



Analysis of PhD Dissertation Abstracts in the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University

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Abstract

Tribhuvan University awarded the first PhD in English Education in 2008. Since then, 33 scholars have been awarded PhDs by March, 2025, creating an avenue for exploring the history, trends, and current state of English education research in the Faculty of Education. For this study, all 33 dissertation abstracts and a few whole dissertations were analyzed, with a special focus on title and abstract structure, types, and styles. The study also focused on the frequency of PhD awards, researchers' and supervisors' demographics, preferred methods, and research areas. The findings revealed that the majority of the awards were overwhelmingly achieved by the male researchers from Brahmin and Kshetri communities who were professionally connected with Tribhuvan University, with their supervisors being Male Professors of the University. The study also exposed that titles, both nominal and compound, ranging from eight to twenty-one words, convey information about the context, issues, objectives, methods, and location, while abstracts consistently included context, objectives, methodologies, and findings of the study. Similarly, researchers addressed diverse subjective issues in the field using phenomenology, case studies, and ethnographies. This study is expected to serve as a resource for ELT researchers, practitioners, and students to outline current trends and prospects in English Education research.

Introduction

The Faculty of Education (FOE), one of the nine academic wings of Tribhuvan University (TU), was established as the College of Education in 1956, three years before the university's establishment (1959), to institutionalize teacher education programmes in Nepal. Being one of the largest faculties within the university, both in student enrollment and the number of affiliated campuses, FOE maintains a large network of 26 constituent campuses and around 600 affiliated colleges across the country (FOE, TU) and bears primary responsibility for producing skilled teachers and teacher educators required in various subjects. Currently, it offers diverse educational programmes in a wider range of subject areas in education.

This Faculty conducts educational programmes in Bachelor of Education (BEd), Master of Education (MEd), Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE), Master of Philosophy (M Phil), and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Education. Envisioning the promotion of quality education in the country by producing highly qualified teachers and educators (FOE, TU), FOE offers the Bachelor's and Master's programmes incorporating academic content and professional courses. In addition, the M Phil and PhD programmes focus on educational research to prepare high-level academics and researchers. The MPhil and PhD degrees are offered in various subjects like English Education, Nepali Education, Mathematics Education, Health Education, and Education Studies. FOE started MPhil leading to PhD programme in 2017 with the intent of integrating MPhil courses with the PhD programme and providing the students an opportunity to choose into MPhil or PhD programme after completion of the coursework.

The FOE launched its PhD programme in education in 1996; however, the first PhD was awarded in the year 2004 in Nepali Education, after 47 years since the education programme started in Nepal. By March, 2025, 134 scholars have completed the PhD degree, while more than 200 scholars have been pursuing their studies in the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University. Notably, the first PhD in English Education was awarded in 2008, before which the Nepali scholars pursued PhD studies in foreign universities, chiefly in the USA, Europe, and India. Even now, a good number of students enroll into the foreign universities. In addition to TU, other universities in Nepal are also providing PhD education, resulting in various perspectives developed in the academic research field related to research trends, practices, areas, and so forth.

Subsequently, academicians across the globe grew interested in analyzing the emerging research trends, theoretical frameworks, and research approaches. In this regard, Yereyikilmaz (2026) in their systematic review of doctoral dissertations on 'Turkish Language Teaching in Primary Education'. Fifty-seven PhD dissertations, awarded between 2022 and 2025, were included in the study, which were analyzed through the 'descriptive content analysis' method. The study found that most studies were descriptive in nature and they primarily aimed to portray the current state of affairs. From the perspective of the research approach, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches were predominantly preferred, and thematically, the development of reading and writing skills, critical writing, digital literacy, technology-supported instructional practices, student-centred approaches, and higher-order thinking skills were predominant, while studies focusing on listening and speaking skills remained limited. The study highlighted

the need for more practice-based, long-term, and holistic instructional models in Turkish language teaching.

