

Metacommunication

 <https://doi.org/10.1075/wlp.10.c18>

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Pages 97–124 of

Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

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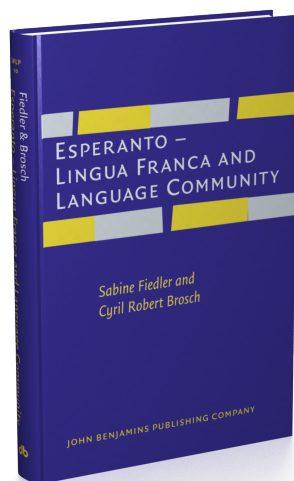
[*Studies in World Language Problems*, 10]

2022. xx, 429 pp.

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Metacommunication

18.1 Introduction

Communication, irrespective of whether it is carried out in a planned language or an ethnic language, is much more than just the exchange of necessary information. When we speak or write, we represent ourselves, for example, by organising the text in such a way that others can easily understand, or by signalling our own attitude to its content or towards the listener or reader. A multitude of devices are applied with the purpose of enhancing communication, including paralinguistic elements such as intonation and stress in oral communication, and punctuation in written communication.⁶⁶ These all have a metacommunicative function, i.e. as “communication about communication”: they indicate how a message is meant to be interpreted. Metacommunicative utterances are interspersed in the actual process of communication, serving to control and support the listener’s comprehension. This chapter deals only with explicit textual forms of metacommunication. We will examine metacommunicative utterances, which can be defined collectively as the linguistic means employed by speakers and/or writers to comment on ongoing communication and its conditions, including the interacting partners and their respective relationships, with the purpose of optimising the process of communication (Techtmeier, 1984: 133; Fiedler, 1991: 25–26). Examples include:

text-structuring elements:

- (2) *Mi havas kvar komentojn, kiuj rekte tuŝas la problemon. Sed mi mencias nur du el ili. Unue, pri la problemo, ke oni ne scias kie estas la prelego [...] Due, mi pensas, ke la filmado gravas [...]*

[I have **four** comments that touch on the problem directly, but I mention only **two** of them. **First**, about the problem of not knowing where the lecture is ... **Second**, I think that filming is important ...] [144 (eng; disc; Lille) 56:05])

justifications of communicative decisions:

- (3) *mi donas kelkajn klarigojn nun en la buso por gajni tempon*

[I am giving some explanations now, on the bus, to save time]

[131 (fra; tour; Lille) 5:48])

66. For an overview of potential non-verbal expressions, see Hyland (2005, p. 28).

anaphoric and cataphoric references:

(4) *kiel mi diris* [as I said] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 20:49]

(5) *mi parolos pri tio en la lasta bildo* [I will discuss this in the last picture]
[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 47:55]

and signals regarding the way a particular expression should be understood:

(6) *Ja Esperanto estas planlingvo, ne tiel inter citiloj natura lingvo* [Esperanto is indeed a planned language, not a quote/unquote natural language]
[113 (hun; pres; Lille) 11:42–52)]⁶⁷

Metalanguage (in Jakobson's 1960 reading), as a specific type of metacommunication, focuses on one part of the communication process, namely the use of linguistic forms and structures. This self-referencing property of language is unique to human language.

Metacommunication is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the way we communicate (Hyland, 2005, p. 5). Mauranen (2010, p. 36) calls it "a strong candidate for being a discourse universal". Its occurrence in Esperanto texts is therefore unsurprising. Indeed, the use of a non-native language as a common means of communication among speakers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds would seem to make the use of elements that facilitate adequate understanding a necessity. With this in mind, and in light of the high degree of language awareness of Esperanto speakers (see Fiedler, 2006; Kimura, 2012), we expect that Esperanto communication should contain a high concentration of metacommunicative utterances. Except for markers of idiomatic expressions in studies on phraseology (Fiedler, 1999), metacommunication in Esperanto has not yet been the subject of much, if any, investigation.

Outside Esperanto, metacommunication⁶⁸ has been the focus of research since the 1980s. An early study is Schiffrin's (1980) analysis of "meta-talk" in tape-recorded conversations. Oral communication was also the basis of Techtmeier's (1984) exploration of metacommunication in discussions among German scientists. Analytical frameworks for the categorisation of different types of metacommunication were

67. By considering the utterance the unit of investigation, our approach is distinguished from broad conceptions of metacommunication which include sentence connectors and pronouns (e.g. Hyland, 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985).

68. The specific terminology varies from author to author. "Metadiscourse" and "metatalk" also appear. Mauranen prefers the terms "metadiscourse" (2012) and discourse reflexivity (Mauranen, 2010). Busse and Hübler (2012, p. 2) state that they use "[t]he two terms 'metapragmatic' and 'metacommunicative' [...] complementarily, the term 'metapragmatic' carrying theoretical, and the term 'metacommunicative' practical overtones".

introduced by Vande Kopple (1985) and Markkanen et al. (1993). The majority of authors dealing with metacommunication in the 1980s and 1990s concentrated on language for special purposes, with a focus on written texts.⁶⁹ They showed that metacommunication is an integral part of academic writing and that there are correlations between the use of metacommunication and text genre. Later investigations emphasised spoken academic communication (Mauranen, 2003) and the comparison between spoken and written academic genres (Ädel, 2010; Mauranen, 2010). A huge body of research is devoted to culture-dependent differences in the employment of metacommunication.⁷⁰ Researchers have studied metacommunication in various languages and analysed how speakers employ it when using English as a lingua franca, and have concluded that metacommunicative prevalence is not uniform across languages.⁷¹

Our data were analysed using the methodology of conversation analysis. This approach investigates the ways in which “talk in interaction” (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p. 720; see also Stivers & Sidnell, 2013) is structured and managed by speakers. Conversation analysts focus on naturally occurring communication. They view it as their task to analyse communication with an emphasis on what can actually be found, without preconceptions or hypotheses. In doing so, they remain open to discovering systematic properties of the structure and management of talk (Firth, 1996, pp. 237f.; Levinson 1983, pp. 286f.). The working assumptions that have been developed by conversation analysts about the organisation of conversation in various languages form the point of departure of our investigation. The consideration of interactions in a planned language can be seen as both a test and an enrichment of the conversation analysis approach and an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the general nature of interactional talk. The transcription conventions can be found at the beginning of the book (see also Chapter 5).

Metacommunicative utterances can be classified in different ways. The majority of researchers distinguish between textual items, which aim at guiding the reader through the text by managing the flow of information, and interpersonal items, which are intended to actively engage the reader (Bamford & Bondi, 2005;

69. See the overview in Ädel (2006).

70. See the survey in Hyland (2005, Chapter 6).

71. For example, as Hyland (2005, p. 118) summarises, Milne (2003), studying metacommunication in editorials of the Spanish *El País* and the British *The Times* found significant differences with regard to types of metacommunication used in the Spanish and English texts. Mauranen (1993) found that Finnish authors used only about fifty percent as many interactive metacommunicative forms as native English speakers did when writing in English. Fandrych and Graefen (2002), although stressing unifying tendencies in the writing of academic texts, also describe differences in the use of text-commenting devices in German and English academic texts.

Hübler, 2011).⁷² This subdivision broadly corresponds to Halliday's (1973) textual and interpersonal metafunctions. In a similar way, reworking the previous studies on metacommunication by Vande Kopple (1985) and Markkanen et al. (1993), Stainton (1996) presents a classification as informational or attitudinal metacommunication. Ädel (2010), who uses "metadiscourse" as an umbrella term, proposes a taxonomy of twenty-three functions in total and applies it to spoken and written academic English. Her taxonomy has proved especially useful for the present study. She starts with a primary distinction between "metatext" and "audience interaction", which is comparable to the subdivision into textual and interpersonal mentioned above. "Metatext" comprises the functional subtypes of metalinguistic comments, discourse organisation and speech act labels, whereas "audience interaction" includes various forms of references to the audience. Mauranen (2010, 2012), in her research on English as a lingua franca in spoken academic discourse, divides metacommunicative utterances according to the circumstances of their use, classifying them as monologic, dialogic or interactive speech.

