METADISCOURSE MARKERS OF ACADEMIC
AND PROFESSIONAL ENGLISH

Tetiana Maslova (Kyiv, Ukraine)

Today metadiscourse is considered as a new concept in the fields of discourse analysis and language education although the term itself was coined by American linguist Zelling Sabbettai Harris in 1959 [2: 3] to denote the pragmatic use of language to comment on the discourse, and guide the perception of the message by signalling the author's attitude towards both the audience and the content.

Metadiscourse markers are words and phrases that do not contain much information on the subject matter but explicitly indicate the presence of the text's author, and help the reader interpret the text. It is interesting to note that metadiscourse markers, sometimes also called indicator phrases, differ from discourse markers, or cue phrases, in that they are non-propositional, usually considerably longer, and far more varied. In fact, variation in the use of metadiscourse markers depends on the author's intentions, the type of audience as well as the socio-cultural context of communication, which makes it an interesting linguistic area to deal with.

According to Ken Hyland's taxonomy [1: 132] metadiscourse can be divided into two dimensions – "interactive", which stands for text features that embody the author's performance in the text, and "interactional", which expresses the author's position and represents his/her personality. In short, the major purpose of interactive metadiscourse is rhetorical or organizational, while the purpose of interactional metadiscourse is mainly to involve the audience. Both of them are realized through five kinds of markers.

Markers of interactive metadiscourse tend to anticipate the audience's probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities so that to present the information in the most coherent and convincing manner. These include

- transitions, or logical connectives, used to express relations between propositions (*in addition*, *further*, *moreover*, *but*, *although*, *however*, *therefore*, *thus, consequently*);
- frame markers, which refer to different text development stages, and contribute to topic shifts and sequencing (*First*, *The next step of this work will be ..., Finally,*);
- endophoric markers, which are either reminders of previous content or references to other parts of the text (*As indicated above, As shown in Figure 4, In what follows,*);

- evidentials, which make the arguments more plausible by citing the others' studies or ideas (e.g. *According to the data provided by SGCC, ...* [3: 61]; *The "Annual Energy Outlook" for 2003 indicates that ...* [3: 29]; *A recent paper by Halvgaard, Poulsen, Madsen, and Jorgensen has shown how ...* [3: 51]);
- code glosses, helping to grasp the meaning of the message by rephrasing, illustrating or explaining (*for example, i.e., such as, essentially, say, in other words, which is*).

Interactional metadiscourse markers simulate real interactions as they allow the author to intrude and comment on the message. Among those we can find

- hedges, which are sugar-coaters that serve the purpose of softening the author's claims (*It appears that..., This could result in..., This may require..., perhaps, likely*);
- boosters, or emphatics, which emphasize the degree of author's certainty (*What is most significant is that.., not only ...but also, especially, very, dramatically, ideally)*;
- attitude markers, which express the author's perspective or evaluation of the propositional content (e.g. *These goals are highly challenging, and without intensive research the challenges may prove insurmountable.* [3: 55]).
- self-mentions, which contribute to revealing the author's stance, for example, by personal pronouns (e.g. *We address three planning issues in this article.* [3: 25]);
- engagement markers, or relational markers, which explicitly address the audience so that to draw it into the discourse (e.g. *For a more detailed description, see the paper by Corradi, Ochsenfeld, et al. listed in the "For Further Reading" section.* [3: 52]).

As participants of academic and professional discourse are constantly in need of finding linguistic means for informing the audience in a persuasive manner, they often use metadiscourse markers to present propositional material. One should remember, though, that because of rhetorical and social distinctiveness of disciplinary communities the functions of interactional metadiscourse markers may have different functions, and thus require further investigating.

References

1. Hyland, K. Metadiscourse. – Bloomsbury Publishing: Language Arts & Disciplines, 2005. – 240 p.

2. Kong K. Professional discourse. – UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014. – 288 p.

3. IEEE Power & Energy Magazine. Volume 11. Number 5. September/ October 2013.