In another study, Topal (2026) indicated that Turkish thesis writers minimally addressed L2 pronunciation features, accompanied by limited and unbalanced gender, institutional, and geographic representation. Correspondingly, they employed conventional research methods, leaving further gaps in the use of more up-to-date designs, tools, and analysis techniques, and in the inclusion of more diverse samples. Moreover, the study revealed that insufficient concentration on specific research topics warrants more inquiry into various areas of pronunciation, and explicit and targeted pronunciation instruction consistently leads to measurable improvements in Turkish EFL learners' pronunciation, comprehensibility, and intelligibility. The study included doctoral dissertations on L2 pronunciation by Turkish authors.

Bista et al. (2025), in their study entitled 'Emerging Trends and Challenges in International Student Research: A Content Analysis of Recent Dissertations (2022-2024)', analyzed 470 doctoral dissertations published between 2022 and 2024. Deploying a qualitative content analysis approach and descriptive statistics, they systematically analyzed the dissertations to identify recurring themes and issues. The key themes identified include teaching and learning; academic practices; acculturation and intercultural competence; career development and leadership; experiences and challenges; mobility and policy contexts; social diversity and inclusion; institutional support; and well-being. The findings showed a predominant use of qualitative methods, a concentration on US-based contexts, and a strong disciplinary

focus on higher education. The study highlighted the need for more inclusive, interdisciplinary, and methodologically diverse research to inform policies and practices that would support international students' academic success, well-being, and global mobility in an evolving educational landscape.

Similarly, a study carried out by Tee and Chia (2025) to investigate the methodology of action research used within the education discipline from January 2013 to October 2024 revealed that 'Grounded Theory' was the most commonly utilized theoretical framework, supporting iterative theory development to address complex educational challenges. Traditional action research methods were widely used due to their seamless integration into professional practices. The study also revealed that interviews emerged as the primary data collection method, supplemented by questionnaires and focus groups. Most studies employed convenience sampling, with quantitative samples ranging from 25 to 275 participants and qualitative cohorts comprising eight to eleven participants. The study included eight PhD dissertations within education disciplines and twelve articles from the Scopus database.

Furthermore, Bastola and Ho (2023) analyzed the rhetorical structure of 60 literature review chapters from a Nepalese university to see how the PhD scholars engage with existing scholarship. Using a revised Creating a Research Space (CARS) model, the researchers evaluated if these chapters established a research territory, identified a niche, and justified the new study, and they found that most of the chapters merely summarized the received knowledge rather than identifying research gaps. The findings also highlighted that significant disciplinary

differences appeared only in how the PhD scholars presented their specific research aims and designs.

Likewise, Yetkiner et al. (2019) identified the tendencies and monitored progress through setting out the current situation in the study on 'Content Analysis of PhD Dissertation on Curriculum Evaluation'. The PhD dissertations in this area, awarded from 1996 to 2017, were analyzed, and concluded that most of the dissertations were on the analysis of formal education curricula; studies were conducted mostly in Ankara, and the majority of the PhD researchers consisted of individuals from higher education institutions. Moreover, focusing on the features of dissertation abstracts, El-Dakhs (2018) revealed that PhD dissertation abstracts are characterized by lengthier introductions with a more frequent use of transitions, evidential, and hedges.

As the initiation of analyzing the theses in English education, Bhattarai (2005) analysed 160 master's theses produced between 1979 and 2004. He identified the areas of research as error/contrastive analysis, language skills, proficiency, teaching methods and techniques, Grammar, vocabulary, mass media, testing and evaluation, attitudes, textbook analysis, translation, dictionary use, language planning, teaching literature, motivation, English for specific purposes, etc.

