# English-language Abstracts in Finance and Accounting Journals: A corpus-based comparison of international and Chinese L1 Writers

**by**

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# Abstract

This research is a study of textual variations in the structural moves and linguistic features identified in a balanced corpus of English-language research article (RA) abstracts written by international and Chinese academic writers from the disciplines of Finance and Accounting. Using a range of corpus-based methods of investigation, the study compares English-language research article abstracts written by Chinese writers and published in Chinese-language journals on the one hand, with English-language research article abstracts written by international writers (i.e. academics from a wide range of national backgrounds) and published in leading international journals on the other. The analysis finds that there are significant differences in the move structures of the English abstracts written by international and Chinese writers, both in terms of move sequences as well as in terms of the usage of individual moves. The study also finds that abstracts written by the two groups of writers display differences in their characteristic linguistic features, most notably in the usage of first person pronouns, and in the usage of finite subordinate clauses. Surveys are then conducted to verify the textual findings. In general, the study demonstrates that RA abstracts written by Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers diverge in a substantial number of important ways from those written by their international peers. The thesis identifies a number of points of difference that could form the basis of an English for Academic Purposes course devoted to the teaching of RA abstract writing skills.

# Dedication

To my beloved daughter Yingxi

# Acknowledgments

I would like to extend thank you to many people, without whom the completion of this thesis would be impossible.

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# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Aim of the research

This thesis is a comparative, corpus-based linguistic study of 800 English-language academic abstracts in the fields of Finance and Accounting across academic journal articles published internationally and in China. The research is contrastive in the sense that it will study and compare English-language abstracts written by two groups of people: Chinese Finance and Accounting academics writing for Chinese journals on the one hand, and international Finance and Accounting academics writing for prestigious international journals on the other. The basic hypothesis of the study is that there will be important differences in the rhetorical structure as well as the linguistic characteristics of abstracts written by members of these two groups. The aim of the research is to test this hypothesis empirically, and to identify any characteristic differences so that they may be drawn to the attention of Chinese academic writers, with the aim of improving their English abstract writing efficiency and thus helping them to meet the international academic community's expectations and thus more effectively disseminate their research internationally.

## 1.2 Field of the research

### 1.2.1 Genre and genre analysis

The field of research that this thesis aims to make a contribution to is the field of genre analysis. Since the 1980s, the concept of genre has increasingly come to prominence in Linguistics and related fields, and is now a substantial area of interdisciplinary research activity. In an influential survey of this work, Hyon (1996) proposed that the field of genre

research can be divided into three main traditions: the New Rhetoric (hereafter referred to as NR) tradition, the Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter referred to as SFL) tradition, and the English for Specific Purposes (hereafter referred to as ESP) tradition of genre analysis. What these three traditions have in common is an understanding of "genre" as a social rather than a linguistic category; genres are conventionalized forms of practice located within particular social contexts. Verbal and written texts ("communicative events" in the ESP tradition and "social processes" in the SFL tradition) are nevertheless of central interest in genre studies, and are studied in terms of both their forms and their functions. However, each tradition has a different emphasis and its own methodology. Emphasis of the NR approach is on individual case studies and primarily takes an ethnographic approach. It tends to focus on literacy practices and is less interested in textual features as such. The SFL genre analysis approach, in contrast, is very strongly focused on the structural properties of genres, and aims to describe these from within its own functional linguistic theoretical perspective. In the middle lies the ESP genre analysis approach. This approach shares with the SFL tradition a strong focus on textual analysis, but also shares the NR interest in exploring the contexts of text production and readers' reception. This thesis is rooted within, and also aims to contribute to this latter approach to genre analysis, by carrying out an analysis of an important academic genre, the research article (hereafter referred to as RA) abstract.

### 1.2.2 The RA abstract genre

The research article abstract is "a result of a well-defined and mutually-understood communicative purpose" (Bhatia, 1993, p.77). As Ventola (1994a, p.333; quoted in Lores, 2004, p.281) points out, the genre of abstract is an essential constituent of the research article as it "[has] become a tool of mastering and managing the ever increasing information flow in the scientific community". By providing the reader with a succinct preview of the structure, content and argumentation of an article, the abstract plays a crucial role in determining a research article's readability as well as its acceptability among its target audience (Hyland, 2004). In this sense, a good written abstract can be seen as an advertisement for a paper (Pho,

2008), and thus as having the potential to maximise its readership (Ren and Li, 2011). This latter point is arguably of particular significance for English non-native writers as English is now well established as the international lingua franca of academic discourse communities across the disciplinary spectrum. From this perspective, the abstract genre plays a crucial role in helping to "guarantee that the reported results of scientific work will circulate worldwide" (Ventola, 1994a, p.333; quoted in Lores, 2004).

Whilst it is possible to speak in general terms of the abstract genre as a single communicative phenomenon, it should also be noted here that rhetorical purposes of English abstracts written and published in international journals are somewhat different from those published in Chinese academic journals. In international journals, the English abstracts precede and are attached to original English research articles. Thus, they not only serve summary, search and indexing purposes, but also attempt to 'hook' potential readers, that is, convince them to read the original RAs in full (Hyland, 2004). In contrast to this, English abstracts published in Chinese academic journals precede and are attached to research articles written in Chinese (see Appendix 1). Thus they are more often than not the only part of a published research article that is actually written in English, and are provided for the benefit of potential international readers who have little or no reading ability in Chinese (Zhang, 2012; Lores-Sanz, 2016). In this context, the rhetorical purpose of the English-language abstract is not to 'hook' the reader, but to act as a 'mini-article' summarizing the content of the original Chinese article.

As Lores (2004, p.281) notes, "it is not unusual for journals published in languages other than English to expect the author to write an English abstract of their article". This is certainly the case in the Chinese academic context; Chinese scholars typically write academic papers in Chinese but are also requested to provide abstracts written in English, in order to facilitate access to the international academic community (Cao and Xiao, 2013a, 2013b). According to a survey conducted by the China Association for Science and Technology (2002, quoted in Zhang, 2012), most Chinese academic journals require the submission of an English abstract. This has been confirmed by Lu (2009), who found that

over 75% of Chinese core academic journals require English abstracts. As Chinese is not widely understood by non-Chinese academics, English-language abstracts are effectively the sole means by which research written in Chinese-language journals can be made available to international audiences. Thus, English abstracts published in Chinese academic journals bear the rhetorical purpose of summarizing original Chinese RAs and presenting Chinese scholars' research to international academic audiences. Moreover, as Cao and Xiao (2013a) point out, "a concisely and accurately presented abstract will make it easier for a non-native writer to be admitted into the research community of their discipline". It is this context of production and reception that the present study focuses on: all of the Chinese data are English abstracts written by Finance and Accounting academics, provided together with their original Chinese research articles.

From Swales' pioneering ESP genre research onwards (Swales 1990), there has been a substantial amount of research focusing on the RA abstract genre (e.g. Ren and Li, 2011; Suntara and Usaha, 2013; Li and Pramoolsook, 2015; Huang, 2018). In his seminal work *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*, Swales (1990) proposed that the IMRD (i.e. Introductions, Methods, Results and Discussion) model of research article structure could also serve as a description of the rhetorical structure of the abstract genre. But in a subsequent work, *Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts*, Swales and Feak (2009) proposed instead a new five-move model for describing RA abstract structure, which has proved highly influential.

In addition to macro level studies such as this, some researchers have also paid attention to the micro level of language features used in abstract writing. Some studies focus on multiple linguistic features (e.g. Pho 2008; Cao and Xiao 2013a, 2013b; Friginal and Mustafa 2017). Other studies have focused on single linguistic features in abstracts, such as Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) study on evaluative *that* clauses, Li's (2016) study on modality, etc. Most of these previous studies have involved either comparisons across various academic disciplines (e.g. Pho, 2008; Golebiowski, 2009; Suntara and Usaha, 2013; Hatzitheodorou, 2014; Huang, 2018), or across different cultures/languages (e.g. Melander,

Swales and Fredrickson, 1997; Martin-Martin, 2003; Pezzini, 2003; Diani, 2014).

Given the situation that there is increasing research interest in the research article abstract genre in the international Applied Linguistics community, there have already been many previous studies about this genre. One may therefore ask: why do we need another study of the abstract genre? I will present the rationale for the current research in the following section.

### 1.3 Rationale of the research

In recent years, the Chinese government has begun to vigorously promote Chinese academic internationalisation. At the 2018 conference of academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and Chinese Academy of Engineering, President Xi specifically put forward the view that Chinese academics should take greater efforts to contribute "Chinese wisdom" to international academic development.[1] Such efforts have been encouraged, and continue to be encouraged, by a range of government policies and initiatives. In 2015, the Chinese State Council declared and enacted an "overall construction plan for world class universities and first class disciplines", with the explicit aim of improving and promoting the international standing of Chinese academics and research institutions (Wu et al., 2017). With this construction plan, many universities encouraged international cooperative teaching patterns, attracted and brought in overseas returnee academics, and encouraged more visiting scholars to come to internationally prestigious universities and high level conferences (Huang et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2017). At the same time, there has been a drive to encourage Chinese academics' deeper involvement in international academic communities (Wu, et al., 2017). This initiative takes two main forms. The first involves encouraging or requiring more Chinese academics to publish in international (and thus mainly English-medium) journals. To this end, many Chinese universities have set in place international publication standards and reward systems (Xu and Jiang, 2018). There is evidence that these initiatives are already

[1] http://news.china.com/zw/news/13000776/20180528/32460304.html

having an impact. In an interview-based study, Li (2014) reported that Chinese medical academics regarded publication in English as bringing more rewards, both materially and symbolically, than publishing in Chinese (cf. Salager-Meyer, 2014). Some universities have even set strict rules and requirements for academic staff to engage actively in international publication activity. One such institution is the university at which I am currently employed, the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (hereafter referred to as SWUFE). In order to maintain its position as one of the top three Finance and Economics universities in China, SWUFE now requires all academic and teaching staff to publish at least one research article in a leading international academic journal every three years. This policy is not an isolated one. In China these days, many universities and research institutes require professionals to write and publish research articles in internationally recognised English medium journals. After all, English "is not just the language of science but rather the language of the richer countries at the heart of scientific production and the language of the most prestigious journals" (Lillis and Curry, 2013, p.221). If, as Swales (1990, p.7) points out, "publication can be seen as documentary evidence that the writer qualifies for membership in the target discourse community", there is now growing evidence that Chinese academics and institutions have a much more internationally-oriented view of what academic discourse communities they wish to be regarded as members of than was the case in the past.

The other way in which China has been attempting to enhance its international research profile is by promoting international awareness of, and interest in, Chinese academic journals. Since 2012, the Chinese National Social Science Fund has provided financial aid to 200 academic journals in the Humanities and Social Sciences, with the explicit aim of promoting the internationalisation of these journals[2]. One of the most important aspects of this process is the addition of English-language abstracts to Chinese-language journal articles published in national academic journals (Bai, 2009; Shen et al. 2010; Salager-Meyer, 2014). While the presence of English-language abstracts in non-Anglophone journals is nothing new in itself, it has been given a massive boost in recent years by the development of internet

[2] http://theory.people.com.cn/n/2013/0821/c107503-22636178.html

technologies, and in particular by the ever-widening online access to academic texts provided by retrieval systems such as EI Compendex and Google Scholar (Liu and Zhao, 2013; Salager-Meyer, 2014). Online English abstracts from all over the world are now captured on such retrieval systems, and it is through these platforms that Chinese scientific and technological achievements can be discovered by international academics who might otherwise be totally unaware of them (Jin et al, 2004). It is therefore not surprising to find that well over 75% of Chinese core academic journals now require authors to submit an English-language abstract, even if the rest of the article is written entirely in Chinese (Lu, 2009).

As Jin et al (2004) point out, however, the potential for academic internationalisation provided by the English language abstract is dependent to a great extent on how well-written these abstracts are. Clearly, a high quality English-language abstract is far more likely than a poorly-written one to attract readers, and thus to boost retrieval numbers and citation frequencies. Conversely, an online deluge of poor quality English-language abstracts is only likely to damage the reputation of Chinese scholars among international academic communities. And in this respect, Chinese academic writers face a potentially serious dilemma. On the one hand, many if not most Chinese academic writers now regard understanding and using internationally accepted conventions for abstract writing as essential skills for engaging with international academic communities (Li and Rij-Heyligers 2011). On the other hand, these same scholars perceive mastery of the English language as the biggest barrier to their publishing in international academic journals and thus being accepted into international academic communities. No matter how many years of English education they have received (for a freshman in university, this is at least six years), Chinese L1 speakers usually perform comparatively poorly in writing tests such as academic IELTS test (Lai, 2015); according to Luo and Yan (2013), the average writing score of Chinese IELTS participants was 5.2 in 2012, ranking as the last but six in all 41 major participating countries/districts. It can be seen that Chinese examinees' writing scores are significantly below global average scores; and for them, the writing section needs further

improvement (Cao, 2017). This is at least partly due to the fact that most Chinese academics have not received any training in English academic writing skills, and thus do not know how to construct appropriate academic texts in English (Salager-Meyer 2014), and generally find the process of writing in English an onerous and tedious one (Flowerdew and Li 2007).

The Chinese government has been mindful about this issue for a long time, and has sought to provide academics with explicit guidance with regard to abstract writing. From as early as 1986, the Chinese National Bureau of Standards formulated and introduced a set of "rules for abstracts and abstracting" (GB6447-86), which stipulates rules for writing abstracts in English as well as in Chinese. However, there seems to be little or no awareness of these rules among Chinese academic writers. (Interview-based evidence to substantiate this claim will be provided in Chapter Eight of this thesis.)

## 1.4 Research questions

In summary, the aim of this thesis is to investigate how closely English-language abstracts in Chinese-language journals correspond to the conventional abstracts published in prestigious English-medium international journals. If areas of difference are found, these will be identified as possible candidate features for EAP instructors to focus on when conducting English academic writing skills classes for research-active Chinese academic staff.

In order to carry out this investigation, therefore, the present study addresses the following three research questions based on the comparison studies of 800 English abstracts:

***1. To what extent do the rhetorical move structures of abstracts in international and Chinese academic journals in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting conform to the conventional abstract rhetorical move structure model proposed by Swales and Feak (2009)?***

By this research question, I intend to find out whether abstracts written by the

above-mentioned two groups typically have all the five basic moves defined by Swales and Feak (2009), as discussed briefly above. And if not, I will identify which move(s) are and are not frequently used by these two groups of writers. I also intend to find out the commonly used move sequence in abstracts written by the two groups of writers.

