



Analyzing Interpersonal Metadiscourse Used In English Language Learning Videos On Youtube

Pristsana Koonnala ^a , Napasorn Chaiwong ^{bt} 

^{a,b} *Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, Thailand*

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze interpersonal metadiscourse in English language learning videos published on YouTube. The samples were 30 video scripts produced by native English speakers, including American, British, Canadian, and Australian. The framework was based on an interpersonal metadiscourse model by Hyland (2005) to describe their categories and functions. The data collection procedures employed an approach of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) suggested by Herring (2004). The steps included developing research questions, selecting data samples, defining framework concepts, applying analysis methods, and interpreting data. The results showed a greater number of interactional metadiscourse markers than interactive, indicating that the speaker prioritized engaging their audience with the video contents. Despite fewer occurrences, interactive metadiscourse markers played a crucial role in guiding the audience through the video content. The analysis results can provide a guideline for producing useful scripts for English language learning videos.

Keywords: interpersonal metadiscourse; language analysis; English learning videos; video scripts; YouTube

1. Introduction

In an effort to stem the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational institutes worldwide were temporarily shuttered. These closures affected hundreds of millions of the global student population (UNESCO, 2021). As a result, schools and universities worldwide have relied on online-only learning. As a vital tool in providing effective online teaching, recorded videos help facilitate student learning, particularly when these students cannot access the Internet for live-streamed teaching (Lee, 2020). In higher education, videos have become critical and are integrated as part of traditional courses. They are often used as the primary information delivery mechanism in massive open online courses, or MOOCs (Brame, 2016). When considering online platforms for educational videos, YouTube plays a vital role in the modern education system. Schools and universities have integrated YouTube's free video platform

¹ Corresponding author.

E-mail address: fefifofa@rmutl.ac.th

into their classrooms. Content developers or teachers can quickly produce sessions using a webcam, and user-friendly software then uploads their videos to YouTube (Antonio & Tuffley, 2015).

However, creating compelling educational videos can be challenging and requires principles and guidelines to produce effective and engaging video scripts. Mayer (2008) suggested the importance of linguistics in multimedia design by highlighting the personalization principle. It emphasizes that when words in a multimedia material are provided in a casual rather than formal manner, individuals understand the lesson more effectively. The theoretical rationale is that personalization techniques promote a sense of social partnership between the speaker and listeners. The principle shares a similar concept to an interpersonal metadiscourse. Hyland (2005) defined *metadiscourse* as self-reflective expressions. The author or speaker uses them to convey interactional meanings in a text, including expressing their views and engaging readers or listeners. Thus, using metadiscourse markers in the text can promote listening and reading comprehension among the audience (Aguilar, 2009). The significant benefits led to an interest in analyzing the use of interpersonal metadiscourse among native English-speaking instructors in language instructional videos published on YouTube. The study seeks to determine which category of interpersonal metadiscourse occurs more frequently, including the frequency of each interactive and interactional marker. It also aims to collect examples of both devices.

1.1. Literature review

In 2005, Hyland developed the concept of “metadiscourse”. It refers to “the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer or speaker in expressing a viewpoint and engaging with readers or listeners as members of a particular community.” As indicated in Table 1, the interpersonal model has two interaction dimensions: the interactive and interactional dimensions. The two dimensions represent characteristics of all forms of communication. The interactive component entails the writer's awareness towards an engaged audience and ways to meet their demands in terms of knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations, and processing skills. The writer intends to shape and confine a message in order to fulfill particular readers' requirements and explain it in an organized way so that the audience will understand the writer's interpretations and aims. The rhetorical features in this dimension include transitional markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. The aspect of interactional devices addresses how authors intrude and respond to their text to create interaction. This dimension allows the writer to explicitly communicate their perspectives and engage readers in responding to the unfolding message. The features in this dimension are hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mention, and engagement markers.

