

# Metadiscourse and translation

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# What is metadiscourse?

- Metadiscourse = interactions between text producers and their texts and between texts producers and users
- Metadiscourse facilitates communication, supports a position, increases readability and builds a relationship with an audience
- Language does not simply convey information, it also acts to present information through text organisation and engage readers as to how they should interpret it
- Text participants bring to the encounter affiliations, experiences, expectations and background understandings

# Audience influence in writing

- The number of readers
- Whether readers are known or unknown
- The relative status of participants
- The extent of shared background knowledge
- The extent of which specific topical knowledge is shared
- Metadiscourse is an important link between a text and its context
- Distinction between propositional content (= information about external reality) and metadiscourse (signal of the writer's communicative intent)

- (5) (a) I want to agree about the date, then we can talk about the venue.
- (b) I was waiting an hour then he told me the train had already left.
- (6) (a) It's possible that he just forgot to collect it.
- (b) It's possible to see the peaks of Snowdonia on a clear day.
- (7) (a) I think she is crazy. First she screamed at me. Second she tore up the mail.
- (b) When I told her the news, first she screamed at me. Second she tore up the mail.

The model recognizes that metadiscourse is comprised of the two dimensions of interaction:

1. ***The interactive dimension.*** This concerns the writer's awareness of a participating audience and the ways he or she seeks to accommodate its probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities. The writer's purpose here is to shape and constrain a text to meet the needs of particular readers, setting out arguments so that they will recover the writer's preferred interpretations and goals. The use of resources in this category therefore addresses ways of organizing discourse, rather than experience, and reveals the extent to which the text is constructed with the readers' needs in mind.
2. ***The interactional dimension.*** This concerns the ways writers conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. The writer's goal here is to make his or her views explicit and to involve readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text. This is the writer's expression of a textual 'voice', or community-recognized personality, and includes the ways he or she conveys judgements and overtly aligns him- or herself with readers. Metadiscourse here is essentially evaluative and engaging, expressing solidarity,

**Table 3.1** *An Interpersonal model of metadiscourse*

| <b>Category</b>      | <b>Function</b>                                  | <b>Examples</b>                       |
|----------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Interactive</b>   | <b>Help to guide the reader through the text</b> | <b>Resources</b>                      |
| Transitions          | express relations between main clauses           | in addition; but; thus; and           |
| Frame markers        | refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages     | finally; to conclude; my purpose is   |
| Endophoric markers   | refer to information in other parts of the text  | noted above; see Fig; in section 2    |
| Evidentials          | refer to information from other texts            | according to X; Z states              |
| Code glosses         | elaborate propositional meanings                 | namely; e.g.; such as; in other words |
| <b>Interactional</b> | <b>Involve the reader in the text</b>            | <b>Resources</b>                      |
| Hedges               | withhold commitment and open dialogue            | might; perhaps; possible; about       |
| Boosters             | emphasize certainty or close dialogue            | in fact; definitely; it is clear that |
| Attitude markers     | express writer's attitude to proposition         | unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly  |
| Self mentions        | explicit reference to author(s)                  | I; we; my; me; our                    |
| Engagement markers   | explicitly build relationship with reader        | consider; note; you can see that      |

# Interactive Metadiscourse

## Code Glosses

–  
( )  
as a matter of fact  
called  
defined as  
e.g.  
for example  
for instance  
I mean  
i.e.  
in fact  
in other words  
indeed  
known as  
namely  
or X  
put another way  
say  
specifically  
such as  
that is

that is to say  
that means  
this means  
viz  
which means

## Endophoric Markers

(In) Chapter X  
(In) Part X  
(In) Section X  
(In) the X chapter  
(In) the X part  
(In) the X section  
(In) This chapter  
(In) This part  
(In) This section

Example X

Fig. X

Figure X

P. X

Page X  
Table X

X above  
X before  
X below  
X earlier  
X later

#### **Evidentials**

(date)/(name)  
(to) cite X  
(to) quote X  
[ref. no.]/[name]  
according to X  
cited  
quoted

#### **Frame Markers**

##### **a) Sequencing**

(in) chapter X  
(in) part X  
(in) section X  
(in) the X chapter  
(in) the X part  
(in) the X section  
(in) this chapter  
(in) this part  
(in) this section  
finally  
first  
first of all  
firstly  
last  
lastly  
listing (a, b, c, etc.)  
next  
numbering (1, 2, 3, etc.)  
second  
secondly  
subsequently  
then

third  
thirdly  
to begin  
to start with

##### **b) label stages**

all in all  
at this point  
at this stage  
by far  
for the moment  
in brief  
in conclusion  
in short  
in sum  
in summary  
now  
on the whole  
overall  
so far  
thus far  
to conclude  
to repeat  
to sum up  
to summarize

##### **c) announce goals**

(in) this chapter  
(in) this part  
(in) this section  
aim  
desire to  
focus  
goal  
intend to  
intention  
objective  
purpose  
seek to  
want to  
wish to  
would like to



