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REPORTING VERBS IN LITERATURE REVIEW CHAPTERS OF TESOL MASTER'S THESES WRITTEN BY VIETNAMESE POSTGRADUATES

Abstract

Reporting verbs (RVs) are the key feature in academic writing that enables writers to attribute content to another source and allows them to convey both their reported research activities and their evaluation of the cited message. However, little research has been conducted on how they are employed by non-native English students. This paper, therefore, presents a study of RVs used in 24 TESOL Master's (M.A.) thesis Literature Review (LR) chapters written by Vietnamese students. Employing Hyland's (2002) classification of RVs in terms of their denotative and evaluative potentials, this study revealed that this group of Vietnamese writers tended to randomly use RVs without being aware of their rhetorical functions. Furthermore, mistakes and non-idiomatic expressions were also identified in this study. Regarding the evaluative potentials of RVs, and the tense and voice uses, these Vietnamese writers were likely to be unfamiliar with using RVs to achieve the communicative purposes of LR chapters. These findings suggest that explicit instructions should be provided to help novice writers effectively use RVs in their M.A. theses.

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Key words

reporting verbs, literature review chapters, Vietnamese writers, master's theses, TESOL.

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