Table 1. An interpersonal model of metadiscourse by Hyland (2005)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive	Guide the readers through the text	Resources
Transitions	express relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	refer to information in other parts of the text	noted above; see Fig; in section 2
Evidentials	refer to information from other texts	according to X; Z states

Code glosses	elaborate propositional meanings	namely; e.g.; such as; in other words
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	emphasize certainty or close dialogue	in fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude markers	express writer's attitude to the proposition	unfortunately; I agree;
Self mentions	explicit reference to the author(s)	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement markers	explicitly build a relationship with the reader	consider; note; you can see that

In 2017, Hyland provided an overview of metadiscourse and how its concept was employed. The overview suggested that most metadiscourse research focused on written academic texts. Notably, research article abstracts and introductions dominated the field. Theses and book reviews, including the areas of business and mass communication genres, were also explored as well as spoken and visual modes of communication --particularly in monologic communication such as presentations and lectures. Some research focused on analysing metadiscourse markers usage in speech delivery. For example, Sari (2014) investigated the categories and purposes of interpersonal metadiscourse devices in a speech delivered by Michelle Obama. Similarly, Azijah & Gulo (2020) explored the types and functions of interactive and interactional markers in Jacinda Arden's keynote address. Analyzing interpersonal metadiscourse in oral business presentations has also emerged. Kuswoyo and Siregar (2019) used a descriptive qualitative technique to investigate the interpersonal metadiscourse in Steve Job's business presentation. The findings revealed how interpersonal metadiscourse markers played an essential role in a business presentation by engaging and building a relationship between the presenter and audience. The literature also indicated that only a few researchers had investigated other types of spoken modes of communication, such as video scripts. Rheisa (2019) studied metadiscourse used in review videos uploaded on the YouTube platform. The study aimed to investigate non-academic, spoken texts. However, the selected three scripts of product review videos were analyzed using Ädel's (2006) reflexive triangle model instead of Hyland's (2005) model.

Research showed that the language register plays a critical role in producing compelling video scripts. Mayer (2008) highlighted the personalization principle with the concept that communicating with a conversational style in multimedia instruction can enhance the learning experience. For example, changing "the" to "your" in the script is one of the methods to create a conversational style. This technique gives a perception of social partnership between the speakers and learners. Thus, both parties make an effort to better understand their conversation partner. Another example suggested by Brame (2016) is using "I" to indicate the narrator's perspective. The personalization principle and its examples reflect an attempt at interpersonal metadiscourse, particularly interactional and engagement markers. Therefore, the present paper aims to discover the interpersonal metadiscourse in video scripts using Hyland's (2005) model. The samples were instructional video scripts for English language learning published on YouTube.

1.2. Research questions

The analysis of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in English language learning videos answers the following questions.

1. Which category of interpersonal metadiscourse, interactional or interactive, occurs more frequently in English language learning videos produced by native English-speaking instructors and published on YouTube?
2. What is the frequency of each interactive and interactional marker used in English language learning videos published on YouTube?
3. What are the examples of interactive and interactional markers in English language learning videos published on YouTube?

2. Method

This research is qualitative and quantitative. The procedure implemented an approach of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) by Herring (2004), and the analysis employed Hyland's (2005) interpersonal metadiscourse model. The details are as follows.

2.1. Sample

The samples in this study were 30 English language learning videos published on YouTube between 2019 and 2020. The videos were selected using one of Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) data sampling techniques, "by individual or group". This technique allows the study to focus on individuals or groups. Thus, the study emphasized the instructional videos produced by native English-speaking instructors who were American, Canadian, British, and Australian. The samples were also selected by design guidelines following Mayer's (2008) evidence-based principles for multimedia instructional design. The principles comprise three main categories. The first category involves five principles for reducing the cognitive processing that lowers mental capability. The principles include coherence (removing unnecessary material), signalling (highlighting important information), redundancy (omitting on-screen text to narrated animation), spatial contiguity (placing texts alongside visuals), and temporal contiguity (presenting corresponding text and visuals simultaneously). The next category concerns three principal concepts of managing essential processing. The fundamental concepts are segmenting (presenting narrated animation in the self-paced segment), pretraining (showing pretraining on the critical component: names, positions, and features), and modality (providing words in the form of spoken text instead of written text). The final category suggests two concepts for fostering generative processing. They include multimedia (presenting texts and images instead of texts only) and personalization (presenting texts in a conversational style instead of formal style).