The latter classification does not seem to be a suitable basis for our discussion, as a number of the lectures and conference presentations that we study – both classically monologic genres – are in reality rather interactive in nature. Presenters pose questions to the audience, are interrupted by audience members and are even corrected by them and respond to their comments. In general terms, we adopt the basic subdivision of metacommunication into primarily message-oriented and audience-oriented utterances. Empirical evidence shows, however, that the two types are closely related. Interpersonal (or interactional) utterances involving the reader also frequently serve as signals of text progression, which is why Thompson (2001, p. 61) speaks of "two sides of the same coin".

Our analysis draws on a dataset comprising lectures and conference presentations (including discussions following these), debates, excursions, and casual talk. The dataset is part of the larger corpus described in Chapter 5.⁷³ We identified 321 occurrences of metacommunication in the dataset. For reasons of comparison, written texts (e.g. from journals) were also included in this section.

Identifying metacommunication is not simple. Its linguistic forms are very diverse, and we must examine each possible occurrence to determine whether it qualifies as an 'utterance'. In addition, difficulties sometimes arise in distinguishing between ordinary signals of orientation inherent in a piece of communication and explicit markers employed by the author in light of an audience's presuppositions.

72. Hyland (2005) uses the terms "interactive" and "interactional" to mark the distinction.

73. The dataset that forms the basis of this investigation encompasses the recordings between September 2014 and November 2015 (a total of 51.6 hours).

What complicates matters further is the fact that metacommunicative utterances are often combined into clusters of utterances with different functions. In these cases we tried to determine the dominant function of the passage and counted the occurrence as one metacommunicative utterance. This fact should be kept in mind with regard to the total number of metacommunicative utterances quoted above.

We study the metacommunicative utterances found in the various aforementioned forms of communication from two different perspectives. First, we group utterances by their respective functions. We take the basic distinction between content- and audience-oriented items as a starting point, further subdividing the metacommunicative utterances within each of the two groups according to their intended purpose, and arranging them in order of frequency. Second, we focus on certain properties of the metacommunicative utterances. We describe each utterance with respect to its position within the message and its linguistic form. This includes the use of personal pronouns, aspects of conventionalisation, different uses in speech and writing, and culture-driven preferences in the use of metacommunication.

18.2 Metacommunicative utterances and their functions

18.2.1 Text organisation

In the majority of cases, metacommunicative utterances serve organisational purposes, i.e. they are used to direct the listener's or reader's attention to the structure of the text. In order of frequency, the organisational functions include introducing a communicative action that immediately follows (A), structuring communicative events (B), referring to visual elements and to following or preceding passages (C), labelling illocutions (D), managing time and situation (E), and managing linguistic form (F).

A. *Introducing communicative actions*

This function can be observed, above all, in lectures, conference presentations, discussions and work group meetings. "Signposts" to guide listeners and participants permeate these genres, as the time stamps in the examples illustrate:⁷⁴

74. Most examples include additional content, in which case the metacommunicative element is presented in bold type. All quotes are given in the original.

- (7) *Nun mi iom parolu pli precize pri la rapideco de forkuro, ĉar tio estas unu el la difinoj de nigra truo.* [Now I should talk a bit more precisely about escape velocity, because this is one of the definitions of a black hole.]
[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 22:28–22:36]
- (8) *Li verkis do unu romanon [...] ĉiun duan jaron. Do nun pri la vortaro de San Antonio. Komence li skribas [...]* [So he wrote a novel (...) every second year. So now about the dictionary of San Antonio. In the beginning he writes (...)]
[75 (fra; pres; Lille) 5:54–6:10]
- (9) *Kaj (???) mi nun venos al tiu poliglota renkontiĝo* [And (???) now I come to this polyglot gathering]
[106 (eng; pres; Lille) 9:32]

In discussions and seminars, participants often start by introducing their topic when taking the floor:

- (10) *mi volas nur aldoni iun personan sperton, ĉar mi ja laboras en hospitalo* [I just want to add some personal experience, as I work in a hospital]
[12 (deu; disc; Poznań) 42:45]
- (11) *pri papago ankaŭ mi havas interesan historion* [I too have an interesting story about a parrot]
[17 (por; edu; Poznań) 17:38]

The introduction of a new subtopic is often combined with metacommunicative utterances that function in other ways, above all as disclaimers, i.e. statements in which speakers explicitly state what they do *not* intend to address (see Examples (12) and (13)).

- (12) *Mi nun ne parolos al vi pri la KER-ekzamenoj, ne pri edukado.net, ne pri metodoj. Sed mi portas al vi iun tute novan temon, iun laboron, kiun mi en junio, eh en majo kaj en junio sukcesis fari [...]* [Now I won't speak to you about CEFR exams, nor about edukado.net, nor about methods. But I bring you a completely new topic: work I succeeded in doing in June, uh in May and June (...)]
[110 (hun; pres; Lille) 1:02–1:22]
- (13) *Temas pri [...] surbaze de tiuj ĉi kvar agadkampoj [...]. Mi ne tuŝos la aliajn agadkampojn, ĉar pri tio okupiĝos [...]* [The topic is (...) based on these four fields of activity (...) I won't touch on the other fields of activity, as (...) will be dealing with this]
[176 (spa; pres; Havana) 0:38–1:03]

B. Structuring communicative events

Speakers often use metacommunication to refer to an agenda that is already known to the participants. Enumerations help to keep track of the macrostructure of the entire speech event; in (16), a discussion on gender and sexual orientation, the individual letters of the acronym *GLAT* (which stand for *Gejoj, Lesbaninoj,*

Ambaŭseksemuloj, Transseksuloj [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual people]) are used as structuring elements.

- (14) *Se ne estas demandoj pri tiu ĉi punkto, ni tuj transiru al la venonta [...] se ne estas intervenoj, punkto ok – terminologio.* [If there are no questions on this point, we should move on at once to the next one (...) if there are no objections, point eight – terminology.] [151 (eng; disc; Lille) 9:26–12:06]
- (15) *Mi preparis por vi unupaĝan superrigardon.* [I've prepared for you a one-page survey] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 0:02]
Tio estas do la unua punkto, do la kondiĉoj. Specoj de komunikado – dua punkto – do povas esti lingva, [...] nelingva, do estas parola kaj skriba komunikado, implica kaj eksplika [...] [This is the first point, the conditions. Types of communication – the second point – can be linguistic (...) non-linguistic, hence there is spoken and written communication, implicit and explicit (...)] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 6:16–6:35]
Do tio estas do la unua punkto: kondiĉoj kaj specoj de komunikado [So, this is the first point: conditions and types of communication] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 8:36]
Nun ni iras al la kvina punkto, tio estas la senkulpigo en moderna socio [Now we are going to the fifth point, i.e. apologising in modern society] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 22:37]
- (16) *Ĉu ni difinu la L?* [Shall we define L?] [12 (eng; disc; Poznań) 7:04]

Occasionally, speakers use metacommunication to justify communicative decisions, i.e. they give reasons for organising their speech in a specific way.

In Examples (17) and (18), the structuring refers to serial speech events, the lecture courses in the International Congress University, which usually consist of three parts. Topic announcements referring to other parts of the series are therefore included here.

- (17) *Do, la enhavo de tiu prelegserio, kiel dirite, estas tri prelegoj, en tiu unua prelego ni parolos pri la scienca revolucio [...]. En la morgaŭa prelego [...] ni parolos pri [...]. Marde matene [...]* [Well, the content of this lecture series, as was said before, there are three lectures. In this first lecture we will speak about the scientific revolution (...) In tomorrow's lecture (...) we will talk about (...) On Tuesday morning (...)] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 6:00–7:15]
- (18) *Ni havos kurson kune, kun tri lecionoj. Du hodiaŭ [...] kaj la tria estos morgaŭ [...]* [We will have a course together, with three lessons. Two today (...) and the third one tomorrow] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 01:05–1:25]

C. Referring to visual elements and to following or preceding passages

Within this subgroup of metacommunicative devices,⁷⁵ references to visual elements (e.g. handouts or PowerPoint slides providing illustrations, graphs or tables) are the most frequent. They are typical of lectures and conference presentations, as in (19) and (20), and occasionally occur in explanations on outings (see Chapter (21)).