In this scenario, as ELT practitioners in Nepal, we realized that analyzing the history, trends, and current state of English education research is worthwhile, as it reveals how the field is evolving. Moreover, such studies help ELT practitioners, teachers, educators, and students understand the broader landscape of English education research and generate new ideas for the field. Taking these ideas into account, we carried out this study analyzing

33 dissertations in English Education awarded from 2008 to March 2025.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to explore the overall landscape and changing trends of English education research in Nepal, focusing on the specific areas of research being prioritized, the prevailing methodology, and the research designs employed by the PhD scholars. It highlights the title structures of the dissertations, as well as the types and structures of the dissertation abstracts, to see how the English education research trend is evolving. Moreover, the study aims to identify the English education communities in Nepal by profiling the English education researchers and their supervisors, contributing to shaping and reshaping the field of English education research. In general, the study highlights how the research areas, practices, and trends have evolved, providing a concise overview of English education research.

Methodology of the Study

This study, aimed to explore the English education research landscape at FOE, TU, is an analysis of the PhD dissertation abstracts. The FOE has awarded 33 PhD dissertations up to the date of March, 2025, and we have conducted a comprehensive analysis of all of them for the study. The main source of information for the study consisted of the dissertation abstracts, though some whole dissertations were also studied to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research trends and methodologies within the arena of English education. To ensure privacy and confidentiality, each dissertation was codified.

The analysis process followed a thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A critical perspective was employed to

develop themes of the study, and the ideas and information related to each theme were analyzed critically.

Year-wise Distribution of PhD Awards

The Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University awarded the first PhD in English Education in 2008. Two years after the first PhD award, the second PhD was awarded in 2010, and the FOE had to dedicate the next four years to preparing for the third PhD graduate in English, who was awarded in 2014. The frequency of PhD awards seems to have gained momentum between 2017

and 2019, with at least one degree awarded every year. This momentum seems to have been gradually accelerated, and 3 PhDs were awarded in the year 2020. In the year 2021, the number of PhD awards reached 5, but the figure again dipped to 3 in the year 2022. With an increase to 5 in the year 2023, the year 2024 marked a significant achievement, as 10 PhDs were awarded in this year. Since this study included the PhDs awarded by April 12, 2025, only one award had been recorded for the final year by that time. The year-wise distribution of the PhD awards by FOE, TU is tabulated below.

Table 1. *Year-wise Distribution of PhD Awards*

Year	Number of Dissertations	Dissertation Codes
2008	1	01
2010	1	02
2014	1	03
2017	1	04
2018	1	05
2019	1	06
2020	3	07, 08, 09
2021	5	010, 011, 012, 013, 014
2022	3	015, 016, 017
2023	5	018, 019, 020, 021, 022
2024	10	023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032
2025	1	033

The table shows that by the given time, altogether 33 PhDs have been awarded. Though the number of awards was low and the momentum was slow in the beginning years, with a slight fluctuation in the mid years, the pace of PhD awards has been notably accelerated in recent years.

Researchers' Demography

We analyzed the demography of the PhD graduates in terms of their gender, ethnicity/ caste, and affiliations. The information, as we categorized is tabulated below.

Categories	Researchers
Male	02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 08, 09, 010, 011, 012, 014, 015, 016, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 031, 032, 033
Female	01, 07, 013
Brahmin/ Kshetri	01, 03, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 010, 012, 014, 015, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 022, 023, 024, 025, 026, 027, 028, 029, 030, 032, 033
Janajati	02, 031
Dalit	011
Madheshi	013, 016
Constituent Campuses, TU	01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 010, 011, 012, 013, 014, 015, 017, 018, 019, 020, 021, 023, 24, 025, 029
Affiliated Campuses, TU	028, 031, 032
Far West University	022, 026, 030, 033
Mid-West University	027
Other Institutes	016

The data presented in the table reveal that a significant gender imbalance is seen among the researchers, with a majority of 30 graduates being male, while just three are female. This suggests a substantial gender gap in enrollment and retention within the PhD programme. Regarding the caste-based or ethnic distribution, the Brahmin/Kshetri cohort represents the dominant majority, with 27 PhD graduates out of 33. Other cohorts, including *Janajati* (2), *Madheshi* (2), and *Dalit* (1) are remarkably underrepresented.

