English abstract is vital to an academic paper and a well-prepared abstract enables us to identify basic linguistic features of a paper. This study focuses on the analysis of journal articles or theses. Sample abstracts were selected from 20 different fields and each field select two English abstracts (Ea) and two abstracts those are from Chinese to English (Ta). Each abstract was divided into four sections following Bhatia’s (1993) model to analyze the linguistic features which includes the verb tense, passive voice, modal verbs, first person pronoun and length of section. The data about frequency of sections show that Chinese writers tend to express more in the introduction section than M, R, C sections and also show that some points appear in the wrong section. The reason is that some journals in China do not have standardized requirements about abstracts may result in neglect and lack of sections. The data about tenses show a great proportional difference between present simple and past in the sections, Introduction—67:43 in Ta, but 81:12 in Ea. That because Chinese does not pay too much attention to tense and Chinese writers do not realize the subtle meaning of tenses and the functions. The data about frequency of passive verbs show that Ea used more passive verbs than Ta. This could be because passive voice is rarely used in Chinese or different concepts have different understandings by people. Course material and concrete data can facilitate graduate students to understand the differences between the two languages in academic writing and also be helpful to understand the subtle meaning of English texts.

Key words: contrastive analysis, abstract, linguistic features