both language lessons conducted in small groups guided by native English-speaking instructors and academic lectures on specialized discourse. The academic experience of ESP learning has been integrated with a seminar offered by the university Job Guidance staff. Video CV preparation was presented to the students as an

optional activity and considered by the teacher for the course assessment and final mark. Students, as potential job seekers, were invited to select and combine a range of audiovisual semiotic resources in order to engage with their potential recruiter and to shape their future professional identity.

Overall, the 47 video CV have an average length of 1:54 minutes, predominantly display a horizontal orientation of the shot, a close-up as size of frame, and an eye-angle for perspective, in line with guidelines and suggestions offered by experts. In terms of the *mise-en-scène*, prospective job seekers chose different settings and backgrounds to communicate their personality, as well as a rather informal dress style and a seated position. To the resource of speech, almost half of the students have added musical accompaniment and written keywords to highlight relevant information at the post-production phase and to show their technological competence. The adoption and integration of modes and modal resources in the audiovisual corpus will be illustrated in detail and discussed in the next sections.

Multimodal data from the small corpus were obtained with the support of the ELAN computer software (version 6.7, 2023), an annotation tool for audio and video recordings developed at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen. ELAN, which is freely available online, allows for the identification and annotation of a wide range of semiotic resources in a video text, such as speech, soundtrack, transition types, angle, size of frame.

5. Research design

The present article adopts an integrated analytical framework. First, the video CV will be addressed through the lens of genre analysis (Bhatia 2017; 2004; Swales 1990). Second, the multimodal toolkit will be used in order to examine the dataset (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021; 2001; Kress 2010), with particular attention given to the concept of design (Adami, Diamantopoulou and Lim 2022; Lim 2021a; Kress 2010; 2000). Third, the metafunctional paradigm (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Halliday and Hasan 1985; Halliday 1978) will be utilised to interpret data. Fourth, storytelling and, in particular, 'small stories' (Georgakopoulou 2015; 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008) will be employed as the main multimodal technique in the data that serves the three metafunctions.

In the initial multimodal level of analysis, academic students are observed as job applicants, orchestrating a range of modes and modal resources (e.g. posture, gestures, speech and music) to design and communicate their prospective professional identities and to engage with potential recruiters. The concept of 'design' will be primarily adopted to explore how modes have been selected and combined (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021; 2001; Kress 2010; 2000) within the dataset. As Kress and Van Leeuwen sustain (2001, 21), the concept of design implies a "separat[ion] from the actual material production of the semiotic product or event." More

precisely, "design stands midway between content and expression. It is the conceptual side of expression, and the expression side of conception" (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001, 5). As such, design is concerned with "projecting an individual's interest into their world with the intent of effect in the future" (Kress 2010, 23). In order to examine the choice and integration of modal resources for prospective identity narration, this paper adopts "a prospective design perspective" (Adami, Diamantopoulou and Lim 2022, 8), according to which "design is prospective, looking forward" (Kress 2010, 6).

As such, modes and modal resources will be discussed in relation to their meaning potential. Hence, multimodal resources are expressed through functional components that are known as metafunctions. These metafunctions are considered as lines or strands of meaning that embrace the main, general purposes for which language is used (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 29-31; Halliday and Hasan 1985; Halliday 1978). The three metafunctions are as follows: the ideational, which is aimed at representation of the content of the narrative; the interpersonal, which enacts interpersonal relations among participants; the textual, which is concerned with the construction of the text, in terms of organisation, cohesion and coherence (Halliday and Hasan 1985; Halliday 1978). Far from remaining discrete, these functions can operate simultaneously in text instances and modes can simultaneously realise multiple functions, although predominant functions can be associated with specific modes. Concerned with the self-related content students tell or show, the ideational metafunction can be realised in the video CV via speech, accessories, gestures, among other modes. The interpersonal metafunction focuses on social relations established between the applicant and the prospective recruiter via semiotic systems such as eye contact, size of frame or perspective. Involved in textual construction in terms of cohesion and coherence, the textual metafunction regards both intra-textual consistency among modes, and extra-textual consistency between the video CV and the job position. Following are some modal resources students may rely on for their video CV design, conceived within a metafunctional frame:

- Ideational metafunction: speech, dress style, accessories, setting;
- Interpersonal metafunction: eye contact, size of frame, orientation, perspective, music;
- Textual metafunction: gestures, keywords, icons, transitions.

