

Chapter 1 Introduction

“Lecturers are necessarily addicted to metadiscourse, and it is hardly possible to make one’s way without it” (Nash, 1992: 99). In spite of its omnipresence in classroom teaching, metadiscourse in teacher talk is treated as some sort of instrumental language or teaching jargons taken for granted. Metadiscourse is rooted in written discourse, and in its short history, it has attracted many researchers’ interests to explore it in a variety of written genres. Metadiscourse in teacher talk as a kind of institutional talk remains a neglected issue for decades of years. What specific metadiscourse resources are used in teacher talk? What discourse functions do these metadiscourse resources perform in classroom teaching? This book attempts to explore the specific patterns of teachers’ metadiscourse and the discourse functions each metadiscourse category performs in classroom teaching by a comparative analysis of two corpora in the Chinese EFL classroom discourse. This chapter consists of two parts. Section One briefly describes the statement of the issue. Section Two describes the rationale of the present study.

1.1 Statement of the Issue

What is metadiscourse? It can be defined in a very broad or a narrow sense in accordance with what research areas we are in. It can be as broad as a sign in Peirce’s (1966) semiotic theory. It can be a propositional logic pointing to the logical structures rather than an object in the external world, which is roughly tantamount to metalanguage in Russell’s philosophy (Crismore, 1989). It can be meta-talk or talk about one’s own talk in

sociolinguistics (Schiffrin, 1980). It can be meta-text or text about text structure in scientific writing (Mauranen, 1993; Rahman, 2004). Metadiscourse is multifunctional and heterogeneous in nature. What is metadiscourse in one context may no longer be in another (Crismore, 1989).

The study of metadiscourse can be dated back to 1959 when Zellig Harris coined the term metadiscourse, and it has been in rapid development ever since Williams (1981) firstly used the term metadiscourse in applied linguistics and defined it as “writing about writing” (ibid.). The development of Halliday’s (1994) tripartite conceptions of language provides the theoretical foundations for metadiscourse studies, and many researchers (Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 1998a; 2000; etc.) adopted the textual-interpersonal taxonomy model, and stated that primary discourse fulfills the ideational metafunction and metadiscourse fulfills either textual or interpersonal metafunction.

In verbal communication, whether spoken or written, language is used to transmit information, goods or services, to convey our judgment and commitment towards the propositional content, and to mark the extent of audience involvement in the interaction. The concept of metadiscourse is generally based on the consensus that language is a means of constructing and negotiating social relations. Crismore (1989: 90) posits that any form of verbal communication consists of two levels of discourse: “the primary discourse, consisting of propositions and referential meanings, and metadiscourse, consisting of propositional attitudes, textual and interpersonal meanings.” Metadiscourse, commonly characterized as “discourse about discourse” or “text about text”, remains “a relatively new concept” (Hyland, 1998b: 437; Jiang & Cheng, 2011: 15), in discourse analysis, teaching pedagogy, and even translation studies. It is generally conceived as an important means of facilitating communication, supporting a writer/speaker’s viewpoint and building up the relationship with the audience (Hyland, 1998a). According to Hyland (2005a), metadiscourse acknowledges the presence of readers and represents a writer’s effort to actively pull readers along with the

argument: focusing their attention, anticipating their objections, including them as discourse participants and guiding them to interpretations of the propositional content. In verbal communication, “metadiscourse provides us with access to the ways that writers and speakers take up positions and align themselves with their readers in a particular context” (Hyland, 2005b: 4). Metadiscourse as a kind of rhetorical device and a pragmatic strategy is normally recognized as an effective means of improving discourse interpretation, conceptualizing interpersonal communication and facilitating interactions by supplying sufficient cues to secure an understanding and acceptance of the propositional meaning.

A number of studies on metadiscourse have been conducted by adopting a variety of approaches ever since its coinage by Zellig Harris in 1959. However, many of these studies address written discourse (Cheng, 1994; Intaraprawat & Steffenson, 1995; Hyland, 1998b; 1999; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Ifantidou, 2005; Ädel, 2006; Abdi, 2010). Metadiscourse is studied extensively in a variety of written genres, ranging from EAP writing (Bunton, 1999; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Velde & Gillaerts, 2010; Wharton & Li, 2012), introductory textbooks (Hyland, 1999), journals (Cao & Hu, 2011), newspapers (Milne, 2008), to CEO letters (Hyland, 1998c). On the one hand, metadiscourse helps writers to make assumptions about readers’ processing abilities, contextual resources and intertextual experience to enable them construct the interpretation consistent with their disciplinary knowledge and community-specific rhetorical expectations (Hyland & Tse, 2004: 136). On the other hand, metadiscourse highlights the interaction between interlocutors in the context. By means of metadiscourse-mediated interactions, a writer’s persona is revealed, his/her communicative intention is fulfilled, and a piece of reader-friendly discourse is constructed.

