Abstracts play a crucial role in introducing the comprehensive scope of academic papers, particularly in English, the most widely used language. English abstracts are essential for scholars pursuing academic endeavors. This paper aims to assist graduate students in their English academic writing courses by examining the differences in abstract structures and linguistic features between abstracts written by English-speaking scientists and those by Chinese scientists. The study employed a contrastive analysis to compare translated English abstracts (Ta) with native English abstracts (Ea), as well as with original Chinese abstracts (Ca). Prior to conducting the contrastive analysis, sufficient data was collected and statistical analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The findings reveal that Chinese writers tend to elaborate more in their introduction sections compared to other sections and more so than their foreign counterparts. Moreover, the analysis of verb tenses indicates that Chinese writers are heavily influenced by their native language, which prioritizes meaning over form, resulting in less awareness of the nuanced meanings and functions of English verb tenses. Furthermore, English abstracts employ more passive voice constructions compared to translated English abstracts, possibly due to Chinese writers’ limited experience with passive voice in Chinese and differing concepts regarding the agent of an action. Therefore, providing course materials with concrete data is crucial for graduate students to understand these language differences and enhance their academic writing skills. Such materials will also enable students to gain deeper insights into the subtle meanings conveyed in English texts. Additionally, further research is needed to explore the specific reasons behind these findings to provide more convincing explanations.

Keywords: abstract, sections, linguistic features, contrastive analysis