- (19) *Ĉi tie estas kelkaj bildoj pri nia universitato* [here are some pictures of our university] / *kaj jen estas foto* [and here is a photograph]

[105 (ukr; pres; Lille) 11:02 / 12:27]

- (20) *Do, la ĝenerala modelo de la komputebla informado povas esti reduktita al tiu- al tiu grafikaĵo. Ni havas je la maldekstra flanko sendanton de informoj [...]* [So, the general model of computable information can be reduced to this- to this diagram. On the left we have a sender of information (...)]

[98 (ita; pres; Lille) 9:41–9:54]

- (21) *Nur per tiu ilo – pioĉo* [Only using this instrument – a pickaxe]

[140 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 13:20]

In Example (21), a tour guide relates how in the First World War (before the battle of Arras) soldiers dug a tunnel using nothing but a pickaxe. She lacks the word in Esperanto and refers to a picture of a pickaxe in the exhibition, before a participant supplies the term (*pioĉo*).

Speakers use cataphoric references to refer to the future, indicating that content related to the current discussion and therefore perhaps also anticipated by the audience, will be discussed later (see Examples (22) and (23)). Anaphoric references refer to the past, to content that has already been covered and that might be useful in understanding the current discussion (see Examples (24) and (25)).

- (22) *Poste mi- mi diros la ekzemplon* [Later I- I'll give an example]

[149 (jpn; pres; Lille) 1:27:07]

- (23) *Do surloke ni klarigos kelkajn detalojn* [so we'll clear up some details on site]

[133 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 6:54]

- (24) *Do fakte, kiel jam dirite, ni festas ĉi tie la centjaran eh la centjariĝon de ĝenerala teorio de la relativeco* [Thus in fact, as was already said, we celebrate here the centenary- uh, the centennial of the general theory of relativity]

[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 3:52]

- (25) *kiel mi diris en la buso [...]* [as I said on the bus (...)]

[132 (fra; tour; Lille) 6:15]

75. Hyland (2005, p. 154) uses the term “endophorics” as an umbrella term for the three types.

In addition, speakers occasionally refer to other participants of the speech event in order to show respect or to reinforce their own argument (see Examples (26) and (27)).

- (26) *Kiel vi ja ĉiuj diris* [as you all said] [176 (spa; pres; Havana) 4:21]
 (27) [...] *ĝuste kiel <name> diris, <name surname> ĉi tie* [...] [(...) as <name> just said, <name surname> here (...)] [161 (?; disc; Lille) 56:02]

Cataphoric and anaphoric references illustrate the close relationship between text organisation and audience orientation. They help to make a text well organised, coherent and easy to comprehend, but their form and frequency depend on the speaker-listener relationship and on how good the speaker perceives the listener's understanding of the content to be. The large number of references in the corpus bears witness to the fact that Esperanto speakers are aware of their particular situation, namely that listeners speak the language as an L2 and are, as a community, very heterogeneous.

D. Labelling illocutions

This type of metacommunicative utterance is not always easy to differentiate from the type described in section A (introducing communicative actions), as the introduction of a topic often includes illocution markers. It is not the organisational aspect that takes centre stage here, however. The items presented below serve as explicit interpretations of the speaker's activities and intentions. Speakers use them to topicalise, i.e. to indicate the illocutionary function of a preceding or following utterance (Examples (28) and (29)). In Example (30) the speaker wants to ensure that a passage is understood not as his own wording but as a quote; in Example (31), the illocutionary label mitigates a preceding criticism (*Vi ne menciis ...* 'you did not mention ...'); and Example (32) seems to be meant as an apology.

- (28) *Nun mi esprimas mian dankon* [And now I express my thanks] [110 (eng; pres; Lille) 32:50]
 (29) *ĉi tio ja estas pli- pli ja komento ol demando* [this is indeed more- more a comment than a question] [74 (jpn; pres; Lille) 55:35]
 (30) *Mi volas legi citaĵon [...]* [I want to read out a citation (...)] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 12:00]
 (31) *mi ne volas vin akuzi, simple mi volas diri* [I don't want to accuse you, I just want to say] [40 (hun; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 87:35]
 (32) *se mi rajtas legi mian propran PowerPoint* [if I may read my own PowerPoint] [86 (eng; pres; Lille) 20:00]

E. *Managing time and situation*

All oral speech events can involve unforeseeable changes to which interactants must respond. In our corpus, this essentially concerns two types of situations: first, technical problems (e.g. the use of equipment for the presentation of visual or acoustic aids) (Examples (33) and (34)) and, second, the restriction of time (Examples (35) and (36)). Speakers' commentaries on these situations represent a form of metacommunication.⁷⁶

- (33) *Pardonu, [...] unu el miaj lumbildoj malaperis* [I'm sorry, (...) one of my pictures has disappeared] [149 (ben; pres; Lille) 53:00]
- (34) *Mi ne bone testis la aparaton, mi esperas, ke ĉio funkcias bone* [I didn't test the equipment properly, I hope that everything will work fine] [177 (por; tour; Havana) 42:40]
- (35) *Estas ĝis unua kaj kvarono, ĉu? Ni havas tempon* [It goes until quarter past one, doesn't it? We have some time] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 33:11]
- (36) *do tio estas la lasta (ekzemplo)* [so this is the last (example)] / *mi rapide montras al vi* [I'll show you quickly] [107 (zho; pres; Lille) 2:51 / 3:14]

In addition, metacommunicative comments help to bridge the gap in situations where a necessary piece of information is not available (Examples (37) and (38)), or where a speaker has to take the floor without being prepared to speak (Example (39)) or has to continue after an interruption (Example (40)).

- (37) *inter vi estas, [...] atendu, mi notis tion ie; estas belgoj, germanoj [...]* [among you there are (...) wait, I've noted this somewhere: there are Belgians, Germans (...)] [130 (fra; tour; Lille) 3:39]
- (38) *Momenton, mi havas ĝin notite* [give me a second, I have it noted here] [99 (ita; disc; Lille) 86:36]
- (39) *Vi devintis* [sic; Presumably it should be "devintus"] *diri tion [= ke mi devas veni al la podio] antaŭe. [...]* *Kion mi povas diri* [You should have said this (= that I have to enter the stage) before [...]] What can I say] [174 (por; cerem; Havana) 19:41]
- (40) *Mi klarigas, ke tiu stacidomo [...]* [I'm explaining that this train station (...)] [102 (fra; tour; Lille) 2:37]

76. Ädel (2010, p. 87) speaks of the "discourse function Contextualising".

F. Managing linguistic form

This type includes comments on the choice or creation of words and phrases. Speakers signal the ad hoc character of a linguistic form and use metacommunication to signal that they, to a certain extent, dissociate themselves from their own language use.

- (41) *X. ne estas la ĝusta loko por tiaj esence partianaj aŭ partizanaj aŭ kiel oni povus diri dokumentoj* [X. is not the right place for such essentially partisan or guerilla or how could you say documents] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 24:17]
- (42) *mi absolute kunpensas, kaj mi pensas, ke mi ĵus inventis tiun vorton, almenaŭ por mi* [I totally follow (lit. think with you), and I think I've just invented this word, at least for me] [143 (spa; pres/disc; Lille) 81:35]

In lectures and conference presentations, metacommunication is employed for terminology management (Examples (43) and (44)).

- (43) [...] *kaj tio en la scienca lingvo nomiĝas geodezo* [...] [(...) and in scientific language this is called geodesy (...)] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 4:45]
- (44) *tio estas fakte radioondo ni diru* [this is in fact a radio wave, so to speak] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 26:35]

Comments can also refer to the foreign origin of an expression (Examples (45) and (46)).