In contrast with the extensive studies of metadiscourse in a variety of written genres, spoken metadiscourse remains a less-developed research area. As is known, the study on spoken discourse is not as fortunate as it is on written discourse, as the latter can get easy access to many ready-made data resources, especially in EAP studies, such as Research Article Abstracts (RAAs), Research Articles (RAs), journals and so on. In

addition, there are not as many well-established spoken corpora (e.g. The London-Lund Corpus and the Corpus of Spoken American English) as written corpora (e.g. Brown Corpus; LOB Corpus; JDEST Corpus; COBUILD Corpus) worldwide. It is normally recognized that the process of establishing spoken corpora has to take more efforts in light of the transcription of prosodic marking and discourse features such as overlapping, interruptions, repairing. Fu and Xu (2012) remarked that spoken metadiscourse studies are far lagged behind especially in Chinese academic circles.

With reference to metadiscourse studies in spoken discourse, Thompson (2003) analyzed the important roles of text-structuring metadiscourse and intonation in signaling the large-scale organization of academic talks by comparing the occurrences of text-structuring metadiscourse in authentic undergraduate lectures with its occurrences in talks appearing in EAP listening skills materials. It is argued that both intonation and metadiscourse are used to help the audience understand the lecture information and enable them to form a mental map of the overall talk of the lecturer (*ibid.*). Hu (2008) investigated the role of metadiscourse in academic lectures from a pragmatic perspective and remarked that metadiscourse can facilitate the interaction between the addresser and the addressee. A vase review on literature tells that metadiscourse studies in spoken discourse still remain a less-trodden research area (Yan, 2010). Secondly, a couple of metadiscourse studies in spoken discourse (Mauranen, 2001; Parvaresh, 2008; Aguilar, 2008; Hu, 2008; Ädel, 2010; Yan, 2010) are confined to very few genres such as casual conversations (Schrock, 2002), academic lectures and seminars (Thompson, 2003; Hu, 2008; Yan, 2010). In addition, there are even fewer studies addressing native speakers of Chinese (Hu, 2008; Yan, 2010).

In classroom discourse, teacher talk as one of the major ways that teachers convey information to students and one of the primary channels of controlling learner behavior has been playing a fundamental role in language teaching and learning (Allwright, 1991). When it comes to foreign language classrooms, teachers' discourse is particularly important, because language serves as both the medium of and the goal

of instruction (Edmondson, 1985). Therefore, in the setting of foreign language classrooms, it is of crucial necessity for language teachers to understand their discourse features with a view to cultivating students' linguistic awareness and shaping their paths of development. In this regard, teachers' discourse in classroom setting as a worthy research topic will never be over-explored nor out of date in teaching pedagogy and discourse analysis. Feng (2005a: 24) commented on the importance of metalanguage and its omnipresent metalinguistic functions in foreign language teaching in general and in EFL/ESL in particular. His study on teachers' metalanguage not only helps us to delineate metadiscourse more precisely, but also provides important insights about the role of teachers' metadiscourse in China's EFL teaching environment, though he did not distinguish the two terms metalanguage and metadiscourse. In spite of the instrumental feature of and the fundamental role of metadiscourse in classroom interaction, there are few researches on teachers' metadiscourse in language teaching in general and even fewer delve into teachers' metadiscourse in China's EFL classroom teaching.

Yan (2010) did a seminal study on teachers' Metadiscourse Markers (MMs) and presented a quantitative research on the distribution of different categories of MMs in China's EFL teaching. Her study (*ibid.*) generated the finding that EFL teachers extensively employ a variety of MMs in classroom discourse, and these MMs help to fulfill different communicative intentions under interactive-interactional dimensions. On the other hand, just as what she has pointed out, "Hyland's (2004; 2005b) interpersonal model of metadiscourse points to academic written discourse, and it is difficult to find a corresponding model for spoken discourse" (2010: 171). Therefore, it's of great necessity to work out a feasible metadiscourse model for spoken discourse.

