In order to improve Chinese graduate students in their English academic writing courses, it is necessary to understand the current linguistic differences that often arise in abstracts written by native English scientists and Chinese scientists. The abstracts analyzed in this study focused on the journal articles or theses. 80 English sample abstracts were randomly selected from 20 different fields. Contrastive analyses between abstracts translated from Chinese to English (Ta) and English abstracts (Ea) and between Ea and Chinese abstracts were conducted. Bhatia’s (1993) model and SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was applied for statistical analysis. Results show that Chinese writers are not fully aware of the subtle meaning of tenses and the functions they play. Chinese writers have less experience in using the passive voice when writing method sections and have a different concept of the doer of events. It is concluded that graduate students should understand the differences between the two languages in academic writing with elaborate course materials, which help them gain a deeper understanding of the subtle meanings revealed by the English text.

Keywords: abstract, academic writing, linguistic differences, contrastive analyses