- (45) [...] *mi prononcas angle*, Wall Street Journal [(...) I pronounce it in English: Wall Street Journal] [99 (eng; disc; Lille) 101:15]
- (46) *Ankaŭ estas la tiel nomitaj kromuniversitatoj. Ili havas diversajn nomojn [...] kaj en tiu konkurencokampo, en tiu, la angla nomo estas kutime extension school, kaj ĝi havas diversajn nomojn* [There are also so-called additional universities. They have various names (...) and in this field of competition, in this, the English name is usually *extension school*, and it has several names] [198 (eng; disc; Lisbon) 27:00]

Metacommunication can often be found with proverbs and idiomatic expressions to prevent these from being understood in a literal sense (Examples (47) and (48)). This topic will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 21 on phraseology.

- (47) *ĉe ni oni diras: kiu ne kuras, ne manĝas* [in our country they say 'he who doesn't run, doesn't eat'] [5 (ces; infl; Poznań) 5:43]
- (48) *Oni diras kutime: La fiŝo estas la lasta besto, kiu konscias pri la ekzisto de la akvo.* [We usually say: the fish is the last animal to be aware of the existence of the water] [198 (por; disc; Lisbon) 23:00]

In addition, metacommunicative markers accompany word searches, as will be discussed in Chapter 22 on code-switching. Finally, it should be mentioned that meta-communication occurs with repairs (*darwinisma evoluŝtupo, [...] pardonu, ŝtuparo* ‘Darwinian evolutionary step, [...] sorry, ladder’ [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 27:10–22]), as will be shown in Chapter 19.

18.2.2 Audience orientation

The metacommunicative utterances which will be discussed in this section focus on the addressee. Speakers want to ensure that the participants of the speech event, be it a seminar, lecture or excursion, understand them in the intended way. More precisely, they employ metacommunication with the aim of managing the conditions of communication, such as channel (G), checking other participants’ understanding (H), highlighting the relevance of information (I), evaluating others’ talk (J), and anticipating criticism (K).

G. Managing channel

At the beginning of their presentations, speakers often check whether the acoustic and visual preconditions for successful communication are met:

- (49) *Ĉu la homoj en la lastaj vicoj bone aŭdas min?* [Can the people in the back rows hear me well?] [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 5:38]
- (50) *Ĉu vi pli-malpli komprenas ĉion?* [Do you understand everything more or less?] [140 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 21:22]
- (51) *Ĉu necesas, ke mi staru?* [Is it necessary for me to stand?] [149 (ben; pres; Lille) 38:05]

In the case of unsatisfactory acoustic conditions, the initiative is often taken by the audience (Examples (52) and (53)) or the moderator (Example (54)):

- (52) *Laŭte. Mi ne aŭdas* [Louder! I can’t hear!] [85 (?; pres; Lille) 68:20]
- (53) *Laŭte. Iru al mikrofono* [Louder! Closer to the microphone!] [94 (?; pres; Lille) 59:08]
- (54) *Proksimigu vian buŝon al la mikrofono* [Move your mouth nearer to the microphone!] [161 (hun; disc; Lille) 44:25]

H. *Checking understanding*

Debates and seminars are characterised by a pronounced orientation to others. For example, participants ask whether their questions have been adequately understood (Example (55)) and heads of discussion groups ask participants to check whether their contribution is correctly represented in a document (Example (56)). More often than not, speakers grant the audience permission to ask questions at any time (Example (57)), and sometimes repeat a question before answering, so as to enable all participants to follow the discussion (Example (58)).

- (55) *Ĉu mia demando estas klara?* [Is my question clear?] [38 (fra; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 58:20]
- (56) *Bone, do mi aldonis [...] Ĉu tio ĝuste trafas la ideon? Jes? Jes.* [OK, so I have added (...) Does this match the idea well? Yes? Yes.] [99 (eng; pres; Lille) 104:05–15]
- (57) *Se vi havas demandon, vi povas en la mezo fari ankaŭ* [If you have a question, you can ask in the middle, too] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 18:09]
- (58) *La demando estis, ĉu [...]* [The question was whether (...)] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 54:47]

I. *Highlighting the relevance of information*

By emphasising the important parts of speech (or – albeit less frequently – unimportant parts – see Example (61)) a speaker can guide the audience to the core message, which is especially helpful in educational contexts. In Example (62), the speaker comments on the design of his visual aids.

- (59) *aparte mi ŝatas mencii* [I want to mention especially] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 4:35]
- (60) *Bonvolu tre bone fiksi la bildon* [Please keep this picture in mind] [110 (hun; pres; Lille) 1:28]
- (61) *Ne gravas, se vi nenion komprenis de la lasta frazo* [It doesn't matter if you didn't understand anything in that last sentence] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 16:17]
- (62) *Mi metis en ruĝo “la informado-mikso”* [I've put in red letters “mix of information”] [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 23:02]

The catchphrase *Kredu min, (sinjorino)*⁷⁷ ['Believe me, (madam)'] can often be heard as an intensifier in Esperanto. See, for instance, the conversation during lunch in Example (63). Example (64), from a conference presentation, shows that its use is not restricted to casual conversation.

77. *Kredu min, sinjorino* ... ('Believe me, madam') refers to Cezaro Rossetti's novel of the same title (1950) about a travelling salesman's adventures.

- (63) A: *Belege!* (comment on a soup that has been served)
 B: *Jes, mi diris al vi ke- kio estas bona.*
 C: *Beleco kaj la boneco estas du aliaj (aferoj)*
 B: *(Jes, sed) ĝi estas ankaŭ bona. Kredu min, sinjorino!*
 Several: @(..)@
 [A: Beautiful! (comment on a soup that has been served)
 B: Yes, I told you that- what is good.
 C: Beauty and quality are two different (things).
 B: (Yes, but) it (a soup) is good, too. Believe me, madam!]
 [1 (deu-hun-hun; infl; Poznań) 13:55]
- (64) *Ne ĉiuj eblaj kombinoj fakte aperas [...] pro tio la sumo ne estas la produkto de tio [...]. Bonvolu, kredu min, gesinjoroj* [In fact, not all possible combinations appear (...). Because of that the sum is not the product of this (...). Please believe me, ladies and gentleman] [156 (deu; pres; Lille) 6:47]

J. Evaluating others' talk

Metacommunication is also used to assess other participants' contributions in debates and seminars, with positive feedback clearly predominating in the dataset, as the following examples show:

- (65) *Tio estas tre brava komento* [This is a very commendable comment]
 [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 48:20]
- (66) *Vi tute trafas kernan punkton* [You're hitting the core point]
 [148 (ita; pres/disc; Lille) 14:25]
- (67) *tio estas efektive tre bona demando* [that is indeed a very good question]
 [156 (deu; pres; Lille) 37:14]

Howarth (2006, p. 125) describes the conventional response "it is a good question", which occurs with high frequency in his corpus of public press conferences, as "a form of evasion or buying of time". Although it cannot be ruled out that this motivation played a role for some of the speakers, the variability of linguistic forms in the examples is an indicator that the function of earnest evaluation is of primary importance.

It can be considered negative feedback, however, when the right to speak is withdrawn from a participant in a discussion or debate as in Example (68), or when his or her contribution is regarded as inappropriate for further discussion. Even in this case, refusals are often hedged or introduced by positive assessment (Example (69)).

- (68) – *Jes?*
 – *Mi (dirus), mi nur volis, mi ne scias, ĉu la komitatoj kaj la ĉeestantoj scias pri tiu eh iniciato “Ni semas”. Eble diri vorton, estas estas kvazaŭ eh helpi aktivulojn en diversaj* [is interrupted]
 – *(Mi) petus al <name> klarigi, estas estas lia iniciato*
 [- Yes?
 – I’d (say), I just wanted, I don’t know whether the committee members and participants know about this uh initiative “We sow”. I maybe say a word, it it is something like helping activists in different (is interrupted)
 – (I’d) ask <name> to explain, it it is his initiative]
 [144 (spa-eng; disc; Lille) 72:52–73:13]
- (69) *Pardonu, mi ne tute kaptas la rilaton [...] Tio estas evidente grava, sed [...]* [Sorry, I do not quite understand how this is related to (...). It is obviously important, but (...)]
 [144 (eng; disc; Lille) 1:20]

K. Anticipating criticism

Occasionally, speakers make self-critical comments on the adequacy of their speeches (Examples (70) and (71)) or express doubts as to whether they are qualified enough to contribute to a topic (Examples (72) and (73)).

