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COGNITIVE MODEL OF METACOMMUNICATION:

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ENGLISH AND UKRAINIAN METADISCOURSE

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Abstract: The article focuses on establishing and developing the cognitive model of metacommunication in English and Ukrainian everyday discourse. Special attention is drawn to the input, which is the intention of the speaker, the meditational process, which reveals the mental event stimulated by the intention of the speaker, and the output, which reflects some particular metacommunicative behaviour.

Key words: cognitive model, (in)variant, metadiscourse, metacommunication, metapragmatic awareness, metapragmatics.

1. Introduction

The notion of metacommunication has long been in the focus of interest of linguists, particularly since 1951 when this term first appeared in Bateson's "*Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry*", and was later developed in Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson's "*Pragmatics of human communication*" (1967). The latter happened to impact Soviet and Post-Soviet linguists – notably, Pocheptsov (Почепцов 1981), Devkin (Девкин 1981) and their adherents (Гнезділова 2021; Дементьев 2010; Чхетиани 1987 etc.), who interpreted metacommunication broadly. Consequently, its task is to support the communication process.

On the contrary, the narrow understanding of metacommunication – as a contact-establishing and contact-maintaining phenomenon only – made European linguists distinguish the reflexive function alongside the metalinguistic and metacommunicative. The diversity of meta-functions with vague borderlines between them led to the development of a new trend in linguistics in the 90s called metapragmatics, well described in Gnezdilova (2018). Yet, I would like to specify it here that it was "*Reflexive language. Reported speech and metapragmatics*" (Lucy 1993) that turned out to be a "terminus a quo" of a separate branch in pragmatics, which was later outlined in the "*Concise encyclopedia of pragmatics*" (Caffi 2009) and in "*Foundations of pragmatics*" (Bublitz & Norrick

2011), and discussed from the point of view of its practical implications in "*Metapragmatics in use*" (Bublitz & Hübler 2007), considering the metapragmatics of humour (Ruiz-Gurillo 2016), of press releases (Geert 1999), of academic written discourse (Gnezdilova 2018) etc. In spite of the advantageous usage of the term "metapragmatics" in reference to meta-phenomena globally, "metacommunication" is still applied in opposition to "communication", as in "*Communication and Metacommunication in Human Development*" (Branco & Valsiner 2004), or in relation to the classification of metacommunicative means, as in "*Investigations into the Meta-communicative lexicon of English. A contribution to historical pragmatics*" (Busse & Hübler 2012).

Nevertheless, both Eastern and Western European scholars traditionally view metacommunication in the scope of (meta)pragmatics as a pragmatic phenomenon. However, being inspired by Gurevich's cognitive space theory of metacommunication (Гуревич 2009), I define metacommunication as a cognitive and discourse phenomenon which organizes, controls and correlates speech interaction of discourse participants by (non)verbal means (see Гнезділова 2021: 31). Moreover, its cognitive nature has clearly been marked by metapragmatic / metacommunicative awareness (Barron 2002: 109, 204; Gnezdilova 2017: 45; Hübler & Busse 2012: 2-3; Mertz & Yovel 2002: 255-256, 263; Verschueren 2000: 439, 450-453; Гнезділова 2021: 59, etc.) as it equals metacommunicative knowledge which, undoubtedly, is cognitive. Actually, as it was noted by Chernenko, language in use and verbal communication studies in modern linguistics are generally viewed as cognitive information exchange (2019: 2).

This article deals with cognitive modelling of metacommunication, but it is not limited to distinguishing its invariants and variants, on the one hand, and constituents, on the other, as the latter was well covered in the doctoral thesis last year (see Гнезділова 2021). I would like to go further and answer two questions – the first one is about intention modelling; whereas the second one, indicated at the 55th Linguistic Colloquium, is about cognitive models of English and Ukrainian metacommunication in comparison, which, actually, are in the focus of this research.

