

A Comparative Study of Language Education Papers in Chinese and English Teaching Journals

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Abstract: In recent years, English has increasingly become the common language for academic communication. This trend undoubtedly increases the difficulty for non-native English speakers to publish articles in international journals and gain academic recognition. As the carrier of scientific research papers, academic journals are a common way in international academic exchanges, which can help readers understand the latest developments in this field. In order to study the similarities and differences of titles of foreign language teaching research papers at home and abroad, this paper collected 1089 language education papers published in four important academic journals at home and abroad from 2012 to 2019, and established two corpora of language education papers at home and abroad, which were compared and analyzed from macro and micro dimensions. The results show that the proportion of language education papers in Chinese and English applied linguistics journals is roughly equal, and the contents are basically the same. English periodicals are highly focused on teaching, while Chinese periodicals pay more attention to the study of teaching materials, while the study of syllabus is weak and needs to be strengthened.

1. Introduction

As a relatively independent academic discourse, abstract usually provides readers with real information covering the whole paper in a concise and accurate way [1]. At present, Chinese scholars are faced with great pressure to publish articles in international journals and difficulties such as being unfamiliar with the genre structure of international journals. The genre application of Chinese discourse has a long history and rich achievements, but it is slightly inferior in the recognition and application of English discourse genre because of social and cultural differences; Much attention has been paid to language education both at home and abroad, and many research results have been produced. At the same time, there are articles in China that use bibliometrics to analyze and discuss the research results of language education. Compared with foreign native language scholars, the English title writing of domestic scholars also needs to be strengthened. Cheng et al. [2] analyzed the discourse patterns of 80 English major graduation thesis abstracts, and found that the abstract structure of domestic students was influenced by the structure of native language genre, while the language form was dominated by Chinese writing tradition. Tan et al. [3] made a comparative analysis of the discourse structure of the introduction part of second language acquisition and second language writing, two sub-disciplines of applied linguistics, and found that the two types of papers used unrelated steps.

In this study, corpus and genre analysis are used to discuss the similarities and differences of English abstracts of empirical papers in Chinese and foreign language semester journals from the perspective of information highlighting, aiming at revealing the characteristics and shortcomings of Chinese language education research and providing reference for more targeted improvement.

2. Material Source and Analysis Method

The title corpus comes from four important journals at home and abroad: Foreign Language Teaching and Research, Foreign Languages, TESOL Quarterly and Language Teaching. Through

CNKI Knowledge Network, Wanfang Database and other network resource platforms, combined with libraries, periodicals and other access channels, we collect and analyze domestic and foreign literature in this research field, and conduct research on this basis.

Content analysis is a scientific research method for quantitative research of literature. In this paper, through the statistical analysis of all the papers published in World Chinese Teaching (Language Teaching and Research), Chinese Learning, Chinese Teaching and Research in CNKI and Wiley Online Library during 2012 -2019, we can understand the specific situation of these papers in terms of research methods and make a preliminary judgment, which is the basis of this paper's research.

Genre analysis of abstracts is inseparable from step analysis. Step refers to a language unit that can achieve a clear communicative purpose. As independent functional units, different steps are organized in a certain order to realize the functions of the whole text. The smallest step in a text is a sentence, and a step often contains more than one sentence. Theoretically, the subject sentence and the central thought sentence can appear anywhere in paragraphs and articles, at the beginning of paragraphs or articles, in the middle, at the end, or not at all, but hidden between the lines of articles. Journals publish high-level research papers in the field of foreign language teaching at home and abroad, which are highly authoritative in the field of foreign language teaching research. Although the sample size of journals is small, they have a wide audience and a high citation rate, which can not only reflect the characteristics of the titles of high-level teaching papers at home and abroad, but also reflect the trend of the titles of teaching research papers.

At the operational level of research and analysis, this paper makes a statistical analysis on the length of the topic, the frequency of words, the syntactic structure and so on with the help of SPSS software and python programming. In addition, this paper also adopts qualitative research methods, and compares the differences between the titles of foreign language teaching research papers in Chinese and foreign journals in terms of language syntactic form and pragmatic function through classification.

3. Comparative Analysis Results

3.1 Macroscopic comparative analysis of title corpus

The analysis results of 40 academic papers show that there are three steps in each paper written by foreign scholars, and the steps are frequently cycled. The author divides the titles of domestic journal title corpora and foreign journal title corpora by using shape and character respectively, and then inputs the title lengths one by one into SPSS 17. 0 to study whether there are significant differences in the title lengths in statistical sense. T test results of independent samples in Table 1 show that the average length of domestic titles is 10.84 words, while that of foreign titles is 10.84 words. The p value of the sample is less than 0. 05, so there is a significant difference between the two.

