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Theses / Dissertation

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**Title:** How Culturally situated Notions of 'Politeness' Forms Influence the Way Saudi Postgraduate Students Write Academic English?

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## Abstract

An increasing number of Saudi students are pursuing postgraduate degrees in Australian universities, which is partly a result of greater recognition of English as an important language for academic purposes. This has benefited Saudi students, allowing them to study their discipline in academic environments in multi-cultural universities in Australia. However, it has meant that they face certain cross-cultural challenges when communicating in English, especially in academic writing. This study aims to explore Saudi postgraduate students' experiences in writing academic Arabic and academic English in Australian universities, with a special focus on how the Saudi culturally situated notion of "politeness" influences their academic writing in English. Other influences include the impact of religious such "Islam", Arabic writing conventions and cultural stylistic differences in expressing ideas. To investigate this, a qualitative approach was employed, involving the collection of data from semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted individually with four Saudi postgraduate students from the Faculties of Arts and Education. The research findings reveal that, all students have encountered intercultural miscommunication in writing academic English and that they identify religion and culture as factors that influence their academic writing in English. In light of politeness in academic English writing, this study establishes the principle of politeness from Saudi postgraduate students' perspectives. Finally, recommendations are provided for academic lecturers so that they can better understand Saudi postgraduate students' experiences in writing academic English.

**Keywords:** Saudi, Rhetoric, Culture, Politeness, Writing