



ABSTRACT

Rhetorical moves are often applied by researchers to reveal how they structure their papers. On the other hand, metadiscourse strategies are employed by writers to show how they communicate and interact with readers. This study analyzed the structure of the discussion section of dissertations written by Chinese students. It explored the rhetorical moves using Yang and Allison's (2003) framework and the metadiscourse strategies employed by the student writers based on Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. The findings showed that the commonly used move patterns include *reporting results-commenting on results*, *providing background information-commenting on results*, and *commenting on results-providing background information*. Unique move patterns were noted, which are not found in the framework, Such moves are *summarizing results-drawing implications and recommendations* and *summarizing results-commenting on results*. Among the steps in the moves, *interpreting results*, *referring to literature*, and *referring to research questions* were the most employed. As for the relations between moves and metadiscourse, code glosses and hedges in general are the most frequent markers employed in steps of *referring to aim, etc.*, *reporting results*, *interpreting results*, *comparing results with literature* and *evaluating results*. Regarding metadiscourse strategies, the study revealed that the Chinese students employed interactive markers rather than interactional markers, which can be considered additional knowledge about Chinese students' strategies in writing. EFL academic writing teachers may consider the findings relevant in their pedagogy. The study also presents a modified model for analyzing the discussion sections of dissertations



considering the results of the study. Recommendations include further studies on the discussion section of dissertations focusing on the connection between moves and metadiscourse and on cultural nuances in academic writing.

Keywords: *Chinese dissertations, discussion sections, interactive markers, interactional markers, metadiscourse strategies, rhetorical moves*