This paper argues that, in order to effectively serve the three metafunctions, one of the main multimodal configurations the video CV adopts is that of storytelling. As previously stated, if the conventional written CV provides biographical information in a detailed and separated form, the video CV enables potential job applicants to use storytelling techniques, namely, to give narrative shape to the information they offer. Stories are indeed privileged forms for self-

construction by bringing the coordinates of time, space, and personhood into a unified frame of reference (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008, 378). Among the most frequently adopted narrative techniques are the following: I-person pronouns, framing structures, temporal markers, cause-and-effect logical chains (Toolan 2013).

The concept of self-narration will be explored through the paradigm of 'small stories' (Georgakopoulou 2015; 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008), which are intended as concise, incomplete, fragmentary narrative accounts. Small stories will be observed as displaying situated, contextualized prospective professional identities (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008, 379).

6. Analysis and discussion

The video CV produced by the students have an average length of 1:54 minutes, ranging from a minimum of 1:01 in video CV n° 9 to a maximum of 2:56 in video CV n° 21. This length respects the criterion of conciseness, in line with indications given in the literature and by HR professionals, according to which the video CV should last between one and three minutes (Apers and Derous 2017, 9; Hiemstra and Derous 2015, 45). In this vein, this section offers an analysis and discussion of multimodal data retrieved from the small corpus of video CV recorded by academic students as prospective job seekers. The following image summarises up modes and modal resources adopted for video CV design, to be illustrated in the next paragraphs:
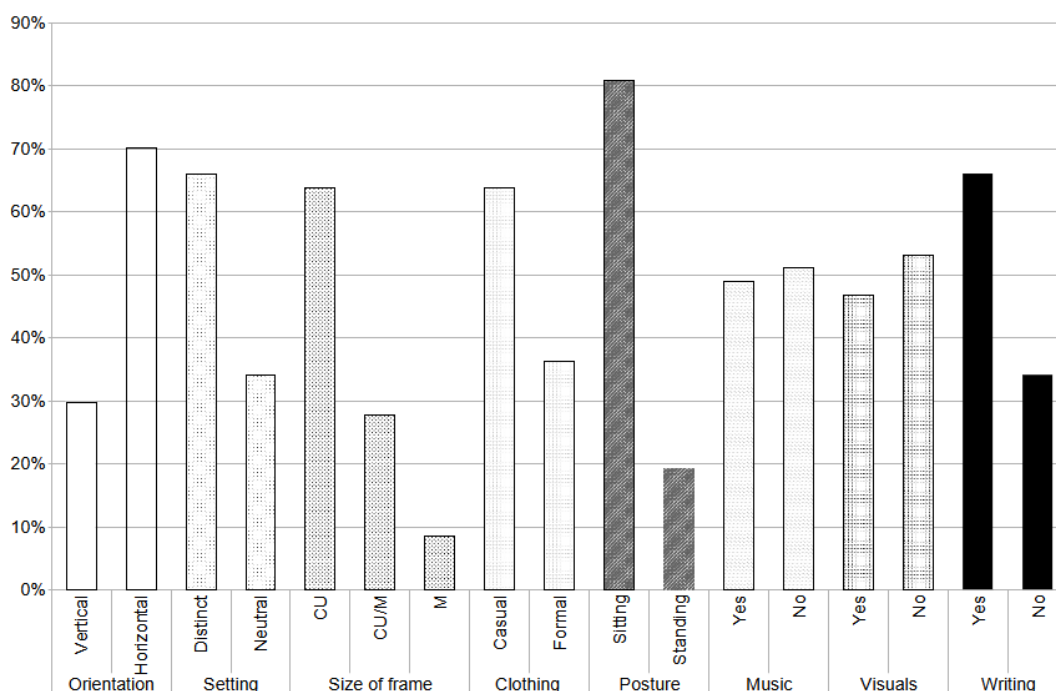