Table 1 Comparison of title length of teaching research papers in journals at home and abroad

Corpus	Total titles	Average length	Total number of words	Standard deviation	t	p
Domestic	603	12.36	8014	3.66		
Foreign	482	10.84	4593	4.18	5.017	.000

It can be seen that the length of abstracts in domestic pedagogy journals is mostly uneven, and the overall comparison is not as regular and standard as that of foreign scholars. This small difference may be caused by the following reasons: there is a certain gap between the English level of Chinese scholars and that of native English speakers, so it may be that English abstract translation tends to use fewer words to avoid obvious grammatical mistakes.

3.2 Comparison of voices in abstracts

Although the typical abstract genre structure is five steps, in fact, the five-step model is rarely used [4]. Almost all papers contain the research results step, which shows that most of the authors report the research results or put forward academic arguments with the help of this step, and stimulate

readers' interest in their own research by highlighting the core arguments and expect to be accepted by readers. However, there is no great difference in the distribution of central thought sentences between English and Chinese argumentative essays. The corresponding Chi-square test also shows that there are significant differences in the application of topic sentences between English and Chinese argumentative essays. Above, we have comparatively analyzed the length characteristics and tense of abstracts in educational journals at home and abroad, and then the author will analyze the details of abstract translation and writing at home and abroad from simple to deep. Table 2 below shows the voice comparison of English abstracts of educational journals at home and abroad.

Table 2 Voice comparison of English abstracts of educational journals at home and abroad

Voice	English abstracts of domestic educational journals		English abstracts of foreign educational journals	
	Active sentence	Quantity	98	Quantity
Proportion		89.35%	Proportion	63.01%
Passive sentence	Quantity	17	Quantity	33
	Proportion	13.71%	Proportion	24.87%

It can be seen from Table 2 that both Chinese and foreign scholars use active voice in the process of writing abstracts, while English native speakers use active voice in writing abstracts of educational journals with a frequency of 68.8%, while Chinese non-native English speakers use active sentences with a frequency of 88.9%, which is higher than that of foreign scholars. We find that the research of language education in applied linguistics in China has made great progress in quantitative research, and the proportion of experimental methods has also increased to a certain extent. In addition, domestic journal teaching research papers are usually written in Chinese, and English titles and abstracts are translated from Chinese to English, which will be affected by semantic transfer in code-switching. Then there is the universality of semantics. Many basic words expressing human society, natural phenomena and social phenomena can be converted with equivalent or similar words [5].

3.3 Research method

Table 3 Quantitative and experimental methods in language education research in Chinese and English applied linguistics

	Proportion of quantitative research in all papers	The proportion of quantitative research in language education research	Proportion of experimental research in all papers	The proportion of experimental research in language education research
Domestic	23.64%	27.14%	6.67%	4.37%
Foreign	49.66%	46.31%	18.224%	21.77%

In foreign language education research, quantitative research accounts for 49.66%, and experimental research accounts for 21.77% (see Table 3). The proportion of quantitative research is close to twice that of China, and the proportion of experimental research is close to five times that of China. Foreign language education research attaches great importance to experimental results and field investigation data, and they pay great attention to the research of practical problems, and can often go deep into teaching practice to do educational investigation and teaching experiments; It is increasing year by year, but the number of non-empirical research is also gradually decreasing, but it is still more than qualitative research and mixed research. Researchers often use the resources of previous studies to pave the way for their own research, so as to make their own research plump and textured; At the same time, it inherits the tradition of previous studies and increases its authority and credibility, so as to make the scholars of the same discourse group recognize it. It can fully "condense" the important information of the text. Even if there is a word limit, from the perspective of information integrity, the contribution of five steps is obviously higher than four steps, and four steps

are obviously higher than three steps or even two steps. Because in both Chinese and English argumentative papers, more than 55% of the topic sentences appear at the beginning of a paragraph, while the topic sentences at the beginning of a paragraph indicate that writing is direct, while other types of topic sentences indicate that writing is indirect.

Contrastive linguistics should not only study the reference of foreign languages, but also study the negative influences between languages-all kinds of interference caused by comparing native languages with foreign languages. In addition, we also find that the proportion of quantitative research in all papers, language education research, experimental research and language education research in China is 27.33%, 24.07%, 6.74% and 4.47% respectively. There are no articles using mixed research methods in the literature of Chinese Learning for ten years, and the non-empirical research and quantitative research show completely opposite trends. With the advancement of time, the number of non-empirical studies is decreasing, and quantitative studies are replacing them. As a matter of fact, this provision is aimed at Chinese grammar habits, which does not mean that it is also applicable to English grammar. Another reason is that most domestic journals require Chinese abstracts to use the third person instead of the first person in their manuscripts, and require the translated English abstracts to echo the Chinese abstracts one by one. However, Chinese scholars use step 1 relatively simply. In addition, Step 3, "Reviewing Previous Studies", has the highest frequency in papers at home and abroad, and the frequency in papers of foreign scholars is much higher than that of domestic scholars.