From the viewpoint of institutional representation, Tribhuvan University remains the primary institution, with the vast majority of (24) representing its constituent campuses. We found a small portion representation from TU's affiliated campuses (3), while Far-Western University (4), and Mid-West University (1) reveal an emerging presence. The representation of only one graduate from other institutions shows that TU is the most fertile area for the intake of PhD graduates in the English education PhD programme at TU.

Thus, the analysis shows that the PhD scholars' profiles in the English education at TU are characterized by homogeneity, with male researchers representing the Brahmin/Kshetri, institutionally associated with TU. This uncovers a critical need for targeted strategies to promote inclusion and equity, particularly for females and marginalized communities, like Dalits, to ensure more diverse representations.

PhD Supervisions and Mentorships

The supervisions and mentorships of PhD Scholars seem to have been largely concentrated on senior faculty members. Out of 12 supervisors, 9 were Professors who supervised 30 out of the 33 total scholars, while three Associate Professors were assigned this responsibility, each responsible for one scholar. Moreover, there were no Assistant Professors assigned this responsibility by the time this study covered.

Looking from the gender perspective, we observed a striking imbalance regarding the supervision and mentorships. The list of the

supervisors is dominated by male faculty members, who account for 11 out of 12. In other words, out of 33 awards, only one award was accomplished with the supervision and mentorship of a female faculty member.

The distribution of PhD supervision is highly concentrated, with limited male Professors. A single professor, coded as Supervisor A (SA), supervised 11 scholars successfully, whereas another Professor, Supervisor B (SB), managed 7 scholars. Supervisor C (SC) and D (SD) supervised 3 students each, and Supervisor E (SE) supervised 2 scholars. All the remaining supervisors guided one scholar each.

Title Analysis of the Dissertations

Basically, in scientific writings, the title is expected to precisely describe the contents of the report. As the purpose of such writing is to present information clearly and concisely so that it can be easily understood, clarity, therefore, begins with the title, which should include three key elements, viz., the topic, the focus, and the purpose of writing (Svobodova et al., 2000). A good title should contain as few words as possible; in the case of journal articles, many journals limit titles to 12 words (Nair & Nair, 2014). Similarly, Day (1998) defines a good title as the fewest possible words that adequately describe the contents of the paper. He further adds that much more often, the writers use too long titles, which contain waste words, and ironically, long titles are often less meaningful than short ones.

Additionally, Hartley (2008) has explored thirteen different types of titles, such as titles that announce the general subject, particularize a specific theme, indicate the controlling question, just state findings, indicate the answer to a question will be

revealed, announce a thesis, emphasize the methodology, suggest guidelines and/or comparison, bid for attention by using startling or effective openings, attract by alliteration, attract by literary or biblical allusions, attract by using puns, and titles that mystify.

With reference to this information, we analyzed the titles of the dissertations and identified several features. These features are closely connected to the length, methodology, context, location, and structures of the titles. Regarding title length, the dissertations vary significantly, ranging from 8 to 21 words. The dissertation, coded as 028, has the longest title, which consists of 21 words, and 09 consists of 20 words, which do not resonate with Nair and Nair (2014) and Day (1998). On the other hand, the shortest titles (code numbers 01, 03, & 011) have eight words, congruent to the suggestion made by Day (1998), while the remaining dissertations possess 9-15 words in the title, which seems to have aligned with Nair and Nair (2014).