- (70) *La fleksebleco de Esperanto – kiel ni bone scias ĉiuj [...] mi nur ripetas ĉi tie banalaĵojn – [...] helpas* [The flexibility of Esperanto helps – as we all know well (...) I’m just repeating banalities here] [103 (hun; pres; Lille) 108:20]
- (71) *Bone, mi komencis paroli pri politiko* [OK, I’m starting to talk about politics]
 [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 16:02]
- (72) *Mi ne estas sperta en lingvistiko* [I am not experienced in linguistics]
 [107 (zho; pres; Lille) 0:40]
- (73) *[...] vi konas pli bone ol mi* [(...) you know better than I do]
 [134 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 1:05]

The speakers comment on deficiencies in their own communicative behaviour, relative to what might be expected in the specific situation, namely addressing relevant issues (Example (70)), sticking to the topic (Example (71)) or having the necessary knowledge to answer a question properly (Examples (72) and (73)), and thus the main function of these utterances might be described as preventing criticism or “anticipating sanctions prophylactically” (Hübler, 2011, p. 130). Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005), who call this strategy “concessive repair”, characterise it as “highly interactional”.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Various types of repair are studied in Chapter 19.

This section has shown that metacommunicative utterances are employed for a variety of functions. There are many different ways for authors to comment and reflect on their own texts and to interact with an audience. It is often difficult to allocate a concrete occurrence of metacommunication to a particular category. Not only do items that serve the purpose of textual organisation often also take the form of interactions with the audience, as discussed above, but there are also overlaps of function within individual categories of our classification. This is because interactants often intend to fulfil several communicative goals at the same time. The utterance *mi ŝatus aldoni ion* ('I would like to add something', 117 [??; disc; Lille] 40:14), in this particular situation, seems to serve mainly to announce the speaker's intention to take the floor and to call the audience's attention to it, but simultaneously it communicates how the successive information should be seen in relation to what has been being discussed. Therefore, we agree with Techtmeier (1984) and Markkanen et al. (1993), who consider metacommunication to be in principle multifunctional. The following section will provide further insights into the use of metacommunication by analysing its linguistic forms.

18.3 Properties of metacommunicative utterances

18.3.1 Position within the text

As the examples in Section 18.2 illustrate, metacommunicative utterances can both precede and follow the message that they relate to.⁷⁹ Their positions depend on their functions. Introductions to topics and macrostructures are, as expected, prospective, whereas anaphoric elements and evaluations of participants' contributions are retrospective. In other functions, such as managing linguistic form (F) or labelling illocutions (D), utterances are found in both positions.

The positioning of metacommunicative utterances within texts has not been widely examined in ethnic languages. Tanskanen (2007, p. 91) finds utterances in "retrospective, mid-message and prospective" positions in computer-mediated interaction (but does not give their prevalence in each case). Hübler (2011, p. 111) argues:

As to the position of metacommunicative clauses, it is most common that they follow the utterance that they refer to. Only where the speaker takes him/herself as target may we find a reversed order, in which the utterance referred follows. This restriction, of course, is not surprising; it is, after all, only in this circumstance that the speaker of a metacommunicative utterance knows what it will be that s/he (cataphorically) refers to.

79. We exclude some subtypes of metacommunication, such as references to visual aids, from this discussion as these utterances often occur simultaneously with the pictures or diagrams, e.g. in PowerPoint presentations.

In contrast to Hübler's assessment, the majority of metacommunicative utterances in our dataset precede the utterances they refer to. Introducing topics is the most frequent function. As for textual reviews and previews, cataphoric references dominate over anaphoric ones.

If we take the metacommunicative utterances as described in the above functions as a basis, 51% of them comment on subsequent content, whereas 32% refer to preceding information. This underlines their general character as text-planning devices. Speakers employ metacommunication more often to look ahead than to react to specific circumstances, unlike, for example, repairs (see Chapter 19).

18.3.2 Personal pronouns

A large number of studies reveal that personal pronouns occur with high frequency in metacommunicative utterances. Ädel (2010; 2012), using corpus-linguistic methods in her studies on academic English, even took the occurrence of personal pronouns as a starting point for her investigations. She retrieved potential examples by searching for the personal pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you* and then analysed the examples manually.

Our exploration confirms the close relationship between metacommunication and personal pronouns: 65.1% of the metacommunicative utterances in the dataset used here include a form of *mi* (I), *ni* (we), or *vi* (you). This is not surprising given the interpersonal character of metacommunication. That about one third of the occurrences do not include a personal pronoun (see, for example, 29, 36, 43 and 58 in the previous section) however, indicates that a study on metacommunication cannot be comprehensive without considering impersonal utterances.

The most frequent personal pronoun is the first person singular *mi*, which is used in 43.9% of metacommunicative utterances. This is empirical support of Vande Kopple's (1985, p. 83) characterisation of metacommunication: it "signals the presence of the author". The second person pronoun *vi* can be found in 11.5% of utterances. Its use shows the implicit dialogic character of monologic genres, such as other-orientation of lectures and presentations (see Examples (74) and (75)).

(74) *Pri tio vi tuj aŭdos* [In an instant you'll hear about this]

[74 (ces, pres; Lille) 21:52]

(75) *Vi vidos nur unu solan ekvacion en la prelego, kiun vi vidas nun sur la poŝtmarko*
[You will see only one single equation in the lecture, which you see now on the stamp]

[80 (heb, pres; Lille) 3:05; the $E=mc^2$ formula is shown on a commemorative postage stamp dedicated to Einstein]

The first person plural pronoun *ni* can be observed mainly in two functions. First, it can be used as the inclusive or pedagogical *we* to refer to both speaker and addressee and thereby create a sense of togetherness (see Examples (76) to (78)).

- (76) *Do ni faru nun ĝeneralajn konsiderojn* [So let's make general considerations]
[98 (ita; pres; Lille) 33:16]
- (77) *Ni prenu ekzemplon* [Let's take an example] [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 17:28]
- (78) [...] *nun, kiom ni traktu pri eksteraj rilatoj* [(...) now, how much should we talk
about external relations] [100 (eng; disc; Lille) 107:13]

As the examples show, *ni* is preferentially used in volitive constructions (marked in Esperanto by the ending *-u*) in this function. Second, the pronoun can be used as part of the conventionalised form *ni diru*, which is used as a metacommunicative signal of hic and nunc word choices, as described in F (see Example (44)). We will discuss the use of this and other ready-made phrases in the following section.

18.3.3 Metacommunicative utterances that have become set expressions

Metacommunication can also be verbalised in the form of conventionalised language. *So to say / so to speak, in other words* and *as it were* are examples in English, whereas in German we find *sozusagen, wie gesagt, ich sag' mal* and many other set phrases. Esperanto is no exception in this respect: *kiel diri?* ('how to say'), *por tiel diri* ('so to say') and *ni diru* ('we should say' / 'let's say') are ready-made constructions or phraseological units (see Chapter 21) that are employed for metacommunicative purposes. Through frequent use they have become routine formulae that are stored as a whole. These lexicalised items have the "advantages of being quickly retrievable and of being familiar to the hearer as well as to the speaker" (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 218), which allows the speaker time to prepare the communication that follows. Due to their conventionalised nature, however, *kiel diri, por tiel diri* and *ni diru* are less conspicuous than alternative metacommunicative markers aiming at performing the same function (*socialiste, por tiel diri, kiel oni povus kompreni tiun ĉi vorton* 'socialist, so to say, as one could understand this word' [40 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 8:34]).

In our dataset *kiel diri, por tiel diri* and *ni diru* serve the purpose of managing linguistic form, as described in F (see also Fiedler, 1999, pp. 277–281). *Kiel diri* generally signals the search for an appropriate expression. It is therefore often accompanied by pauses or hesitation (see Example (79)).