***2. Are there any characteristic lexico-grammatical features associated with each move in abstracts written by each of the above mentioned groups, and are there any notable similarities and/or differences in the patterns of linguistic feature usage across the two groups of writers?***

By this research question, I intend to find out whether there are any statistically significant differences in the typical lexico-grammatical characteristics of abstracts written by the two groups of writers represented in my data, and if so, what functions these features tend to serve. More specifically, my aim here is to investigate whether there are any lexico-grammatical features that Chinese academic writers typically 'underuse' or 'overuse' (Granger and Rayson 1998) in comparison to their international peers when writing English-language abstracts. To answer this question fully, I will carry out an empirical investigation at two levels of analysis. First, I will look for patterns of lexico-grammatical underuse and overuse at the level of individual rhetorical moves in the abstract genre, and I will then search for forms that are more generally overused and underused at the level of the abstract text as a whole. If many linguistic differences are found, it will be necessary for reasons of space to select only a few features for more detailed qualitative analysis.

***3. How do Chinese Finance and Accounting academics view the process of writing abstracts in English?***

By this research question, I intend to find out whether and to what extent Chinese academic writers in the fields of Finance and Accounting are aware of the typical rhetorical structures

and lexico-grammatical features of English-language abstracts in their discipline. Do they want to write better English abstracts to meet international writing conventions? What potential methods will they adopt/have they adopted? I will attempt to find answers to the above questions, and also to gain a better general understanding of the contexts in which Chinese Finance and Accounting academics write, through the use of questionnaires and interviews (specifically, 30 questionnaires and 4 interviews with Chinese Finance and Accounting academics).

### 1.5 Thesis outline

This thesis consists of nine chapters. Following this introductory chapter, I will provide in Chapter Two a review of relevant literature focusing primarily on the theory and practice of genre analysis, with particular attention to the genre of the academic RA abstract. In Chapter Three I will first describe the corpus compilation procedure adopted for the study, and then present an overview of the composition of the two sub-corpora that were created for the research. Chapter Four will focus on the rhetorical move structure analysis required by research question 1. In Chapter Five, I will use the technique of keyness to examine and compare lexico-grammatical profiles for each of the moves identified in Chapter Four, and thus to identify features that may be underused or overused by Chinese abstract writers in comparison to their international counterparts. From the features identified in this analysis, I then select two sets of linguistic features for further qualitative and quantitative analysis: first person pronouns, particularly *we* and *our*, and finite subordinate clauses. These two sets of features will be studied in detail in Chapter Six and Seven. Following these four text-based analysis chapters, I then present in Chapter Eight an overview of my questionnaire and interview data, focusing in particular on features of these data that cast light on the results of the textual analyses reported in Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven. As Bhatia (1993) points out, checking text-based analyses with ‘specialist informants’ can add depth to the genre analyst’s interpretations and can help further explore potential reasons behind the surface

descriptions provided by textual analyses. Thus, in this chapter, I will attempt to gain some insights into Chinese Finance and Accounting scholars' understanding of RA abstracts, to identify possible reasons for observed rhetorical and linguistic differences, and to evaluate the current teaching situation regarding how abstract writing is taught in EAP writing courses in China. In the final chapter, I will conclude the thesis by summarizing the key findings of the study and, by briefly discussing directions for future research.

# CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter I briefly introduced the academic research article abstract as an academic genre. In this chapter, I will look in greater detail at the underlying questions of what a 'genre' actually is, and how a genre might be analysed from a linguistic (and more specifically from a corpus-linguistic) perspective. I will also review previous research on the abstract genre, and through this review I will develop a more detailed rationale for carrying out the research reported in this thesis.

## 2.1 Genre and genre analysis

### 2.1.1 The concept of genre

Derived from the Latin word "genus" meaning "kind" or "class" (Rosemarin, 1985), the word genre has long been applied in literary critical theory and analysis. Indeed, this tradition can be traced back to Aristotle and Horace, who classified Tragedy and Epic as the two main literary genres of the classical era (Nwogu, 1989). In more recent times, the main literary genres have been identified as "Fiction (subdivided into the novel, the short story, and the epic), Drama (in prose or in verse), and Poetry" (Wellek and Warren, 1976, p.227).

Since the 1980s, the concept of genre has increasingly drawn the attention of linguists, "especially in applied linguistics research in ESP and EST where it has proved invaluable as a useful concept for characterizing texts" (Nwogu, 1989, p.45). Although with a much shorter history, the concept of genre in linguistics and language studies has established itself very quickly as a major research area. According to Hyon (1996), it is possible to identify and distinguish between three major schools or traditions studying non-literary genres. The first is New Rhetoric (NR) genre analysis, as represented by scholars such as Bazerman (1988, 2009), Miller (1984, 1994) and Devitt (2004). The second is the "Sydney" school, or

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) genre analysis, represented by Halliday and Martin (1993), Martin (1993), amongst others. The third is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) genre analysis, as represented most prominently by Swales (1984, 1990, 2004), Bhatia (1993, 2004), Dudley-Evans (1994, 1997) and Hyland (2004). What the three traditions have in common is an emphasis on the discourse functions and communicative purposes of genres rather than on formal classification as in literary criticism:

> genres reflect and coordinate social ways of knowing and acting in the world, and hence provide valuable means of researching how texts function in various contexts... and how to teach students to act meaningfully in various contexts (Bawarshi and Reiff, 2010, p.5)

In addition to this broadly shared understanding of genre, the three traditions also share the pedagogic objective of cultivating students' "generic competence" (Bhatia, 2000; quoted in Paltridge, 2001, p.7). Generic competence indicates the ability to understand and also participate in communicative activities in the real world. Genre theorists of all the three traditions share the belief that teaching students explicitly about genres will help them to establish, use and explore generic conventions in order to realise their own communicative purposes (ibid). In this sense, genre knowledge is seen as providing access not only to communication, but also to social empowerment, as mastery of a society's genres is an essential condition for full participation in that society (Hyon, 1996).

Of course, there are differences as well as similarities amongst these three traditions. Perhaps the most obvious difference lies in the way in which each tradition approaches the question of whether and to what extent genre analysis should focus on the linguistic forms that genre take. On this point, the NR tradition differs strongly from the other two in that it perceives linguistic analysis as being of only peripheral interest at best. As the founder of the NR approach, Miller (1984, p.151) argues: "a rhetorically sound definition of genre must be centred not on the substance or the form of discourse but on the action it is used to accomplish". In NR, the main research objects are not so much generic texts in isolation but the contexts in which generic texts are produced. Scholars focus

ethnographically on students and/or professional writers whose first language is English, and attempt to understand how these writers try to use generic resources to make meanings in particular situations. Thus, while NR studies may include discussions of the language choices that individual writers make, these analyses are more oriented towards "a discussion of the rhetorical situation rather than with a more specific analysis of lexico-grammatical elements within the texts" (Johns, 2002, p.9).

In terms of attention to linguistic form, the SFL approach to genre stands at the opposite end of the spectrum to the NR approach. While SFL scholars share with NR researchers the core idea that genres are best understood as social rather than linguistic processes, SFL scholars nevertheless regard these processes as always being "linguistically realized" (Martin, 1985, p.250), and argue therefore that linguistic analysis is fundamental to genre study. As Martin (1985, p.250) explains, "the term genre is used [in the SFL tradition] to embrace each of the *linguistically realized activity types* which comprise so much of our culture." Thus, in SFL, generally recognised text types such as company reports, crime novels, movie reviews or academic research article are identified as 'macro-genres', which comprise a series of more basic 'genres', each of which performs an individual semiotic function, such as 'exposition', 'description', 'recount', 'explanation' and so on (Martin, 1989, 1992). Since the 1980s, SFL genre researchers (including Hammond, 1987; Callaghan et al., 1993; Martin, 1993) have conducted investigations mainly in the context of Australian primary and secondary schools, for the purpose of studying and creating "a genre-based pedagogy consistent with Systemic Functional Linguistics" (Jones, 2002, p.5). A major outcome of this research is Martin's (1992) "schematic structure" model of genre and "teaching/learning cycle" approach to genre pedagogy (Hyon, 1996, p.705). With the establishment of the "Literacy and Education Research Network (LERN)" (Cope et al., 1993, p. 239), such genre-based curricula have been promoted in Australian primary and secondary schools, and also extended to adult migrant language training program. It is therefore no exaggeration to state that, in Australia, "genre-based pedagogy has influenced the entire state educational system" (Hyon, 1996, p.710).

If the NR and SFL approaches can be thought of as standing at two opposite

poles of the genre analysis continuum, the third and final approach to be reviewed here, the ESP approach, can be thought of as occupying a 'middle ground' between them, both intellectually and pedagogically. However, this is not to say that the ESP approach is an amalgam or synthesis of the other two approaches. On the contrary, the ESP approach has developed quite independently during the same time period, and has its own distinctive conventions and emphases.

The origins of the ESP approach can be traced back to early work on the pedagogically-motivated description of scientific English by Tarone et al. (1981) and Swales (1981), with Swales and Bhatia establishing the research foundation for the ESP genre school in seminal studies published in the early 1990s (Swales, 1990; Bhatia, 1993). For Swales and other ESP scholars, "[a] genre is a class of communicative events...with shared set of communicative purposes" (Swales, 1990, p.45-46). As the name indicates, the research objects of ESP genre analysis are generic texts written within specialised professional discourse domains. A key motivation of this approach is to provide pedagogically useful insights for teachers of English for academic or other specific purposes whose students are non-native speakers of English. ESP genre analysis aims to help non-native speakers comprehend as well as construct professional discourse, and thus participate fully and successfully in the specialised discourse communities that they are (or wish to become) members of.

Undoubtedly the best-known analytical approach that has been developed from within the ESP tradition is move structure analysis. Originally developed in a series of groundbreaking publications by Swales (e.g. Swales 1981, 1990, 2004), move structure analysis (hereafter abbreviated to the shorter label 'move analysis'), aims "to identify the rhetorical moves of a text, or the parts of the text that carry out distinct rhetorical functions" (Tardy and Swales, 2014, p.168). Move analysis will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

While the main focus of analysis in this approach is on the typical linguistic characteristics of generic texts (as in the SFL approach), ESP analysis are also interested in studying and accounting for the contexts in which such texts are produced (as in the NR

approach). Perhaps the most famous example of this is Swales (1998), a book-length ethnographically-oriented study of three very different discourse communities occupying different floors of a single university building. Ultimately, ESP analysts see discourse analytic and ethnographic perspectives on genre as being of equal value: "[w]hen used in combination, linguistic and ethnographic methods can provide a more robust understanding of the meaning that particular generic features hold for users or even of the ways in which [such features] influence readers' textual interpretations" (Tardy and Swales, 2014, p.169).

Although Hyon's (1996) distinction between the three traditions of genre analysis as described above has recently been called into question by some commentators (Tardy and Swales, 2014, p.166), for example, suggest that "integrative and cross-over work over the last decade … has considerably blurred and complicated this tripartite division", I believe that it remains a useful heuristic for classifying current research. Certainly, the research reported in this thesis affiliates very clearly and strongly with ESP genre analysis. There are several reasons for this. First of all, I regard the abstract as a distinct and definable genre in itself, and the word 'abstract' as a functional label that describes this genre as a whole. This is different from the SFL tradition, where (as discussed earlier in this section) the academic abstract would be regarded not as one genre but as a 'macro-genre' combining several different functional genres -- exposition, argument etc.

Secondly, my research relies heavily on comparative linguistic analysis, including both move structure analysis and text analysis. This differentiates the current study from NR, in which the main methods adopted are surveys, such as field observation, interviews and case studies, and where rigorous linguistic analysis is not generally implemented. And lastly, from its beginnings, the ESP genre analysis tradition has been closely associated with ESP/EAP teaching. Its main purpose is to serve English non-native writers, who need not only to acquire professional knowledge in academic disciplines, but also to understand the rhetorical structure patterns and lexico-grammatical features of professional discourse. This again is somewhat contrary to the spirit of NR, where the emphasis is on demonstrating the "dynamism" and "situatedness" of genres (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1993, p.478; 1995, p.4), rather than on identifying features that might be explicitly presented to students in pedagogic

situations. My research aims to serve Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers by establishing appropriate guidelines for abstract writing in EAP writing classes. This involves identifying features that will help them establish a better awareness of the abstract genre, to understand where international conventions may depart from Chinese-language rhetorical traditions, and finally to write appropriate academic abstracts for the international Finance and Accounting academic communities.

Thus, from the perspectives of theory, methodology and pedagogy, ESP genre analysis is the most appropriate approach for my research.

### 2.1.2 A closer look at genre in the ESP tradition

According to Bhatia (1997, p.181), genre analysis in ESP is "the study of situated linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional settings, whichever way one may look at it, whether in terms of typifications of rhetorical action, regularities of staged goal oriented social processes or consistency of communicative purposes". Its main goal is to learn about the communicative purposes as well as the discourse strategies used in specific contexts (Qin, 2000). As Dudley-Evans (1987, p.3) notes, genre-based pedagogy is not prescriptive "in the old fashioned [sense of] prescribing certain grammatical forms to be the correct forms, but [in the] rather more flexible [sense of] prescription based on analysis that makes suggestions about the layout, ordering and language appropriate to a particular writing or speaking task". Thus, ESP genre analysis has developed from an initially simple focus on language description to a more multi-layered approach to analysis and interpretation of genres, involving sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic facets together with discourse explanation of communicative interactions and rhetorical devices in texts (Bhatia, 1993).

Although much of the ESP genre analysis research literature has focused on academic writing, it has also been extensively used in many other professional fields. Amongst those studies, there were Bhatia's (1993, 1997) studies of professional genres (such as job application letters and legal cases) in business and law, Herring et al.'s (2005) genre studies of weblog and online encyclopaedias, and Flowerdew and Wan's (2006) tax

computation letter between accounting companies and clients, etc. to name just a few.

As mentioned in the previous section, the concept of genre was first introduced into the ESP field by Tarone et al. (1981) and Swales (1981). In his early work, Swales defined genre as:

> a more or less standardized communicative event with a goal or set of goals mutually understood by the participants in that event and occurring within a functional rather than a social or personal setting. (Swales, 1981, p.4).

It may seem odd to contrast 'functional' settings with 'social or personal' settings, but the intended contrast here is between professional and casual contexts of use; that is, for Swales, the focus of genre analysis is on professional or at least highly formalised communicative events such as research articles, company reports, cooking recipes, etc., rather than on more loosely defined events such as casual conversations.

