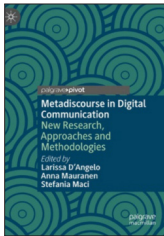


# Book Reviews

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## Metadiscourse in Digital Communication: New Research, Approaches and Methodologies

**Larissa D'Angelo, Anna Mauranen & Stefania Maci (Eds.)**

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The past four decades or so have witnessed burgeoning research on metadiscourse due to its growing role in the fields of discourse analysis, pragmatics and language teaching. Nonetheless, most of the research work in the field revolves around the written academic genre (Hyland, 2017; D'Angelo & Consonni, 2021). Very few studies have so far attempted to explore less well-trodden areas such as digital communication genres, although there is a strong and growing interest in how people develop meaning-making in a digital environment (D'Angelo & Consonni, 2021). The volume under review, *Metadiscourse in Digital Communication*, edited by Larissa D'Angelo, Anna Mauranen & Stefania Maci, is thus considered a timely response to this “new wave” (D'Angelo & Consonni, 2021, p. 24) of metadiscourse studies.

The book contains seven chapters, with one introductory chapter and six curated papers presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Metadiscourse Across Genres* conference (MAG 2019). In the opening chapter, the editors D'Angelo and Maci provide an excellent overview of past and current research on metadiscourse and highlight the innovative trend emerging from the field, i.e., metadiscourse use in digital communication. The end of the chapter presents a concise summary of each of the six contributions.

In Chapter 2, Mauranen shows her interest in the extent to which the less-researched written dialogues (also referred to as ‘digital dialogues’) differ from spoken monologues and spoken dialogues in English as a lingua franca situations. She therefore examines metadiscourse use in research blog comment threads (i.e., a hybrid of writing and dialogue), monologic speech and dialogic speech, thereby drawing a comparison of discourse types

(monologue vs. dialogue) and modes (written vs. spoken). The main finding is that dialogic discourses differ greatly from monologic discourses in metadiscourse functions. Meanwhile, spoken and digital dialogues are extremely similar, although a fine-grained analysis reveals differences in entity types referred to as well as the presence of attribution and evaluation. Finally, the author explains the differences and raises several methodological issues.

Interested in a different, multimodal blog format, Ädel (Chapter 3) focuses on the vlog (i.e., video blog), where she analyzes metadiscourse use and other related 'meta' phenomena. Based on an in-depth qualitative analysis of a sample vlog, the author concludes that digital communications prompt researchers to revisit the existing metadiscourse theories and to pay attention to other forms and resources related to metadiscourse, such as semiotic resources, synchronous intertextuality and metacommunication. Finally, she envisions a 'meta' wave or 'reflexive turn' as a promising avenue for future metadiscourse research.

Rather than just focusing on analyzing digital discourses, Malavasi in Chapter 4 compares metadiscourse use between the prototypical genre (i.e., research articles) and the increasingly popular digital genre (i.e., blog posts). Drawing upon Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model, the author quantitatively and qualitatively explores the interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices in research articles and blogs written by the Nobel Prize winner Paul Krugman. The results show greater use of interactive expressions in research articles but a preponderance of interactional expressions in blog posts, illustrating how different genres target different readerships.

Moving on to online genres of scientific knowledge dissemination, Sancho-Guinda in Chapter 5 brings up graphical abstracts, a rather under-represented genre in the metadiscourse research field. Based on an eclectic analytical framework, the author scrutinizes the use of metadiscourse in the graphical abstracts from various sources. Her findings reveal the important role of graphical abstracts in the democratization of science, especially when visual metadiscourse is regarded as 'narrative transformers' and 'stylization' is treated as a phenomenon that can both enhance and hinder scientific meaning. The chapter concludes with some suggestions offered to scientists, institutions and policymakers.

Chapter 6 by Delibegović Džanić and Berberović concerns advertisements that contain visual elements and modified phraseological units as textual

elements. The authors argue that conceptual blending theory can explain the construction of the meaning of text-image advertisements. To support this point, they analyze two advertisements within conceptual blending theory and visual metadiscourse frameworks. They conclude that conceptual blending is useful in achieving the creativity and effectiveness of multimodal advertisement discourse and that visual elements, aided by textual elements, play a significant role in understanding and interpreting advertisements.

Biri in the final chapter (Chapter 7) shifts the discussion to metadiscourse use in social media discourses. She adapts Ädel's (2006) reflexive model and applies this framework to compare the use of personal and impersonal metadiscourse across three social media platforms and four contentious topics. The results indicate frequency and function differences in metadiscourse use across the platforms, suggesting that different social networking sites have different technological affordances, such as discussion structure and text length. The author ends the chapter by stressing the necessity of remodeling the existing analytical frameworks of metadiscourse and of adapting the traditional criteria of metadiscourse identification for dialogic online genres.

Taken together, the seven finely selected chapters in this volume keep up to date with the latest developments in metadiscourse study and reflect the recent trends towards digital forms of communication. To the best of my knowledge, it is the first book devoted to exploring the use of metadiscourse in digital communication. More importantly, it offers new and valuable insights into the way digital channels have altered today's communication practices, in both academic and non-academic settings. Additionally, it enriches the field's understanding of metadiscourse (including its use and role) and expands approaches to targeting metadiscourse in digital genres. Finally, praise should be given for the high quality of the print.

Yet this monograph is not without its limitations. First, the seven chapters are not grouped thematically, which may lead readers to question why they are laid out in that particular way. That said, this kind of arrangement is perhaps not unreasonable due to the relatively limited number of chapters and themes included in the monograph. The second flaw may also be associated with the first one. This edited volume does not provide good coverage of the diverse methods that can be applied to metadiscourse studies in digital forms of communication. That is, while discourse-analytic procedures understandably dominate the studies presented in those

chapters, other methods that are of potential interest to readers, such as ethnographic approaches and experimental designs, are not present in any of them.

By and large, this volume edited by D'Angelo, Mauranen and Maci is a valuable reference for scholars and graduate students who engage in the research of discourse analysis, corpus linguistics and genre analysis. As a reader, I appreciate it as a stimulating read and recommend incorporating it into our reading materials and resource collection.

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