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Employment of Metadiscourse Markers in EFL Doctoral Dissertation Abstracts by Thai Postgraduate Students

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Abstract

Metadiscourse markers (MDMs) are viewed as vital devices that assist authors to express their opinions effectively. In this light, EFL postgraduate students are likely to employ MDMs in their dissertation abstracts due to essential requirements for efficient communication within the concise overview genre. This study attempts to explore Thai postgraduate students' adoption of MDMs in English Language Studies (ELS) doctoral dissertation abstracts. The corpus included 25 doctoral dissertation abstracts. The AntCont software and descriptive statistics were deployed to analyze the data. The findings disclosed that Thai postgraduate students employed interactive and interactional MDMs in their abstracts. Concerning interactive MDMs, transition markers were the most frequent markers that are adopted in ELS doctoral dissertation abstracts while evidential markers were the least popular markers utilized in these abstracts. Regarding interactional MDMs, the most frequently used marker in the abstract sections was boosters while self-mentions were not used in such sections. The most popular functions of MDMs that are employed in ELS doctoral dissertation abstracts include establishing a connection between ideas in the writing and indicating the writers' certainty in their opinions. Besides, several pedagogical implications are also proposed for language teachers, policymakers, and students based on the preliminary findings of this study.

Keywords: metadiscourse markers; interactive and interactional MDMs, doctoral dissertation abstracts; EFL written discourse analysis; Thai postgraduate students