Because the research background language step provides readers with important information such as understanding the research field, the necessity of research and filling in the gaps in view of the shortcomings, its marketing effect is particularly important for foreign readers [6]. In the past, whether a certain step should be retained or which steps should be required or optional was recognized and discussed from the perspective of discourse structure or writing norms. However, we believe that the importance of information is the decisive factor in the choice of steps. This shows that although every culture and language will influence their thinking mode and rhetoric tradition to a certain extent, as a social group, human thinking mode has its Republican part; Rhetorical patterns are not as rigid as people think. Different languages and cultures may have the same or similar rhetorical patterns. No matter how the method is divided, each has its own advantages, and there are always other defects. On the other hand, there is inevitably a cross between different categories. From the perspective of foreign language teaching, it is preferable to divide culture into knowledge culture and communicative culture.

3.4 Fill the gap in the research field

The function of step 3 is to fill in the research gaps raised in step 2. This function is realized by outlining the structure and purpose of current research and reporting the main research results. Writing norms are not an important consideration, but what information is more important, persuasive and attractive to readers in this field is an important factor. These paragraphs will be excluded from the analysis object, because the theme of a paragraph can not be fully developed by one or two sentences alone; The introduction paragraph and conclusion paragraph are used to lead out the topic and draw conclusions respectively, instead of launching a topic. The comparison between Chinese and foreign languages is conducive to the further study of Chinese itself; It is beneficial to absorb lively expressions and fresh vocabulary in other languages [7]; It is also conducive to the purity of the motherland's language and the prevention of mixed sediment. The absorption function of language and the pollution phenomenon of language are opposite and exist at the same time. We can conclude that the top 50 words used frequently in English abstracts of Chinese and foreign educational journals are basically the same, but only a few words are different. In the process of marking the magazine "Chinese Learning", the author found that although this journal is a bimonthly magazine, the articles in it are actually biased towards ontology research, and there are only 107 articles related to teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

The remainder words refer to words that have little to do with the content of the article and cannot effectively convey the theme, such as "research, investigation and discussion" in the Chinese title or

"analysis, study, research" in the English title. However, while comparing the two journals, it is not difficult for the author to find that English abstracts written by foreign scholars are more professional and idiomatic, while English papers written by domestic scholars are relatively simple and low-level. The analysis results of step 3 are shown in Table 4. Scholars at home and abroad focus on using step 1a and step 1b to realize the function of step 3. To be exact, domestic scholars only use these two steps to realize the function of Step 3, and Steps 2 and 3 are completely missing. Foreign scholars also use steps 2 and 3. This phenomenon also shows that foreign scholars are familiar with CARS model, while domestic scholars are not skilled in using this model.

Table 4 The frequency of step 3 and its steps in the introduction

The structure of step 3	Foreign		Domestic	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
The total frequency of steps in step 3	30	100	15	100
Step 1a: Outline the research purpose	17	27	4	21
Step 1b: Report the research situation	21	58	8	62
Step 2: Report the main findings	3	3	1	2
Step 3: Introduce the paper structure	7	13	3	14

In addition, in addition to using the four steps included in Step 3 in CARS mode, this study finds that foreign scholars will make some predictions or list the hypotheses that researchers want to verify, while domestic scholars mainly use the two choices of Step 1. In fact, the integrity of information is a relative concept. Under what conditions, such as the number of abstract words required by journals, for which academic groups, the differences between disciplines and the degree of completeness are a matter of choice. In fact, the integrity of information is a relative concept. Under what conditions, such as the number of abstract words required by journals, for which academic groups, the differences between disciplines and the degree of completeness are a matter of choice. After considering these factors, it is as "complete" as possible. In addition, the comparison between Chinese and foreign languages is also of great significance to foreign language teaching and Chinese teaching as a foreign language. In essence, Chinese-foreign translation is carried out in contrast. The study of translation theories, rules and techniques belongs to the category of contrastive linguistics.

4. Summary

Through the macro and micro multi-dimensional comparative analysis of the titles of foreign language teaching research papers in domestic and foreign journals, it is found that domestic titles are obviously longer than foreign titles and contain many redundant words; The proportion of quantitative research in China is increasing rapidly, but the utilization rate of corpus is always very low. Compared with the vigorous corpus construction in China in recent years, the utilization rate of corpus in language education research in China is pitifully low. The research methods of teaching narrowness as a foreign language in China are undergoing great changes, from non-empirical and personal experience research to more objective and scientific empirical research. This change is a great progress for the whole discipline. In addition, there are differences in English proficiency between Chinese scholars who translate English abstracts and native English speakers, so they tend to use simple sentences to avoid mistakes in abstract writing. Therefore, Chinese scholars should learn from foreign scholars to increase the length of abstracts appropriately, so as to show the main contents of the study more completely.

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