

ANALYSIS OF STYLISTIC AND DISCURSIVE ERRORS IN MASTER'S THESIS WRITING

Fayziyeva Oydiniso Hikmatovna
Lecturer at Asia International University

Abstract

The quality of academic writing is a crucial indicator of research competence at the postgraduate level. Master's theses are expected to meet established standards of academic style and discourse organization; however, many texts demonstrate persistent stylistic and discursive deficiencies. This study investigates the most frequent stylistic and discursive errors found in master's thesis writing and examines their impact on textual coherence, clarity, and academic credibility. Employing a qualitative research design, the study analyzes a corpus of master's theses written in English by non-native speakers through stylistic and discourse-oriented textual analysis. The findings reveal that common stylistic errors include inappropriate lexical choice, redundancy, informality, and syntactic complexity, while discursive errors primarily involve weak cohesion, unclear thematic progression, and inconsistent argument development. The study argues that these problems are closely linked to insufficient academic writing training, limited genre awareness, and the influence of native language discourse patterns. The article concludes by emphasizing the importance of systematic academic writing instruction and proposes pedagogically relevant strategies for improving stylistic accuracy and discourse competence in postgraduate education.

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

Introduction

Academic writing plays a central role in higher education, particularly at the postgraduate level, where students are expected to demonstrate not only subject-matter expertise but also advanced linguistic and discursive competence. A master's thesis represents a complex academic genre that requires clarity of expression, logical organization, stylistic appropriateness, and adherence to established conventions of scientific discourse. The quality of academic writing directly affects the comprehensibility, credibility, and scholarly value of research outcomes.

The growing emphasis on research skills, numerous studies indicate that many master's students encounter serious difficulties in producing well-structured and stylistically consistent academic texts. These difficulties are especially evident in the frequent occurrence of stylistic and discursive errors, which undermine the coherence and effectiveness of academic communication. Such errors are not merely linguistic inaccuracies but reflect deeper issues related to academic literacy, discourse awareness, and genre competence. Stylistic errors in master's theses often manifest as inappropriate lexical choices, excessive verbosity, ambiguity, informal expressions, and deviations from the formal tone required in academic discourse. These issues 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 rigor.

Discursive errors, on the other hand, concern 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 problems significantly affect the readability of the thesis and make it difficult for readers to follow the author's line of reasoning. Discourse-related shortcomings often indicate inadequate 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 error patterns and their underlying causes can provide valuable insights for improving academic writing instruction and supporting students' research communication skills. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the most frequent stylistic and discursive errors found in master's thesis writing and to propose pedagogically relevant strategies for enhancing academic discourse competence.

This study is conducted within a qualitative research 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 analyzed 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 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 analyzed to assess the effectiveness of textual connectivity. All identified errors were categorized 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.

Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that stylistic and discursive errors remain a significant challenge in master's thesis writing and substantially affect the overall quality of academic texts. The findings indicate that such errors are not limited to

surface-level linguistic inaccuracies but are closely connected to deeper issues of academic literacy, discourse competence, and genre awareness. Even when research content is conceptually strong, weaknesses in stylistic consistency and discourse organization can reduce the clarity, coherence, and persuasive power of scholarly communication.

References:

1. Караулов, Ю. Н. (2010). Русский язык и языковая личность (4-е изд., с. 3–264).
2. Кубрякова, Е. С. (2004). Язык и знание: На пути получения знаний о языке (с. 5–560).
3. Шейгал, Е. И. (2000). Семиотика политического дискурса (с. 4–367).