2. Methodology and theoretical framework

This research has been performed within the *metacommunicative and manipulative modelling method*, which was developed and well grounded in (Гнезділова 2021: 96-130). Thus, taking into account the objective of this article, i.e. cognitive modelling of metacommunication, as well as its tasks: (i) to build a cognitive model of metacommunication; and (ii) to compare its realizations in the English and Ukrainian languages; I would like to specify the modifications applied to the aforementioned method (see Fig. 1 below).
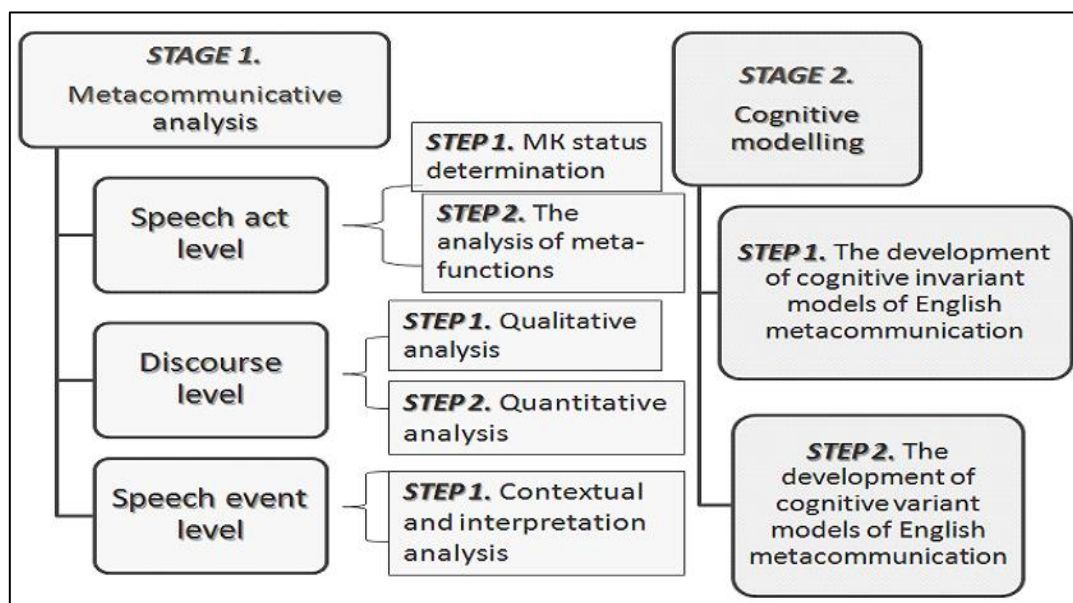
Figure 1. The metadiscourse analysis and its cognitive modelling. Source: Own processing

Firstly, the "manipulative component" has been excluded from the scheme as this research is devoted to the metapragmatic discourse analysis in its classical perspective and understanding. Secondly, only cognitive modelling has been studied here, with discourse modelling being left out. My interest in the cognitive perspective of metacommunication was prompted by its few analyses in the scope of cognitive studies (Гнезділова 2021; Гуревич 2009), which actually contradict the traditional interpretation of metacommunication as an exceptionally pragmatic phenomenon and the idea that metacommunication does not deal with cognitive information (see Шевченко 2004), on the contrary, it renders no more than sociative information.

In my opinion, there is no terminological discrepancy if one takes into account that nowadays the term "pragmatics" comprises its two branches: metapragmatics (see above) and cognitive pragmatics (Шевченко 2017; Foolen 2019; Schmid 2012; Shevchenko & Gutorov 2019, etc.). Therefore, if one is to consider that pragmatic linguistics in its broad sense is cognitive (Шевченко 2017: 114) as it deals with such cognitive categories / methods / operations as cohesion (ibid: 119), mapping (Sammut-Bonnici, McGee 2014; Wheeldon 2010), interpretation and sense construing (Шевченко 2017: 114); then it appears to be logical to treat metacommunication as both *cognitive and pragmatic phenomenon*, with a set of *meta-means*, used to regulate interaction and to create "the supportive communicative climate" (Sieriakova et al. 2020: 132), on the one hand; and the *metapragmatic awareness* of how to use them, on the other (see Fig. 2 below). Metapragmatic awareness regulates the usage of meta-means, provides the participants of interaction with all types of supporting information, and is responsible for processing that information in "regulating attitudes and beliefs

