

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ACADEMIC  
WRITING (IN ENGLISH) OF PHD THESES OF ARTS  
DISCIPLINES AT YANGON UNIVERSITY (2002-2004)**

**PhD DISSERTATION**

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### Abstract

This study was based on the hypothesis that for Myanmar scholars, writing academically in English is critical. The corpus of the investigation included fifteen doctoral dissertations from five Arts disciplines from Yangon University. The investigation was carried out to explore the specific problems concerning format conventions and language use.

To study format, a framework was set up based on the criteria suggested by scholars and institutions. To examine the language, Error Analysis was used as an analytical approach.

The findings revealed that certain dissertations did not include separate sections that are considered essential by international academic institutions. Consistency, page layout and writing in English academically were also key areas of deviations in the dissertations.

As regards language, the findings showed that no dissertation was error free. The errors were classified into five categories: errors in lexis, grammar, syntax, punctuation and spelling. The most frequent errors belonged to the grammatical category while the least frequent ones the spelling category. Punctuation errors were the second highest in the order of frequency while syntactic and lexical errors were the third and the fourth highest respectively.

Unfamiliarity with research paradigm and academic writing skills were the major causes of deviations in format. Fossilization, inadequate knowledge

of the target language rules and carelessness in proofreading were significant causes of errors. Literal translation from mother tongue often led to errors.

It is hoped that the research findings will contribute some insights into the further development of EAP curricula.