Ädel and Mauranen (2010: 2) summarized the previous metadiscourse studies and argued that they are falling into two general models, the interactive model and the reflexive model. The interactive model relying heavily on linguistic forms is operated by "retrieving all occurrences of a pre-defined list of members of specific subsets" (*ibid.*). In this model, the researcher is able to scrutinize the occurrences and the

general distributional pattern of each metadiscourse category under a given database (*ibid*: 3). By adopting this model, data retrieval becomes highly decontextualized and automatized, and thus metadiscourse studies seem to be quantitative-oriented, written-discourse-oriented, and intuition-based (Fu & Xu, 2012). The recent development of this model is represented by Hyland's interpersonal model (2004; 2005b), which has been applied into a wide range of written genres such as Research Article Abstracts (RAAs), Research Articles (RAs), journals, and introductory textbooks. In addition to the interpersonal model, the interactive model covers a variety of metadiscourse studies as well (Williams, 1981; Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989; Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen, 1993; etc.).

In contrast to the interactive model, the reflexive model, traced back to Schiffrin's (1980) study on meta-talk and represented by Ädel (2006) and Mauranen (2010), takes reflexivity as fundamental to metadiscourse studies, and examines the occurrences of metadiscourse resources in context (Ädel & Mauranen, 2010). Contrary to the interactive model, the reflexive model scrutinizes language ontology and targets at both spoken and written discourse (Fu & Xu, 2012). Ädel (2010) put forward a taxonomy model of metadiscourse studies consisting of 23 discourse functions by a comparative analysis of spoken and written discourse, and argued that a majority of these functions occur in both speech and writing though spoken discourse outperforms some discourse functions. This model has been criticized for its inexhaustiveness. Mauranen (2010) pointed out that metadiscourse is broader than reflexivity since many non-reflexive elements such as connectives are also metadiscursive. In other words, not all metadiscourse resources are reflexive.

Fu and Xu (2012) remarked that it is plausible to integrate both of them in metadiscourse studies, and in fact some studies (e.g., Mauranen, 1993) have already merged the interactive model with the reflexive model into the analysis of metadiscourse resources in scientific articles. On account of the inherent weaknesses existing in the two models, this book attempts to propose an analytical model of teachers' metadiscourse in Chinese EFL classroom teaching by integrating and modifying the

interactive model and the reflexive model with a view to investigating teachers' metadiscourse in classroom teaching.

1.2 Rationale of the Study

By adopting the functional approach, this book aims to investigate the specific patterns of metadiscourse in teacher talk and to uncover the discourse functions each category of metadiscourse performs in classroom teaching. In the functional approach to metadiscourse studies in teaching pedagogy, some investigated the correlation of the use or the teaching of metadiscourse devices on the quality of writing (e.g., Cheng, 1994; Xu, 2001); some examined metadiscourse features in academic writing (e.g., Hyland, 1998a; 1998b; 2000; 2004; 2005b; Fu, 2012); some scrutinized the use of metadiscourse resources in academic lectures and conferences (e.g., Thompson, 2003; Hu, 2008). Little attention was paid to teachers' metadiscourse features in classroom discourse (Yan, 2010; Yan & Zhang, 2013). Hence, the first purpose of this book is to scrutinize teachers' metadiscourse features in Chinese EFL classroom discourse. In order to decrease the subjectivity from the interactive model and avoid the weakness of being inexhaustive from the reflexive model, this book attempts to integrate and modify the two models to propose a three-dimensional analytical model of teachers' metadiscourse, which consists of meta-talk, interactive and interactional metadiscourse.

The second research objective is to apply the three-dimensional analytical model to interpreting the discourse functions of each category of metadiscourse devices. Sperber and Wilson's relevance theory (1986) serves as a satisfactory explanatory model in many metadiscourse studies (Hu, 2007; Aguilar, 2008; Schourup, 2011). In addition, some of the discourse functions of metadiscourse devices involve the realization of politeness strategies (Brown & Levinson, 1987). For example, in classroom teaching, *inclusive-we* is in an effort of cooperation with students, whereas *exclusive-we* creates a distance between students and teachers (Fortanet, 2004). Thus the more frequent use of *inclusive-we* than *exclusive-we*

suggests a teacher's preference for cooperation and in-group identity with students. In this regard, some metadiscourse resources are important strategies in the realization of politeness or sometimes they are taken as face-saving acts or behaviors. Therefore, with reference to these theories, the second purpose of this book is to uncover how each category of metadiscourse devices across the three dimensions exerts an impact on both teachers and students in classroom setting.

