Abstract:

This study conducts a contrastive analysis of abstracts in Chinese and English research papers to explore linguistic differences and structural variations. The research aims to assist Chinese graduate students in enhancing their English academic writing skills by understanding common abstract structures and language preferences in native English abstracts. The study samples 80 abstracts across various disciplines, including theoretical and applied sciences, social sciences, medical science, and economics. Abstracts are categorized into four sections—introduction, methods, results, and conclusion—based on Bhatia's model, and linguistic features such as verb tense, passive voice, modal verbs, and first-person pronouns are examined.The results indicate that Chinese authors tend to provide more extensive introductions, sometimes at the expense of other sections, potentially due to the lack of standardized abstract requirements in some Chinese journals. A significant difference in the use of verb tenses between Chinese and English abstracts is observed, with Chinese abstracts showing a higher frequency of the present simple tense, especially in the introduction and conclusion sections. English abstracts, in contrast, exhibit a more balanced distribution of tenses, reflecting a nuanced understanding of tense usage in academic writing. The study also reveals a higher frequency of passive voice in English abstracts, which may be attributed to the negative transfer from Chinese writing habits or cultural differences in expressing the doer of an event.The conclusion emphasizes the need for well-prepared course materials that provide concrete data to help students grasp the linguistic subtleties of English academic writing. It suggests that further research is required to delve into the reasons behind the observed differences, offering a more comprehensive understanding for educational purposes.

Keywords: Abstracts, Contrastive Analysis, Linguistic Features, Academic Writing, Chinese and English Research Papers