While analyzing the titles of the dissertations in terms of methodology and research design, we found that some of the titles have explicitly mentioned the methodology of the study, whereas a few others have done so implicitly, and the rest of the titles are silent about methodology in the titles. For instance, dissertation 08 mentions in its title that the study is phenomenological. In the same line, dissertation 09 is a multiple case study, 015 is quasi-experimental, 018 is mentioned to be action research, and 024 is a critical ethnography. The use of these words in the dissertation titles reveals an explicit focus on methodology, highlighting that there is a practice of mentioning methodology explicitly in the titles of English education dissertations. Besides, we found that

some researchers implicitly mention the methodology and research design in their titles. Dissertations 017 and 021 use the term ‘lived experiences’ and dissertation 022 uses the term ‘classroom discourse’ in their titles, reflecting the methodology and design they follow for the study. Besides, the rest of the dissertation titles seem to be silent about research design and methodology. Thus, out of 33 dissertations, seven were found to have shaped their titles with a focus on methodology. This evidence highlights that designing the research titles both with and without mentioning the research design and methodology is in practice in English education dissertations. However, the trend of framing titles without a methodological focus seems to be more frequent.

Subsequently, we observed a common trend of including specific context and locations in dissertation titles. For instance, dissertation titles such as 03, 06, 011, 021, 022, 023, 026, and 033 explicitly mention the term ‘Nepal’, while 07 uses the term ‘Nepalese schools’, 031 uses the term ‘in Dhading’, and 017 uses the term ‘Nepalese EFL classrooms’. Similarly, the dissertation title 04 specifically uses ‘Nepali novels’, while dissertation 014 mentions the term ‘Nepali into English’. Hence, these patterns suggest that the titles of English education dissertations at FOE and TU prioritize geographical and contextual specificity. By including the study sites and specific settings, researchers ensure that their studies are framed with a clear focus on these contexts. Such practice of framing the titles aligns with the title categories suggested by Hartley (2008).

Similarly, we observed practices of framing the title with compound as well as nominal structures. However, the practice of framing dissertation titles in a compound way seems

to have slightly dominated that of the nominal way. For example, out of the 33, we observed 14 dissertation titles framed in a nominal structure, and the remaining are all framed in a compound way. This reveals that the scholars in English language education are getting more inclined to compound title structures for their dissertations.

Research Areas

During the study, we identified 14 diverse research areas across the analysed dissertations. This finding resonates with Yereyikilmaz (2026), and Bista et al. (2025), who also indicated a number of areas predominantly appeared in the doctoral studies. Regarding this study, the earliest works focused on error analysis (dissertations 01 & 02). Then the focus seems to have shifted to teachers’ professional development (03), followed by dissertations 05 and 020, then to translation (04), followed by dissertation 014. Over time, research in English education expanded into language policies and planning (06, 07, 024) and English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) (019, 028, 033). Other scholars explored multilingualism (026 & 031), classroom teaching (022 & 029), while a significant number of studies focused on language skills (010, 015, 018, 027, and 032). Moreover, other scholars investigated language function (012), andragogy (030), and ICT in English language education (09, 013, & 025). The issues like language testing (08 & 016), critical pedagogy (011 & 023), and soft skills (021) also have their spaces in the research areas explored by the PhD scholars of FOE.

Likewise, we observed that research areas that started with narrow linguistic focuses, such as error analysis, gradually evolved into broader areas such as professional development, translation, language policies and planning,

EMI, ICT, critical pedagogy, multilingualism, etc. It shows that the research issues and areas are not confined within the classroom and pedagogy; instead, it has expanded into socio-political aspects like language policy and planning, multilingualism, critical pedagogy, and so forth in the English language landscape of Nepal. Thus, we found that PhD scholars in English language education have expanded their research scope in terms of focus.

Methods Used in the Studies

From the methodological approach point of view, the study findings reveal a heavy domination of the qualitative study, which signals an inclination of PhD scholars towards subjective issues and social phenomena rather than objective issues and numerical data in the English language education. This finding is consistent with Bista et al. (2025), who identified that qualitative methods are predominantly in use in doctoral studies. This study revealed that out of 33 dissertations, only three dissertations (01, 02, & 015) were quantitative inquiries, whereas five studies (03, 05, 011, 025, & 027) bridged the gap between numbers and narratives. The overwhelming majority (25 out of 33) of dissertations employed qualitative approaches. This shows that the PhD inquiries initiated with the quantitative inquiries are strongly directed towards qualitative ones over time.