- (79) *Mi antaŭ kelkaj jaroj konstatis, ke ILEI en Svedio havis la opinion ke tiuj testoj, ITK-testoj, estas eh (.) kiel diri eh ili estas akceptitaj ĝuste de la Eŭropa Unio. Mi debatis tion [...] [Some years ago I realised that ILEI in Sweden was of the opinion that these tests, the ITK tests, are uh (.) how to say uh have just been accepted by the European Union. I contested this (...)]*
[38 (swe; disc; La Chaux-de-Fond) 58:18]

- (80) *Hieraŭ ni mal (1) kiel diri [...] inaŭguris [...] [Yesterday we op- (1) how to say (...) inaugurated (...)]* [141 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 2:40]

Por tiel diri and *ni diru* are similar in their function. They precede or follow a word or phrase that the author has reservations about and marks accordingly as a spontaneous creation. In Examples (81) and (82), *por tiel diri* accompanies the speaker's search for an adequate description of some illustrations. In Examples (83) and (84) we find figurative expressions signalled in this way (*dinosaŭro* 'dinosaur' for a behind-the-times person and *sensuka* 'without sap' for uninspired writing), whereas in Example (85), the focus is on the word *diverĝo* ('divergence'), which might be considered a sort of euphemism in the particular context. Finally, in Example (86), a speaker uses *ni diru* to introduce an analogy.

- (81) *Ĝi ankaŭ funkciis kiel por tiel diri kvazaŭ neŭtrala ŝildo* [It also functioned as a kind of, so to say, neutral shield] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 22:19]
- (82) *Ĝi enhavas kelkajn belajn bildojn, skeĉojn por tiel diri* [It contains some beautiful pictures, sketches so to say] [164 (eng; oth; Lille) 72:56]
- (83) *Krome, ni diru, ke li laŭ mi estas unu el la malnovaj dinosaŭroj, kiuj ankoraŭ opinias, ke raŭmismo [...] ankoraŭ povas esti proponata kiel alternativo [...] [Besides, let's say that according to me, he is one of the old dinosaurs who still believes that raumism (...) is plausible as an alternative (...)]* [36 (ita; inf; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 24:08–24:48]
- (84) *Povas ŝajni vanta veto traduki verkon de San Antonio en iun ajn lingvon. Laŭ nia scio multaj nacilingvaj tradukoj estas se ne fuŝaj ni diru sensukaj. Sed ĝuste tiun riskon ni prenis [...] [It seems a hollow bet to translate a book by San Antonio into any language. According to our knowledge, many translations into ethnic languages are, so to say, insipid, if not bungled. But we took on just this risk (...)]* [75 (fra; pres; Lille) 11:32–11:57]
- (85) *Do tio estas alia ni diru diverĝo en niaj du [...] rigardoj* [So this is another so to say divergence in our two points of view] [36 (ita; inf; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 27:55–28:08]
- (86) *La spaco kurbiĝas pro la gravito de granda maso, same kiel eh ni diru eh surfaco de kaŭĉuko kurbiĝas se vi metas en ĝin iun pezan objekton* [Space warps because of the gravity of a huge mass, in the same way as er let's say uh a rubber surface warps when you put a heavy object onto it] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 26:02–26:20]

As the examples illustrate, *ni diru* and *por tiel diri* are not just phrases employed to buy time in a situation where a speaker fumbles for a suitable word, as their literal meanings might suggest; they simultaneously work as highlighters that put the linguistic elements to which they refer at the centre of attention. Finally, it is worth

mentioning that the conventionalised metacommunicative utterances discussed here are idiosyncratic, i.e. their use is subject to individual preference. This is also true for *ĉu ne*, a set phrase for tagging questions (see Chapter 23).

18.3.4 Variation in the use of metacommunication

The use of metacommunicative utterances depends on a variety of factors. In their analysis of academic articles, Fandrych and Graefen (2002) find different frequencies of metacommunication depending on the academic **discipline** of the authors. Hyland (2005) describes how usage patterns reflect the knowledge domains and argument forms of various academic disciplines. Another cause of variation in the use of metacommunication is **genre**. Conference presentations and lectures contain high numbers of utterances, above all text-structuring devices. Discussions after talks and speeches, working group meetings and debates are rich in items that evaluate participants' contributions or are related to the organisation of the speech event. Participants are granted the right to contribute to the discussion (see Example (87) and 88), and they vie for the floor (see Examples (89) and (90) or to keep the floor (Example (91)).

- (87) *<name>, koncize, mi petas* [*<name>, concisely, please*] [72 (eng; disc; Lille) 72:26]
- (88) *<name>, ĉu vi volas ion diri pri via rolo en [...]* [*<name>, do you want to say something about your role in (...)*] [151 (eng; disc; Lille) 8:15]
- (89) *Ĉu mi rajtas?* [May I?] [157 (eng; disc; Lille) 98:29]
- (90) *[...] unu aldono* [one more thing] [73 (zho; disc; Lille) 48:04]
- (91) *Ĉu mi rajtas kompleti tion* [May I finish this one] [128 (hin/urd; disc; Lille) 18:26]

(For a more detailed description of Esperanto used in debates, see Chapter 21). In contrast, metacommunication that focuses on linguistic form, e.g. managing terminology, can be found equally frequently in all genres we have investigated.

Our study does not confirm a correlation between the **length** of texts and the extent of metacommunication.⁸⁰ Even short contributions often include explicit metacommunicative signals of speaker intentions. Occasionally, we find so-called brackets (Schiffrin, 1980) that mark the beginning and termination of a contribution to the discussion:

80. Busch-Lauer (1995, pp. 51–52), for example, in an analysis of academic English, states that the longer the text, the more metacommunication occurs.

- (92) *ĉi tio ja estas pli- pli ja komento ol demando [...] do jen mia kontribuo* [this is indeed more- more a comment than a question (...) so, this is my contribution]
[74 (jpn; disc; Lille) 55:35–56:33]
- (93) *Mi volas paroli iomete pri flugfolioj kaj informiloj kaj tiel plu [...] Do, mi nur volis fari tiujn komentojn* [I want to speak a bit about flyers and information leaflets and the like (...) So, I just wanted to make these comments]
[100 (eng; disc, Lille) 44:08–46:50]

As mentioned in the introduction, a number of studies have revealed differences in the use of metacommunication according to speakers' **cultural backgrounds**. As our examples show, metacommunication in Esperanto is employed by interactants with a multitude of native languages and cultures.⁸¹ Variation can therefore be observed according to L1 influences, which are also some of the features that users of the planned language expect. Esperanto speakers have not acquired the language – as is generally the case in foreign language learning – in order to speak it in a way a native speaker of that language does,⁸² but rather to use it in an international community. This implies that the method of presenting a topic or conveying information to an audience is in general different. Our dataset includes examples where speakers with English as their L1 obviously structure their Esperanto texts in a way that confirms author-responsibility, which is generally ascribed to academic English (for example, by Clyne, 1981, 1987; see Fiedler, 2015e), but we can also find texts or speeches where Esperanto speakers from Israel, Pakistan or Japan use metacommunication for exactly the same purpose. As in Esperanto communication, a number of factors must be taken into consideration in addition to L1 influences, such as language proficiency, experience in international communication by means of other foreign languages, homogenizing effects of Esperanto meetings, and individual identities beyond the language and culture that speakers were born into. A generalisation on the basis of a few examples does not seem to be justified here. One might instead say that, as regards cultural styles for academic writing and speaking, the cultural peculiarity of Esperanto communication lies in the fact that it is not culture-specific.

81. The dataset upon which this investigation draws includes speakers of the following native languages (as far as they are known to us): Bengali, Czech, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

82. This aspect is vividly illustrated by the title of a recent article on the use of English in the sciences: “„Das ist das Problem, das hinzukriegen, dass es so klingt, als hätt' es ein Native Speaker geschrieben” [‘That’s the problem, to do it in a way that it seems a native speaker did it’] (Gnutzmann & Rabe, 2014b).

