Abstrct

English abstracts play a vital role in academic research, particularly for Chinese graduate students learning English academic writing. It is essential to grasp the linguistic differences between abstracts written by native English-speaking scientists and their Chinese counterparts to enhance educational outcomes.

Sample abstracts were randomly selected from 20 fields spanning theoretical and applied natural sciences, social sciences, medical science, and economics. This included 80 authentic English abstracts, comprising native English abstracts (Ea) and translated versions (Ta) from Chinese, alongside original Chinese abstracts (Ca). Abstracts were categorized into introduction (red), methods (black), results (green), and conclusions (blue) sections following Bhatia's model (1993). Linguistic features such as verb tense, passive voice, modal verbs, first-person pronouns, section length, and translation accuracy of scientific terms and numerical data were analyzed. Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS, involving frequency calculations and occasionally employing the Chi-square test to validate findings.

The study highlights notable differences in how Chinese authors structure their abstracts compared to English-speaking counterparts. Chinese authors often emphasize introductory sections more extensively but provide less detail in methods and results sections, indicating divergent academic norms and linguistic preferences. Moreover, the analysis reveals significant disparities in verb tense usage; Chinese abstracts predominantly employ the present simple tense in introductions, whereas English abstracts demonstrate a more even distribution of tenses across all sections. Furthermore, passive voice usage is less frequent in Chinese abstracts, particularly in methods sections, potentially influenced by native language conventions.

Well-prepared course materials with concrete data are essential for graduate students to grasp linguistic differences in academic writing between languages, facilitating deeper insights into nuanced meanings of English texts. Further specific studies are required to convincingly explore underlying reasons for these findings.

Keywords: Contrastive analysis, academic writing, linguistic features