Fig. 3: Modes and modal resources adopted for video CV design

The majority (70%) of the analysed video CV display a horizontal orientation of the shot, while 30% show a vertical orientation. Generally considered to be more natural and more pleasing (Menotti 2019, 158), the horizontal orientation seems to be more appropriate to the video CV communicative situation and aim. As a matter of fact, the horizontal orientation is functional to the foregrounding of the speakers' mouth and eyes, as speech and eye contact are pivotal modes through which prospective candidates present themselves and engage with potential recruiters. The less frequent choice of the "unusual" (Menotti 2019, 156) vertical format may be due to the fact that students have recorded their video CV using their smartphones, and that they are familiar with vertically developing social media stories (Menotti 2019, 149).

In terms of size of frame, 64% of video CV use a close-up and 28% of them adopt a midway solution between a medium shot and a close-up (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021, 123). Only 8% rely on a medium shot. Such choices affect the interpersonal distance established with the recruiter: distance is reduced with a close-up, but it is more extended with a medium shot. Data show that video CV tend to reduce social distance between the candidate and the recruiter, thereby establishing a close interpersonal relation. An effective and unusual editing device is employed by video CV n° 5, whereby a medium shot used in the introduction is shifted to a close-up for the textual body, thus progressively enhancing engagement with the audience. In general, the choice of size of frame should also depend on the use of gestures (Masiala 2024; Lim 2021b) as a meaning-making system. If gesture is relied on, then size of frame should include the hands; if not, then a close-up is enough. Hence, a framing device should be avoided that only partially excludes hands when gestures are actually used as a semiotic resource: such solution may impede communication and convey an impression of carelessness. When vertical orientation is combined with a close-up in the video CV n° 14, it also co-occurs with a high angle, whereby the candidate looks down at the recruiter, thus establishing an effect of superiority and control (Kress and Van Leeuwen 2021, 138). Therefore, an eye-level that conveys equality between the speaker and the audience is preferable. As a consequence of vertical orientation, the ceiling in the video CV n° 14 is also included within the shot, which makes the framing ineffective.

Students generally chose different settings and backgrounds for their video curricula, as a means of articulating their distinct personalities, their passions and interests (De Fina 2015, 352). For their background, five future job applicants displayed art posters or paintings, one individual relied on travel photographs, three others showed a plant, four preferred books on shelves, among other items. As for setting, for example, nine videos were recorded in a living room, four in a bedroom, five in a university room, with a blackboard as a background. One video CV, n° 36, was recorded outdoors, on a green lawn, with mountains as a background. Overall, if 66% of future job seekers chose a distinct setting and background, 34% relied on a more neutral solution for their *mise-en-scène*. It is noteworthy that 14 students presented their

video CV in front of a white or neutral background, indicating that they do not consider the background to be a meaningful or significant mode for the communication of their identity and/or personality. In this vein, 25 students do not appear to pay attention to the room where they recorded their videos; sometimes, the room cannot be inferred because of a white wall being the only background.

In general (64%), the adopted dress style in the dataset may be described as rather informal, with only 36% of students wearing a more formal attire, including white shirts, blazers, and, in one case, a white shirt with a tie, and a *tailleur* in another. The majority of students have opted for a casual woolen top in a dark hue, with only two individuals selecting a saturated red, with one a pale peach, and one a bordeaux tint. It appears that this is the dress style they rely on to communicate their current personality and identity as university students, rather than a way of projecting their prospective professional identities to the recruiter.

A further reason for such disregard for formality may be linked to the assumption that students do not consider dress code as a relevant aspect within a recruitment process. This choice may be read in line with previous observations related to other *mise-en-scène* aspects. Interestingly, the student in video CV n° 8 has altered her attire for an embedded video CV section, wearing her volleyball uniform. As a professional volley player, she convincingly adopts this editing strategy to mention this sport activity in her self-narration and to describe how it impacts on her life and personality.