2.2. Data collection and analysis

Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) by Herring (2004) was adapted for data collection and analysis. First, the research questions were defined, and after that, selecting a computer-mediated data sample was conducted. The following procedure was defining framework concepts. The essential concepts involved a model of interpersonal metadiscourse by Hyland (2005). There are three main principles to identify and code interpersonal metadiscourse markers. Hyland & Tse (2004) suggested that (1) interpersonal metadiscourse is separate from propositional elements of discourse. (2) It involves textual elements that represent writer-reader interactions. (3) It solely relates to internal discourse. When analyzing the interpersonal metadiscourse, there are two primary markers to consider. The first category is interactive, including transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses.

The second category is interactional markers, including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mentions, and engagement.

The following procedure was used to apply methods of analysis to the data sample. Steps in conducting the analysis were as follows: (1) downloading each script of the selected samples by going to the YouTube page, opening the selected video, clicking on the button with three dots located below the video title, clicking on the Open transcript, which will display the right sidebar panel, clicking on the three dots within the transcript panel to toggle the timestamps off, finding the first word of the transcript, highlighting all the text, copying and pasting the script into a Word document (Cameron, 2019); (2) organizing each script into paragraphs and giving a reference code, S1 – S30; (3) prescreening the script using the web-based language analysis tool, Text Inspector, to identify metadiscourse markers and then sharing the prescreening script to the first and second researcher to collect the interpersonal metadiscourse markers manually and separately using Hyland's (2005) model; (4) comparing the results of both researchers to ensure validation; (5) classifying each marker into its category and subcategory.

The final procedure was interpreting the data. First, interactive and interactional metadiscourse categories were compared to indicate the frequency. The subsequent interpretation dealt with comparing the frequency of each feature in the interactive category ranked from most frequently occurring to the least frequently occurring. The examples of each marker found in the scripts were also gathered and collected. Lastly, the frequency of each interactional metadiscourse marker was compared and ranked from most frequently occurring to the least frequently occurring. Then the examples found were collected.

3. Results and Discussion

Overall, the results presented below show 4,546 interpersonal metadiscourse markers used in the scripts for English language learning videos. As indicated in Table 2, the total number of interactional markers was higher than the interactive. In the category of interactive, frame markers were used at the highest number, followed by transitions, code glosses, and endophoric markers. The fewest occurrences fell into the subcategory of evidentials.

In the interactional category, engagement markers were at the highest number, followed by self mentions, hedges, attitude markers, and boosters. The interpretation of the results is discussed with supporting examples in the section below.

Table 2. Interpersonal metadiscourse markers found in the scripts of English language learning videos

Category	Total items	% of total metadiscourse
Interactive	941	20.70
Transitions	382	8.40
Frame markers	409	9.0
Endophoric markers	10	0.22
Evidentials	4	0.09
Code glosses	131	2.88
Interactional	3,605	79.30
Hedges	106	2.33
Boosters	34	0.75

Attitude markers	68	1.50
Self mentions	1031	22.68
Engagement markers	2371	52.16
Totals	4,546	100

One of the primary objectives of this research was to explore interpersonal metadiscourse in English language learning videos using Hyland's (2005) model. The interpersonal metadiscourse included two interaction modes: interactive and interactional. When compared, the total number of interactional markers was higher. This finding demonstrates that when producing the scripts for English language learning videos, the speaker tended to prioritize how to involve their audience in the video contents using interactional markers. Hyland's (2005) work, which indicates that interactional metadiscourse is concerned with how writers or speakers interact with one another, suggests that exploiting this type of metadiscourse allows the speaker to engage readers or listeners, increasing both their willingness to contribute, and the number of significant chances for them to engage the associated discourse. A similar finding regarding high occurrences of interactional markers in oral communication scripts can be seen in Kuswoyo & Siregar (2019). The study examined the interpersonal metadiscourse markers in the area of oral business presentations. A manuscript of the business tycoon Steve Jobs was analyzed. The results showed that interactional markers were used at a greater frequency in this particular manuscript than interactive markers.

