



Ain Shams University
Faculty of Education
Department of English

METADISCOURSE IN TV INTERVIEWS IN ENGLISH AND ARABIC

A Thesis

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of the Degree of M. A. in Linguistics**

Submitted by

Mohammed Hussien Mahmmoud Hussien

Under The Supervision of

Dr. Faisal H. Abdallah

Asst. Professor of Linguistics
Department of English

Dr. Safinaz M. Radwan

Lecturer of Linguistics
Department of English

Faculty of Education
Ain Shams University

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Mohammed Hussien Mahmmoud Hussien

Metadiscourse in TV Interviews in English and Arabic

Department of English- Faculty of Education - Ain Shams University

Abstract

The present study aims at analyzing metadiscourse in the genre of TV interview in English and Arabic, particularly in political interviews and current affair expert interviews, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The study adopts Ifantidou's (2005) relevance- theoretic model of metadiscourse, which is built upon Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1986), as a general framework for analysis. The relevance-theoretic approach adopted for the analysis helps properly describe the varieties of metadiscourse expressions, and explain their functions in pragmatic/ cognitive terms.

The analyses of the use of metadiscourse in twenty- six selected political and current affair expert in-depth television interviews in English and Arabic reveal that metadiscourse is linked to the distinctive communicative characteristics of the institutional genre of TV interview. The interviewers and the interviewees employ metadiscourse to refer to other parts of their texts or to refer to other texts or authors. These references alert the relevance of their

discursive contributions, and help guide TV home- viewers to the intended interpretation of their on-going talk.

Based on intra- textual and inter- textual analyses, the present thesis provides some insights into the characteristics of English and Arabic in employing metadiscourse in the genre of TV interview. The findings from this research provide evidence that despite the remarkable differences and preferences specific to the use of metadiscourse in English and Arabic, participants in TV interviews in both languages employ most of metadiscourse markers in order to make their discursive contributions more explicit and precise.

Key words: Metadiscourse; TV Interviews; Institutional Discourse; Relevance Theory

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List of Abbreviations

RT: Relevance Theory

IR: Interviewer

IE: Interviewee

DC: Discourse Connective

SFG: Systemic Functional Grammar

MSA: Modern Standard Arabic

CCA: Cairene Colloquial Arabic

L1, L2 : Languages

X, Z : Participants or Persons

Essential Conventions for Reading Transcribed Arabic Forms¹

- [ʔ] glottal plosive
- [b] voiced bilabial plosive
- [t] voiceless denti-alveolar plosive
- [θ] voiceless dental fricative ²
- [g] / [ʒ] voiced velar plosive
- [h] voiceless pharyngeal fricative
- [x] voiceless uvular fricative
- [d] voiced denti-alveolar plosive
- [ð] voiced denti-alveolar sulcal fricative
- [r] voiced alveolar flap
- [z] voiced denti-alveolar sulcal fricative
- [s] voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative
- [ʃ] voiceless palato- alveolar fricative
- [s^ʕ] voiceless denti-alveolar sulcal fricative
- [d^ʕ] voiced denti-alveolar plosive
- [t^ʕ] voiceless denti-alveolar plosive
- [ð^ʕ] voiced denti-alveolar
- [ʕ] voiced pharyngeal fricative
- [ʁ] voiced uvular fricative

¹ Adopted from Ezzat (1973) and IPA

² In Egyptian Arabic /θ, ð/ are often approximated to [s, z] and always represent [s, z].

[f] voiceless labio-dental fricative

[q] voiceless uvular plosive

[k] voiceless velar plosive

[l] voiced denti-alveolar lateral

[m] voiced bilabial nasal

[n] voiced denti-alveolar nasal

[h] glottal fricative

[w] labio-velar semi-vowel

[y] voiced palatal semi-vowel

[a:] long vowel [a]

[i:] long vowel [i]

[u:] long vowel [u]

[e:] long vowel [e]

[o:] long vowel [o]

Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Metadiscourse is a relatively new term in current discourse analysis. It refers to the ways writers or speakers project themselves in their texts to interact with their readers or hearers. It plays crucial roles in negotiating the flow of discourse between participants in order to help make discourse more explicit and achieve optimal relevance.

Metadiscourse is considered as an umbrella term that includes many seemingly heterogeneous features of language and language use to show how texts work interpersonally. Many of metadiscourse resources have been elsewhere jointly and separately analyzed under other headings such as *attitude* (Halliday 1985- 2004), *epistemic modality* (Hyland 1998b), *appraisal* (Martin and White 2005), *stance* (Biber and Finegan 1989), and *evidentiality* (Chafe 1986). A review of literature confirms the idea that such headings have three basic functions, namely: expressing the speaker's or writer's opinion, establishing an interpersonal relationship with the hearer or reader, and organizing the discourse (Thompson and Hunston 2000).

The prefix 'meta' attached to metadiscourse means "about the same thing". That is why metadiscourse is simply defined as "discourse about discourse or communication about communication" (Vande Kopple 1985: 83), "talk about talk" (Schiffrin 1980: 199), or "writing about writing" (Williams 1981: 211). Metadiscourse involves using a variety of lexical elements to help listeners or readers organize, interpret, evaluate and react to

information presented in a text/ speech. These lexical elements are meant to “direct rather than inform” (Crismore 1983: 2), and hence facilitate understanding the ideational meaning presented. Metadiscourse elements include a wide variety of lexical items such as: discourse connectives (*but, therefore, so*), adverbs (*presumably, obviously*), speech act verbs (*suppose, claim, suggest*), mental-state verbs (*think, consider, believe*), personal pronouns (*I, we, my, they*), and text developers (*namely, for example, in other words, first*).

Such linguistic items have been classified into different functional or syntactical categories within different models of analysis. Generally, they serve metadiscursive functions when they are used to organize and shape a text in a cohesive and convincing form, or when they highlight the interpersonal features of interaction. Conjunctive relations, for example, are considered metadiscursive elements when they add, compare or contrast steps of an argument(s), or draw conclusions of an argument(s). They serve discursive functions when they add, compare or contrast activities, events or states of affairs in the world external to the text, or express sequences to explain why and how things happen in the world external to the text (Hyland 2005: 50-1; Halliday and Hasan 1976: 239-244). Accordingly, these linguistic items are considered to be context dependent, i.e. they may serve discursive or metadiscursive functions. The following example, which is quoted from Halliday and Hasan (1976), may explain: