

# Contents

**Acknowledgements — VII**

**Abbreviations — XIII**

**Index of Figures — XVII**

**Index of Tables — XIX**

**1 Introduction — 1**

1.1 Issues at stake — 5

1.2 Research questions and methodology — 9

1.3 Outline — 11

## **Part I: Meta-discourse, spoken discourse, stance-taking**

**2 Meta-discourse: definitions, strategies and functions — 15**

2.1 Introduction — 15

2.2 Meta-discourse: some definitions — 16

2.3 Parentheticals — 21

2.3.1 Properties of parentheticals — 21

2.3.2 Syntactic form of parentheticals — 29

2.4 Comment clauses — 33

2.5 Discourse markers — 35

2.6 The three domains of application of meta-discursive strategies — 41

2.6.1 The speaker-oriented domain — 41

2.6.2 The textual domain — 43

2.6.3 The interpersonal domain — 45

**3 The epistemological value of the investigation of spoken discourse — 49**

3.1 Introduction — 49

3.2 The syntactic properties of spoken discourse — 53

3.2.1 Emergent and real-time syntax — 53

3.2.2 Kinds of clauses in spoken discourse — 61

3.3 The semantic properties of spoken discourse — 65

3.3.1 Building meaning with low expenditure — 65

- 3.3.2 Vagueness in spoken discourse — 66
- 3.4 The textual properties of spoken discourse — 69
- 3.4.1 Dynamicity, patterns of (re-)use, and the marking of transitions between stretches of discourse — 69
- 3.4.2 Spoken discourse and deixis — 73

## **Part II: Methodological considerations**

- 4 Subject of analysis, corpus, and annotation scheme — 79**
- 4.1 Introduction — 79
- 4.2 The subject of analysis — 79
- 4.3 Design principles: The KIP Corpus of spoken Italian — 81
- 4.4 The annotation scheme — 83
- 4.4.1 Distributional parameters — 83
- 4.4.1.1 Mood of comment clause's host — 83
- 4.4.1.2 Patterns of co-occurrence — 85
- 4.4.1.3 *Irrealis* status of co-text — 85
- 4.4.2 Syntactic parameters — 86
- 4.4.2.1 Comment clauses distributed in verbal clauses — 86
- 4.4.2.2 Comment clauses distributed in verbless clauses — 91
- 4.4.3 The prosodic profile of comment clauses — 97
- 4.4.4 Internal properties of comment clauses: person, source and mood — 98
- 4.4.5 The functions of comment clauses in Italian — 99
- 4.4.5.1 The speaker-oriented domain — 99
- 4.4.5.2 The textual domain — 100
- 4.4.5.3 The interpersonal domain — 101
- 4.5 The EXMARaLDA software for spoken discourse — 102

## **Part III: Meta-discourse in spoken Italian**

- 5 Meta-discourse and speaker-oriented domain — 107**
- 5.1 Introduction — 107
- 5.2 The discourse profile of the speaker-oriented domain — 107
- 5.3 Epistemic modality and evidentiality — 111
- 5.4 Epistemic exemplification — 130
- 5.5 Emphasis — 135
- 5.5.1 Emphasis through intensification — 138

- 5.5.2 Emphasis through repetition — 143
- 5.5.3 Emphasis through disagreement — 146
- 5.6 Hedging — 148
- 5.7 Mirativity — 152
- 5.8 Speech act motivation — 155
- 5.9 Comment clauses and networks of functions — 156
- 5.10 Concluding remarks — 157
  
- 6 Meta-discourse and textual domain — 160**
- 6.1 Introduction — 160
- 6.2 The discourse profile of the textual domain — 161
- 6.3 Meta-discourse and macro-coherence — 164
- 6.3.1 Opening boundaries in discourse — 164
- 6.3.2 Topic-resumption — 170
- 6.3.3 Introduction of new arguments and complex reformulation — 172
- 6.4 Meta-discourse and micro-coherence — 183
- 6.4.1 Reformulation — 183
- 6.4.1.1 Context-sensitive reformulation — 188
- 6.4.1.2 Between repair and reformulation — 190
- 6.4.2 Approximation — 191
- 6.4.3 Time for planning — 195
- 6.5 Comment clauses and networks of functions — 197
- 6.6 Concluding remarks — 199
  
- 7 Meta-discourse and interpersonal domain — 202**
- 7.1 Introduction — 202
- 7.2 The discourse profile of the interpersonal domain — 203
- 7.3 Monitoring and drawing the hearer's attention — 206
- 7.3.1 Attention-getting — 206
- 7.3.2 Checking and response-evoking — 211
- 7.4 Presupposing, sharing and recollecting knowledge — 216
- 7.4.1 Appealing to shared knowledge — 216
- 7.4.2 Insinuation — 222
- 7.4.3 Provoking surprise: hearer-oriented mirativity — 223
- 7.5 Speech act level functions: from attenuation to emphasis — 226
- 7.5.1 Attenuation — 226
- 7.5.2 Hearer-oriented emphasis — 230
- 7.6 Comment clauses and network of functions — 240
- 7.7 Concluding remarks — 244

**8**      **Summary and conclusions — 247**

8.1      Introduction — **247**

8.2      Summary: meta-discourse and its discourse profile — **247**

8.3      Concluding remarks: meta-discourse and stance-taking in  
discourse — **249**

8.4      Outlook — **256**

**References — 259**