about social norms and maintaining socially shared rules" (Pinich 2019: 216). What is more, it gives an opportunity to count the meta-index of any discourse via the reinterpreted quantitative method of Greenberg (see Гнезділова 2018: 49-50; 2021: 111-117). In addition, metacommunication establishes the organization of interaction and the transition of propositional information in discourse in accordance with some "cognitive scenarios" (Шевченко 2004) which are the clear and obvious indication of the existence of some cognitive metacommunicative models.
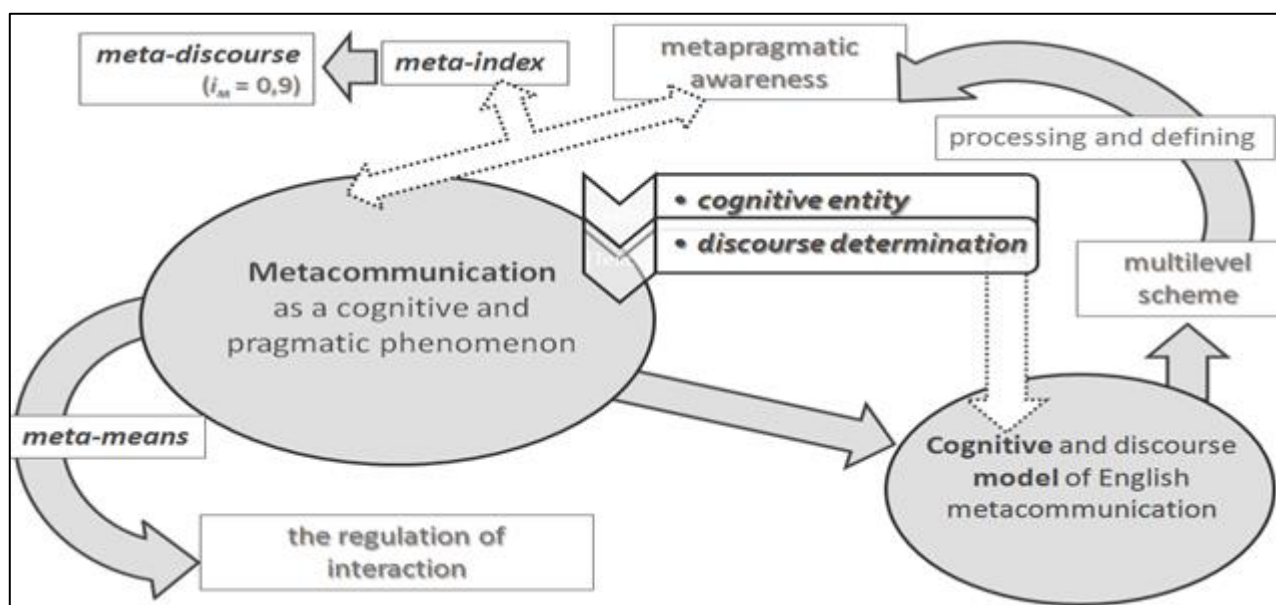

Figure 2. Metacommunication as a cognitive and pragmatic phenomenon. Source: Own processing

3. The cognitive model of English and Ukrainian metadiscourse

What I would like to start with is the terminological issue concerning the notion of "cognitive model" and, consequently, the validity of metadiscourse cognitive modelling. The latter can be proved, to my mind, by Yokoyama's approach to cognitive modelling of informational discourse (Yokoyama 1986: ix, 6), where she studies the consistent patterns and rules that regulate conscious transition of verbalized knowledge from one speaker to another. Moreover, while scrutinizing that knowledge, she establishes that its [cognitive model of informational discourse] informational component, which includes propositional, specifying, existential, predicative and referential, is accompanied by metainformational, which comprises the knowledge of the code and of the discourse situation, which, to my mind, relates to metacommunication.

I share Kubryakova's and Demyankov's approach to the definition of the cognitive model (Кубрякова 1997: 56-57), which, actually, takes as its basis van Dijk's mental models (2006: 168), and is understood as the scheme or the subjective representation of the discourse situations, rooted in the