In subsequent work, culminating in his comprehensive definition of genre in *Genre Analysis* (1990), Swales emphasised three important and correlative notions in genre analysis -- genre, discourse community and language learning task (Flowerdew, 2015; Swales, 2016). He pointed out that these three notions are interrelated, with communicative purpose connecting them together:

> It is communicative purpose that drives the language activities of the discourse community; it is communicative purpose that is the prototypical criterion for genre identity, and it is communicative purpose that operates as the primary determinant of task (Swales, 1990, p.10).

It can be seen that in this definition, Swales puts primary emphasis on the *communicative purposes* of discourse instead of the mere surface features of texts, and establishes the key idea that communicative purpose between writers and readers is constituted in specific contexts. This is also the major point of difference between genre analysis as conceived by

Swales and register or sub-register analysis (e.g. Biber, 1988); the difference lies "in the importance [attached] to communicative purposes within a communicative setting" (Swales, 1981, p.10).

While Swales' general approach has remained broadly consistent over the years, he has reviewed and re-examined two key concepts in some recent publications. First, Askehave and Swales (2001) reviewed the concept of *communicative purpose*, and argued that communicative purpose is actually discovered *through* genre analysis, rather than presupposed beforehand. Although the view in this article is arguably moot in the case of the abstract genre -- once communicative purposes and functions of the abstract genre have been discovered, there is no need to rediscover them again and again -- this article still usually reminds us that communicative purposes in one genre are not always static: a genre may change its communicative purposes with the time processing, and/or it may acquire some additional communicative purposes over time or across different contexts.

The second concept that has been reassessed in Swales' more recent work is that of *discourse community*. Swales (2016) re-examines and revises this concept into three subtypes, the first of which he refers to as "local discourse communities" (ibid, p.11). These are familiarized "residential,…and occupational" (ibid, p.11) communities, whose members are physically located in the same places and at the same time. The second,"focal discourse communities" (ibid, p.11), are "associations of some kind that reach across a region, a nation, and internationally" (ibid, p.11), and which therefore do not require physical proximity; in fact, members of focal discourse communities may never meet each other face to face at all, but may communicate solely through written texts. Finally, Swales proposes "folocal discourse communities" (ibid, p.12) as "hybrid communities" (ibid, p.12) combining both local and focal characteristics. In this research, my main focus is on the second type of discourse community, the "focal discourse community". In Swales's conception, the notion of "focal discourse communities" is particularly associated with *professional* discourse communities such as BAAL (the British Association for Applied Linguistics), and academic journals as *ASp* or *TESOL Quarterly* (these are Swales's own illustrative examples). For

non-native (English) scholars such as the Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers in my study, however, it is possible to make a further distinction between two types of focal discourse communities: the national and the international. Both national and international discourse communities are part of the professional life of Chinese academics, and an academic can participate and/or belong to either (and both) at the same time. But Chinese (and other non-native) writers are sometimes treated as (or at least perceive themselves as) outsiders, because of their lack of language proficiency in the international focal discourse community.

Building on Swales's (1990) definition and understanding of genre, Bhatia (1993) puts forward another essential characteristic of genre, i.e. that a genre is not only "a highly structured and conventionalized" (ibid, p.14) discourse, but also has certain constraints. According to Bhatia (ibid), in academic and/or professional communities, expert members are familiar not only with the communicative purposes within such specific communities, but also with the "conventionalized internal structure" (p.14) of specific genres. However, though expert members have the freedom to adopt various linguistic resources to present their writing intentions, these can only be "allowable contributions" (ibid, p.14) as this kind of conventionalised structure has its own constraints -- "certain standard practices within the boundaries of a particular genre" (ibid, p.14). Furthermore, according to this definition, only expert members have the right to be creative and exploit a genre's writing conventions, as they share more internal knowledge and experience of the communicative purposes, conventionalised use and construction of genres, and can therefore depart from standard conventions to some degree without being perceived as writing in an odd or unacceptable way within their academic and/or professional communities (ibid, p.14-15).

This idea has particular relevance for non-native writers such as the Chinese academic writers are professionals in their fields of expertise, they are not used to writing in English when publishing in national or international journals. Their comparative lack of knowledge and expertise in relation to English abstract writing therefore puts them at a discursive disadvantage: any non-conventionalized forms that they might use are likely to be

regarded not as creative or innovative, but as oddities of expression and thus as unacceptable to international audiences. This thesis is ultimately motivated by the aim of helping these scholars to write in ways which will ameliorate such problems, and thus help them to promote their work in internationally.

### 2.1.3 Move analysis in ESP genre analysis

In his milestone works, Swales (1981, 1990) developed an approach to genre analysis which has proved to be highly popular and influential, and is now seen as the signature methodology of the ESP tradition. This approach is known as *move structure analysis*, or, more simply, *move analysis*. As mentioned earlier, the basic aim of move analysis is to divide generic texts into staged sections performing distinctive and clearly identifiable rhetorical functions. Move analysis is performed on individual texts initially, but the ultimate aim is to analyse an entire corpus of texts in this way, so as to identify the prototypical (or at least the most common) move structure(s) for the genre in question. By far the most well-known and widely used model of this kind is Swales' CARS (Create a Research Space) model for the analysis of RA Introductions. Based on an investigation of 48 RAs introductions, Swales (1981) found a consistent four-move pattern for the introduction section in research articles. After further revision and development, Swales and Feak (1994, p.175) presented a modified version of this model, which is presented in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 CARS model for RA introduction (Source: Swales and Feak 1994: 175)

| | |
|---|---|
| Move 1 | Establishing a research territory |
| | a. by showing that the general research area is important, central, interesting, problematic, or relevant in some way. (optional) |
| | b. by introducing and reviewing items of previous research in the area. (obligatory) |
| Move 2 | Establishing a niche |
| | a. by indicating a gap in the previous research, raising a question about it, or extending previous knowledge in some way. (obligatory) |
| Move 3 | Occupying the niche |
| | a. by outlining purposes or stating the nature of the present research. (obligatory) |
| | b. by announcing principal findings. (optional) |
| | c. by indicating the structure of the RP. (optional) |

In this version of CARS model, I can also see another important concept in move analysis, that of 'step'. Steps are best understood as the specific ways in which moves are achieved. As can be seen from Table 2.1, steps can be used in isolation or in combination, and may either be optional or obligatory depending on the genre in question.

The CARS model has been utilised by many researchers to study RAs introductions across various academic disciplines (e.g. Crookes, 1986; Swales and Najjar, 1987; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2002, 2005). It has also stimulated much research across languages and cultures (e.g. Taylor and Chen, 1991; Duszak, 1994; Fredrickson and Swales, 1994; Cmejrkova, 1996; Ahmad, 1997). An important finding of these studies is that, there are variations in the move and/or step preferences of RA introductions across different languages, and that these variations may be due to rhetorical and thus cultural differences.

While move analysis has proved highly popular as a general methodology, it has

also attracted some criticism over the years, particular with regard to how rhetorical moves/steps are actually identified by the analysts. Essentially, there are two approaches to move/step identification, which Swales (2004) refers to 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches. As the name suggests, the 'bottom-up' approach involves attempting to identify rhetorical moves — and the boundaries between them — by searching for linguistic features that appear to be characteristic of moves or move boundaries, such as a switch of verb tense choices or the use of certain formulaic phrases. Examples of this approach include Crookes (1986) and Nwogu (1989). However, as Pho (2008, p.233) has pointed out, this approach is problematic because it "results in a circularity of the identification of rhetorical moves and [their] linguistic realization". An even more trenchant critique is offered by Paltridge (1994, p.295), who points out that a number of scholars who claim to be carrying out a strictly linguistically-based move analysis are actually "[drawing] on categories based on *content* to determine textual boundaries, rather than on the way in which the content is expressed *linguistically*." This observation leads Paltridge (1994, p.295) to conclude that move analysis is actually a matter of 'top-down' interpretation, relying on the analyst's overall cognitive intuitions:

> … the search for structural divisions in texts should be seen as a search for cognitive boundaries in terms of convention, appropriacy, and content [i.e. topic matter] rather than as a search for linguistically defined boundaries; that is, there are non-linguistic, rather than linguistic, reasons for generic staging in texts

Whilst Swales agrees with Paltridge that moves are ultimately defined in terms of their rhetorical function rather than their linguistic form, he has consistently argued that linguistic features can sometimes act as markers of moves or move boundaries, and has therefore consistently advocated an 'eclectic' approach, "that makes use of all types of evidence [i.e. both top-down and bottom-up] to reinforce decisions about move boundaries" (Tardy and Swales 2014, p.168-69). In my study, I will follow this eclectic approach and combine both

‘top-down’ and ‘bottom-up’ approaches to analyze the rhetorical move structures of English abstracts written by international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers.

### 2.1.4 Text analysis in ESP genre analysis

While move analysis is perhaps the best known methodology associated with the ESP approach to genre analysis, there is an equally strong tradition of detailed text analysis research, where the goal is to identify lexico-grammatical features and/or phraseological patterns commonly or particularly used in one genre as a whole. And with the development of corpus linguistics, this approach is becoming increasingly popular in ESP genre analysis.

Although Swales (2002) considered corpus-based approaches (such as concordance analysis and/or keyword searches) to be inconsistent with genre analysis in its more top-down rhetorical move structure analysis variety, Flowerdew (2005, P.326) argued that the pitfalls of adopting such a “bottom-up approach can be partly avoided by working with whole texts”, such as RAs abstracts, as will be studied in this thesis. Flowerdew (2005) also argues that Swales’s criticism of corpus-based approaches can be partly avoided by annotation of “larger stretches of text for rhetorical features” (ibid, p.326). That is, once a corpus containing texts belonging to a particular genre has been marked up for move structures, it then becomes possible to isolate each move and analyze it separately, in order to establish whether and to what extent there might be particular linguistic features associated with that move (cf. Biber et al., 2007).

The benefits of corpus-based approaches to ESP genre analysis proposed by these scholars have now been widely accepted, and even Swales, who was initially sceptical of corpus analysis as mentioned above, has in his more recent work embraced corpus analysis techniques. To take just one example, Tardy and Swales (2014) provide an analysis of bio-statements which uses corpus-based methods to examine such linguistic features as frequency counts for content words, evaluative expressions in this genre, and so on.

As Flowerdew (2005) points out, the integration of corpus analysis with genre analysis not only enhances rhetorical move structure analysis, but also promotes studies of

lexico-grammatical features within genres. Examples of this integrated approach include Hu and Cao's (2011) comparative study of hedging and boosting in Applied Linguistics RAs abstracts; and Gledhill's (2000a, 2000b) analysis of phraseological patterns in the different sections of journal articles in the field of cancer research.

In summary, and as Tardy and Swales (2014, p.169) note, "[t]ext and move analysis are [nowadays increasingly] often used together to identify common formal and rhetorical features of a genre within a given community of users" The research reported in this thesis will follow in this integrated tradition of analysis, by integrating a rhetorical move analysis of abstracts taken from international and Chinese journals with a detailed corpus-based study of the salient lexico-grammatical features of these texts. By combining these two approaches, my aim is to develop a relatively comprehensive understanding not only of the RA abstract genre in Finance and Accounting, but also of how this genre is produced by international and Chinese academics.

## 2.2 The genre of the academic abstract

In 1920, the *Physical Review* became the first academic journal to provide short abstract texts at the front of featured research articles. By the 1970s, the issue of International Standard ISO 214-1976 set a global standard for abstract writing criteria; and in 1980s, the issue of Chinese national GB 6447-86 indicated that Chinese abstract writing should follow international abstract writing conventions. In this section, I will first establish a general view of the abstract genre and how it functions. I will then briefly describe a range of major abstract types, before going on to review previous studies that have been carried out on this genre, and to identify a need for further research that this thesis aims to fulfil.

### 2.2.1 Definition and functions

The emergence of the academic abstract genre mirrors the exponential growth of its parent

genre, the research article, during the twentieth century. With increasing numbers of academic journals and research articles being published around the world, scientific researchers have increasingly needed an effective means of searching articles for required information. As "an abbreviated, accurate representation of the contents of a document, preferably prepared by its author(s) for publication with it" (American National Standards Institute, 1979, p.1), the abstract provides just that effective approach. Usually, the abstract is considered as one constituent of the research article genre ass a whole; however, in both its purpose and style it is quite different from other research articles constituents, such as research articles introductions (Bhatia, 1993; Friginal and Mustafa, 2017), and because it can occur as a standalone text (e.g. in academic journal webpages), it could also be regarded as an independent genre of academic writing (Nwogu and Bloor, 2011). With its conventional structural and lexico-grammatical features, abstracts help both writers and readers to position a piece of research within the discourse of an academic research community (Friginal and Mustafa, 2017). For readers, the abstract is also a convenient means of learning about a paper's contents and gauging the relevance or otherwise of a research article to them, and thus helping them to decide quickly whether it is worth reading or not (Weissberg and Buker, 1990). The abstract also qualifies as a genre in its own right in as much as it is " '[a] rite de passage' (Swales 1990, p.218, quoted in Orasan 2001, p.2) for gaining entry into the scientific community via a demonstration of increasing mastery of the academic dialect" (Orasan, 2001, p.2).

Since the *Physical Review* (founded in 1893) first started publishing early versions of RA abstracts in 1920, it quickly became a convention for articles in medical journals such as *The Lancet* and the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* also to begin with an abstract. Thereafter, abstract writing and publishing gradually spread to other Science and Arts research fields, and nowadays nearly all academic journals, students' theses and conference papers include an abstract together with its 'parent' paper (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Martin-Martin, 2003; Zhang, 2012).

According to Bhatia (1993, p.78), the academic abstract "is a description or factual summary of [a] much longer report, and is meant to give the reader an exact and

concise knowledge of the full article". Similar to Bhatia's definition, the 2010 edition of the publication manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) describes the abstract as a "brief" but also "comprehensive" (p.25) summary of a research paper. In terms of content, the APA states that abstracts should be "dense with information" (p.26); while for their form, it is recommended that abstracts should be readable, well organised, brief, and self-contained. Johnson (1995) states that abstracts should facilitate readers to locate relevant information, and reflect the essential contents of the corresponding documents. Hyland (2004) holds a similar view, describing abstracts as a "selective representation" (p.64) of research articles. By "selective", he means abstracts do not simply present the research articles' exact contents, but rather, "set[s] out the stall, highlighting important information and framing the article that it precedes, …in such a way as to encourage further examination and draw the reader into the more detailed exposition" (ibid, p.64). Thus, the abstract "serves as one further step in turning the article into an object, for the abstract considers the article as a whole and then makes a representation of it" (Bazerman, 1984; quoted in Swales, 1990, p.179). In short, this "representation" (Hyland, 2004, p.64; Johnson, 1995, p.28) and/or "miniature version" (Gastel and Day, 2016, p.55) of the accompanying research article is generally regarded as the major communicative purpose for the genre of the abstract, and thus stands as a major rationale for seeing it as a genre in its own right.