The subsequent discussion is concentrated on the occurrence of interactive metadiscourse devices in the videos for learning English. Despite fewer uses than interactional markers, they were still considered to play a pivotal role in guiding the audience through the video content. The interactive dimension involves the author or speaker's awareness of engaged audiences and how to help support their knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations, and processing skills. Thus, the audience can understand the author or speaker's interpretations and goals (Hyland, 2005). The results showed that there were five subcategories of interactive markers used in the video scripts. The first markers are frame markers, which were employed at the highest number in this category. The primary function of them is to show text boundaries or graphical representation of text structure elements. They have four purposes: (1) to organize segments of the text or to internally order an argument; (2) to identify text stages; (3) to state the goals of discourse; (4) to indicate shifts in a topic. Therefore, using frame markers can help readers or listeners understand what's being said (Hyland, 2005). The findings showed that the English language instructors used frame markers with all four purposes in their video scripts. Thus, it is evident that frame markers are essential for making useful instructional scripts. Their roles are similar to signposts. As Mclean (2013) concluded, signposts catch the audience's attention and help maintain their attention through the presentation. The example of each function of frame markers is as follows.

Table 3. Examples of frame markers

Frame markers	Examples
Sequencing	first/firstly, second, one, two, next, then, last, finally
Labeling text stages	in summary
Announcing the goals of discourse	The purpose of this lesson is, This lesson is about/aims at, talk about, I am going to talk/look at
Shifts of topic	Okay, let's, right, alright, well

Example excerpts:

Sequencing

First, let's talk about the good things. When we want to talk about the good part of something, the good aspect, the good characteristics, the good qualities, we can say that these are the "pluses." (S13)

Labeling text stages

There are probably five to eight sounds that are problem sounds for you. Alright, once you've worked out what they are, make a list of those sounds, stick them on your bathroom mirror and practice them every morning out loud, every day. (S18)

Announcing the goals of discourse

So, the purpose of this lesson is just to equip you, to give you some really basic words and phrases in different contexts that will just help you to join in, to start a conversation if you don't know very much at all, okay? (S24)

Shifts of topic

Okay. So, now we're going to talk about some words that you're going to start hearing more and more about, because this is part of the climate change, part of the changing world we live in. (S15)

Transitions followed as the next most frequently occurring interactive markers used by English native speakers in the language instructional videos. A conclusion can be drawn that organizing the scripts using transitions is critical for producing compelling learning videos. The main reason is that it helps to promote comprehensible interpretation among the audience. According to Martin & Rose (2003) and Hyland (2005), transition markers are conjunctions and adverbial phrases intended to assist readers in grasping pragmatic linkages between phases in an argument. Mayer (2008) highlighted that organizing words in multimedia instruction builds coherent cognitive structures or mental processes for verbal material. This concept demonstrates that organizing words according to transition markers in the instructional video scripts can increase comprehension for the intended audience. There were three types of transitions used in the video scripts: addition, comparison, and consequence. The examples are shown as follows:

Table 4. Examples of transitions

Transition markers	Examples
Addition	and, addition, again, in other words, also, as well
Comparison	however, but, similarly, alternatively, in the reverse
Consequence	so, in conclusion, of course

Example excerpts:

Addition

And just something to add, I think by putting yourself in those situations where you have to speak English is the best way of making progress. (S24)

Comparison

However, perfecting your pronunciation can really help to communicate faster, to help your listener by reducing the cognitive load, by helping them to understand you faster. (S8)

Consequence

In conclusion, "I need to tell her that I love her." Perfect! "I need to say to her that I love her." That's fine too. Just don't say "I need to say her" or "I need to say for her." Those are mistakes. (S1)

Following transitions and frame markers, code glosses were the most commonly used interactive markers. They serve to provide more information by rephrasing, clarifying, or elaborating on what the speaker has stated. They benefit the listeners by helping them recover the speakers' intended meaning (Hyland, 2005). The results highlighted that the presenters in the English language instructional videos used code glosses to elaborate their contents, including grammar, vocabulary, expressions, idioms, pronunciation, cross-cultural differences, and methods to improve English language learning. It can be concluded that using code glosses is an essential way to promote more precise communication, which is especially important in language learning contexts. An example is as follows:

Table 5. Examples of code glosses

Code glosses	Examples
	for examples, such as, like, which means, it is called, in other word

Example excerpt:

To be honest, I don't think you should try to read books if you're still a beginner, in other words, if you have an A1 or A2 level. It's because a lot of children's books have words which are actually a bit advanced for non-native beginners. Not all of them, obviously, but a lot of children's books have, for example, names of animals that aren't very common or words that are related to fantasy, like "enchanted castle." (S29)

Endophoric markers were used at a lower frequency than transitions, frame markers, and code glosses in the English language instructional scripts. They are used as expressions to point to different parts of the text (Hyland, 2005). The findings demonstrate that only a few of the instructors referred to other parts of their instructions when presenting the contents in the language instructional videos. It is possible that editing the video contents allowed them to present each argument shot by shot. They also used visual elements to guide the audience through the contents. These methods allowed them to complete each part of their argument without the necessity to refer to other parts of the presentation. A possible conclusion that might be drawn is that the process of editing videos and enhancing visual elements affected endophoric markers' use. The example is as follows.

Table 6. Examples of Endophoric markers

Endophoric markers	Examples
	as I said earlier, I mentioned, I said before

Example excerpt:

As I said earlier, instead of "give," we can use the word "pass" because "give" is a very direct word. We can say "pass." It's much softer. (S7)

The least frequently occurring interactive markers used in the language learning videos were evidentials. The primary function of them is to point to information from other texts. They involve an attribution to a reliable source and contribution to a convincing objective (Hyland, 2005). This definition leads to the conclusion that the relative infrequency of this type is due to the expository nature of the related discourse. Like Bonnot (2020) defined, the instructors' expository tools included describing, providing analysis, comparing and contrasting, problem and solution, and cause and effect. Using these

tools indicates that the instructor intended to refer to a particular topic rather than to persuade. This can be the reason evidentials rarely occurred in the language instructional video scripts. The following is an example.

Table 7. Examples of evidentials

Evidentials	Examples
	There was a study done, X state that, A quote from

Example excerpt:

Now, the policy and doctrines of the United States of America state that all men and women are created equal. But due to racism and systemic racism, that's not how life plays out. (S10)

The subsequent section concerns a discussion of the interactional markers. The primary purpose of this category is to involve audiences in discourse. Writers or speakers use these features to express their views to the audience and involve them by responding to the unfolding text (Hyland, 2005). There were five subcategories found in the English language learning video scripts. The most frequent interactional markers in the scripts were engagement markers. They are devices used to address audiences directly, including discourse participants and focusing their attention (Hyland, 2005). The instructors addressed their audiences as participants by using pronouns, such as *you*, *your*, inclusive *we*. Interjections, for example, *you may notice*, could be seen in the scripts. Most of them also drew the audience's attention by using questions, imperatives, and obligation modals. It is evident that engagement markers played a critical role in engaging the intended audience. Mayer (2008) highlighted the personalization principle and suggested that when texts in a multimedia course are delivered in an informal way rather than a formal approach, individuals learn more successfully. Changing the article "the" to "your" in the script is one example. The theoretical rationale is that personalization techniques promote a sense of mutual relationship between the presenter and listeners. Therefore, learners make a more significant effort to understand their conversational partner's message. The example of engagement markers is as follows.

Table 8. Examples of engagement markers

Engagement markers	Examples
Pronouns	you, your, inclusive we, inclusive us, inclusive our, yourself
Obligation modals	must, have to, should
Directives (Imperatives)	don't forget to, notice that, make sure, look at this, be careful, keep in mind, remember, let me know, stick with me

Example excerpt:

There are many different phrases, expressions, words that we can use. Just to simply ask for some assistance, some help. So, today that is what we will be looking at, as well as how to actually use your intonation and pronunciation to actually sound like you need help and not to sound like a robot. Let's do it. (S3)

The next interactional marker used in the scripts that appears with a significant frequency was self mention, referring explicitly to the writer or speaker in the text. For example, using first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives, such as *I*, *me*, *mine*, exclusive *we*, *our*, *ours* (Hyland, 2005). The findings revealed a significant number of occurrences in the use of self mention in the video scripts. Using self

mention in presentations is an effective way to construct conversational language, much like the work of Brame (2016) demonstrated in that using the subject “I” to indicate the narrator’s perspective creates a conversational style in the educational videos. The example of self mention can be seen below.