speakers' consciousness and, consequently, intentions, reflecting the metacommunicative knowledge and experience that constitute the metapragmatic awareness (see Fig. 3 below).
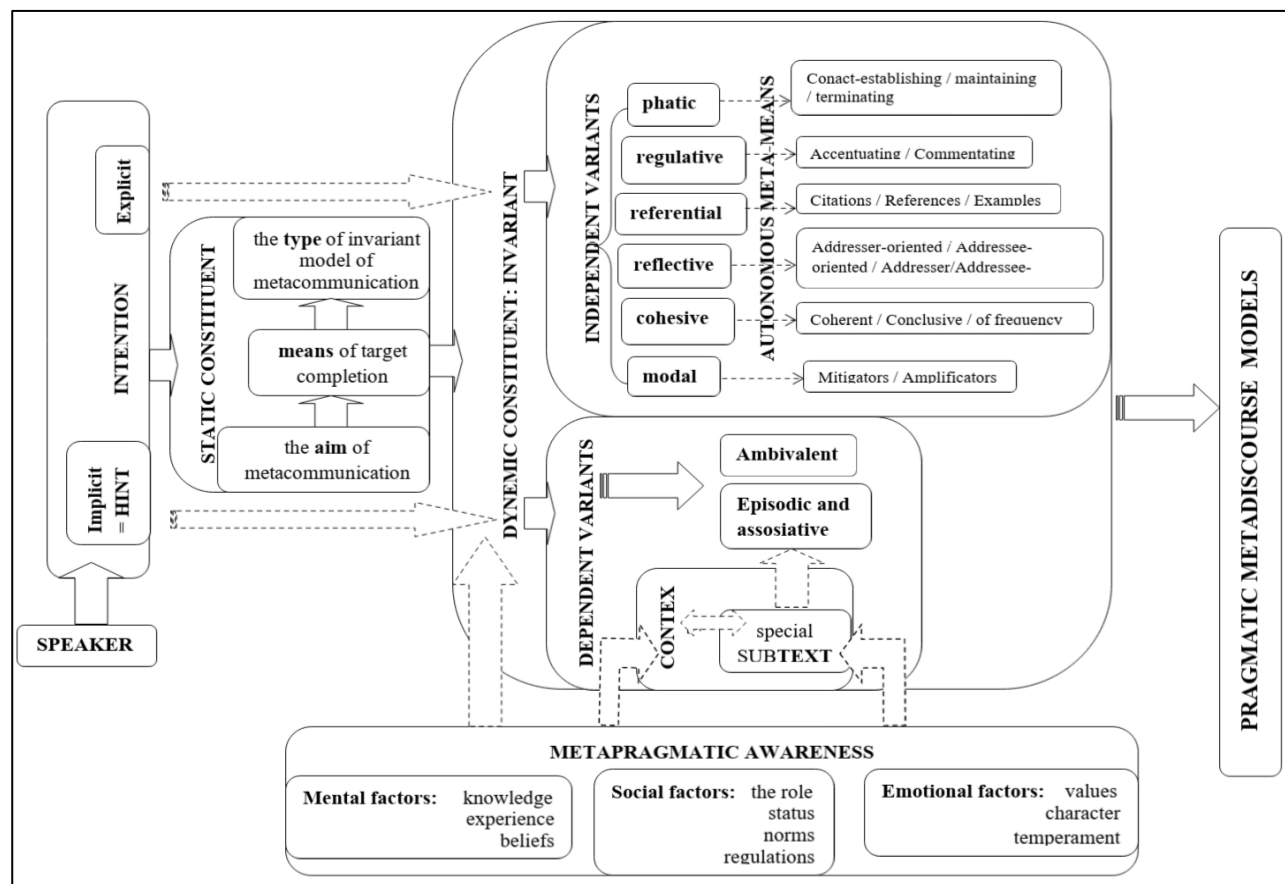

Figure 3. Cognitive model of metacommunication. Source: Own processing

The metadiscourse cognitive model consists of two major components – static and dynamic. The static component which is unchangeable in all cognitive invariant-variant models of metacommunication deals with information analysis, which the speaker receives during (meta)communication in the focus of his/her intention, aim and the ways of its realization. The dynamic component reflects the ways of information processing on the basis of the metacommunicative awareness of the speaker (the analysis of mental, emotional and social factors), the result of which is the corresponding speech behaviour. The dynamic component has been proved to be changeable and realized in two invariant models: cognitive invariant independent model of metacommunication which varies in six types of metacommunication (phatic, regulative, referential, reflective, logical and structural, and subject-modal) and cognitive invariant dependent model of English metacommunication which varies in two types (ambiguous and episodic-associational) (see Гнезділова 2021: 11). Here I would like to specify that those two components correlate with "the stages of human cognitive activity", outlined by Panasenko (2021: 594). The static component comprises two first stages: primary information and information processing; while

the dynamic component involves "background knowledge, which is of cultural value" (in other words, that is metapragmatic awareness) and final estimation (ibid.).