**d) shift topic**

back to

digress

in regard to

move on

now

resume

return to

revisit

shift to

so

to look more closely

turn to

well

with regard to

**Transition Markers**

accordingly

additionally

again

also

alternatively

although

and

as a consequence

as a result

at the same time

because

besides

but

by contrast

by the same token

consequently

conversely

equally

even though

further

furthermore

hence

however

in addition

in contrast

in the same way

leads to

likewise

moreover

nevertheless

nonetheless

on the contrary

on the other hand

rather

result in

similarly

since

so

so as to

still

the result is

thereby

therefore

though

thus

whereas

while

yet

**Interactional Metadiscourse**

**Attitude Markers**

!

admittedly

agree

agrees

agreed

amazed

amazing

amazingly

appropriate

appropriately

astonished

astonishing

astonishingly

correctly

curious

curiously

desirable

desirably  
disappointed  
disappointing  
disappointingly  
disagree  
disagreed  
disagrees  
dramatic  
dramatically  
essential  
essentially  
even x  
expected  
expectedly  
fortunate  
fortunately  
hopeful  
hopefully  
important  
importantly  
inappropriate  
inappropriately  
interesting  
interestingly  
prefer  
preferable  
preferably  
preferred  
remarkable  
remarkably  
shocked  
shocking  
shockingly  
striking  
strikingly  
surprised  
surprising  
surprisingly  
unbelievable  
unbelievably  
understandable  
understandably  
unexpected

unexpectedly  
unfortunate  
unfortunately  
unusual  
unusually  
usual

### **Boosters**

actually  
always  
believe  
believed  
believes  
beyond doubt  
certain  
certainly  
clear  
clearly  
conclusively  
decidedly  
definite  
definitely  
demonstrate  
demonstrated  
demonstrates  
doubtless  
establish  
established  
evident  
evidently  
find  
finds  
found  
in fact  
incontestable  
incontestably  
incontrovertible  
incontrovertibly  
indeed  
indisputable  
indisputably  
know  
known

must (*possibility*)  
never  
no doubt  
obvious  
obviously  
of course  
prove  
proved  
proves  
realize  
realized  
realizes  
really  
show  
showed  
shown  
shows  
sure  
surely  
think  
thinks  
thought  
truly  
true  
undeniable  
undeniably  
undisputedly  
undoubtedly  
without doubt

#### **Self Mention**

I  
we  
me  
my  
our  
mine  
us  
the author  
the author's  
the writer  
the writer's

#### **Engagement Markers**

(  
?  
(the) reader's  
add  
allow  
analyse  
apply  
arrange  
assess  
assume  
by the way  
calculate  
choose  
classify  
compare  
connect  
consider  
consult  
contrast  
define  
demonstrate  
determine  
do not  
develop  
employ  
ensure  
estimate  
evaluate  
find  
follow  
go  
have to  
imagine  
incidentally  
increase  
input  
insert  
integrate  
key  
let x = y  
let us  
let's

look at  
mark  
measure  
mount  
must  
need to  
note  
notice  
observe  
one's  
order  
ought  
our (*inclusive*)  
pay  
picture  
prepare  
recall  
recover  
refer  
regard  
remember  
remove  
review  
see  
select  
set  
should  
show  
suppose  
state  
take (a look/as example)  
think about  
think of  
turn  
us (*inclusive*)  
use  
we (*inclusive*)  
you  
your

**Hedges**  
about  
almost

apparent  
apparently  
appear  
appeared  
appears  
approximately  
argue  
argued  
argues  
around  
assume  
assumed  
broadly  
certain amount  
certain extent  
certain level  
claim  
claimed  
claims  
could  
couldn't  
doubt  
doubtful  
essentially  
estimate  
estimated  
fairly  
feel  
feels  
felt  
frequently  
from my perspective  
from our perspective  
from this perspective  
generally  
guess  
indicate  
indicated  
indicates  
in general  
in most cases  
in most instances  
in my opinion

in my view  
in this view  
in our opinion  
in our view  
largely  
likely  
mainly  
may  
maybe  
might  
mostly  
often  
on the whole  
ought  
perhaps  
plausible  
plausibly  
possible  
possibly  
postulate  
postulated  
postulates  
presumable  
presumably  
probable  
probably  
quite  
rather x

relatively  
roughly  
seems  
should  
sometimes  
somewhat  
suggest  
suggested  
suggests  
suppose  
supposed  
supposes  
suspect  
suspects  
tend to  
tended to  
tends to  
to my knowledge  
typical  
typically  
uncertain  
uncertainly  
unclear  
unclearly  
unlikely  
usually  
would  
wouldn't

# Examples from TedTalks

- Well, it was discovered that one of the tricks that enzymes have evolved to make use of, is by transferring subatomic particles, like electrons and indeed protons, from one part of a molecule to another via quantum tunneling.
- È stato scoperto che uno dei trucchi usati dagli enzimi sta nel trasferire particelle subatomiche, come elettroni e protoni, da una parte all'altra di una molecola grazie all'effetto tunnel.
- And then somebody else said, well, what if the star had already formed planets, and two of these planets had collided, similar to the Earth-Moon forming event.
- E qualcun'altro ha detto, e se la stella avesse già formato dei pianeti, e due di questi si fossero scontrati come è successo con Terra e Luna?
- So, what have we learned? Well, let me try to walk you through what we actually see and so you understand the news that I'm here to tell you today.
- Quindi, cosa abbiamo imparato? Bene, lasciate che vi guidi attraverso quello che osserviamo così capirete la notizia che sono qui a raccontarvi oggi.