Within the general context provided by this broad understanding of the abstract genre, a number of more specific functions that this genre performs have been identified by genre researchers. Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) and Huckin (2001), for example, have proposed that the RA abstract has four distinctive functional roles. First, abstracts are essential for research indexing and the development of databases (especially with today's huge computer-based databases) (cf. Huckin and Olsen, 1991; Nicholas et al., 2007; Friginal and Mustafa, 2017). Secondly, abstracts provide readers with a concise and clear summary of the main constituents of a piece of research (Huckin, 2001); yet at the same time, they emphasize and foreground the most important information within that piece of research (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). The third function is to help create an explanatory and guiding frame for readers who will go on to read the whole article (Berkenkotter and Huckin,

1995; Huckin, 2001). On this point, Hyland (2004) has argued that the abstract also performs a persuasive function, in that expert writers use the abstract to convince potential readers of the value of their research and thus to hook those readers into committing to read their full paper. This leads on to the last but not the least important function of abstracts according to Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) which is to help readers to filter and select relevant research for downloading from the vast amount of published material now available in all academic fields (Nicholas et al., 2007; Dahl, 2009; Friginal and Mustafa, 2017). This function "is especially important for researchers outside [the] U.S. or the U.K. where there is limited free access to journal publishers' download sites" (Friginal and Mustafa, 2017, p.47).

However, there is one further important function that abstracts can serve for non-native writers which is not mentioned by Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) or Huckin (2001). As mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, given the status of English as the lingua franca of scientific discourse communities worldwide, it is a common requirement for national journals published in with languages other than English to attach an English abstract (Lores, 2004). Thus, the abstract is usually the only part of a text that is typically written in English in national academic journals in non-Anglophone countries. Given the abstract's general functions of presenting an overview of a piece of published research work (Swales, 1990; Pezzini, 2003), the abstract effectively provides an opportunity for members of international academic discourse communities to learn about research being carried out and published in non-Anglophone national journals. In other words, English language abstracts can be viewed as the only way for English non-native writers publishing in national journals to disseminate their research to worldwide audiences.

### 2.2.2 Abstract types

Since its first appearance, the research article abstract genre is generally regarded as having developed into two main sub-types, referred to as structured and traditional abstracts (Zhang, 2012). While these two types of abstracts are quite similar to each other in their structure and content (hence them being seen as sub-types of the same genre rather than as separate genres),

one distinct difference lies in the fact that structured abstracts usually bear sub-titles, whereas traditional abstracts do not. In other words, in structured abstracts, the rhetorical moves are explicitly marked (Swales and Feak, 2009).

Structured abstracts first appeared from 1987 in Medical Sciences, and then spread to other academic disciplines, particularly in the fields of Biology and Psychology (Swales and Feak, 2009; Zhang, 2012). One noted psychologist, James Hartley, has paid particular attention to structured abstracts, and has written extensively on issues such as their typesetting and design (e.g. Hartley, 1994; 1998; 2000). Compared with traditional abstracts, Hartley has argued that structured abstracts are more accurate in reflecting article contents (Hartley et al., 1996), more informative (Hartley and Benjamin, 1998), more readable (Hartley, 2000), and more convenient for readers to search for information (Hartley and Sydes, 1997), even though they are usually longer than traditional abstracts (Hartley, 2002).

Research on traditional abstracts suggests that they can be further classified into two subtypes: 'indicative' (sometimes also referred to as descriptive abstract) and 'informative' abstracts (Gastel and Day, 2016; Friginal and Mustafa, 2017). Indicative abstracts can be used either for statements of research objectives and/or research range, or for providing an overview of article background, methodology and/or progress (ANSI, 1979). However, due to its descriptive (as opposed to substantive) nature (Gastel and Day, 2016), this type of abstract is generally seen as more applicable to theoretical discussion papers and/or investigation reports than they are to empirical research papers (Zhang, 2012). They are also seen as more useful for reference librarians (Gastel and Day, 2016). Informative abstracts, in contrast, are regarded as being closer to their accompanying articles (Gastel and Day, 2016), providing "a report in miniature" (Jordan, 1991, p.507; quoted in Lores, 2004, p.282) as a summary of complete paper and/or a brief overview of the contents of each of the main sections of a research article. As Gastel and Day (2016) notes, this type of abstract "supplants the need for reading the full paper" (ibid, p.58); as such, this kind of abstract is regarded as particularly well suited to helping academics keep up with publications reporting important current developments in their areas of interest from amongst a massive and always increasing

tide of research articles. In the current thesis, informative abstracts will be the empirical focus.

In their book *Abstracts and the Writing of Abstracts*, Swales and Feak (2009) introduced another way of classifying abstract texts. Rather than classifying abstracts according to their general style, Swales and Feak (2009) propose that abstracts can be classified according to the type of text that they are abstracting. From this perspective, they argue that four types of abstract in academic discourse can be identified: research article (RA) abstracts, abstracts for short communications, conference abstracts and PhD dissertation abstracts. Swales and Feak (2009) illustrate this approach by comparing RA abstracts and conference abstracts, pointing out that these two belong to two different written genres in that they are embedded within different writing contexts and have different communicative purposes. The distinguishing characteristic of the conference abstract is that it is a "stand-alone text" (Swales and Feak, 2010, p.169); with its competitive nature, its acceptance or rejection as a conference submission is based entirely on its own merits (Swales and Feak, 2009, 2010). Thus, compared to RA abstracts, conference abstracts have a slightly different rhetorical move structure and tend to feature one extra move indicating "further observations (implications, limitations, further developments)" (Swales and Feak, 2009, p.45). This is because they typically "need to make a strong appeal to [conference] review committees" (ibid, p.45).

Swales and Feak's distinction between RA and conference abstracts is accepted in the present research, and it is with this distinction in mind that I excluded all conference issues from both international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic journals when I compiled the corpora analysed for the current research (A more detailed discussion of this point can be found in Chapter Three).

Nowadays, a majority of research articles in academic journals across the disciplinary spectrum have an accompanying informative abstract, and this clearly indicates that the role of abstracts is becoming more significant in the modern research publication environment. This increasingly important status is also reflected in the steadily growing average text length of academic abstracts in most fields. As Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) found, the average number of sentences in each abstract has grown from 4.4 to 6.5 during the

period 1944-1989. A more recent study by Hyland (2004) comes to similar conclusion in a quantitative analysis of abstracts across eight disciplines published between 1980 and 1997. Hyland found that average text length (measured this time by word tokens rather than number of sentences) has increased substantially, indicating that abstracts become "longer and more informative" and thus capable of expressing "more complex, multi-move patterns" (ibid, p.81). Nowadays, even though there is no unified criterion stating abstract text length and/or word count (international and Chinese national standards have different requirements, and in practice, various journal publishers and disciplines also have their own requirements), there still are tacit agreements: the informative abstract length is normally between 100 and 250 words (APA publication manual, 2010; Van Bonn and Swales, 2007), while the indicative abstract is generally somewhat shorter at about 100 words on average, while dissertation abstracts are typically the longest, normally ranging between 500 and 2000 words according to different degrees and/or disciplines (Zhang, 2012).

### 2.2.3 Previous studies of the RA abstract genre

In principle, the manner by which an abstract writer selects rhetorical moves is constrained by directives prescribed in journal submission guidelines. In practice, however, these directives or guidelines are often quite vague and minimal. As Hyland (2004, p.74) notes, journals generally "[give] little guidance on creating a discursive context", and often do no more than provide very basic information about word limits. This is certainly the case with the journals studied in this thesis; the following example from the Journal of Finance submission guidelines (accessed on 15 March 2016) is typical:

> An abstract, of no more than 100 words, must be entered or pasted into a separate text box as part of the on-line submission.

Even the most explicit sets of instructions found in my data (such as the following, from the *Journal of Financial Economics*, accessed on 15 March 2016) are not particularly detailed or

helpful:

> A concise and factual abstract is required. The abstract should state briefly the purpose of the research, the principal results and major conclusions. An abstract is often presented separately from the article, so it must be able to stand alone. For this reason, References should be avoided, but if essential, then cite the author(s) and year(s). Also, non-standard or uncommon abbreviations should be avoided, but if essential they must be defined at their first mention in the abstract itself.

In short, journals generally give academic writers very little information about how an abstract should be structured. Despite this, previous research on the RA abstract genre has shown that abstracts are actually highly conventionalized in their rhetorical structure. In other words, expert academic writers seem to know 'the conventions' for structuring abstracts, even though these 'writing conventions' are rarely if ever stated in journal submission guidelines.

Genre-based research on the RA abstract has steadily increased in recent decades, as the importance of this genre has become increasingly well recognized. About thirty years ago, it is fair to say that abstracts were generally overlooked and under-researched in genre studies. In their review of the literature, Swales and Feak (2010) were able to find only a small number of studies focusing directly on abstract writing, a set of guideline by McGirr (1978) and Graetz's (1985) brief description of the main characteristics of abstracts. The situation has however changed significantly in recent years, a review by Montesi and Urdiciain (2005, quoted in Swales and Feak, 2010) discussed 28 abstract studies from 1990; to which, I can now add a substantial number of more recent studies, including major papers by Hyland (2004), Swales and Feak (2009), Cao and Xiao (2013a, 2013b) and Friginal and Mustafa (2017).

Applied linguistic research on abstracts has focused on both the macroscopic scale (i.e. move analysis or other structural analysis) and/or the microscopic scale (i.e. analysis of lexico-grammatical features) (Zhang, 2012). Inspired by Swales' ESP genre

analysis approach (1990), macroscopic analyses of abstracts in various disciplines have been conducted using move analysis (e.g. Santos, 1996; Hyland, 2004; Kanoksilapatham, 2013; Ahmed, 2015; Tanko, 2017). The most substantial work has been done by Hyland (2004), who studied 800 abstracts across six academic disciplines, and summarised abstract writing patterns across these different fields as mostly conforming to an 'introduction, purpose, method, product and conclusion' move sequence. Other studies have used existing models to analyse and/or compare abstract rhetorical structures, such as Huang's (2018) adoption of Santos's (1996) and Pho's (2008) model in analysing Applied Linguistics and Educational Technology abstracts, and Ren and Li's (2011) adoption of Hyland's (2004) five move classification model as discussed above.

Working at a more microscopic level, other researchers have paid more attention to the lexico-grammatical features of abstract. Important early examples of this approach include Graetz's study (1985; quoted in Swales, 1990) of verb tense, voice, personal pronoun usage in 87 abstracts, and Salager-Meyer's (1992) investigation of verb tense and modality usage in different moves in Medical Science abstracts. More recent studies include Hyland and Tse's (2005b) analysis of evaluative *that*-clauses in 465 abstracts by expert writers and EAP student writers, Hu and Cao's (2011) investigation of hedges and boosters as metadiscourse markers in English and Chinese abstracts, Gillaerts and Van de Velde's (2010) and Gillaerts's (2014) diachronic studies of interactional metadiscourse, Cakir's (2016) comparison of stance adverbs in English abstracts by Anglo-American and Turkish writers, and Li's (2016) study of modality and modal sequences in English abstracts written by native and (Chinese mother tongue) non-native writers, and Jiang and Hyland's (2017) study of interactive and interactional functions of metadiscursive nouns in six academic disciplines.

While research focusing on individual features or related sets of features such as the above remains popular, there has in recent years been a growing trend towards the analysis of multiple lexico-grammatical features in abstracts. Some researchers have examined the linguistic realisation of each rhetorical move (e.g. Salager-Meyer, 1992; Pho, 2008; Cakir and Fidan, 2015; Huang, 2018), while others have examined the interaction of numerous lexico-grammatical features in the genre as a whole. For example, Ansarifar et al. (2018)

study a range of noun modifiers, such as relative clause, attributive adjectives, *of* phrases, etc. across thesis abstracts and RAs abstracts. Similarly, Ruan (2018) studies and compares noun phrases and modifiers across English abstracts written by native English and Chinese writers. Cao and Xiao's (2013a) study of English abstracts written by English native and non-native (Chinese) writers in twelve Science and Engineering disciplines analyses 163 linguistic features, which they classify into seven dimensions using the Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) approach first developed by Biber (1988). In a similar vein, Friginal and Mustafa's (2017) also adopt of Biber's MDA model to analyze and compare multiple linguistic features in abstracts across four disciplines written by native and non-native writers. Omidian et al. (2018) investigate lexical bundles (according to the communicative functions) in RA abstracts, in an attempt to find out different writing conventions across six academic disciplines.

Some studies have focused on one specific discipline, such as Salager-Meyer (1992) on Medical Sciences, and Santos (1996) on Applied Linguistics. It is more common for researchers to adopt a more cross-disciplinary perspective, however. Some cross-disciplinary comparisons are between relatively closely related disciplines, such as Samraj's (2005) study of abstracts in Conservation Biology and Wildlife Behavior, Suntara and Usaha's (2013) study of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics, and Huang's (2018) comparative study among three sub-disciplines within Marine Engineering. Other studies have chosen to focus on disciplines representing the full range of academic research fields; such multi-disciplinary studies that include Stotesbury (2003a, 2003b), Hyland (2004), Cao and Xiao (2013a), and Friginal and Mustafa (2017). Even wider ranging is a study by Melander, Swales and Fredrickson (1997), which is both cross-disciplinary (comparing abstracts in the fields of Medicine, Biology and Linguistics) and cross-linguistic (comparing abstracts written in English and Swedish). In a similar vein, a study by Sauperl et. al (2008), compares abstracts in the fields of Pharmacology, Sociology, and Linguistics and Literature, across English and Slovenian.

Cross-linguistic studies of abstracts are of particular relevance to this thesis, as they provide insights into abstract writing practices across different cultural backgrounds. As Van Bonn and Swales (2007, p.95) note, the abstract genre is "a valuable source for

investigating the cultural causes and consequences of linguistic and rhetorical differences across languages." Martin-Martin (2003), for example, finds some interesting differences when comparing Spanish abstracts with English ones. Generally, English abstracts are described as more 'complete' than Spanish abstracts. Specifically, in the four-move rhetorical pattern, there are fewer 'result' moves and less use of the justification step in 'introduction' moves in Spanish abstracts. As for lexico-grammatical features, the most salient difference is in the usage of hedging, which Martin-Martin finds to be much more pervasive among English than Spanish writers. Likewise, Jones (1992) demonstrated that Brazilian academics had difficulties in altering the conventional Portuguese abstract structure into an appropriate English one. Ventola (1994b) also observed that German academics had problems and difficulties when writing English abstracts, in text length, rhetorical structure construction and also text cohesion.