In terms of posture, the majority of students (79%) adopted a seated position when presenting their video CV, while a smaller number (21%) opted for a standing position in front of a bookcase or in front of a wall with some art posters or pictures. Among the seated students, only one is observed to be sitting on a sofa in the video CV n° 10, which conveys a more relaxed attitude and shapes a friendly relationship with the audience. The remaining seated students are at a desk. Arguably, the sitting posture may be read as expressing both the habitual posture of students and that of digital natives.
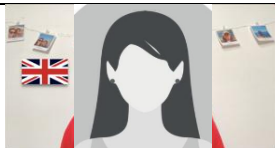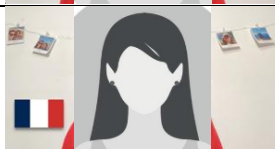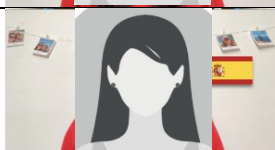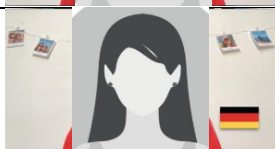
From a multimodal perspective, language is considered in the forms of writing and of speech, as a visual semiotic resource and as an aural semiotic resource (Kress 2010). In the video CV, the former is to be considered part of the visual track, the latter as part of the audio track (Sindoni 2023). Interestingly, language is used at different stages of video production: speech during the recording process, writing during the phase of editing. Overall, writing has been adopted in 64% of audiovisual instances in different forms and with different functions. Video CV predominantly adopt keywords (47% of the whole dataset) to anchor relevant information the recruiter should focus on and memorise, e.g., name, age, language competences, or personality traits. Writing is then frequently used (36% of the dataset) to leave contact details (e.g. personal and email address, phone number, social networks). Less often and with a

structuring function, 15% of instances show the use of writing to signal video genre moves (Bhatia 2017, 2004, 1993), including 'education,' 'goals,' and 'language skills.' If 21% of all videos use writing at the beginning to give a title, 9% of texts use a thank-you message to conclude the video. Writing is also present in the dataset in other forms: one student has written her email address on the blackboard, one has added subtitles to the text to sustain viewing, one has added a signature as video conclusion and as a reminder of his name.

With regard to the audio track, 49% of all video CV can be observed as accompanied by musical elements. This significant aural choice creates a two-layer soundscape, in which the speaker's voice operates as the most relevant sound (Van Leeuwen 1999, 22-23, would call this 'figure'). The music, on the other hand, is a less important but supporting sound (Van Leeuwen 1999, 22-23, would call this 'ground'), since it accompanies and emphasises speech. As such, music in the video CV is an instrumental one, has a lower volume than that of the voice, and shapes a positive atmosphere though a pleasant melody. It also operates textually, as a cohesive strategy with a "unifying function" (Van Leeuwen 1999, 98) through sound continuity across the whole textual unit. Differently, the video CV n° 16 adopts a film soundtrack by Sergio Leone for a humorous beginning, with the candidate miming the killing gesture. This unconventional and creative introduction operates as an identity-shaping and as an attention-grabbing device. Upon direct inquiry, the student acknowledged awareness of the potential ineffectiveness of the solution in a job-application context, but asserted its suitability for self-expression. Moreover, some students have added some sound effects to their audiovisual presentations. For instance, the video CV n° 11 incorporated the sound of typing on a typewriter in the introductory scene, when the protagonist's contact details are being typed on the screen. This aural strategy is attention-grabbing, sustains text fruition and the memorisation of contact details.

Used for self-presentation and self-promotion, speech relies heavily on narration as a structuring device. A relevant component of narration is characterisation, whereby a participant is given the status and role of a character in a story (Smorti 2022; Toolan 2013). The only character in a video CV is the protagonist, who uses the first-personal pronoun for self-promotion. In the multimodal ensemble, the protagonist status is personally conveyed visually through the use of techniques such as facial expression, dress style, make-up, and setting. For example, the speaker of the video CV n° 13 is formally attired and positioned in front of a regularly-shaped and carefully organized bookcase. She states, "I'm very communicative, precise, and always happy to welcome my guests with a smile every morning" (01:01-01:10). In this segment dedicated to characterisation, the verbal expression of personality traits (i.e., her precise and welcoming attitude) is multimodally corroborated at the visual level through her dress style, background, and her smiling expression.