In Chinese EFL classroom teaching, teacher talk by native speakers of Chinese (NSC teacher talk) is the interlanguage (IL) or the continuum between native Chinese as the source language and native English as the target language. No matter at what level one's IL proficiency is, it can never reach the proficiency level of native speakers of English (NSE) (Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991). On the other hand, scarce metadiscourse studies make their appearance between NSC and NSE teacher talk (Yan, 2010), although some studies (Hu, 2008; Ädel, 2010) involve the comparison between spoken and written discourse. Thus, the third research objective is to examine to what extent teachers' metadiscourse between NSC and NSE teacher talk is associated with and different from each other. Two corpora are established with a view to fulfilling this purpose. To accomplish these research objectives, three research questions are addressed in the following:

- (1) What are the metadiscourse patterns in NSC and NSE teacher talk?
- (2) What discourse functions does each category of metadiscourse perform in EFL classroom teaching?
- (3) To what extent are metadiscourse resources in NSC and NSE teacher talk associated with and different from each other?

This study is a quantitative and qualitative classroom research conducted in naturalistic settings. In Cazden's (2001: 3) view, classroom discourse primarily involves studying and uncovering communication systems in classroom, especially "variation in ways of speaking". Taylor (2003: 95-98) remarked that it is difficult to imagine what the consequences would be if we language users were deprived of reflexive vocabulary and had never

developed any metalinguistic vocabulary or metadiscursive techniques. When it comes to foreign language classrooms, the role of language is highlighted, because language performs multiple roles as the medium of classroom teaching and management, as the content of instruction, and as the goals of instruction. In classroom teaching, it is hardly possible to make one's way without using verbal signposts such as *today we're going to talk about, in the first place, now let's move on to*, which are used to "help students to form a mental map of the discursive country a teacher proposes to travel through" (Nash, 1992: 100). The study on teachers' metadiscourse in classroom teaching is of theoretical and pedagogical significance.

Theoretically, metadiscourse as a fuzzy concept seems easy to accept in principle, yet it is much more difficult to establish its boundaries (Swales, 1990; Nash, 1992; Hyland, 2005b). Metadiscourse as a heterogeneous term is context-sensitive in nature, and what is metadiscursive in one context may not be in another (Crismore, 1989; Nash, 1992). Therefore, despite many theoretical explorations, metadiscourse still remains under-theorized, and researchers' opinions diverge from each other concerning the functions and forms of metadiscursive structures and the roles they play in discourse (Beauvais, 1989). Because metadiscourse rooted in writing discourse used to refer to "writing about writing" (Williams, 1981: 226) and taken as an essential rhetorical device in academic writing, most of the metadiscourse studies address written discourse, especially in EAP writing. Very few studies address spoken discourse and even fewer (e.g., Yan, 2010; Yan & Zhang, 2013) point to classroom teaching. Moreover, it is difficult to find an analytical model for metadiscourse studies in spoken discourse, therefore, it is suggested that a model of spoken metadiscourse be proposed in the near future (Yan, 2010). This book is a contribution to the study of spoken metadiscourse in Chinese university classroom setting.

By critically evaluating and integrating the interactive model and the reflexive model, this book puts forward a three-dimensional analytical model to examine teachers' metadiscourse in classroom discourse, which consists of meta-talk, interactive and interactional metadiscourse. Meta-

talk, according to Schiffrin (1980: 200), is “talk about talk”. In other words, it serves as its own meta-language. Taking reflexivity as point of departure, meta-talk focuses on the description of linguistic code itself rather than the propositional content with reference to explaining language regularities, organizing teaching procedures and manipulating classroom topics. Self-referential meta-talk and topic-management meta-talk are included in this dimension. Interactive metadiscourse, such as sequencers *firstly*, refers to the devices used by a teacher to help explicate the logical relations between portions in the discourse and to guide students through a teacher's preferred or expected interpretations. Interactional metadiscourse is concerned with the ways a teacher conducts interaction with students by intruding and commenting on what is said, and by addressing students explicitly.