As might be expected, most contrastive studies of abstracts are between English and other languages, such as Swedish (Melander et al, 1997), Italian (Diani, 2014), French (Van Bonn and Swales, 2007), Russian (Zanina, 2017), Persian (Chalak and Norouzi, 2013; Marefat and Mohammadzadeh, 2013), and Turkish (Candarli, 2012). Amongst these, the most frequently studied pairs are English and Spanish (e.g. Martin-Martin, 2003; Martin-Martin and Burgess, 2004; Alonso-Almeida, 2014; Arroyo and Roberts, 2014).

### 2.2.4 Research on RA abstracts in the Chinese context

In China, research interest in abstract writing began during the 1980s (Zhang, 2012). In its early exploration stage, abstract research centered on introducing the concept of academic research article abstract writing to Chinese academics, and attempting to propose some form of writing conventions for RA abstract writing (e.g. Liu, 1999; Liang, 2000). In more recent years, the research focus has transferred to discourse analysis from a variety of investigative perspectives (Zhang, 2012). In previous studies, Chinese researchers have studied academic English abstract writing from the perspectives of stylistics (e.g. Qin, 2002; Zhang, 2008), functional grammar (e.g. Yu, 2003), pragmatics (e.g. Qin, 2010) and genre analysis (e.g. Ju,

2004; Ge and Yang, 2005).

Amongst these studies, the ESP genre analysis perspective of RA abstracts has proved to be the most popular and productive (e.g. Liang, 2000; Ju, 2004; Ge and Yang, 2005; Zhang, 2008; Qin, 2010; Li and Rij-Heyligers, 2011). As discussed above, this research can be sub-divided into studies that adopt a more macro- or micro-level focus. At the macro level of rhetorical abstract structure, Ge and Yang (2005) have analysed and compared English abstracts from the disciplines of Finance, Surgical Medicine, and Electronic Engineering. As for the micro level, Tseng (2011) has shown how differences in verb tense selection correlate with different rhetorical moves. Also adopting a microscopic perspective, Zhang (2008) found that in Linguistics, international academics prefer to use more first person pronoun, such as *we* and *I* than Chinese writers, and that there were certain differences in the referential and discourse functions of first person pronoun usage amongst English and Chinese writers.

Interestingly, Chinese genre-based research mirrors international trends, in that there has been a growing trend towards incorporating contrastive perspectives (cf. Hu and Cao, 2011; Cao and Xiao, 2013a, 2013b). Ju (2004), for example, used Swales's IMRD model to compare 20 English (from *Applied Linguistics*) and 20 Chinese abstracts (from *Foreign Languages Teaching and Research*) in the field of Applied Linguistics. Ju found that Chinese abstracts were inclined to omit the rhetorical moves of Introduction (only 35% compared with 100% for English writers) and Discussion (only 35% compared with 80% for English writers). Ju's explanation for the relative underuse of Introduction moves by Chinese writers to a general preference for "a reader responsible pattern" (Ju, 2004, p.34), in which the purpose of the research is left implicit and is thus for the reader to figure out, in contrast to the English rhetorical preference for "a writer responsible pattern" (ibid), in which fully explicitness on the part of the writer is expected. As for the difference in the use of Discussion moves, Ju argues that Chinese writers are simply unaware of this rhetorical convention.

While there have been a few other studies along similar lines to Ju (2004) (e.g. Li and Mu 2005; Niu, 2013; Ma 2014), there have been hardly any 'micro-level' studies focusing on specific linguistic features. A rare exception to this is Hu and Cao (2011), who investigated the usage of hedging and boosting in 227 Chinese abstracts and 195 English abstracts in the

field of Applied Linguistics, and found that there were more use of hedges and less use of boosters in English abstracts than in the Chinese ones. These findings indicated that Chinese applied linguists tend to adopt a more confident and certain tone in their abstracts than do their Anglophone counterparts.

But while there is a growing interest in English/Chinese comparisons, a far more popular strategy has been to compare English abstracts written by native and (Chinese) non-native writers, either focusing in rhetorical structures (e.g. Tseng, 2011; Wei, Liu and Liu, 2015), or on lexico-grammatical features (e.g. Fan, 2005; Zhang, 2008; Tseng, 2011). Zhao and Wu's (2012) study is one of few studies that compares both rhetorical move structures and linguistic features. However, most of these studies could be criticised for being somewhat superficial in their approach. Most macroscopic (i.e. rhetorically oriented) studies have taken Swales and Feak's five moves model (or the even more basic IMRD model) for granted, and have used it as the basis for general comparisons of move frequencies and/or word count comparisons. There have been no detailed or intensive studies investigating whether and to what extent Chinese (or, for that matter, native speakers) writers adhere to such models in their own abstract writing. Likewise, lexico-grammatical comparative studies have for the most part been content simply to compare frequency counts; only Zhang's (2008) study of first person pronouns has taken the discourse functions of a given linguistic feature into account.

Amongst all the previous studies of abstracts carried out in the Chinese context so far, the study that most closely corresponds to the aims of the current study is that carried out by Huang (2008). This study investigates English abstracts written by international and Chinese writers, and studies abstract texts from the perspectives of both macro rhetorical structure and micro linguistic features. However, there are also several salient differences between this study and the research that will be reported in this thesis. First of all, there are only 64 English abstracts in Huang's (2008) study, while there are 800 in mine. Secondly, Huang only investigates the discipline of Applied Linguistics; the current thesis studies two closely related but distinct disciplines of Finance and Accounting. Thirdly, Huang's linguistic feature analysis uses Halliday's functional grammar to investigate the transitivity processes in

abstract texts. In contrast, the current thesis will use corpus tools to explore lexico-grammatical features in a more data-driven (and theory-neutral) way. Lastly, the research carried out for this thesis goes beyond Huang's study in that it makes use of surveys (specifically, 30 questionnaires and 4 interviews with Chinese Finance and Accounting academics) as well as textual analyses. This is in recognition of the fact that the ESP approach to genre analysis is one that aims to understand not only the features of generic texts in themselves, but also the contexts in which these texts are produced, and which play a fundamental part in determining the forms that these genres take.

## 2.3 Genre, rhetoric and culture

In broadening the focus from generic texts to the contexts which shape and are shaped by them, we inevitably raise complex questions about the relationships between language and culture. To what extent are rhetorical structures or textual preferences culture-specific? If culture-specific preferences in generic forms exist, are these transferred from one culture to another? Are traditional notions of national cultures valid, or are they simply crude stereotypes with no basis in the empirical world? Even if they have had some validity in the past, how relevant are they in the increasingly globalised and digitally interconnected world of today? The aim of this final section is to tackle these questions, and to establish the position of the current thesis in relation to such issues. It will be argued that this thesis is best understood not as an example of contrastive rhetoric research, but rather as contributing to the newer paradigm of intercultural rhetoric studies.

### 2.3.1 The concept of rhetoric

While the concept of rhetoric has only become salient to linguists and discourse analysts in recent decades, its origins can be traced back much further, to ancient Greece and Rome. In both classical and modern versions, the concept of rhetoric relates to the notion of persuasion,

and does not have the negative connotations that the term has in everyday usage (Martin-Martin, 2005). Inheriting some basic concepts and theories from classical rhetoric, and combining these with insights from psychology, sociology, linguistics and literary theory, the New Rhetoric studies (as discussed briefly earlier in this chapter) have turned the concept of rhetoric into an analytical tool for analysing texts and text-making practices across various languages as well as academic disciplines (Mauranen, 1993). In Purves's (1988, p.9) definition, rhetoric is "the choice of linguistic and structural aspects of discourse -- chosen to produce an effect on an audience".

### 2.3.2 Contrastive rhetoric and its recent development

As the name suggests, the field of contrastive rhetoric is one that concerns itself with the comparison of persuasive textual strategies across languages, and thus across cultures. To some extent, contrastive rhetoric has been influenced by contrastive analysis (Connor 1996). However, unlike traditional contrastive analysis, contrastive rhetorical studies have not remained at the level of phonology and/or lexis; rather, they have extended way beyond the sentence level to the macro level of the whole genre (Martin-Martin, 2005).

As an interdisciplinary research field, contrastive rhetoric is generally regarded as being initiated by the applied linguist Robert Kaplan, in a famous (and in some respects infamous) article entitled *Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-cultural Education* (Kaplan, 1966). On the basis of an analysis of 600 non-native students' English essays, this paper proposed five basic discourse organisation patterns, each representing a unique rhetorical inclination. Kaplan attempted to connect these inclinations to specific cultures and thinking patterns; English native speakers were purported to think in 'straight lines', whereas Chinese and other Asian writers were characterised as thinking in a much more indirect way -- specifically, in a concentric spiral pattern.

Kaplan's pioneering work was undoubtedly useful in that it encouraged English writing teachers to look beyond issues merely related to words and grammar (Bloch 2013). However, it has also aroused much criticism over the last 40 years (Connor, 1996). From a

21st century perspective, Kaplan's unthinking privileging of English native writing as a norm against which all other cultures should be judged is clearly unacceptable, as is his crude division of text organisation patterns into basic types associated exclusively with individual cultures (Pennycook, 1998). Researchers have also pointed out that second language students' writing problems can be much more simply attributed to low-level negative transfer issues (e.g. Leki, 1991; Connor, 1996).

But at the same time, these criticisms have also prompted this theory's development, culminating in a "paradigm shift" (Connor, 1996, p.18) in the 1990s, with the birth of a new and expanded contrastive rhetoric framework. Connor's (1996) *Contrastive Rhetoric: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Second-Language Writing* remains the representative theoretical statement in this expanded framework. In her work, Connor develops a much more detailed and sophisticated view of how culture and rhetoric influence each other, drawing on insights from such fields as writing pedagogy, text linguistics, cultural anthropology, cognitive psychology and translation studies to show how "writing as an activity embedded in a culture" (ibid, p.100).

Within this new framework, researchers analyse the whole text from the discourse level, based on dynamic and interactive contexts (Connor, 1987; Enkvist, 1987), rather than relying purely on linguistic methods of analysis (Connor, 1996). Generally speaking, modern contrastive rhetoric research treats texts as dynamic interactions with emphases on communications between writers and readers (Connor, 2002), rather than presenting one culture as a norm from which other cultures deviate.

Inevitably, contrastive rhetoric research has extended to include texts from professional and academic genres (Connor, 2002). From this perspective, Martin-Martin (2003) has argued that in order to communicate successfully in an academic discourse community, it is important for scholars (both native and non-native) to master the writing conventions which characterise the academic writing in that discourse community. While Widdowson (1979) has proposed a kind of universal discourse prototype, several studies on contrastive rhetoric claim that various academic writing styles are actually affected by the interests and priorities of particular discourse communities, thereby leading to the production

of rhetorical variation across disciplines.

Given that rhetorical preferences may vary across both languages and disciplinary cultures, and that English has been the lingua franca in international academic community, most genre analysts believe that non-native scholars need to familiarise themselves with target discourse conventions when they write in English and wish to gain international recognition. Ignorance of such rhetorical conventions is seen as a major reason for non-native scholars' relative lack of success in international scientific communication (Connor, 1996) -- although of course more practical constraints such as a lack of access to funding or other material resources, or to a critical mass of colleagues working on similar topics are inevitably also partly responsible for this.

As Connor (2002, 2004) points out, in contrastive rhetoric, move structure analysis has been used to investigate patterns of variation in written genres across cultures and languages (cf. Samraj, 2014). Pezzini (2003) and Niu (2013), for example, have combined and compared three datasets: English abstracts written by English native writers, English abstracts written by non-native writers (e.g. Portuguese and Chinese) and Italian and Chinese abstracts written by non-native writers. However, only a few studies have touched upon English abstracts written by non-native writers. Ren and Li (2011) have compared English abstracts written by professional academics (in the form of published RA abstracts) with English L2 MA students' dissertation abstracts, while Chalak and Norouzi (2013) compared 40 English abstracts published in the *International Journal of Language Studies* written by American and Iranian academics.

Above all, recent work has moved away from simplistic notions that cultural differences can be reduced to national cultural stereotypes. In recognition of this, Connor (2004, 2011) has put forward the concept of "intercultural rhetoric" as

> an umbrella term that includes cross-cultural studies (comparisons of the same concept in culture one and culture two) as well as studies of interactions in which writers from a variety of linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds negotiate through speaking and writing (Connor, 2011, p.2)

According to Connor (2011) and Belcher (2014), this new approach offers four new perspectives for researchers interested in the relationships between language, culture and rhetoric. The first of these relates to the fact that the notion of cultural identity is becoming increasingly vague in the 21st century. From a 'postmodern' perspective, culture is now becoming seen not as a fixed property of national or racial groups, but as "a dynamic, ongoing process which operates in changing circumstances to enable group members to make sense and meaningfully operate within those circumstances" (Holliday, 1999, p.248). Thus, the concept of culture has become less related to national boundaries (Kramsch, 2002). It is not the steady and distinct language and culture system that is associated with nationalities, identities and/or habitats; on the contrary, it recognises that all writers have multiple cultural identities. Holliday (1994, 1999) argues that culture is best regarded as a complicated interaction among what he calls 'large' and 'small' cultures (e.g. Holliday, 1999; Atkinson, 2004; Connor, 2011). Thus, an academic writer could be participating in a small culture as well as in a large culture at the same time. For example, Chinese academic writers who publish research articles in international English language academic journals may feel that they belong to traditional national and ethnic Chinese cultures on the one hand, but at the same time, they may also see themselves as a member of a disciplinary discourse community that not only transcends national boundaries, but has no national affiliation whatsoever.