There is, however, a peculiarity of (international) Esperanto meetings that should be mentioned in this context. It is the common practice of speakers to mention their name and congress number before entering the discussion, which allows the audience to identify the speaker from the booklet of participants.

- (94)

Mi estas <name>, kongresnumero 834. Kaj mi nur volis aldoni [...] [I am <name>, congress number 834. And I just wanted to add (...)]
[157 (eng; disc; Lille) 34:45]
- (95)

<name>, kongresnumero 328. Mi volas reveni al la rimarkoj de <name> kaj la respondo de <name> [<name>, congress number 328. I want to get back to the remarks by <name> and the response by <name>]
[144 (spa; disc; Lille) 41:50–42:01]
- (96)

Bonvolu, jes, sinjoro. Kaj ne forgesu diri nomon kaj kongresnumeron [Yes, please, Sir. And please don't forget to say your name and congress number]
[(72 (eng; disc; Lille) 4:15]

An influential factor driving variation in the use of metacommunication is **mode**. Studies of English have shown that metacommunication is a common feature of both spoken and written texts, but that oral communication includes higher frequencies of metacommunication than writing (Ädel, 2012). A number of factors characterising spoken interaction in real time, such as time constraints and the opportunity to include members of an audience in the conversation, give rise to a broad range of specific metacommunicative functions. This can be verified for Esperanto communication. Whereas the majority of functions described in Chapter 18.2 occur in both modes, some are restricted to oral speech events, as the following table illustrates:⁸³

Table 8. Examples of metacommunicative utterances in written texts (labelled according to their classification in oral communication presented in Chapter 18.2, A-K)

Function	Example in writing
Introducing topics (A)	<i>Eble mi unue devas iom priskribi la lingvan situacion en Skotlando.</i> [Perhaps I should first describe the language situation in Scotland a bit.] (<i>Monato</i> 10/2014 p. 20)
Structuring communicative events (B)	<i>Por preparoli la efikojn de proteinadsorbado, unue mi enkondukas la terminon “proteino” kaj poste mi prezentas faktojn por substreki la gravecon de proteinadsorbado.</i>

83. The examples from written texts were taken from Esperanto journals.

Table 8. (continued)

Function	Example in writing
	<i>En estontaj artikoloj mi planas doni trarigardon de la teoriaj kaj eksperimentaj konoj pri proteinadsorbado, sed en tiu ĉi artikolo la temo limiĝas al la prezento de proteinoj kaj la kialoj de indeco esplori pri la adsorbado de proteinoj al diversaj surfacoj.</i> [To discuss the effects of protein adsorption, first, I introduce the term “protein” and then I present facts in order to underline the significance of protein adsorption. In future articles I plan to give an overview of theoretical and experimental knowledge of protein adsorption, but in this article, the topic is restricted to the presentation of protein and the reasons why it is worthwhile to explore the adsorption of protein on various surfaces.] (<i>Scienca Revuo</i> Vol. 65, 232, 2015, p. 1)
Referring to visual elements and to subsequent or previous text passages (C)	<i>Rimarko: unue aperas la skota vorto, poste, inter parentezoj, la islanda [...]</i> [NB: First comes the Scottish word, then, in brackets, the Icelandic one (...)] (<i>Monato</i> 10/2014 p. 20) <i>Ekzemplon de rekta pruvo mi donos sube.</i> [I’ll give an example of a direct proof below.] (<i>Scienca Revuo</i> 64, 2013, p. 1)
Labelling illocutions (D)	<i>[...] mi kaptas la okazon danki al vi, sinjoro redaktoro, kaj viaj kunlaborantoj pro vere elstare redaktita revuo [...]</i> [(...) I seize the opportunity to thank you, Mr editor, and your colleagues, for the really outstandingly edited journal (...)] (letter to the editor, <i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)
Managing time and situation (E)	<i>Ĉi tiu artikolo raportos laŭ ambaŭ vidpunktoj sed, por esti mallonga, nur pri la ĉefaj elementoj.</i> [This article will report from both perspectives, but for reasons of length, only about the most important elements] (<i>Interlinguistica Tartuensis</i> IX, 2009 p. 145)
Managing linguistic form (F)	<i>[...] D-ro Jörg Haider [jerg hajda] estas landestro de Karintio [...]</i> [Dr Jörg Haider (jerg hajda) is president of Carinthia] (<i>Monato</i> 1/2015 p. 19)
Highlighting the relevance of information (I)	<i>[...] oni devas denove substreki, ke influo de la latina lingvo en Eŭropo [...]</i> [(...) it should be underlined again that the influence of Latin in Europe (...)] (<i>Interlinguistica Tartuensis</i> IX, 2009 p. 99)
Evaluating others’ talk (J)	<i>Mi estas incitita de la intervjuo de <nomo>. Li certe rajtas havi sian propran opinion, sed mi esperas, ke ĝi ne kongruas kun la opinio de la redakcio.</i> [I am troubled by the interview of <name>. He certainly has the right to his personal opinion, but I hope that it is not congruent with the editor’s opinion.] (letter to the editor <i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)
Anticipating criticism (K)	<i>Miaj informoj ne estas absolute fidindaj, sed mi havas la impreson, ke ja regule kaj ofte okazas tiuj kondamnoj, sed en okcidento oni tutsimple ne raportas ilin [...]</i> [My information is not completely reliable, but I have the impression that these condemnations do occur often and regularly, but in the West they are simply not reported (...)] (<i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)

As should be expected, examples of functions G (managing channel) and H (checking understanding) are not found in written texts.

To gain further insight into the differences between metacommunication in spoken and written forms of communication, we present in the following the results of a comparative study of a text that exists both as a tape-recorded speech and in writing. The written version was submitted for conference proceedings prior to the talk (see Barandovská-Frank, 2015). The analysis concentrates on the speaker’s use of metacommunicative utterances and possible devices that function as equivalents in the written text. Additional features of oral communication, such as greeting the audience, hesitation phenomena, fillers (e.g. *do; sekve* ‘so/’well’), false starts, repairs etc. will not be taken into account.

Table 9. Metacommunicative utterances in an oral academic presentation alongside the corresponding passages from the written version

Oral presentation ^a	Written article ^b
<i>Mi ne komencas mian prelegon tiel ĝojige. Aŭskultu.</i> „La homoj estas senzorgaj, ili malrespektas kaj detruas la naturon, [...]” [I am not starting my lecture in such a nice way: listen up. “Human beings are careless, they disregard and destroy nature, (...)”] (14:58–15:12)	1. Enkonduko „La homoj estas senzorgaj, ili malrespektas kaj detruas la naturon, (...)” (p. 6) [1. Introduction “Human beings are careless, they disregard and destroy nature, (...)”]
<i>Kiu estas tiu homo?</i> [Who is this man?] [...] (16:19)	2. Vivo Ĉiuj libroj kaj artikoloj pri Alano la Granda (Alain de Lille, Alanus ab/de Insulis, Alanus Magnus) asertas, ke li estas [...] p. 6 [2. Life All books and articles about Alain de Lille (Alain de Lille, Alanus ab/de Insulis, Alanus Magnus) assert that he is (...)]
<i>Mi diris al vi</i> [I told you] (20:05)	
<i>Mi ankoraŭ montras lian tombon. [...] Rigardu, ke sub liaj piedoj estas ŝafetoj. Kaj pri tio vi aŭdos poste.</i> [I am showing his tomb. Please note that there are little sheep below his feet. You will hear more about this later.] (20:30/21:47)	<i>Alano mortis en [...] Tie li estis ankaŭ entombigita kun jena epitafo: Alanum brevis hora [...] p. 7</i> [Alain died in (...) He was also buried there with this epitaph: Alanum brevis hora (...)]
<i>Nun ni venas al la unua legendo.</i> [Now we come to the first legend.] (21:56)	<i>La unua parto de la legendo diras proksimume jenon:</i> (p. 7) [The first part of the legend says approximately the following:]
<i>Tio estis unua parto de la legendo.</i> [This was [the] first part of the legend.] (24:15)	

