



Reflexively Speaking: Metadiscourse in English as a Lingua Franca

Anna Mauranen.

Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Mouton, 2023. 250 pages. ISBN 978-3110286779

Reflexivity is generally perceived as a defining characteristic of human language (Hockett, 1960). One important type of reflexive activity is metadiscourse, the mechanism of which is akin to metacognition. There are two dominant approaches to metadiscourse, the interpersonal model (e.g., Hyland, 2005) and the reflexive model (e.g., Ädel, 2006). The latter is adopted by Anna Mauranen in her recent book, *Reflexively Speaking: Metadiscourse in English as a Lingua Franca*. By and large, this book accumulates Mauranen's thirty-year expertise in metadiscourse, showing that discourse reflexivity in spoken communication is a promising territory to be explored. It is a fruitful reference for LSP researchers, practitioners, and students dedicated to reflexive language in spoken interaction.

Spoken interaction is the most fundamental mode of language, where the English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) research is an important strand. However, metadiscourse research still shows a heavy bias towards written discourse. Meanwhile, spoken interaction research pays little attention to metadiscourse. Given the gaps to be filled, Mauranen aims to investigate ELF academic dialogues and monologues from the perspective of reflexive metadiscourse, echoing the "Third Wave of Metadiscourse Studies" (Ädel, 2021). This research orientation could be decomposed into three goals: (i) To justify metadiscourse as discourse reflexivity from cognitive and communicative perspectives; (ii) to build up an overall framework of discourse reflexivity in spoken dialogue through triangulation; and (iii) to investigate how discourse reflexivity is used between dialogue and monologue through modifying the framework.

Striving toward the first goal, Mauranen builds on theories of cognition and communication. She perceives metadiscourse as discourse reflexivity, defining it as "a way of speaking about the ongoing discourse that organises, specifies, and modifies the discourse at hand" (p. 9). The term 'ongoing discourse' distinguishes metadiscourse from metalanguage, as metalinguistic

expressions tend to isolate from the current discourse flow (*we mostly speak about politics*). The key term “prospection” (Sinclair, 2004) is taken on board to spoken metadiscourse during the ongoing discourse process. It is argued that prospection is closely related to the process of prediction, which is the focus of cognitive linguistics and cognitive neuroscience. The cognitive perspective is intertwined with the communicative dimension, as “human cognition is interactionally oriented” (p. 6). Speakers/writers need to balance their metacognition with hearers/readers’ intersubjectivity. Meanwhile, active hearers/readers need to exert processing effort to anticipate speakers’ cognition, reducing uncertainty in communication, and facilitating the co-construction of meaning in spontaneous dialogues. Distinguishing metadiscourse from metalanguage, highlighting the cognitive dimension, and applying prospection to spoken dialogues make Mauranen’s reflexive approach slightly different from Ädel’s (2006) study, even though both are in the narrow tradition of metadiscourse. This subtle difference would be intriguing for metadiscourse researchers.

The second goal is achieved through a robust methodology. First, nearly half-million-word data from the corpus of ELFA (English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings) and WrELFA (Written English as a Lingua Franca in Academic Settings) are selected. Mauranen then chooses a data-driven bottom-up analysis of reflexive metadiscourse in context. Third, she builds up a tentative framework by analysing multi-party interaction and then amends it after applying it to other spoken registers. This framework consists of *discourse management* and *situation management*. Managing the discourse is about how speakers spend time and effort connecting their speech to the state of the discourse at hand through *contextualising* and *negotiating*. The *contextualising* function is performed either through *orienting* or *retrieving*, wherein the *orienting* function only indicates how the current speaker means their upcoming speech to be taken (*I just like to make a brief comment on this*). The *negotiating* function (*to go back to what you said*) is integral to collaborative knowledge construction. Managing the situation concerns how to ensure the smooth running of the interaction in its situational contexts, which is either controlled by the chair (*any questions comments please*), or performed as plane-shifts by other participants to change a topic (*let’s stop about it*) and alter turn allocation (*could you <NAME S3> specify*). This framework provides a sound reference for future spoken metadiscourse studies, bridging the gap of using the monologue-based model to explore dialogic interaction.

The third goal is empirical. Mauranen provides the frequency and function distribution of discourse reflexivity, which is complementary to qualitative analysis. The results show that reflexive discourse stays constant between dialogues and monologues, with five occurrences per thousand words. However, the variation becomes greater between dialogue and monologue regarding discourse function. First, situation management covers a smaller percentage in monologue, with no basis for further classification. Second, *negotiating* is a major sub-category of discourse management in dialogue, replaced by *commenting* in monologue. Third, most discourse reflexive expressions performing the *retrieving* function are egocentric in monologue, whereas most are altercentric in dialogue. Variation also occurs within different modes of dialogue. The frequency of reflexive discourse in written dialogues is higher than in spoken dialogues. 94.5% of egocentric references perform the *orienting* function in written dialogues, much higher than in spoken dialogues (72.2% in conferences and 80.8% in seminars). Given these variations, Mauranen perceives written dialogue as a third register independent of spoken co-present dialogue and written monologue. Through the triangulation between qualitative and quantitative approaches, Mauranen reinforces the reliability of research findings across the dialogic and written divides. She then provides readers with an in-depth explanation of the observed patterns from the perspectives of co-presence, (dis)embodied communication, the length of discussion, and social asymmetries. For instance, more discourse reflexivity is associated with longer discussion, high stakes, and social asymmetry between participants in spoken dialogues.

Overall, this book is a groundbreaking work on metadiscourse in spoken ELF contexts, which inspires *Ibérica* readers in copious ways. First, this book brings new perspectives for readers to understand metadiscourse, as it challenges the viewpoint of perceiving metadiscourse as writer-to-reader interaction. Instead, Mauranen posits that the notion of active readers could highlight the equal activity between interlocutors in embodied spoken interaction from a cognitive and communicative perspective. Second, *Ibérica* readers can apply the reflexive model to registers outside academic discourse, for instance, employing it in BELF (Business English as a Lingua Franca) contexts. Such an application in different registers could, in turn, modify and develop the framework. Third, the research results are no doubt enlightening by bringing new insights into conventionally written monologues and metadiscourse in ELF contexts. More importantly, this book provides great

research space for *Ibérica* readers. To what extent does this framework of discourse reflexivity apply to registers outside academic contexts? How are non-reflexive expressions such as hedges and boosters used to combine with reflexive discourse? How does time span or social asymmetry constrain the use of discourse reflexivity? These research questions can be further investigated in future studies.

In a nutshell, Mauranen's present work contributes greatly to the interplay between metadiscourse and spoken communication. By exploring discourse reflexivity in spoken dialogues and monologues, this book sheds new light on how discourse reflexivity facilitates interlocutors to share experiences and negotiate interaction in spoken dialogic contexts. For LSP researchers and practitioners, this work adds to our understanding of reflexive language used in academic ELF discourse from cognitive and communicative perspectives.

Received 8 April 2023
Accepted 24 September 2023

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