Abstract:

This paper presents a comprehensive contrastive analysis of abstracts from Chinese and English research journals, focusing on the linguistic and structural disparities that could affect the academic writing proficiency of Chinese graduate students. The study involved a meticulous examination of 80 abstracts, evenly divided between authentic English abstracts (Ea) and their Chinese counterparts translated into English (Ta), alongside the original Chinese abstracts (Ca). The abstracts were categorized into four fundamental sections: Introduction, Method, Results, and Conclusion, each color-coded for clarity and analyzed for various linguistic elements. The contrastive analysis revealed that Chinese authors frequently provide more detailed introductions, possibly due to the absence of standardized abstract guidelines in some Chinese journals, leading to an imbalance in the distribution of content across the four sections. A significant finding was the underutilization of the conclusion section in Chinese abstracts, where points were often misplaced in the introduction.

Linguistic analysis exposed a notable variance in verb tense usage between Ta and Ea. Chinese abstracts predominantly employed the present simple tense, whereas English abstracts showed a preference for the past tense, reflecting a nuanced understanding of tense function in academic writing. The study also identified a higher frequency of passive voice in English abstracts, suggesting a cultural and linguistic influence on the expression of agency in scientific writing.

Statistical analysis using SPSS software was instrumental in quantifying these differences, with Chi-square tests employed to reinforce the findings. The study concludes that to bridge the gap in academic writing between Chinese and English contexts, Chinese graduate students require well-prepared course materials that provide concrete examples and deep insights into the subtleties of English academic texts.

Keywords: Contrastive Linguistics, Academic Abstracts, English and Chinese Writing Styles, Linguistic Analysis, Tense Usage, Passive Voice, Academic Writing Education