Table 9. Examples of self mentions

Self mentions	Examples
	I, me, my, exclusive we, exclusive us, myself, exclusive our

Example excerpt:

One thing that we love to talk about in the UK is vacations. However, in Britain, we don't call it a vacation. We call it a holiday. A vacation is an American word. (S4)

Hedges are the following markers to be discussed in this category. They identify a decision on the writer or speaker to recognize alternative perspectives and points of view. Therefore, complete commitment to the proposition is withheld. Using hedges allows the information to be portrayed as a viewpoint rather than a fact. Some examples of hedges are *possible*, *might*, and *perhaps* (Hyland, 2005). The video script analysis showed that the instructors employed hedges to present alternatives on language learning resources, word choices for each situation, and language learning methods. The example is shown below.

Table 10. Examples of hedges

Hedges	Examples
	in my opinion, I think, probably, perhaps, may, might, maybe, suppose, possible

Example excerpt:

It's absolutely fine to say that, but I'm just here to give you more options and more ways of, perhaps being more playful and having fun with your English. (S3)

The subsequent discussion involves attitude markers. They are employed to convey the author or speaker's frame of mind, such as surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, or frustration. Most attitude markers are clearly expressed by attitude verbs, sentence adverbs, and adjectives (Hyland, 2005). It can be seen in the video script that some instructors used attitude markers for various purposes. For example, to emphasize the truth, express what they wish to happen, or raise the importance of a particular part of their lesson. In addition, the instructors expressed their attitude towards topics such as vocabulary and expressions, pronunciation, and language learning strategies. Therefore, it can be concluded that even though there were a small number of them, attitude markers were considered one of the instructors' alternative strategies in involving the audience in their talk. Below is an example of attitude markers.

Table 11. Examples of attitude markers

Attitude markers	Examples
	honestly, to be honest, hopefully, important, confusingly, surprisingly, perfect, interesting, unfortunately, extremely, fantastic, brilliant, amazing, undoubtedly, impressive

Example excerpt:

So, there you go guys, there were ten or so different ways of saying "you", but plural in English. Hopefully, this episode has helped you learn a little bit more about informal English. (S20)

Lastly, the least frequent interactional markers in this category were boosters. They allow the writer or speaker to emphasize assurance and close conversation. Examples of boosters include clearly, obviously, demonstrate, definitely, in fact and it is clear that (Hyland, 2005). Analyzing the video scripts showed that even though the frequency of this type of marker was at the lowest level, some instructors used them to convey their certainty in giving suggestions on learning English. The areas included vocabulary, expressions, pronunciation, and language learning strategies. An example of boosters is shown below.

Table 12. Examples of boosters

Boosters	Examples
	definitely, obviously, exactly, absolutely, certainly, actually, in fact

Example excerpt:

These are just my recommendations. Obviously, you can read whatever you want, and it is good to challenge yourself sometimes. (S29)

4. Conclusions

Using Hyland's (2005) framework for analysing the scripts for the English language learning videos demonstrates that immersing the audience in the content was a vital component of the scripts. This can be seen from the higher frequency of interactional metadiscourse markers versus the lower frequency of interactive ones. The interactional markers primarily aimed to engage the audience and focus their attention by shaping the scripts' voice into a conversational style. Though interactive markers occurred less frequently, they played an essential role in organizing the scripts and helped the audience understand the instructors' intended meanings. They also benefited the instructor in promoting clarity of video content, including drawing in and maintaining the audience's attention. The present findings suggest using metadiscourse markers for preparing scripts for English language instructional videos. This research can be beneficial to English language instructors by helping them improve their language instructional scripts and ultimately produce more engaging and compelling videos. Particularly for non-native English-speaking instructors, having the resources of metadiscourse devices can help develop effective English language instruction scripts. The principles can also be applied to other fields in producing instructional videos.

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AUTHOR BIODATA

Pristsana Koonnala works as a lecturer at the Department of Languages and Communication, Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL). She currently serves as the Assistant to the Dean for International Relations and Head of the Language Center, RMUTL. Her research interests include English as a foreign language and discourse analysis.

Napasorn Chaiwong works as a lecturer at the Department of Languages and Communication, Faculty of Business Administration and Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL). Her interests are in discourse analysis, pragmatics and semantics.