The three-dimensional model contributes to the theoretical studies on metadiscourse by offering an analytical model for teachers' metadiscourse in classroom discourse. In addition, this study also contributes to the study of ESL/EFL teaching in general. This study uncovers a variety of metadiscourse patterns, some of which are unique to classroom teaching. For example, previewing and reviewing bear the unique characteristics of classroom teaching. The co-occurrence of the eight aspects of topic-management meta-talk such as topic-introducing and topic-concluding reveals the features of classroom teaching though any single aspect of topic-management meta-talk may occur in casual conversations as well. The discovery of the unique features of teachers' metadiscourse provides us new perspectives to ESL/EFL teaching.

This study offers some pedagogical implications to language teachers as well, with reference to to what extent they can make good use of metadiscourse devices to facilitate their teaching. Firstly, it sheds some enlightenment on teachers that language is used not only to address teaching content, but also to point to teaching procedures and classroom management. In classroom teaching, the discourse function of language as topic management is as important as that of its teaching content. Hence, the study helps to reach a consensus that it is essential to highlight the role of teacher talk from the perspective of metadiscourse. Secondly, this study

can enhance a teacher's metalinguistic or meta-lingual awareness, and thus can enable him/her to cultivate students' metadiscursive awareness in language teaching. Jakobson (1960) remarked that aphasia is caused by the loss of the ability for metalingual awareness. In EFL teaching, it counts a great deal to "teach about English" rather than "teach English" (Feng, 2005a). In other words, in ESL/EFL teaching, a teacher should enhance students' linguistic competence by enabling them to have a good command of two language systems, and make shifts between them flexibly (*ibid.*). Thirdly, the comparison between NSC and NSE teacher talk sheds us enlightenment on the general patterns for the use of metadiscourse. For example, the more frequent use of topic-management meta-talk in NSC teacher talk suggests that they are more concerned with the teaching formula or schema in comparison with NSE teachers. It is expected to find a balanced point on which each metadiscourse pattern is used very effectively through the comparison of the two corpora.

Chapter 2 Metadiscourse

On account of its heterogeneous nature, metadiscourse remains a vague concept and has always been a fuzzy term in discourse analysis and teaching pedagogy. This section reviews the theoretical and empirical studies of metadiscourse with a view to locating an appropriate typology for the ongoing study. The first section contributes to its theoretical explorations covering the concept, the research perspectives and taxonomies on metadiscourse. The second section reviews the empirical studies with regard to the study of metadiscourse in three different spoken genres. The final section pinpoints the research gaps on the basis of theoretical and empirical studies reviewed above.

2.1 Theoretical Studies on Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse as a relatively new concept has been abundantly explored since its coinage by Zellig Harris in 1959, yet it still remains a somewhat controversial issue in light of its heterogeneous nature. This section examines the theoretical-oriented studies of metadiscourse by scrutinizing the concept, its normally-adopted theoretical perspectives and divergent taxonomies. In linguistics, metadiscourse is defined as “writing about writing” (Williams, 1981), and “discourse about discourse” (Hyland, 2005b). In functional linguistics, metadiscourse is considered to fulfill either the textual or the interpersonal metafunction (Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 2005b).

2.1.1 Metadiscourse as an Academic Concept

Metadiscourse has been addressed from many different perspectives and dubbed in numerous ways by researchers directing at their own academic orientations. Some of the widely used terms are metacommunication (Rossiter, 1974), non-topical material (Lautamatti, 1978), gambits (Keller, 1979), meta-talk (Schiffrin, 1980), and meta-text (Rahman, 2004). Terminological diversity leads to difficulty in categorization. Misleading terminology can interfere with one's thinking (Sinclair, 2005: 163). In addition, the heterogeneity of linguistic forms encounters some difficulty in defining metadiscourse, and many syntactically different items can be labeled as metadiscourse such as conjuncts, lexical phrases, advance organizers, hedges, authorial comment alike (Aguilar, 2008: 58). Diversity is a defining feature of metadiscourse (ibid.). The confusion of the concept can also be contributed to the overlapping of Metadiscourse Markers (MMs) with other two similar terms: Pragmatic Markers (PMs) and Discourse Markers (DMs). A comparison between them will be presented in the next chapter. Metadiscourse as an elusive concept is scrutinized with regard to its etymology, the key notions in relation to metadiscourse, as well as its macro-micro definitions.

