

The Organizational Structure, Development Features, and Metadiscoursal Elements in the Expository Writing of College Freshman Students

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Abstract : This study entitled, 'The Organizational Structure, Development Features, and Metadiscoursal Elements in the Expository Writing of Freshman College Writers' aimed to examine essays written by college students. It seeks to examine the organizational structure and development features of the essays and describe their defining characteristics, the linguistic elements at both macrostructural and microstructural discourse levels and the types of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers that are employed in order to negotiate meanings with their prospective readers. The different frameworks used to analyze the essays include Toulmin's (1984) model for argument structure, Olson's (2003) three-part essay structure; Halliday and Matthiesen (2004) in Herriman (2011) notions of thematic structure, Danes (1974) thematic progression or method of development, Halliday's (2004) concept of grammatical and lexical cohesion; Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse strategies; and Chung and Nation's (2003) four-step scale for technical vocabulary. This descriptive study analyzes qualitatively and quantitatively how freshman students generally express their written compositions. Coding of units is done to determine what linguistic features are present in the essays. Findings revealed that students' expository essays observe a three-part structure having all three moves, the Introduction, the Body and the Conclusion. Stance assertion, stance support, and emerging moves/strategies are found to be employed in the essays. Students have more marked themes on the essays and also prefer constant theme progression as their method of development. The analysis of salient linguistic elements reveals frequently used cohesive devices and metadiscoursal strategies. Based on the findings, an instructional learning plan is being proposed. This plan is characterized by a genre approach that focuses on expository and linguistic conventions.

Keywords : metadiscourse, organization, theme progression, structure

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