From the perspective of research design under the qualitative approach, unlike the revelation of Tee and Chia (2025), who found grounded theory to have been most commonly used, in this study, we identified phenomenology as the most popular research design with eight studies (08, 013, 016, 017, 020, 021, 029, & 031), signaling a significant trend towards understanding the lived experiences of the participants. Similarly, ethnography (06, 07, 026, 7 028) and case studies (09, 019, 032, 033) appeared to be the second most popular

research designs. Additionally, we observed that other study designs, such as discourse analysis (022), grounded theory (012), action research (018), and narrative inquiry (030), with a singular entry each, are the less common choice compared to phenomenology, ethnography, and case studies. Thus, the study found out that the English language PhD scholars recognise human narratives, experiences, and social contexts to be the fertile spaces for knowledge production.

Terminological Variations

While analysing the dissertations, we also found the lack of terminological uniformity, that is, the terms like approach, methodology, paradigm, strategy, and technique are used interchangeably. A researcher (02) has used the term ‘quantitative method’, whereas for another researcher (04), the qualitative-quantitative distinction is a matter of technique. Next scholar (07) has used the term qualitative paradigm, while for 09, it is a strategy. For the researchers 012 and 018, it is a matter of approach, and finally, for 023 and 027, it is research design. Leavy (2017) and Creswell (2014) perceive qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods distinctions as approach-related concerns rather than methodology, paradigm, strategy, and techniques.

Here, the core issue lies in terminological understanding, where different labels are used to describe the same general concept. Analytically, we conclude that terms like research approach, method, paradigm, design, strategy, and techniques are used for different notions, but PhD scholars are found to have used these terms in their dissertations interchangeably.

Organization of the Abstracts

An abstract is a mini-version of the paper that should provide a brief summary of each

of the main sections: Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, and Discussion (Day, 1998). In the words of Houghton (1975), an abstract is a summary of a document's information. It is written for people who may never read the full version. Basically, there are two types of abstracts: descriptive, which provides a kind of content list of what will be in the paper; what the writer will deal in the paper rather than the synopsis of the actual results while, informative abstract, not only describes what will be in the paper, but also gives the summary of the factual information such as methods and materials, results and discussion (Svobodova et al., 2000). They also add that an informative abstract contains elements like expansion of title, purpose of research, methodology, findings, meaning of findings, recommendations for further research, and the limitations of the research. Regarding the style of writing, Svobodova et al. (2000) suggest using the present tense in a descriptive abstract and the past tense in an informative abstract.

Similarly, Hartley (2008) talks about structured abstracts, which are typically written using five subheadings, viz. background, aim, method, results, and conclusion, whereas an unstructured abstract is written without subheadings. Considering these references, while analysing the abstracts, we identified several variational features regarding the introductory sentences and paragraphs, abstract length, structures, number of paragraphs, coverage, citations, and so forth, which clearly reveal how the academic studies are summarized.

A significant variation was observed regarding the length of the abstracts, which was measured in terms of the number of paragraphs and the number of words. In terms of paragraph count, we found the

abstracts ranging from two paragraphs (06, 09, 010, 014, & 028) to thirteen paragraphs (01), the very first PhD awarded by FOE in English education. We identified two three-paragraph abstracts (013 & 018) and one eight-paragraph abstract (020), while all remaining abstracts contain 4-7 paragraphs. However, the majority of the abstracts contain 4-5 paragraphs. The latest dissertation (033) included in this study also contains a four-paragraph abstract. Similarly, in terms of the word count, the longest abstract (01) contains 1287 words, whereas the shortest abstract (013) contains 302 words. Thus, the study reveals that the condensed style of writing abstracts is getting more popular than that of the extended style among PhD scholars in English education.