Metadiscourse is labeled as a confusing and fuzzy concept by researchers in different fields. Its confusion is attributed to not only the vagueness of the concept, but also the contribution of the prefix "meta" (Jiang and Cheng, 2011: 16). The construction of metadiscourse as a concept is based on the interpretation of "meta" in etymology. The origin of "meta" comes from Greek *meta* (prep.) "denoting chiefly sharing, joint action, pursuit, quest" (Onions, 1966: 572). Derived from metaphysics, "meta" originally means "subsequently" or "after". Aristotle's works was firstly called metaphysics because the books follow the treatises in the natural sciences (ibid.). Sinclair (2005: 164) defines "meta" as "a more abstract level of organization". According to Matthews (2000: 223):

Meta is a prefix used in terms for constructs or investigations on a higher plane or of a higher order of abstraction. Thus a metalanguage is a language of a higher order than its object language; a metarule is a higher-order rule; a set of metarules can be said to form a metagrammar.

Jiang and Cheng (2011: 17) defined “meta” as “along with” or “accompany by”. Many new terms such as metascience, metatheory, metacognition, metaphilosophy come into being ever since the coinage of the term metamathematics by the German mathematician David Hilbert in the early twenties (qtd. from Li, 2011: 24).

Metadiscourse is posited as “discourse about discourse” or “discourse along with discourse” (Hyland, 2005b). Metadiscourse as a context-parasitic concept has to be framed under the dynamic communicative context. According to Hu (1994), communicative context is a configuration of linguistic context, situational context and cultural context. MMs perform contextualizing functions in the construction of and the realization of communicative context (Li, 2001).

It is important to circumscribe discourse with a view to pinpointing metadiscourse in the present study. Widdowson (2004: 8) remarked that discourse is the text activated by contextual connection, and in this view it is the pragmatic process of meaning negotiation. Trask (1999: 78) defined discourse as any connected piece of speech or writing produced by people engaging in a conversation or in a written exchange. Discourse has been used divergently in meaning interpretation (Bussmann, 2000: 131): connected speech (Harris, 1952); the product of an interactive process in a socio-cultural context (Pike, 1954); conversational interaction (Coulthard, 1977); language in context across all forms and modes (Tannen, 1981), and process (Brown & Yule, 1983). Discourse is defined as the dynamic process of negotiation of meaning between the addresser and the addressee in a given social-cultural context. It can be in any forms: a letter, a sound, a word, a sentence, or a string of sentences. Discourse is the dynamic manifestation of the dialogic nature of communication, in which, in addition to the propositional content, an addresser's intentionality or preferences are delivered consciously or unconsciously by means of some

so-called accessories either in a linguistic or in a paralinguistic form. This book only points to those discursive accessories in the linguistic forms. They are awfully important in the process of information production and interpretation on both parties of interlocutors.

Discourse is parasitic to context. Schiffrin (1987: 3) put forward four hypotheses examining the relations between language and context.

Language always occurs in a context.

Language is context sensitive.

Language is always communicative.

Language is designed for communication.

Under a specific social-cultural context, many seemingly proposition-irrelevant linguistic redundancies by retrieving an addressor's thinking process can decrease the processing efforts on the part of the addressee and thus yield more communicative effects (Li, 2011: 31). Therefore, these so-called "accessories" is an important part of everyday communication, though they do not directly contribute to the propositional content. The two components of discourse are named primary discourse and metadiscourse respectively.

The embryonic stage of primary discourse and metadiscourse can be traced back to phatic communion, a type of linguistic use firstly put forward by Malinowski in 1923. In his view (1923: 330-332), words in phatic communion primarily fulfill a social function by establishing bonds of personal union in addition to serving as a means of transmission of thought. It is not correct to regard language as a mere residuum of reflexive thought (*ibid.*). In the process of stating a matter-of-fact, a speaker's preferences are uncovered, and his/her personal emotions are revealed either consciously or subconsciously (Lyons, 1977). The two-layered model of discourse is put forward by Sinclair (1981), who distinguished autonomous plane from interactive plane of discourse. The autonomous plane is "concerned with language only and not with the means by which language is related to the world outside the text" (Hyland, 2005b: 40). In other words, the autonomous plane involves developing the propositional

content, or Hallidayian ideational component. The interactive plane is concerned with the ways in which language is used to negotiate with others and present texts appropriately (*ibid.*). Therefore, the interactive plane is expressive, attitudinal and transactional in nature. Sinclair's (1981) plane of discourse paved the way for metadiscourse studies, especially for the development of Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2004; 2005b). The autonomous plane in Crismore's (1989: 94) view is the level of "what you know", and the interactive plane is about "how you present this knowledge" (*ibid.*). According to Crismore (1989: 89-90), any form of verbal communication consists of two levels of discourse: primary discourse and metadiscourse; the former is involved with the expression of propositional and referential meaning and the latter is concerned with the textual meaning and interpersonal attitudes.