The narrative component in the dataset is evident in the temporal ordering of events, linguistically expressed through verbal tenses, temporal adverbs, and conjunctions (Smorti 2022; Toolan 2013). For example, the student in video CV n° 15 frames her language skills as a sequential narrative of language-learning: "Since I was a kid, I've always loved learning new languages, starting from English at primary school, continuing with French, and Spanish in high school, and now German at university, with the perspective of adding other ones in the future" (00:21-00:32). In order to tell her personal small story about language learning, she uses: the subordinate temporal conjunction 'since'; the tenses 'I've loved,' 'starting,' 'continuing'; the temporal adverbs 'always' and 'now'; and the temporal prepositional phrase 'in the future.' Meanwhile, she adopts sequential icons to emphasise her language skills. The following Table illustrates the multimodal orchestration of storytelling this specific video CV has realised.

Time	Visual	Track	Sound track
00:21 – 00:23		Posture: Sitting	Since I was a kid, I've always loved learning new languages, starting from English at primary school,
00:24 – 00:25		Dress style: Informal	continuing with French,
00:26– 00:27		Background: Travel pics	and Spanish in high school,
00:28 – 00:32		Size of frame: Close-up Angle: Eye level	and now German at university, with the perspective of adding other ones in the future.

Tab 1: The multimodal orchestration of storytelling in the video CV n° 15

Not only are elements temporally related; cause-and-effect logical chains also frame the self-narrative. Professional, educational and internship experiences are not presented in isolation; rather, they are discussed in terms of their impact on the candidate's personality, competences, and skills (Bateman and Tseng 2023, 262). For instance, after mentioning three cultural and sporting events in which she participated as a volunteer, the student in the video CV n° 6 states that "All these professional experiences have enabled me to undergo personal growth to improve many skills, such as time management, teamwork, problem solving, languages skills, professional use of social medias and to develop high sense of responsibility" (01:31-01:48). It is evident that the cause-and-effect logical chain implies the previously discussed temporal

development, as the student in question refers to personal growth and the improvement of various skills in relation to the experiences she has previously undergone.

It is noteworthy that some students explicitly announce the adoption of storytelling as a framing technique at the beginning of their speech. For example, speakers in video CV n° 5 and n° 14 state the following: "But let's start from the beginning," before mentioning where and when they were born, and anticipating the subsequent narration of their educational and professional pursuits.

The findings indicate that video CV do not shape extended, cohesive grand narratives. As a matter of fact, the professional context of job recruitment pre-screening stage does not admit the unfolding of extended, articulated and time-consuming narratives. To be effective, the video CV should instead highlight relevant and memorable information in a concise form. The analysed texts comprise narrative fragments or small stories performing self-characterisation and pertaining to professional and educational experiences, which are integrated around a self-constructed narrative framework (Georgakopoulou 2015; 2006; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008).

In general, all audiovisual texts show a certain tension between maintaining genre integrity and embracing creativity (Bhatia 2017, 10, 35), that is, between the adoption of guidelines offered by tutorials and class content and the pursuit of more innovative and distinct solutions. With regard to genre standardization, all students have demonstrated an understanding of the importance of concise video formats, and have generally exploited the affordances of orientation, eye contact, eye angle, close-up or medium shots, posture and gestures. Additionally, small stories have been utilised in order to perform self-characterization and to narrate their educational and professional experiences. Keywords, icons, and animations have been very often adopted, while dress style and background have been less frequently used as distinctive strategies. Creative and individual solutions include the following: a signature as video CV conclusion (n° 4), an embedded unit with dress change (n° 8), subtitles and size of frame shift (n° 5), humour as an introductory device (n° 16), a QR code for the provision of personal information (n° 4), the sound of typing on a typewriter in the introductory scene, when the protagonist's contact details are being typed on the screen (n° 11).

