



Article

Analysis of Stylistic and Discursive Errors in Master's Thesis Writing

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Abstract: Academic writing quality is a crucial indicator of research ability at the postgraduate level. Master's theses should follow established style and structure standards, yet many still exhibit stylistic and discursive issues. This research investigates the most common errors in master's thesis writing and their effects on coherence, clarity, and scholarly credibility. Using a qualitative approach, the study analyzes theses written in English by non-native speakers, focusing on stylistic and discourse features. Findings reveal that typical stylistic errors include poor word choice, redundancy, informality, and complex syntax, while discursive mistakes involve weak cohesion, unclear thematic flow, and inconsistent argumentation. The study indicates these problems arise from insufficient academic writing training, limited genre awareness, and native-language discourse influences. The article emphasizes the importance of systematic instruction in academic writing and suggests pedagogical strategies to improve stylistic and discourse skills among postgraduate students.

Keywords: academic writing; stylistic errors; discursive errors; master's thesis; discourse analysis; academic literacy.

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1. Introduction

The growing emphasis on research skills, numerous studies show that most master's students encounter serious challenges in producing well-structured and stylistically consistent academic texts. These issues are especially evident in the frequent occurrence of stylistic and discursive mistakes, which undermine the coherence and effectiveness of academic communication. Such mistakes are not merely linguistic inaccuracies but reflect deeper problems related to academic literacy, discourse awareness, and genre competence. Stylistic errors in master's theses often include irrelevant lexical opportunities, excessive verbosity, ambiguity, informal expressions, and deviations from the formal tone required in academic discourse. These challenges may arise due to limited exposure to academic writing norms, insufficient mastery of academic vocabulary, or the influence of spoken language and non-academic registers. In many cases, students struggle to balance clarity and formality, resulting in texts that lack precision and academic rigour.

However, discursive mistakes have some worries about the macro-level organization of the text and the logical development of ideas. They include weak cohesion between sentences and paragraphs, unclear thematic progression, inconsistent argumentation, and ineffective use of discourse markers. Such issues significantly affect the readability of the thesis and make it more difficult for readers to follow the author's line of reasoning. Discourse-related shortcomings often show an inappropriate understanding of how academic arguments are constructed and sustained across extended texts. In multilingual academic contexts, these challenges are further intensified by the influence of the students' first language. Literal translation strategies, transfer of native discourse patterns, and differences in rhetorical traditions frequently lead to structural and stylistic mismatches in English academic writing.

As a result, even conceptually strong research may fail to meet academic standards due to

weaknesses in written presentation. Given the increasing importance of academic writing quality in postgraduate education, a systematic analysis of stylistic and discursive errors in master's theses is both timely and necessary. Identifying common mistake patterns and their underlying causes can provide valuable insights for improving academic writing instruction and supporting students' research communication skills. Therefore, this research has some objectives to analyse the most frequent stylistic and discursive mistakes found in master's thesis writing and to propose pedagogically relevant strategies for enhancing academic discourse competence.

This research paper is conducted within a qualitative framework, employing stylistic and discourse analysis as its primary methodological tools. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for examining academic texts, as it enables a detailed exploration of linguistic choices, textual organization, and discourse patterns that cannot be fully captured through quantitative methods. The focus of the research is on identifying recurrent stylistic and discursive errors in master's theses and analyzing their impact on the overall coherence and academic quality of the texts. The research data consist of a selected corpus of master's theses written in English by non-native speakers. The theses were chosen through purposive sampling in order to ensure that the data were representative of common academic writing practices at the postgraduate level. The analysed texts belong to various academic disciplines, primarily within the humanities and social sciences, which allowed for a comparative examination of stylistic and discursive features across different fields. All selected theses followed the standard academic structure, including introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and conclusion sections.

The analysis process involved close reading and systematic examination of the texts. Stylistic errors were identified at the lexical, grammatical, and syntactic levels, with particular attention paid to inappropriate vocabulary usage, redundancy, informality, sentence complexity, and deviations from conventional academic style. Discursive errors were examined at the macro-textual level, focusing on cohesion, coherence, thematic progression, paragraph unity, and logical development of arguments. Discourse markers, referential devices, and transitions between sections were also analysed to assess the effectiveness of textual connectivity. All identified errors were categorised according to established principles of academic discourse and stylistic norms. The classification was guided by existing models of academic writing and discourse analysis, allowing the findings to be interpreted within a solid theoretical framework. To ensure analytical reliability, recurrent patterns were cross-checked across multiple texts, and similar error types were grouped to identify dominant tendencies in master's thesis writing. The methodological approach adopted in this study enables a comprehensive understanding of stylistic and discursive challenges faced by master's students. By combining textual analysis with discourse-oriented interpretation, the study provides a reliable basis for discussing the causes of academic writing deficiencies and for proposing pedagogically relevant recommendations aimed at improving postgraduate academic literacy.

2. Conclusion

This research paper has demonstrated that stylistic and discursive mistakes stays an important challenge in master's thesis writing and substantially affect the overall quality of academic texts. The findings show that such errors are not limited to surface-level linguistic inaccuracies but are closely connected to deeper problems of academic literacy, discourse competence, and genre awareness. Even when this study's content is conceptually strong, weaknesses in stylistic consistency and discourse organization can decrease the clarity, coherence, and persuasive power of scholarly communication.

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