Primary discourse and metadiscourse are performed together to fulfill communicative intentions, and metadiscourse by guiding through the unfolding discourse makes it more accessible to the reader or speaker. Aguilar (2008: 111) by adopting a relevance-theoretic approach stated "communication takes place in a constant flux where primary discourse and metadiscourse combine and intermingle in such a way that optimal relevance is achieved". She used an analogy of the seamless fan to conceptualize the integration of discourse and metadiscourse. With reference to the fan shapes, metadiscourse and primary discourse are integrated to form either a flat semi-circular shape or other possible shapes depending on the distribution of metadiscourse and discourse in the fan (*ibid.*).

Primary discourse and metadiscourse as two planes of discourse are dependent on context. Metadiscourse in one context may carry propositional information in another, in which, it has to be labeled with primary discourse and the other way round. However, metadiscourse is parasitic to primary discourse. It is hardly possible to imagine a piece of discourse which is only composed of metadiscourse, yet primary discourse can stand on its own in many contexts. According to Aguilar (2008: 110), "metadiscourse cannot exist on its own to a greater extent than primary discourse can exist on its own, because the interdependence

between both does not stand on a relationship of equality.” Propositional and procedural meanings are two important terms in relevance theory (Li, 2011). Although primary discourse is proposition-oriented and metadiscourse is procedural-meaning-oriented, it still awaits for an answer as to to what extent they are different on account of the non-discreteness between them.

In addition to primary discourse and metadiscourse, metalanguage and metadiscourse are two terms with a high frequency of occurrence in linguistics and discourse analysis. With reference to metalanguage, there are several dictionary definitions.

- (1) Metalanguage is language about language. Grammars, dictionaries, linguistics and applied linguistics are all metalinguistic; so are mundane remarks such as what does this word mean? He mumbles etc. This reflexiveness allows language to be both the means and the objects of description. (Johnson & Johnson, 1998: 212)
- (2) Metalanguage is a language used to make statement about a language. The language about which they are made is correspondingly the object language. (Matthews, 2000: 223)
- (3) Metalanguage is a language used to talk about another language. Linguists, philosophers, and many others often need to talk about particular languages, or about languages in general...We must therefore distinguish carefully between the object language (the language which we are talking about), and the metalanguage (the language we are using to talk about the object language). (Trask, 1999: 184)
- (4) Metalanguage is second-level language (also called language of description) by which natural language (object language) is described. (Bussmann, 2000: 303)

From the definitions above, it is hardly possible to avoid object language in defining metalanguage. Metalanguage is a second-order language used to analyze or describe the object language; object language is the language used to talk about the experiential world. In other words, metalanguage is posited

as language about language.

According to Jaegwon Kim and Ernest Sosa (1995: 366), "If a language M contains expressions which denote expressions of a language O, then M is a (potential) metalanguage for O and O is an object language of M." However, there is not always a clear-cut distinction between metalanguage and object language. As Berry (2005: 7) pointed out, a metalanguage becomes in turn an object language with its own metalanguage if it is described and explained. Widdowson (1997: 1888) stated "the language you use to talk about language is itself language which in turn is subject to enquiry". Berry (2005) further clarified two types of metalanguage: micro-metalanguage (language about language) and macro-metalanguage (any language use which alludes to other language use).

In comparison with metalanguage, metadiscourse is not defined in depth. It is found that the study of metadiscourse is based on Halliday's (1994) three metafunctions, and metadiscourse is used to capture interactions and realize metafunctions.