If all video CV show both traits of genre integrity and innovation, some tend to privilege integrity, while others tend to prefer innovation. The multimodal configuration of integrity-oriented video CV deploys dynamic images and speech, prioritising the *mise-en-scène* and modes such as dress-style, make-up, and setting, whereas the multimodal configuration of innovation-oriented video CV incorporated post-production elements such as keywords, icons, and animations. For example, 53% of video instances use visuals, including icons, pictures, and maps. This phenomenon is illustrated in video CV n° 15, where flag icons are used to anchor

language competences (See Table 1). The greater attention given to the post-production stage may be attributed to personal preferences, to a desire to design a more contemporary text, or to an effort to showcase their technological competences to their potential recruiters. It may also be viewed as a self-positioning strategy, whereby group membership is established as being part of a young, flexible and technology-savvy Generation Z (Botezat et al. 2024; Yılmaz, Dinler Kısaçtutan and Gürün Karatepe 2024). Even though Generation Z age range varies considerably in the literature, seminar participants, generally born in the first half of the 2000s, are "digital natives in the digitalizing world" (Yilmaz, Dinler Kısaçtutan and Gürün Karatepe 2024, 2) and may be ascribed to that social group. Meanwhile, it enables students to signal group distinction from a diachronic perspective, to affirm the fact that they do not belong to the previous generations of non-digital natives.

7. Conclusions

This article explored the multimodal composition of a small corpus of video curricula, recorded by ESP academic students. The results show that students as prospective job applicants adopt a range of modes and modal resources, e.g., speech, eye contact, angle, icons, music. A pervasive and noteworthy technique in the dataset is that of storytelling, multimodally realised through speech, writing, gestures and other modes. The appropriate integration of semiotic resources frames a cohesive and concise educational and professional narrative. Speech primarily encodes small stories, using verbal strategies including I-person pronouns, framing structures, temporal markers, cause-and-effect logical chains. Overall, multimodal storytelling performs self-characterisation and shapes prospective professional identities. By capturing and holding the attention of potential recruiters, multimodal storytelling communicates the prospective professional narrative in an effective and convincing way.

Texts show a tension between the maintenance of genre integrity and the pursuit of creativity (Bhatia 2017, 10, 35), between the adoption of guidelines offered by tutorials and class content and more innovative and distinctive solutions. Genre integrity or standardisation can be identified in video conciseness, as well as in stable choices regarding orientation, eye contact, eye level, close-up or medium shots, posture and gestures. Such solutions may be related to instructions and suggestions provided by experts and may be seen as contributing to the genre effectiveness in terms of self-promotion. In general, prospective job applicants seem to pay less attention to *mise-en-scène* elements including dress style and the setting in which their videos are shot, while devoting particular attention to post-production items such as keywords, icons, and animations. What could be defined as a Generation-Z-VC may be the result of personal preferences, of the desire to design a more contemporary video CV that goes beyond the traditional format of dynamic images and speech, or of the intention to showcase technological

competences to potential recruiters. Meanwhile, students have also adopted creative and distinctive strategies, including the use of a signature as video CV conclusion, an embedded unit with dress change, humour as an introductory device, a QR code for the provision of further personal information, that appear to predominantly configure aesthetic and stylistic solutions.

It is evident that the conclusions are constrained by the limitations of the dataset and the research design. Firstly, a limited number of 47 text instances was considered for the inspection. The corpus will be integrated and expanded with other video CV recorded by students attending the same class in the future. Secondly, speech has been observed as part of the multimodal video artefact. In the next article, speech will be devoted specific attention within the video CV multimodal ensemble, with an automatic transcription and more systemic exploration of verbally-enacted storytelling. Thirdly, the research concentrated on the video CV text genre, thereby excluding other genre forms (e.g., the written curriculum and the job interview) within the recruitment discourse. The relationship between the written and the video curricula will be the scope of future research. Fourthly, the specificity of the Generation Z VC format has been formulated as a hypothesis, after the analysis and discussion, but requires further investigation. In future work, the validity of this hypothesis will be checked in relation to video CV perception.

Acknowledgements

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