Regarding the question of cognitive models of English and Ukrainian metacommunication in comparison, I do affirm now that all six types of independent (explicit) metacommunication are present in both English and Ukrainian metadiscourse (see Table 1 below). Moreover, the aforementioned cognitive model is true for both English and Ukrainian metacommunication (see Fig. 3 above). It is, by all means, not enough to analyze only two languages to state that this model is universal, but, I guess, it can be viewed as an attempt at generalization.

However, it would have been a huge mistake to say that there are no differences between English and Ukrainian metacommunication. First, I have spotted some specifics of Ukrainian phatic metacommunication, not typical of English, i.e., while greeting, Ukrainians wish good health to their addressee (*Доброго здоров'я / здоров'ячка! Здоровенькі були!*); what is more, they practice various extensive excuses like *На жаль, не можу… / Мені дуже шкода / Із задоволенням би / Охоче, але…; Шкодую, що не зміг…* which, actually, correspond with English "*sorry but…*" used to express their willingness to help or to do something for the addressee, on the one hand, and their pity that they cannot realize that, on the other. Second, extended regulative and referential means often prevail to introduce arguments (e.g., *Довести своє твердження я можу такими аргументами – [I can prove my statement by the following arguments]*) or examples (e.g., *Яскравим прикладом цієї / схарактеризованої вище ситуації може бути… – [The bright example of this situation / the situation analyzed above may be…]*). Finally, it is in Ukrainian tradition to use *we-* instead of *I-* structures in argumentative and scientific discourse (addresser-oriented reflective metacommunication); furthermore, addresser/addressee-indefinite meta-means, especially passive in structure, are more characteristic of Ukrainian reflective metacommunication.

Table 1. Autonomous meta-means in English and Ukrainian

The type of meta-means	English	Ukrainian
phatic	*Good afternoon! Hello;* *I'm so pleased to meet you;* *How can I help you?* *Sorry*	*Доброго дня / здоров'я! Привіт;* *Моє шанування!* *Чим можу допомогти?* *Вибач(те)*
regulative	*In total; as a whole;* *From this perspective;* *Moreover;* *I would like to point out*	*Загалом;* *З огляду на;* *До того ж;* *Зауважу(имо), що*
referential	*For example / instance; e.g.;* *In accordance with / according to;* *Silverstein identifies*	*Наприклад; Так; за приклад може правити такий випадок;* *Згідно з; услід за;* *Відомий український педагог Василь Сухомлинський сказав*
reflective	*My point is this; in my opinion;* *Just consider / think of…;* *It means;* *But who knows*	*На мою думку / моє переконання; моя точка зору на цю проблему така;* *Просто уяви(іть), що…;* *Це означає, що…;* *Хтозна*
cohesive	*First, second; the first step to;* *At first; first of all; first and foremost;* *Previous research showed;* *So; Thus*	*По-перше, по-друге;* *Перш за все;* *Повертаючись до думки про…; Як уже зазначалося;* *Отже; Таким чином*
modal	*As you may see;* *You might not know;* *I must / can say*	*Як можна побачити;* *Напевно ви не знаєте;* *Потрібно сказати; можна зазначити;*

To sum up, I would like to state that the previously discussed theoretical points are true of both English and Ukrainian metadiscourse, and their cognitive model can be illustrated with examples 1-2, stressing how speakers' intentions have been realized and what effect has been created. For the sake of objectivity, it would have been desirable to analyze more than two examples, but, unfortunately, it is not entirely possible for reasons of space.

(1) Eng. *Kate: Neighbours. [Together] <u>Hello!</u> [All laugh]*

Summer: <u>Well, hi. Um, we're the Symondses from next door. I'm Summer, and this is my husband Larry</u>.

Larry: <u>Hey, neighbours</u>.

Summer: <u>I just wanted to bring you this welcome gift</u>...of various samples from the new Robustion Aphrodite line of beauty products. <u>But I'm sure you're in no mood for guests</u>.

Steve: <u>Don't-Don't be silly. I'm Steve Jones</u>.

Kate: <u>Come in. Come in</u>.

Summer: <u>Hi</u>.

Steve: <u>Aw. Nice to meet you. Steve</u> [to Larry].

Larry: <u>Uh, Larry Symonds. Pleased to meet you</u>.

Kate: <u>This is Jenn and Mick, and I'm Kate</u>.

Jenn: <u>Hello</u>.

Larry: <u>Hi, Mick. Nice to meet you</u>.

Kate: <u>So nice to meet you</u>.

Larry: <u>You too</u>.

Steve: Do you have kids? Because they should come over and meet Mick and Jenn.