Table 9. (continued)

Oral presentation ^a	Written article ^b
<i>La dua [...]</i> [The second (...)] (24:39)	<i>La dua parto de la legendo povas esti precize datita [...]</i> (p. 8) [The second part of the legend can be precisely dated (...)]
<i>Tio estas fino de la legendo. Kaj nun ni venu al la faktoj.</i> [This is the end of the legend. We should now come to the facts.] (27:12)	<i>Alano do malkovris sian veran identecon kaj la ĝojigita papo donis al lia dispono du klerikojn, al kiuj li diktis siajn verkojn.</i> (= last sentence, followed by a new paragraph) (p. 8) [So Alain discovered his real identity and the delighted Pope put two clerics at his disposal, to whom he dictated his works.]
<i>Mi pardonpetas, ke ĝi estas tiom larĝa, sed tio ne estas mia kulpo.</i> (referring to a picture) [I apologise that it (= the picture) is so large, but it's not my fault.] (27:21)	
(showing a slide of the title page of a work) <i>Pri kiu mi ankoraŭ okupiĝos en la estonta tempo.</i> [Which I will deal with in the future.] (29:13)	
(showing a slide of a list of works) <i>Pri tiu ĉi verko ni hodiaŭ iomete parolos.</i> [This is the work we will talk about a bit today.] (30:39)	
<i>Do estas dialogo</i> [So it's a dialogue] (33:29)	
<i>Mi ŝanĝas ridon en larmojn, kaj ĝojon en tristecon,</i> <i>Aplaŭdon en plendon, ŝercojn en ploron,</i> <i>Ĉar vidas mi naturon silenti pri siaj leĝoj.</i> <i>Nenio ĝojiga.</i> [I change a smile into tears, and joy into tristesse, Applause into complaint, jokes into weeping, As I see that nature is silent about its laws. Nothing pleasant] (34:22)	<i>In lacrymas risus, in luctus gaudia verto</i> <i>In planctum plausus, in lacrymosa iocos</i> <i>Cum sua naturam video decreta silere.</i> (<i>Mi ŝanĝas ridon en larmojn, kaj ĝojon en tristecon,</i> <i>Aplaŭdon en plendon, ŝercojn en ploron,</i> <i>Ĉar vidas mi naturon silenti pri siaj leĝoj.</i>) p. 11
<i>Estas eksteredza filo, imagu.</i> [We are talking about, imagine , an illegitimate son.] (37:44)	<i>[...] la diino Venuso faris eraron: dum</i> <i>Kupido estas ŝia legitima filo el geedziĝo kun</i> <i>Himeneo, ŝi krome kuniĝis kun Antigenio</i> <i>kaj naskis filon [...]</i> (p. 14) [(...) goddess Venus made a mistake: whereas Cupid is her legitimate son from her marriage with Hymenaeus, she additionally had a relationship with Antigenio and bore a son (...)]

(continued)

Table 9. (continued)

Oral presentation ^a	Written article ^b
<i>Mi jam menciis tiun belan gramatikan metaforon.</i> [I already mentioned this beautiful grammatical metaphor.] (48:23)	<i>En la verko troviĝas gramatikaj metaforoj, ĉar gramatiko ja estis la unua el la mezepokaj “artoj” kaj [...] (p. 15)</i> [The work contains grammatical metaphors, because ultimately grammar was the first of the medieval “arts” and (...)]
<i>Tio estas la lasta bildo. [...] Ni havas verŝajne ankoraŭ unu minuton por demandi nin kion tiu dialogo diras al ni hodiaŭ.</i> [This is the last picture. We probably still have one minute to ask ourselves what this dialogue is telling us today.] (52:40–07)	6. Aktualeco [6. Topicality]

a. Dataset no. 74 (26 July 2015).
b. See Vergara (2015, pp. 4–18).

The comparative analysis, relying only on data from a single presentation, should not be generalised, but it does reveal a number of intriguing results. Whereas in the written version, the author relies mainly on enumerated headlines, structuring formulae (*la unua parto*, *la dua parto*) and on paragraphing to communicate successfully, she employs a variety of metacommunicative devices in her speech. For example, she explicitly marks the beginning of her presentation by telling her audience to listen, and even includes a comment on this utterance itself (*Mi ne komencas mian prelegon tiel ĝojige* ‘I am not starting my lecture in such a nice way’) so as to prepare the audience for the upcoming content. Next (see the second item in Table 9) we find a question as a structuring element that draws attention to its answer. This procedure is a way of facilitating information processing and at the same time enlivening the talk (Bamford, 2005). In addition, the spoken text includes anaphoric and cataphoric references (*Mi diris al vi* ‘I told you’; *Pri kiu mi ankoraŭ okupiĝos en la estonta tempo* ‘Which I will deal with in the future’) as well as references to pictures and their quality (*Mi ankoraŭ montras lian tombon. Rigardu, ke [...] ‘I am showing his tomb. Please note that ...’; Mi pardonpetas, ke ĝi estas tiom larĝa, sed tio ne estas mia kulpo* ‘I apologise that it is so large, but it’s not my fault’) and verbalised transitions to individual text passages (*Tio estas fino de la legendo. Nun ni venu al la faktoj* ‘This is the end of the legend. We should now come to the facts’). Some pieces of information are highlighted either to amuse the listener by means of irony (*imagu* ‘imagine’) or to enhance their understanding of the subsequent text (*Do estas dialogo* ‘So it’s a dialogue’). Finally, the author makes a comment on the amount of time remaining (*Ni havas verŝajne ankoraŭ unu minuton* ‘We probably still have one minute’), as a way to transition into her conclusion.

The speaker employs a variety of metacommunicative devices to guide her audience during her presentation. These devices serve to compensate for some of the inherent advantages of written communication, e.g. the opportunity to read passages twice, look up words and check sources. In her talk she refrains from presenting Latin originals and bibliographical notes that are included in the article. Instead, she provides the listeners with synonyms and rephrasings of items they might not know (*la sep gravaj pekoj, la sep ĉefaj malvirtoj* ‘the seven deadly sins, the seven major vices’), a strategy that will be described in more detail in Chapter 19.3.1 under “Synonyms and paraphrases”.

18.4 Some concluding remarks on metacommunication in Esperanto

Our study has revealed that metacommunication plays an important part in Esperanto interaction. Speakers make extensive use of it for the purpose of organising their texts and maintaining a successful relationship with other participants in all the genres under investigation. They orient the audience regarding how they want their communication to be interpreted and reflect on others’ input as well as on the conditions of the communicative event. The use of metacommunication is clear evidence that Esperanto is a fully fledged language that is also successfully used in complex linguistic discourse.

Our study suggests that the analysed speech contains a rather high concentration of metacommunicative utterances. As regards the functions of metacommunicative utterances identified here, we find parallels with the results of investigations on other languages, especially (academic) English and German (Ädel, 2010; Mauranen, 2010; Fandrych, 2014). On the whole, the use of metacommunication does not seem to differ much from what we might find in mother-tongue communication or talk in another (foreign) language. This suggests that metacommunication is heavily influenced by factors such as genre and context (academic content) and the globalised text norms that are characteristic of these factors – a hypothesis which will need to be confirmed by an investigation based on a much larger dataset. A comparative quantification of data on other languages is difficult due to the lack of comparative data.

As regards the linguistic means used with metacommunicative function, a number of language-specific features can be found. They include structuring elements that allude to phenomena of Esperanto culture, and the emergence of stereotypical constructions for text structuring and commenting which have become set expressions due to recurrent use. It is also worth mentioning the convention to present oneself at the beginning of an oral contribution using one’s congress number.

Metacommunication is closely related to several other topics addressed in this book, and we will return to the topic when discussing ready-made constructions marking the use of repairs (Chapter 19) and phraseology. The study has also shown differences in spoken and written communication. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 23. Finally, it is worth noting that metaphorical language use (to be discussed in Chapter 21) shares some of the functions of metacommunication, as it helps us to understand and present complex phenomena more easily and to focus our attention on significant information.