Interactional Metadiscourse Markers in the Abstract Sections of Arabic Patents

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Abstract
This study aims to investigate interactional metadiscourse markers (IMDMs) in 60 patent abstracts written in Arabic by Arabic-native drafters within the field of human necessity. Specifically, the objectives are to identify which categories of IMDMs are predominant in Arabic patent abstract and to explain how metadiscourse markers function in these abstracts. To achieve these objectives, data were analyzed quantitatively to count the frequency of IMDMs, and qualitatively to examine the functions of these markers within Arabic patent abstracts based on Hyland's model (2005). The results indicate that boosters, hedges and attitude markers are the most frequently employed markers while the remaining categories show a low frequency of occurrence. Moreover, the analysis also reveals that IMDMs fulfill different functions, such as providing data in a truthful manner, avoiding commitment to precise figures and persuasion among others. The findings of this research are useful for Arabic-speaking drafters and novice inventors for a better understanding of IMDMs commonly applied in their patent abstracts. A better understanding of the pragmatic functions of IMDMs can improve not only patent drafting skills, but also the chance for successful patent grants. It is recommended that future research investigate IMDMs within other patent sections such as claims, description, and background among different disciplines in order to achieve better insights of the use of such rhetorical metadiscourse features.
Keywords: Abstract section, Arabic, interactional resources, metadiscourse markers, patent