Regarding the structure, an abstract is expected to follow IMRaD (Introduction, Methodology, Results, and Discussion pattern (Hartley, 2008), but we noticed variation in crafting the abstracts. The first dissertation (01) abstract starts with a title description, followed by background, organization of chapters, methodology, objectives, methodology again, and findings. It does not include implications and/ or recommendations. The second dissertation (02) abstract begins with the objectives, followed by the methodology, findings, and recommendations, with the final paragraph providing the chapter description. Similarly, the third (03) dissertation abstract merges purpose and methodology in the first paragraph, context in the second paragraph, which is followed by findings in the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs, and recommendations in the last paragraph. However, most of the latest dissertation abstracts initiate with a context, background, and objective in the first paragraph. In a few abstracts, for instance, dissertations 01, 02, 020, a separate paragraph has been dedicated to the organisation of the dissertation. This

trend indicates that both the informative and descriptive ways of abstracting (Day, 1998; Svobodova et al., 2000) are in practice, but the informative way of abstracting seems to be more predominant. Similarly, all the abstracts we studied have followed the unstructured (Hartly, 2008) way of abstracting.

Furthermore, during our study, we also noticed a slight variation regarding content coverage, which largely focuses on context, objectives, methodology, findings, and implications. All of the abstracts have covered the contents like context, objectives, methodology, and findings, but a few of them, like dissertations 01, 010, and 022, explicitly lack implications. This shows that the PhD researchers are more concerned about including ‘what they found’ and ‘how they found’ in the abstracts than the ‘so what?’ aspect of their study. Moreover, we observed the inclusion of ‘limitations’ and ‘further study’ in the dissertation abstract, 031. These features found in the study are, by and large, consistent with Hartley (2008) and Svobodova (2000).

Besides, the findings of this study highlight some idiosyncrasies that deviate from general abstract conventions. Citations in an abstract (05, 011, 024, & 033) are a less conventional practice, but are practised in these abstracts as a stylistic choice. Similarly, the findings also revealed that an abstract (08) was composed in a very peculiar way, which comprises four paragraphs and seven sentences throughout the abstract. Out of the four paragraphs, the first, second, and fourth ones are two-sentence paragraphs, whereas the third one is a single-sentence paragraph. Moreover, irrespective of the suggestions made by Svobodova et al. (2000), we found the use of the present and past tense in both descriptive abstract and informative abstract. This shows that the PhD researchers in English education tend to break

down the continuum of convention to some extent.

Finally, the study underscored a trend towards an integrated and condensed practice of abstract writing. Wider coverage of contents like context, purpose or objectives, methodology, findings, and implications has appeared to be the fundamental components of an abstract.

Conclusion

The PhD awards, which started in 2008 under the English education at TU, have been remarkably expanding over the recent years. By 12 April, 2025, altogether 33 PhDs have been awarded, most of which were supervised by the male Professors. Out of the 33 awards, only three were achieved by female researchers, and the remaining were all by males. The PhD studies initiated with error analysis have expanded to many diverse areas, including socio-political issues as well. So, the studies have expanded beyond the classroom confinement and pedagogical sphere. Methodologically, the researchers are inclined to qualitative studies with the domination of phenomenology, case studies, and ethnographies.

The researchers tend to use both the nominal and the compound type of titles with a slightly stronger inclination towards the compound one. In terms of word count, the variation was ranged from 8 to 21 words. A similar kind of variation was also realized regarding the abstract structures. The number of paragraphs in abstracts ranged from three to thirteen. Apart from other components, context, objectives, methodologies, and findings turn out to be the unmissable components of abstracts.

Moreover, the English language PhD researchers are more inclined to explore the subjective issues that emerged in their field. They increasingly tend to develop interpretivist and critical worldviews rather than a positivist one. Beyond getting stuck to the conventional practices, the scholars appeared to enjoy flexibility in their studies.

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