Larry: <u>Actually</u>, we don't. I was, uh- I wasn't able- [Murmurs]

Steve: <u>Oh</u>. What?

Summer: I know that with a big move in "conduction"...with a woman's naturally fluctuating hormones, it can leave your skin a wreck, but you'll find that the Aphrodite line...of beauty products can really give you a glow.

Steve: <u>I bet. Look at you. You're a vision of beauty</u>.

Summer: <u>Well, thank you</u>.

Steve: <u>You're welcome</u>. <u>Larry, wanna grab a cold one? Come on</u>.

Larry: <u>Okay</u>?

Summer: <u>Sure. Yeah, sure. Okay</u>.

Kate: <u>Come on in. Well, would you like a tour</u>?

Summer: <u>Sure. These rooms are divine</u>.

Kate: <u>Thank you</u>.

Summer: <u>You should come over to our house</u>, and we can talk decor.

Kate: <u>Oh, I would love that</u>. (Dinzler & Borte 2009)

Example 1, excerpted from the American movie "*The Joneses*" *(2009)*, shows the metacommunicative situation of "getting acquainted with neighbours". Summer, accompanied by her husband Larry, is determined to get introduced to the new neighbours as soon as possible and to present them a welcome gift (<u>explicit intention</u>); thus, her <u>implicit intention</u> is to advertize the new Robustion Aphrodite line of beauty products and to get new customers. These intentions mark the <u>static component</u> of the cognitive model of Summer's metadiscourse – her <u>aim</u> is to give them that gift during the introduction as this phatic speech event is perfectly suited there (<u>the means of aim completion</u>). She starts with contact-establishing means (*Well, hi. Um, we're the Symondses from next door. I'm Summer, and this is my husband Larry*), continues explaining the reason for their coming via contact-maintaining *I just wanted to bring you this welcome gift* and wants to round up the

acquaintance with the contact-terminating *But I'm sure you're in no mood for guests* (<u>dynamic component, independent metacommunication</u>).

Yet, the Joneses' <u>intention (implicit)</u> is to become a role model for the neighbours to aspire to, so they do their best to impress them [the neighbours], and phatic speech events are widely used by them to demonstrate themselves as welcoming, sociable, hearty etc. Hence, when Kate (mother) gives a signal *'Neighbours'*, the so-called "family" quickly gather together and display the upmost friendliness possible (<u>the aim</u>), marked by their emphatic *Hello* (the contact-establishing means). Contact-maintaining means are realized via introductions (*I'm Steve Jones; This is Jenn and Mick, and I'm Kate*), invitations (*Come in. Come in; You should come over to our house*), compliments (*I bet. Look at you. You're a vision of beauty; These rooms are divine*), words of gratitude (*Well, thank you; You're welcome; Oh, I would love that*), offers (*Larry, wanna grab a cold one? Well, would you like a tour?*) etc. (see the underlining in Example 1). Also, it needs to be stressed that not only phatic metacommunication has been used. Regulating metacommunication is represented by the encouraging (*Don't-Don't be silly; Come on*), evasive (*Actually*), and confirmable (*Sure. Yeah, sure. Okay; Sure*) markers which help the conversation flow naturally. Metacommunication in this example helps to keep the attention of the interlocutors and makes them follow the socially-recognized scenario of speech behaviour.

(2) Ukr. *Mother: <u>Вас вітає славне місто Ужгород! Серце Закарпатської області</u>. Куди їдем? – [The fine town of Uzhgorod welcomes you! The heart of Transcarpathia. Where to?]*
Son: На Шахту. – [To Shakhta district].
Mother: <u>Сідайте зручніше. Приготуйтеся до незабутньої подорожі містом сакур</u>. – [Sit comfortably and get ready for an unforgettable journey through the town of cherry blossom] … <u>Як там погода в Києві?</u> – [How's the weather in Kyiv?]
Son: <u>Так само як тут. Може трохи тепліше</u>. – [Same as here. Maybe bit warmer]
Mother: <u>А взагалі як?</u> Ніхто не бунтує? – [Is anyone protesting?]
Son: <u>Та ні. В Києві класно</u>. – [It's cool in Kyiv] <…>
Mother: Я взяла пару вихідних. <u>Хіба ти не радий?</u> – [I took a few days off. Aren't you happy?]
Son: <u>Дуже радий</u>. – [Very happy]
Mother: <u>Чесно?</u> – [For sure?] <…> <u>З приїздом, синку</u> – [Welcome, son] (Лукіч & Кальченко 2019).