Secondly, Belcher (2014) points out that writing and communication modes in the internet era have now become a research focus within the new intercultural rhetoric paradigm. The development of internet technology has facilitated the emergence and development of cyberspace, which can be viewed as an entirely new kind of discourse community, which problematizes traditional notions of cultural affiliation and identity. These types of emerging discourse communities allow new and potentially unique sets of values and conventions to emerge. An example of this is provided by a study by Temples and Nelson (2013), which revealed novel patterns of communication among Spanish and English speaking students in an online language learning course. At the same time, some researchers believe that the emergence and development of cyberspace, with its collapse of traditional boundaries of time, space and materiality, has provided unprecedented opportunities for

intercultural communication (e.g. Jones and Hafner, 2012; Ju, 2016). Under such circumstances, the concept of targeted audience has also become more dynamic and multivariate (Ju, 2016). This is particularly relevant for the current research; compared with the era of traditional paper printing, the potential audiences for online English abstracts in the internet age are entirely unrestricted; any abstract can now in principle be accessed by any academic anywhere in the world. In such an environment, traditional divisions between national and international audiences seem increasingly less relevant.

Thirdly, researchers in intercultural rhetorical studies have already recognised the potential offered by electronic analytical approaches such as Corpus Linguistics, and have begun to apply such approaches to specific intercultural rhetoric research questions (Connor 2011). A good indicator of this is the book *Critical and Corpus-Based Approaches to Intercultural Rhetoric* (Belcher and Nelson 2013), in which leading researchers such as Connor, Cortes and Hardy, Friginal and Gentil have all employed various types of corpora and corpus linguistic tools and approaches in carrying out intercultural rhetoric studies. It should be noted however, that the introduction and adoption of corpus linguistic approaches does not mean the abandonment of traditional approaches in contrastive/intercultural rhetoric studies. On the contrary, intercultural rhetoric research is a highly eclectic enterprise, which makes full use of both qualitative and quantitative modes analysis, incorporating analytical approaches from corpus linguistics, genre analysis, critical discourse analysis and surveys (e.g. Connor, 1999, 2000).

Finally, whereas traditional contrastive rhetoric studies could be criticised for applying simplistic notions of ‘culture’ ‘rhetoric’ and ‘mother tongue influence’ to the analysis of second language writing, the new intercultural rhetoric paradigm has a much more nuanced and sophisticated view of context, and is aware of the complex ways in which historical, social and political forces can all have significant influences on writing rhetoric (You 2010; Belcher 2014; Ju, 2016).

The development of intercultural rhetoric studies indicate that contrastive rhetoric is continuously expanding its research fields, improving its theoretical modes, and innovating its research approaches. From Kaplan’s (1966) pioneering work, to Connor’s new expansion

of intercultural rhetoric studies, contrastive rhetoric studies continue to provide a useful interface with EAP/ESP research and pedagogy (Martin-Martin, 2005). This thesis is certainly a contrastive study in that it will attempt to identify differences (if any exist) in English abstracts written by two groups of academic writers. However, the current research cannot be seen as a conventional contrastive rhetoric study as it is not based on a contrast between a source language and a target language. Rather, this thesis could be more accurately described as making a comparison between abstract texts written as a source language (in this case, English), and abstracts written in what is effectively an *inter*language variety, that is, English written by Chinese-speaking Finance and Accounting academic writers. In this sense, the current research is closer in both spirit and substance to the intercultural rhetoric tradition than it is to the contrastive rhetoric tradition of analysis. Before moving on, it is important to clarify that although my study could be described as focusing on an interlanguage variety, it only borrows the concept of interlanguage (or the name, to be more specific) from the second language acquisition literature; the current research is not concerned with error analysis or with any other aspects of interlanguage theory as it is commonly understood in the SLA research literature. The focus of the current study will remain firmly within the realms of discourse analysis, and more specifically within the ESP tradition of genre analysis. In order to signal this, I will prefer to use the term "English abstracts written by Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers" rather than "interlanguage abstracts" to refer to the English-language abstract texts produced by Chinese writers publishing in Chinese-language journals.

## 2.4 Rationale for the current study

In summary, the abstract genre has been the focus of an increasing amount of research in both international and Chinese EAP communities in recent decades (Cao and Xiao, 2013a). The question that arises at this point therefore is: why is there a need for the research reported in this thesis? There are three main motivations for the current research, each of which will be

explained below.

Firstly, most of the studies reviewed in this chapter have focused on a relatively narrow selection of disciplines; in particular, there has been a substantial focus on the disciplines of Medicine, Language and Science and Engineering (especially Biology). In contrast, abstracts in the Humanities and Social Sciences have been relatively neglected. This is particularly true for the fields of Finance and Economics, with which I am involved as an EAP teacher at a Chinese university specialising in these fields. To my knowledge, there are only six studies that include analyses of abstracts from these disciplines: Hyland (2004), Ge and Yang (2005), Hyland and Tse (2005a, 2005b), Dahl (2009) Khedri et al. (2013) and Pique-Noguera (2013). There is therefore a clear need for further research on abstracts in these fields.

Secondly, there are very few comprehensive abstract studies combining both rhetorical move analysis and lexico-grammatical features analysis. In most cases, researchers either examine and/or compare rhetorical move structures (occasionally also investigating typical linguistic realisations for each move), or study specific linguistic features in the abstract genre irrespective of move structure considerations. From the review of the literature conducted in this chapter, it seems clear that the most powerful insights into the nature and functions of the abstract genre are generated by combining these macroscopic and microscopic perspectives. It is therefore necessary for further studies to be conducted that explicitly aim to combine and integrate these perspectives from the outset.

Extending this point somewhat, there is also an urgent need for more studies that range beyond the confines of text-based analysis altogether, and incorporate data of a more contextual nature, such as interview transcripts of responses to questionnaires, as a means of triangulating or casting light on text-based observations. To date, comparatively few studies provide these kinds of perspectives; Hyland's work, which usually does incorporate interview and/or questionnaire data, is a notable exception in this regard. That this is so is surprising, given the importance that major figures in the ESP tradition of genre analysis such as Swales and Bhatia have consistently placed on understanding the contexts in which genres are produced. The current research aims to redress this, by including both questionnaires and

interviews as a means of exploring Chinese academics' views and practices in relation to writing English-language abstracts.

Thirdly, there is a clear need for more comparative studies of abstracts written by native and non-native speakers of English. Internationally, there have thus far been very few studies of this kind; and while this perspective has been more popular among Chinese researchers, the studies carried out to date have been lacking in depth and sophistication. More research along these lines is needed for pedagogic as well as theoretical reasons. It is not enough for Chinese academic writers (or for other English non-native writers) simply to be informed about English language abstract writing conventions, or about differences between academic English and their own native academic writing conventions. Rather, they need to be made aware of differences between their own English abstract writing practices and those of the international academic community — which is not restricted to any particular 'native speaker' model, so that they can better follow the writing conventions expected in these international (English-medium but not necessarily native-speaking) discourse communities.

The present study will address the above mentioned gaps in the literature: by combining rhetorical move analysis with corpus tools, it will explore textual variation in English abstracts written by international and Chinese academics across two related Social Science disciplines. It will then investigate two salient lexico-grammatical features, namely first person pronoun usage and subordinate clauses usage, with the ultimate aim of helping to raise Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers' awareness about how their abstract writing practices can be brought more into line with the expectations of international audiences, thereby enhancing the potential for their work to be disseminated internationally.

## 2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed previous studies on genre, genre analysis, the genre of the academic abstract and the broad fields of contrastive and intercultural rhetoric. I first

reviewed the concept of genre in three traditions and stated my reasons for selecting the ESP genre analysis approach for my study. I then looked in more detail at the ESP genre analysis tradition and its development over the last three decades. After brief discussion of ESP genre analysis, I further discussed the move analysis and text analysis, and how both of these approaches have been enhanced by corpus analysis techniques. Regarding the abstract genre, I started by establishing its nature and function, and then discussed major ways in which this genre can be classified. Following this, I reviewed previous studies of abstract writing in English from both international and Chinese EAP writing perspectives. Given that my study is a contrastive study of English abstracts written by two groups of writers, I also briefly reviewed the field of contrastive rhetoric and its recent development as intercultural rhetoric.

In the next chapter, I will begin to describe my own empirical research, focusing in particular on the two sub-corpora that form the basis of the empirical study, and on how these corpora were designed and compiled.

# CHAPTER THREE: DATA COLLECTION AND CORPUS COMPOSITION

In this chapter, I will describe the data collection and corpus compilation process undertaken in my study. The chapter begins with a brief overview of basic issues in relation to the process of corpus compilation. I will then explain how I selected academic journals from the disciplines of Finance and Accounting for my corpora, and how the English abstract texts from these journals were collected. This selection process involved dividing my data into two sub-corpora, named EJ (for international journal abstracts) and CJ (for Chinese journal abstracts) sub-corpora. I will then conclude by providing an overview of these two sub-corpora.

Before proceeding any further, however, it is necessary to provide a clarification about the name of one of the two sub-corpora collected for the current research. As already noted, I have named the sub-corpus consisting of English abstracts from international Finance and Accounting prestigious journals the 'EJ' sub-corpus, as an abbreviation of "English Journals". A relevant question here might be: why call this sub-corpus EJ? Surely IJ (for "International Journals") would be a more accurate label? Of course, I fully understand that the writers who have published research articles in the international journals studied in this thesis are not all native English writers. However, I wanted to refer to the international journals sub-corpus as EJ to emphasise that these journals are all exclusively English medium journals; they are not 'international' in the sense that they also include articles written in languages other than English, as is the case with the CJ sub-corpus.

## 3.1 Issues in corpus compilation

There are numerous previous discussions of corpus compilation and design in the corpus linguistics literature (e.g. Biber, 1993; Biber et al., 1998; Tognini-Bonelli, 2001; Hunston, 2002; Meyer, 2002; McEnery et al., 2006; McEnery and Hardie, 2012). The vast majority have typically identified three key issues that any prospective corpus builder needs to consider. These are corpus representativeness, balance and corpus size. Each of these will be discussed in turn below.

The concept of representativeness is notoriously controversial in corpus linguistics (for overviews of the main issues, see Biber 1993; Hunston 2002; McEnery et al., 2006) and corpora are often meant to represent a particular type of language (Hunston, 2002). However, as Hunston (2008, p.161) points out, "the question of representativeness [only] really becomes controversial when applied to a general corpus". Specialised corpora, by their very nature, are usually highly specific and restricted to a particular social group or functional variety, which makes the task of assembling a corpus which will allow generalizations about that social group or functional variety much easier. In this research, I will study the single genre of RA abstracts in just two academic disciplines as Finance and Accounting. Finance and Accounting are taught and researched in higher education in China as well as in many other countries internationally. Both the disciplines of Finance and Accounting have their own academic journals in which researchers can publish their original research articles. Therefore, in my study, I will treat Finance and Accounting as two independent and equal academic disciplines.

Turning now to the concept of balance, Hunston (2008, p.163) argues that this concept is about the internal components of a corpus: "the proportions of the various sub-corpora that make it up." In my study, there are two sub-corpora which will be referred to throughout this thesis as EJ and CJ respectively. For the sake of comparison, I will need to ensure that there is adequate balance between my sub-corpora by using an equal number of abstracts from the two academic disciplines under analysis. However, as Hunston (2008) also points out, the relationship between "'number of texts' and 'number of tokens'" (ibid, p.163)

is also critical and needs to be taken into consideration. My approach to fulfilling these requirements will be discussed in detail later in this chapter.

A closely related basic issue that any corpus building project needs to consider is that of sampling. Corpus sampling is in close connection with representativeness and balance (McEnery et al., 2006). Yates (1965, p.9) indicates that the purpose of sampling "is to secure a sample which, subject to limitations of size, will reproduce the characteristics of the population". As my research concerns the genre of the research article abstract in Finance and Accounting journals, the sampling frame will thus need to include English abstract texts from among the most prestigious English-medium academic journals in these fields, as well as English abstract texts from Chinese Accounting and Finance academic journals (with various impact factors).

In relation to corpus size, my requirements are somewhat different from those of many previous studies. To explore phraseological patterns in concordance lines, corpus linguists in previous studies have usually preferred compiling and using large corpora (cf. Meyer, 2002; Hunston, 2008). However, while this thesis will include an analysis of salient lexico-grammatical features, my research also aims to carry out a discourse analysis of rhetorical structures. This requires me to take into considerations, the fact that manual annotation of abstract rhetorical moves will be a major part of my methodology. As a lone researcher, it would thus be unrealistic for me to compile a multi-million word corpus for the purposes of this study. Instead, my analysis will be based on 200 abstract texts from each discipline and each writer group.

Until recently, copying electronic texts without the permission of the copyright holder was illegal under UK law, and was regarded as potentially ethically dubious (McEnery and Hardie 2012). In 2014, however, there was a significant change in UK copyright law, with the result that "researchers are [now] allowed to make copies of whole copyright works that they have lawful access to [e.g. via their university's library subscriptions], without asking for specific permission, as long as they are making these copies solely for the purpose of non-commercial research."[3] As all of my data were collected via university online portals

[3]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/375954/Research.pdf

and will not be used for commercial purposes, there are therefore no ethical issues to declare in relation to the current research.

### 3.2 Data collection

The research carried out in this thesis is based on an electronic corpus of abstracts that I designed, collected and developed. This corpus contains two sub-corpora: one for English language abstracts derived from prestigious international English Finance and Accounting academic journals (hereafter referred to as the EJ sub-corpus) (please refer to the clarification relating to the reasons for naming the sub-corpus as “EJ” instead of “IJ” in above section), and the other for English language abstracts from Chinese academic journals (hereafter referred to as the CJ sub-corpus). Each sub-corpus contains 400 abstract texts and is drawn from the same academic disciplines, namely, Finance and Accounting (with each discipline providing 200 abstracts for each sub-corpus).

Of the three ways of acquiring written texts proposed by Hunston (2008), I adopted the third approach -- “obtaining texts electronically” (ibid, p.157). Specifically, I downloaded English abstract texts from academic journal websites and from the SWUFE library portal.

Care was taken to ensure that the corpora are well balanced: each discipline in each sub-corpus contributes 200 abstract texts. Although the primary objective of my research is to conduct a contrastive study across two groups of writers in order to identify any writing differences across these two groups, I still want to allow for the possibility that there might be some writing differences that might be more plausibly linked to differences between the two disciplines under analysis than to any fundamental linguistic or cultural differences between the two groups of writers represented by my data. Finance and Accounting are two distinct but closely related Social Science disciplines, which under the Chinese academic discipline classification system are considered counterparts. As a subsidiary aim to the main contrastive analysis, therefore I also want my research to be open to the possibility that there may be

disciplinary differences in my data, either in terms of rhetorical structure preferences or in terms of preferred lexico-grammatical features.

### 3.2.1 Compilation of EJ sub-corpus

In this section I will discuss in more detail how target academic journals were selected, and how the abstract texts from those academic journals were collected for inclusion in my corpora.

