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A Corpus-based Error Analysis of Writing for publication: A Case of EFL Doctoral Students' Papers

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Abstract

This paper is undertaken with the premise that academic writing and errors are symbiotic; they nurse an interdependent relationship. By definition, EFL doctoral students are fairly good writers otherwise they would not be admitted to doctoral programs. They are expected to demonstrate their mastery of long and more complex "prose"; show capacity to argue as well as counter-argue; write clearly and concisely, and give credit to cited authors. Although they seem to have a handle on certain linguistic and stylistic aspects of scholarly writing, they frequently produce papers of poor quality: The structures are poorly crafted and delivered. Therefore, papers do not look sufficiently polished and risk desk rejection. Bhatia (1999) notes that students lack the necessary textual knowledge, genre knowledge, and social knowledge. The present paper endeavors to conduct a corpus-based analysis of EFL doctoral students' papers with a view of determining the nature of their writing errors, categorizing these and finally lay out the deficient knowledge. Preliminary findings suggest that doctoral students (N=10) indulge intentionally (occasionally) and unintentionally (often) in three types of inconsistencies (1) linguistic (2) stylistic, and (3) publishing standards.

Key Words: Corpus-based error analysis- EFL doctoral students- writing for publication- linguistic, stylistic and publishing inconsistencies