Example 2, excerpted from the Ukrainian movie "*Мої думки тихі*" – *[My thoughts are silent] (2019)*, demonstrates a mocking "small talk" between a mother and her son. The mother, while meeting her

son, pretends to be a taxi-driver and starts with contact-establishing *The fine town of Uzhgorod welcomes you! The heart of Transcarpathia* and contact-maintaining *Sit comfortably and get ready for an unforgettable journey through the town of cherry blossom*. The son plays along and makes it as though he is an ordinary passenger while answering metacommunicative questions about the weather and Kyiv (*How's the weather in Kyiv?*), i.e. *Same as here, Maybe bit warmer* or *It's cool in Kyiv*. In fact, I assume that the mother has two different explicit intentions which are displayed via two closely-knit targets (the static component): to entertain and to express a warm welcome to her son. The latter is expressed at the very end of their talk, again, by means of phatic metacommunication (*Welcome, son*). The dynamic component here is composed mainly out of phatic metacommunication; yet, regulating metacommunication is represented as well – it is very important for the mother to know that her son is really happy to see her, and it results in the use of the confirmable marker *For sure*.

4. Conclusions

As noted in the present paper, one might claim that, firstly, metacommunication is both a cognitive and pragmatic phenomenon and, secondly, metacommunication is differently presented in English and Ukrainian discourse.

Regarding the two-sided interpretation of metacommunication, two stages of analysis were outlined there. These include metapragmatic analysis, which is targeted at the investigation of the pragmatic nature of metacommunication, and cognitive modelling which schematically presents its cognitive character. The cognitive model of metacommunication comprises two components where the static one deals with the realization of the speaker's intentions and the information processing, while the dynamic one relates to metapragmatic awareness, social context and cultural environment.

The comparative modelling of English and Ukrainian metadiscourses allowed me to pinpoint that English speakers' explicit intentions are obvious to the recipients at the very beginning of the conversation, while in the Ukrainian metadiscourse they are not obligatorily bound to the beginning of the talk; on the contrary, they are clearly articulated only at the very end of interaction. In relation to the specifics of English and Ukrainian metadiscourses it should be mentioned that there are no differences in major types of English and Ukrainian metacommunication, but there are discrepancies as to the use of some metacommunicative markers there.

Needless to say, the present study does not answer all the questions we may have with respect to the specifics of cognitive modelling of English and Ukrainian metacommunication. With my initial study,

I call for further inquiries into cognitive and discourse modelling of English and Ukrainian metacommunication. Also, I have been prompted for further thought and reflection on metamodelling of scripted and spontaneous speech in comparison, as well as intention modelling of scripted instances of language use with the focus on both the screenwriter's and the characters' intentions.

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Résumé

This research focuses on establishing and developing a cognitive model of metacommunication in English and Ukrainian everyday discourse. Inspired by a universal model of the smallest unit of informational discourse, I connect the input in the particular speech situation with the intention of the speaker. The output behaviour, on the other hand, reflects the metacommunication type required by the speaker. The meditational process, which reveals the mental event stimulated by the intention of the speaker, is of importance for the proposed model as well. The mental event comprises two cognitive constituents of various kinds. The first constituent is static and includes the analysis of the speaker's intention and desire via such steps as recognizing their motives and aims. Then, the speech situation is evaluated and the most efficient form of communication, discourse type or speech event is chosen. The second – dynamic – constituent is understood as a specific filter for sorting out language means via 'metapragmatic awareness'. The latter requires the speaker's background knowledge, skills, social environment and other ideational factors or so-called 'knowledge sets'. In other words, the speaker's experience, social and/or personal behavioural norms and restrictions, and predicted emotional feedback influence the choice of metacommunication type, either independent (phatic, regulating, referencing, reflextive, logic, modal) or dependent (ambivalent and episodic), accompanied by the corresponding set of language means most suitable under the circumstances. Moreover, static constituent is marked as universal, as it remains the same in both meaningful communication and metacommunication. On the contrary, the dynamic constituent is, in any case, realized via metacommunication, which either shapes the meaningful information or manages the meta-utterance in its traditionally positive way.

Key words: cognitive model, (in)variant, metadiscourse, metacommunication, metapragmatic awareness, metapragmatics.