#### 3.2.1.1 Selection of academic journals

In selecting English Finance and Accounting academic journals, I principally used the Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports (JCR) Social Sciences 2013 and 2014, supplemented with the Academic Journal Classification and Ranking Category 2013 (published by SWUFE) and the JCR Report 2015. As a "recognized authority for evaluating journals," JCR "presents quantitative data that supports a systematic, objective review of the world's leading journals" (http://wokinfo.com/products_tools/analytical/jcr). In the first stage of selection, I listed the top twelve Finance and Accounting journals in JCR 2013 and 2014 reports. I then crossed out the journals which appeared only once (such as the *Journal of Financial Stability*). Next, I examined each of the academic journals' official websites, and at the same time, I also sought the views of "specialist informants" (Bhatia, 1993, p.34) from among my colleagues (some of whom are my interviewees as well) in the Schools of Accounting and Finance in SWUFE. At this stage, I crossed out the journals which were not exclusively devoted to the fields of Finance or Accounting, such as *Corporate Governance-An International Review* and *Auditing-A Journal of Practice and Theory*. For similar reasons (and on the basis of specialist informant advice), I also decided not to include the *Accounting, Organizations and Society* in my Accounting EJ sub-corpus. Finally, I also consulted and cross checked with the JCR 2015 Report and the SWUFE 2013 Category (this Classification and Ranking Category was principally focussed on international academic journals from a top Chinese Economics and Business university

(http://e.swufe.edu.cn/eswufe/a/About/SWUFE_at_a_Glance). This Category was based on the Thomson-ISI JCR for the last five years. (It focussed on the impact factor as the main index but was not only limited to impact factors). I wanted to verify and was keen to confirm my previous choice and undertook the process of repeating the above mentioned procedures. During this step, I further ruled out the *Journal of Banking and Finance* from my candidate journal list for Finance, and *Accounting Horizon* from my candidate list for Accounting. I then critically evaluated the selection between the Accounting journals of *Contemporary Accounting Research* and *Accounting, Organizations and Society* and the Finance journals of *Review of Finance* and *Journal of Financial Intermediation.* Finally, combining the analyses and data from the above-mentioned two resources (within each subject/discipline category), and principally referring to the academic journals' impact factors (including their 5-year impact factors), I selected the most prestigious English academic journals in the light of these considerations. With these journals, I believe that the international writers' writing conventions are positively associated with the academic journals' qualities and that they can therefore be regarded as a valid international 'norm' for comparison (cf. Cao and Xiao, 2013a, 2013b). A full list of the journals finally selected for analysis is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 International Accounting and Finance academic journals in EJ sub-corpus

| Discipline | Journal Name | Impact Factor Scores (based on 2014 JCR) |
|---|---|---|
| **Accounting** | *Journal of Accounting and Economics* | 2.724 |
| | *Journal of Accounting Research* | 2.384 |
| | *Accounting Review* | 2.319 |
| | *Review of Accounting Studies* | 1.379 |
| | *Contemporary Accounting Research* | 1.263 |
| **Finance** | *Journal of Finance* | 5.424 |
| | *Journal of Financial Economics* | 4.047 |
| | *Review of Financial Studies* | 3.174 |
| | *Review of Finance* | 2.012 |
| | *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis* | 1.566 |

Of the five selected English language Finance journals listed above, the first three are acknowledged as the top three Finance academic journals in the scholarly community. For most Finance scholars, the *Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis* occupies the fourth position. However, this journal is somewhat different from the top three in that it prefers research articles that make extensive use of quantitative (and often mathematical) analyses. As such, I was aware that data collected from this journal would be likely to have an impact on my EJ sub-corpus Finance data. Nevertheless, I still decided to include this journal in my corpus on the grounds that it is widely recognised among Finance researchers. As for the Accounting sub-corpus, the only potentially problematic case was *Contemporary Accounting Research*. As the "premiere research journal of the Canadian Academic Accounting

Association" (https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/19113846), *Contemporary Accounting Research* is an English/French bi-lingual journal. As I was only inputting English language academic journals into my database, it was fortuitous to note that there was not a single research article written in French during the publication years of 2013-14. I can therefore treat this particular journal as a de-facto English-medium-only journal, and thus as directly comparable with the other four prestigious journals identified for inclusion in my Accounting corpus.

3.2.1.2 Collection of abstracts

Having identified a selection of relevant journals, the next step was to collect relevant abstracts for my EJ sub-corpus. I went through all the issues in the publication years of 2013-14 of all the selected English Finance and Accounting journals, and rejected any conference issues (such as the Issue 3, Volume 18 of *Review of Accounting Studies*; Issues 2-3, Volume 56 of *Journal of Accounting and Economics*). The English abstracts presented in these issues, are in fact, the conference abstracts, which, as suggested by Swales and Feak (2009), are an entirely different genre from that of the RA abstract (a detailed discussion of the differences between RA abstracts and conference abstracts was provided in Section 2.2.2 of Chapter Two of this thesis).

I then systematically read through all of the article titles in the issues in my sampling frame. The aim was to reject any remaining articles which were generically inappropriate for my study, such as book reviews, editorial and prizewinning announcements and other notices.

After the first two rounds of selection, all that remained were original research articles from which I could randomly select English abstracts for my EJ sub-corpus. From the publication years of 2013 and 2014 (assuming that there would be no great change of academic writing style in Finance and Accounting in recent years), I had a relatively balanced

selection of abstracts from the remaining issues (including the special issues, because with an even distribution of abstracts, the randomly selected texts from special issues would not affect the resulting corpus) and remaining research articles. Each academic journal contributed 20 English abstracts from each year of publication. The total number of abstracts in the EJ sub-corpus was 400.

### 3.2.2 Compilation of the CJ sub-corpus

In this section I will begin by discussing how target journals for the Chinese Finance and Accounting sub-corpus were selected. I will then proceed to discuss the process of collecting English abstracts from those academic journals that constituted my CJ sub-corpus.

#### 3.2.2.1 Selection of academic journals

For identifying candidate Finance and Accounting academic journals published in China, I principally relied on the authoritative China Academic Journal Network Publishing Database (hereafter referred to as CAJD), which is part of the China Knowledge Resource Integrated Database (hereafter referred to as CNKI). CNKI is the "Chin[ese] National Knowledge Infrastructure...the most comprehensive system of Chin[ese] academic knowledge resources dedicated to the mass digitalization of China ['s] knowledge resources, as well as creating a platform for global dissemination and value-added services". (http://eng.oversea.cnki.net/kns55/support/en/about_cnki.aspx). The CAJD database "is the largest and continuously updated Chinese academic journal database in the world, ... It has collected around 8000 Chinese academic journals, totalling 50,000,000 full-text papers" (see http://nvsm.cnki.net/KNS/brief/result.aspx?dbprefix=CJFQ, translated for a brief introduction to CAJD). In short, it is fair to say that this database has the largest selection in terms of both quantity and quality of Chinese academic journals currently available.

In the first stage of selection, all Chinese Accounting and Finance academic journals were identified from the CAJD database via a web link from the SWUFE library

portal. This enabled me to have free access to full original research articles. From this list, a set of appropriate academic journals according to the "subjects" (as they are referred to in the CNKI database) of Accounting and Finance were then selected.

To ensure and confirm the reliability of my selected data, I verified these indexed Chinese Finance and Accounting academic journals using three authoritative Chinese guidebooks. These were the Comprehensive List of Chinese Core Journals (2014), the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (2014) (hereafter referred to as CSSCI) (for a brief introduction, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_Social_Sciences_Citation_Index), and the SWUFE Academic Journal Classification and Ranking Category 2013. From this comprehensive list, I decided to select Finance and Accounting journals with various impact factors (cf. Cao and Xiao, 2013a), so as to represent the full range of academic English writing levels amongst Chinese writers. I also examined these academic journals' official websites, taking into account my specialist informants' opinions. Thus, in the second stage of selection, I rejected some Chinese Accounting and Finance academic journals. Some were rejected on the grounds that they had already stopped publication (e.g. *Financial Science*). Others were rejected because their coverage of topics ranged beyond Finance (e.g. *Finance Theory and Teaching*). Yet others were excluded as they did not require writers to submit English-language abstracts (e.g. *Accounting Learning*).

On the basis of the above, I made a preliminary selection of four Accounting journals and eleven Finance academic journals from the CAJD database. While there were many reasons for this disparity in the respective number of journals chosen belonging to each discipline, my primary concern at this juncture was that such a small number of Chinese Accounting journals would have implications for the representativeness of my data. I therefore decided to locate and select more Chinese Accounting journals from other valid and credible resources. While examining and reviewing the three most authoritative Chinese guidebooks particularizing lists of Chinese Accounting journals, I noticed that there were two additional Accounting and one additional Finance journals in the index catalogue in the CSSCI (2014). In order to confirm these three journals were recognised in their relevant

discourse communities, I consulted my specialist informant colleagues from the Schools of Accounting and Finance in SWUFE, as well as two other academic journal editors (one was also a PhD in Editorial Science). They all confirmed that these journals are highly regarded in Chinese Accounting and Finance academic communities.

On the basis of these additional checks, I was reassured about the academic standing and prestige of these three journals. I therefore decided to include them in my CJ sub-corpus. It was not possible to locate any additional qualifying journals without compromising the overall selection criteria, however, so it must be conceded that there is still an imbalance in the representation of the subject areas in my data. Nevertheless, the resulting list is clearly an improvement on the original list of just four academic journals for Accounting.

For the selection of Chinese academic journals, I adhered to the same selection criterion as I did for the international English language Finance and Accounting academic journals. I was still concerned that my selected Chinese academic journals should cover almost all the major topics in the two disciplines. I wanted my selection of Chinese academic journals to be strictly limited to Finance and Accounting topics. This was partly in order to aid the process of matching and comparing with my selection of prestigious English-medium academic journals, but also because in some comprehensive and integrated Economics and/or Management Chinese academic journals, Finance and Accounting research articles tend to be mixed together with other Economics and/or Management research articles. This would then render the process of distinguishing between Finance and Accounting research articles extremely difficult for me as a disciplinary ‘outsider’ (my area of disciplinary specialisation being in Linguistics). It is for this reason that I did not consider any of the comprehensive Economics and/or Management journals published in Chinese, such as some of the academic journals originating from leading Chinese Economics and Finance universities.

My final selection of candidate Chinese Accounting and Finance journals is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Chinese Accounting and Finance academic journals in CJ sub-corpus

| Discipline | Journal Name | Impact Factor Scores |
|---|---|---|
| **Accounting** | *Accounting Research* | 3.070 |
| | *Journal of Accounting and Economics* | 0.906 |
| | *China Accounting Review* | 0.48 |
| | *Communication of Finance and Accounting* | 0.149 |
| | *Contemporary Accounting Review* | n/a |
| | *Accounting Forum* | n/a |
| **Finance** | *Studies of International Finance* | 2.679 |
| | *Journal of Financial Research* | 2.034 |
| | *Finance Forum* | 1.426 |
| | *Financial Economics Research* | 1.404 |
| | *Chinese Review of Financial Studies* | 0.824 |
| | *South China Finance* | 0.725 |
| | *Shanghai Finance* | 0.59 |
| | *Financial Theory and Practice* | 0.429 |
| | *Journal of Financial Development Research* | 0.312 |
| | *Journal of Shanghai Finance University* | 0.257 |
| | *Journal of Regional Financial Research* | 0.23 |
| | *Quarterly Journal of Finance* | n/a |

From this list, the Accounting journal *Communication of Finance and Accounting* is the only publication whose inclusion requires any further comment here. Although this journal bears the name 'finance', it is actually devoted solely to research in the field of Accounting. It also differs somewhat from the other academic Accounting journals listed above in that it

publishes issues on both academic and practical aspects of Accounting. Furthermore, only some of the articles published in this journal have English abstracts (each issue has an average of seven to eight English abstracts). Thus, for this journal, I focussed on the academic issues for the selection to my data reservoir. I randomly selected one or two English abstracts from these academic issues.

My sampling period was from October 2014 to November 2015. I collected abstracts from all of my selected Chinese Accounting and Finance academic journals via the SWUFE online library portal.

3.2.2.2 Collection of abstracts

Having identified a set of relevant Chinese academic journals, and following the same selection process used for the international Finance and Accounting academic journals sub-corpus, I went through every issue for the years of 2013 and 2014 of each of the selected Chinese Finance and Accounting journals. While there were no conference issues to contend with, there were some specific sections that were inappropriate for my study and accordingly, I rejected them all. Given the close relationship of the disciplines of Finance and Economics, Accounting and Economics, there are two Accounting and Finance academic journals containing sections with a focus on Economics. These are the *Journal of Shanghai Finance University* and *Journal of Accounting and Economics*. Considering that these Chinese colleges' Finance and Accounting journals are solely Finance and Accounting academic journals (by examining their official websites and feedback from Finance and Accounting academics in SWUFE), and with only one other related discipline sections occasionally appearing in some issues, I still retained these journals in my CJ sub-corpus and rejected those specific sections so as to adhere to some degree of the disciplinary integrity.

I then checked through the titles of all of the articles in the remaining issues, with the aim of rejecting any content that was not relevant to my research. Irrelevant material included name lists of peer-reviewers (such as in *Journal of Financial Research*), New Year's

addresses and journal subscription information (such as in *Accounting Research*). Also rejected were literature review articles. According to Swales and Feak (1994), the literature review genre is a distinct genre in its own right and thus different in rhetorical aims and structure from that of an article reporting on original research. Some Chinese Finance and Accounting journals tend to present literature review articles together with other original research articles in each issue, but even in such cases, there is always a clear indication in the title of each article that these are "literature reviews" rather than empirical research articles. Thus, it was straightforward in practice to eliminate all the articles that were not appropriate for my study.

I applied the same selection procedure for the international Finance and Accounting academic journals to my CJ sub-corpus data collection process. I randomly chose a selection of research article abstracts, drawn from all the remaining original research articles that were published between the years of 2013 and 2014. As noted above, the numbers of Chinese Finance and Accounting journals are not equal to each other. To ameliorate this balance issue, I selected eight to nine abstracts per journal from each year of publication from the Chinese Finance journals and sixteen to seventeen abstracts per journal and per publication year from the Chinese Accounting journals. I believe that the resulting disparity of one research article per publication year would not have a significant impact on my contrastive analysis. Meanwhile, given that three selected Chinese Finance and Accounting academic journals do not have enough research articles to choose from in the publication years of 2013 and 2014, I had to supplement my data by randomly selecting a corresponding number of research articles abstracts from the publication year of 2015. The names of the academic journals from where these selections were made are *Quarterly Journal of Finance*, *Accounting Forum* and *Contemporary Accounting Review*. As stated previously, I believe that one publication year disparity (and for only three Chinese academic journals) would not have a significant impacts on any contrastive analysis results.