A term is used in the study of discourse for those features in the organization of presentation of a text which helps the reader to interpret or evaluate its content. They include features of textual organization (e.g., headings, spacing, and connectives such as *first* and *next*) as well as such interpersonal elements as hedges (*perhaps*), attitude markers (*frankly*) and dialogue features. (Crystal, 2008: 302)

The term "metadiscourse" is used to refer to the linguistic material in texts, whether spoken or written, that does not add anything to the propositional content, but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the information given. Metadiscourse can also serve what Halliday calls the textual and interpersonal functions of language, as opposed to the ideational function. (Crismore et al., 1993: 40)

The two definitions suggest that metadiscourse as a concept is primarily used to fulfill two discourse functions: the textual and the interpersonal functions. In fact, the textual-interpersonal taxonomy is very popular in metadiscourse studies (e.g., Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989; Hyland,

1999; 2000).

According to Berry (2005), there does not exist a simple mutual exclusion nor combination relation between metadiscourse and metalanguage. Each subcategory of metadiscourse in whatever approaches and taxonomies has to use metalanguage to denote, explain or summarize its general features, such as connectives, discourse markers, code glosses (*ibid.*). Moreover, “metalanguage has its own metadiscourse” (*ibid.*: 11). It is impossible to use language to talk about itself in one linguistic stratum, so metalanguage occurs in two linguistic strata: the lower stratum of object language and the higher stratum of metalanguage. Stratificity constitutes an important feature of metalanguage (Li, 2006; Zhao, 2006). Metalanguage takes reflexivity as fundamental to language, or in other words, language can refer back to itself. According to Lucy (1993: 11), “Reflexivity is so pervasive that we say language is, by nature, fundamentally reflexive.”

Similar to metalanguage, the reflexive model of metadiscourse studies also takes reflexivity as fundamental to metadiscourse studies (Schiffrin, 1980; Mauranen, 1993; Ädel, 2006; 2010). They are concerned with “talk about talk” (Schiffrin, 1980: 200) or “text about text management” (Rahman, 2004: 39). In other words, metadiscourse resources in the reflexive model involve the discourse functions of using language to describe, organize or evaluate language. According to Leech (1974: 352), “whenever we use language to talk or write about language, we use language in a metalinguistic function.” Therefore, metadiscourse studies in the reflexive model focus their attention on the metalinguistic functions, or in other words, they focus on how language is used to talk about language, namely, metalanguage. That is to say, metalanguage and metadiscourse are roughly equivalent in the study of metalinguistic function of language.

In contrast, based on Halliday’s (1994) tripartite conceptions on metafunctions, the interactive model takes metadiscourse as fulfilling both textual and interpersonal metafunctions. The early metadiscourse studies under the interactive model (Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 1999; 2000) explicitly adopt the textual-functional model

of metadiscourse analysis. Hyland (2004; 2005b) began to adopt the interpersonal model, which conceives all metadiscourse resources as interpersonal. Differing from the reflexive model, neither the textual-interpersonal model nor the interpersonal model takes reflexivity as fundamental to metadiscourse studies. In other words, in addition to reflexive metadiscourse, some metadiscourse resources are non-reflexive. Mauranen (2010) commented that many metadiscourse items are non-reflexive in nature, such as connectors.

In order to embrace reflexivity into metadiscourse studies, metalanguage has to be taken into account on account of its metalinguistic functions in using language to talk about language. On the other hand, not all metadiscourse resources are reflexive (Mauranen, 2010). In other words, metadiscourse as a concept is much broader than metalanguage on the grounds that the former consists of both reflexive and non-reflexive metadiscourse resources. That is to say, metadiscourse is an umbrella term for metalanguage, and metalanguage is conceived as the reflexive aspect of metadiscourse. In fact, the relation of inclusion between metalanguage and metadiscourse is not the contribution of this book. Crismore (1989) also argued "metadiscourse is broader than metalanguage" (ibid: 90) and "metadiscourse includes metalanguage" (ibid.).

Since reflexivity is a defining characteristic of language, metadiscourse plays a significant role in everyday talk, especially in classroom discourse. Feng (2005a) pointed out that metalanguage plays an indispensable role in foreign language teaching in general and in ESL/EFL in particular. The construction of the relationship between metalanguage and metadiscourse lays a solid foundation for the interpretation and contextualization of metadiscourse in a broad perspective. Metadiscourse attempts to construct two-layered interactions in spoken discourse: the interaction between a speaker and the discourse, and the interaction between a speaker and the audience.

Swales (1990: 188) commented "although the concept of metadiscourse is easy to accept in principle, it is more difficult to establish its boundaries". Similarly, Nash stated that: