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**D'ANGELO, L., MAURANEN, A., & MACI, S. (EDS). (2021).
METADISOURSE IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION:
NEW RESEARCH, APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES.
London: Palgrave Macmillan.**

Abstract

The domain of metadiscourse and digital communication is ever evolving, providing an increasing number of communicative contexts in which new and developing research methods can be applied. Roxanne H. Padley offers a gleaming review of the very timely work entitled *Metadiscourse in Digital Communication: New research, Approaches and Methodologies* edited by Larissa D'Angelo, Anna Mauranen and Stefania Maci, published by Palgrave Macmillan. The review provides a general overview of the volume's objectives and theoretical grounding as well as critically analysing the individual contributions and their relevance to the various emerging fields of investigation. The volume covers a mixed selection of topics ranging from communication of academic meaning to online sources such as blogs and vlogs as well as investigating graphical scientific abstracts, advertisements and social media. Padley concludes that the strength of this volume is the way in which it offers an innovative approach to research avenues in metadiscourse.

Keywords: Metadiscourse; Multimodal discourse; Digital Humanities; Digital Communication

Review

Metadiscourse in Digital Communication: New Research, Approaches and Methodologies provides an insightful and in-depth examination of existing theoretical and methodological approaches to metadiscourse as well as new and emerging directions for the analysis of multimodal discourse. Positioned within the wider scope of digital communication, the book offers an international overview of the role of metadiscourse, and related theories, in constructing interaction on an individual and community level through digital forms of communication. The seven chapters in the book offer a valid overview of the ways in which digital communication has developed and influenced different communicative contexts while illustrating different research methods that evolve in line with such change.

The book is edited by Larissa D'Angelo, Anna Mauranen and Stefania Maci, and their own contributions and experiences are traced within the volume. The introduction chapter is authored by D'Angelo and Maci, who offer a snapshot of metadiscourse from its beginnings and beyond, while the second chapter, authored by Mauranen, investigates metadiscourse within the online realm of blog discussions.

The introduction itself provides the reader with a short introduction of metadiscourse application within the field of digital communication by outlining previous and current practices and research on metadiscourse along with new methodological approaches to discourses which are emerging within the field. It begins by defining metadiscourse according to Hyland (2005) and clarifies that while the concept has existed since the 1950s, research into metadiscourse, that it is not solely based on academic genres, saw an upturn in innovative studies including visual research methods, which also investigated digital channels at the turn of the New Millennium. The authors also outline a number of studies which have since focussed on academic blogs, i.e. a highly interactive digital genre, whereby scientific discourse is both popularised and democratised.

A most salient feature of metadiscursive studies is also addressed in the introduction, which to a large extent is addressed from various perspectives by the other contributing authors throughout the volume, that of how academia communicates academic meaning i.e. recontextualization of scientific discourse. D'Angelo and Maci outline the first authors who addressed such issues (Yus, 2015; Bondi, 2018; Zou and Hyland, 2019) and also indicate the importance that digital development has played in these evolving discourses, stating that "people create meaning through language *and* digital resources." This is a key concept of the whole volume which aptly investigates the directions in which metadiscursive meaning making is progressing alongside multimodal practices and hybridised forms. Indeed, the remainder of the introduction summarises the contributors' papers and how they have investigated the progressively hybridised academic genres.

Chapter 2 by Mauranen illustrates her investigation into research blog dialogues through an analysis of the comment threads by comparing their characteristics to spoken dialogue and monologue in academic contexts. In particular, the data are drawn from English as a Lingua Franca looking at discourse reflexivity in digital dialogues. The main finding in the investigation is that dialogic discourse is dramatically different from monologic discourse in its use of discourse reflexivity, but spoken and written dialogue are similar. This finding then leads

the author to outline in-depth motivations for such differences, concluding that the digital context indeed has its own profile which is not akin to face-to-face dialogues. What is most noteworthy about this study, is how the author identifies the significance of hybridity in this genre and how there is indeed greater explicitness found in digital communications modes.

Chapter 3 by Ädel presents a case study of a sample vlog (video blog) by applying the meta-discursive reflexive model. Of particular relevance within this study are the findings related to the semiotic resources, for instance paralinguistic and visual cues, which support the verbal metadiscourse investigated. Qualitative analysis is employed in order to investigate differences between metadiscourse and their related phenomena and the term 'synchronous intertextuality' is coined in order to refer to how the intertext (a simulator game in this case) operates while a vlogger interacts with it. The conclusions and future predictions are of utmost importance within the context of the volume as the author foresees a third wave of metadiscursive studies moving from non-propositional and interpersonal to reflexive, a concept which is shared entirely by D'Angelo and Maci.

Malavasi's contribution (Chapter 4) follows logically on from Chapter 3's analysis of vlogs as she explores both research articles and blogs written by the economist and Nobel Prize winner, Paul Krugman. The author draws a comparison between the two genres by exploring interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers. The employment of corpus linguistic methodologies for this particular paper renders the analysis more robust from a quantitative perspective as it considers ten research articles (73,000 tokens) and 100 blog posts (45,000 tokens), which enable the researcher to outline the metadiscursive clusters from both a frequency and percentile angle. While this number of tokens is not particularly representative of linguistic patterns from a purely corpus linguistic analytic perspective, it allows the author to shed light on the different variety of metadiscursive strategies employed by Paul Krugman and to further demonstrate the utility of combining mixed method analyses for metadiscursive investigation.

Sancho-Guinda (Chapter 5) investigates an emerging area of metadiscourse in her chapter which, to coin her term, is "out of the box." The analysis investigates graphical abstracts by selecting samples from Elsevier's JCR journals as well as samples which have been criticised by science bloggers and novice scientists (final year engineer students). The author has selected a mixture of analytical frameworks including Hyland's metadiscourse model as well as critical genre, social semiotics, narrative enquiry to name just a few. Initially the high number of frameworks chosen for analysis seems potentially overwhelming, but the author successfully guides the reader through the analysis drawing the conclusion that conventions for these types of emerging genres still need to be better defined. While the author claims that scientists cannot approach this new visual metadiscourse without previous consensus, it is evident that these complex texts already exist and thus, as identified by the author herself as well as D'Angelo and Maci, this avenue of research merits further investigation within the digitalised context of current times.

Chapter 6 by Džanić applies the conceptual blending theory to the study of advertisements to investigate how meaning is constructed through text-image advertisements using modified idiomatic expressions. The twofold study looks to identify how visual elements play a role in cognitive understanding and what the cognitive mechanisms are that involve interpreting

advertising. The chapter examines two visual-text case studies and, while the conclusions drawn may seem relatively predictable (i.e. visual and textual elements are inseparable in meaning making for advertisements), their contribution is most valid as it adds to the ever evolving field of metadiscourse in digital spaces.

The final chapter (7) is authored by Biri and turns its attention to metadiscourse in social media through the application of a reflexive framework. The contribution is unique as it turns away from academic formal discourse and looks towards informal writing, an area which has been investigated to a much lesser degree within the context of metadiscourse and digital communication. The study aims to carry out a frequency analysis of personal and impersonal metadiscourse on the platforms Twitter, Reddit and Tumblr through the application of corpus linguistics methods. For a written corpus, it could be considered rather limited at 85,000 words, however, the author quite rightly recognises that, while overarching linguistic generalisations may not be possible, as a smaller and specialised written corpus, a closer reading and qualitative analysis is feasible. Nevertheless, the contribution of this paper is most valid as it approaches metadiscourse from a changing and developing perspective.

Overall, this volume on metadiscourse in digital communication presents a most comprehensive overview of new perspectives on the role that metadiscourse plays in building and maintaining interaction between individuals as well as different communities. It completes a gap in the literature for this emerging field of investigation and can be appreciated by a range of scholars as well as graduate students with an interest in metadiscourse, corpus linguistics and multimodal discourses in a digitalised context. A key strength of this contribution is that it is not fossilised within traditional studies of metadiscourse from a scientific and academic stance, but rather branches out in new and emerging directions encompassing new research avenues such as social media. It provides a most insightful outlook into key areas of metadiscourse whilst also moving quite aptly with the times and technology.

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