The finalized CJ sub-corpus contains 400 abstract texts, the same number of texts found in the EJ sub-corpus drawn from international Finance and Accounting academic journals.

### 3.3 Corpus composition

The final corpus contains 102203 words in total. The EJ sub-corpus and CJ sub-corpus each amount to approximately 51000 words, as shown in Table 3.3. As can be seen, there is very little difference in the overall size (in word token terms) between the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. It is therefore reasonable to regard the two sub-corpora as being effectively of equal size, which means that any frequency data can be reported and compared directly without any need for 'per-*n*-words' normalization calculations.

Table 3.3 The EJ and CJ sub-corpora sizes

| Sub-corpus & Disciplines | Number of texts | Number of tokens | Average text length |
|---|---|---|---|
| **EJ sub-corpus** | **400** | **51020** | **127.55** |
| Accounting | 200 | 30210 | 151.05 |
| Finance | 200 | 20810 | 104.05 |
| **CJ sub-corpus** | **400** | **51183** | **128** |
| Accounting | 200 | 27099 | 135.5 |
| Finance | 200 | 24084 | 120.42 |
| **Total** | **800** | **102203** | **127.75** |

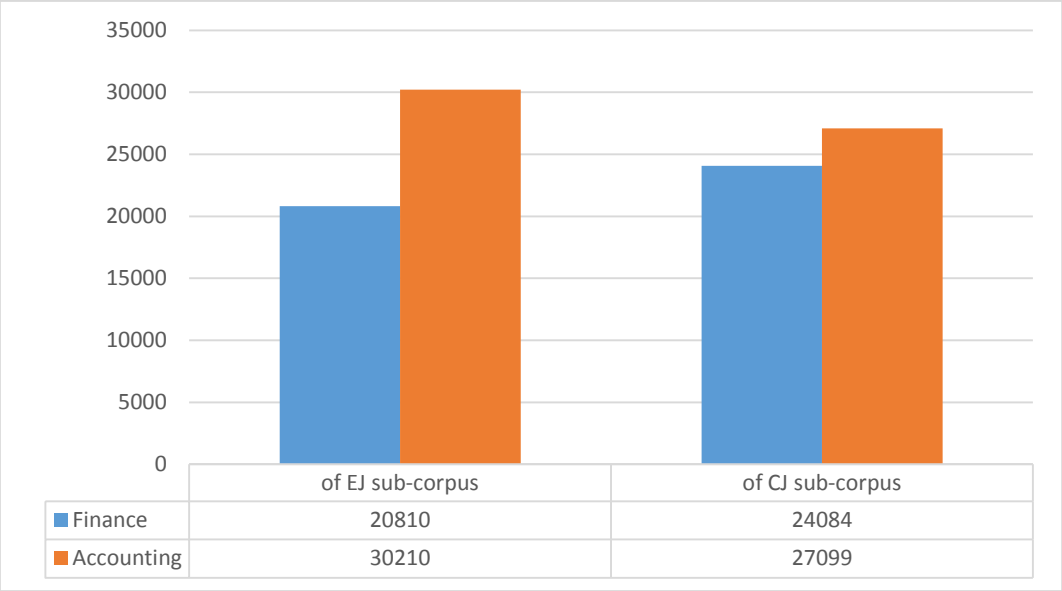



Figure 3.1 Total word numbers of abstracts in EJ and CJ sub-corpora

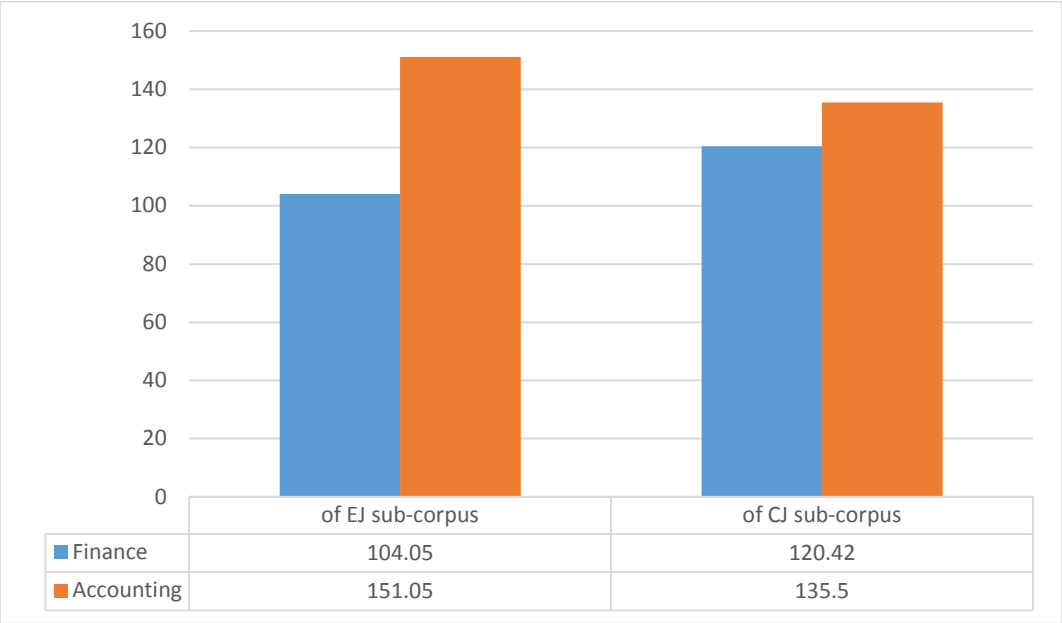



Figure 3.2 Average word numbers per abstract text in EJ and CJ sub-corpora

Table 3.3, Figures 3.1 and 3.2 show that the average number of words per abstract text is almost the same as that of the EJ sub-corpus as well as the CJ sub-corpus. They are about 128 words per text. At first sight, just by taking into account average word numbers, we may infer that the average text lengths of abstracts written by international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers are almost the same. However, if I examine the separate

disciplines in the two sub-corpora, it is apparent that there are more pronounced differences between EJ and CJ. This can be seen most directly and clearly in Figure 3.2. In Finance in particular, international writers seem to write noticeably shorter English abstracts (about 16 words less) than Chinese writers do on average. For those from Accounting, the average word number per abstract in EJ sub-corpus seems slightly longer (about 15 words more). The Accounting comparison result is in line with Cao and Xiao (2013a) findings for Science and Engineering disciplines, in which Chinese writers were found to write shorter English abstracts than their international counterparts as well.

The more detailed breakdown also indicates some apparent disciplinary variations. For example, Figure 3.2 shows that there is a marked word number variation between Finance and Accounting in the EJ sub-corpus. Specifically, international Accounting academics seem to write longer (by about 50 words, that is, one third longer) abstracts than Finance academics do. For the Chinese writers however, the difference in text length is not so salient. While the Accounting abstracts are lengthier than Finance abstracts in CJ sub-corpus, this difference is only 16 words or so on average. While it is not possible at this point in the thesis to make any informed speculations about what these differences might mean, it will be interesting to see whether any explanation might emerge from the analyses reported in later chapters.

## 3.4 Summary

In this chapter I have provided a detailed explanation of the data collection and corpus composition process. I discussed the procedures through which relevant international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic journals were selected for sampling and analysis. I then described how English abstracts were collected from these two resources. I also discussed some problems I encountered during the data collection process, and the steps I undertook to overcome them. I ended this chapter by comparing the abstract text word numbers and finding that there was a clear disciplinary distinction between the Finance and

Accounting in EJ sub-corpus. The demarcation for these two disciplines in the CJ sub-corpus was vague, on the contrary.

In the chapters to follow, I will examine and compare closely English abstracts in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora firstly from the perspective of rhetorical move structure analysis, and then from the perspective of salient lexico-grammatical features. I will discuss the specific methods used in each of these two study perspectives in the following chapters.

# CHAPTER FOUR: MOVE ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the rhetorical move structure analysis of English-language Accounting and Finance journal article abstracts published in international and Chinese-language journals. The analysis falls into two parts. The first focuses on the range, frequency and distribution of different move sequence types found across the four sub-corpora, while the second looks at the range, frequency and distribution of individual move types identified in the data.

The chapter begins by identifying three basic methodological issues that any move analysis study needs to take into consideration, and explaining how each of these issues was addressed in the current study. Following on from this, Section 4.2 describes the methodology of the current study in detail, focusing in particular on how the move annotation process was carried out. Section 4.3 reports on the intra- and inter-reliability tests that were used to test the validity of my move annotations. The remainder of the chapter presents and discusses the main findings of the move analysis study. Section 4.4 focuses on the results of the move sequence analysis, and Section 4.5 examines and compares each individual move type in more detail. Both analyses take a comparative perspective, across both the two disciplines and two writer groups represented by my corpus. The main finding emerging from these two sets of analyses is that the Chinese abstract writers represented by my data clearly prefer different moves and move patterns to those found in international journals. The chapter concludes by proposing some possible reasons for these differences.

## 4.1 Methodological decisions in move analysis

For any move analysis study, there are several basic methodological choices and decisions that need to be made from the outset. First, the analyst needs to develop, adopt or adapt a suitable coding scheme for annotating each text in the corpus for rhetorical moves. Second,

the analyst needs to specify how move boundaries will be defined. Finally, the analyst also needs to decide whether it will be useful or relevant for them to make a distinction between 'obligatory' and 'optional' moves, or between 'moves' and 'steps', when carrying out their analysis. Each of these issues will be discussed in turn below.

### 4.1.1 Choosing a suitable coding scheme

As discussed in Chapter Two, rhetorical move analysis involves not only identifying moves in generic texts but also coding moves once they have been identified, using an appropriate label from a list of possible moves for the genre in question. If a genre has never or seldom been analysed before, it becomes a major goal of the move analysis to generate a list of move types and code labels in the first place. This can only be done by engaging with the textual data, and a final list of agreed moves only tends to appear after an extended iterative process of coding, revising and recoding. For some other genres, in contrast, well established move coding frameworks may already be available; in such cases, the first task facing the analyst is to decide which (if any) of the available frameworks to use, and if so or whether to apply one single coding framework or a combination or synthesis of different frameworks to their data.

This latter case certainly applies with the genre of the RA abstract. In fact, in previous research, a bewildering number of models have been proposed for coding the generic structure of the RA abstract. One of the earliest attempts at a move analysis of this genre can be found in a study by Graetz (1985, quoted in Swales 1990). Although this study focuses principally on language features in abstract writing, such as the verb tense/voice selection, and the first person usage, it also claims that English abstract typically includes four sections with the sequence as follows: 'problem-method-results-conclusions'. In his own early work, Swales (1990) is largely in accord with Graetz's analysis, suggesting that in most cases, the abstract is just a reflection of the IMRD (i.e. Introductions, Methods, Results, Discussion) framework for the experimental research article as a whole. Bhatia's (1993, p.78-79) framework for the abstract genre is essentially the same, consisting as it does of four moves labeled as 'introducing purpose', 'describing methodology', 'summarizing results' and

‘presenting conclusions’. However, some other work on abstract structure has detected certain variations from the IMRD format. Salager-Meyer (1990), for example, studied Medical English abstracts in research articles, case reports and reviews, and identified considerable diversity in abstracts structures across the three text types. While this suggests that the format of the abstract depends on the format of the genre that the abstract is tied to, some researchers have found variation even within a single genre, and within single disciplines as well. For example, in an analysis of RA abstracts in the field of Linguistics, Lores (2004) found that while most texts followed the IMRD pattern, some abstracts had a rhetorical move structure more akin to Swales’s CARS model for research article introduction (as discussed at length in Chapter Two). With abstracts that follow the CARS model, there are no explicit methodology moves; instead, they place emphasis on presenting the rationale for the research (Huang, 2018; see also Gillaerts, 2013).

In an influential early model provided in a genre-based EAP writing textbook, Weissberg and Buker (1990, p.185) divided the ‘introduction’ move into two moves, as ‘background’ and ‘purpose’. They then proposed the five-move sequence ‘background’, ‘purpose’, ‘method’, ‘results’ and ‘conclusion/recommendation’ as the conventional form, with the key points placed in the ‘result’ move. Subsequent studies have followed a similar vein. Santos (1996), for example, analysed 94 RAs abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics and found a prototypical move sequence of (1) situating the research, (2) presenting the research, (3) describing the methodology, (4) summarizing the findings, and (5) discussing the research. Cross and Oppenheim’s (2006) study of Protozoology, Ahmed’s (2015) study of Tourism research and studies of abstracts in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics by Pho (2008), Tseng’s (2011), and Diani’s (2014) have identified similar five-move patterns. After examining English abstracts across six academic disciplines including both hard and soft disciplines, Hyland (2004) also identified five rhetorical moves in abstract writing, and proposed the sequence labels ‘introduction, purpose, method, product and conclusion’.

It should be noted that not all researchers have settled on a five-move model for

the abstract genre. Liddy (1991), for example, added an ‘Appendices’ to Weissberg and Buker’s (1990) model after analysing RA abstracts in Education, Behavioral Sciences and Mental Health. More recently, Tanko (2017) has proposed expanding the five-move model by adding ‘Topic’ and ‘Niche’ and subdividing ‘Conclusion/Recommendation’ into two separate moves. Other researchers have argued that the five-move model is valid in general, but that each of these five moves can be further divided into various and more detailed sub-moves (e.g. Hatzitheodorou 2014).

Nevertheless, on the basis of the overall evidence reviewed above, it is reasonable to conclude that the consensus among most EAP genre researchers is that the rhetorical structure of the RA abstract genre can be coded according to a five-move pattern. This will be the starting point for the current study, although my intention is to treat this five-move coding model as a hypothesis to be tested on my data, and not as a set of facts about the genre’s structure that can be assumed to be true. In particular, I will be willing to adapt, add to or even reject the model entirely if it does not fit satisfactorily with my data.

Of course, this still leaves the question of which of the many variants of the basic five-move model should be selected for the current study. After careful consideration, I decided to base my move coding on another influential model, which has been proposed by Swales and Feak (2009). This model is shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 RA abstract rhetorical structure model with accompanying questions
(Source: Swales and Feak 2009: 5)

| | |
|---|---|
| Move 1 | **Background/introduction/situation** |
| | What do we know about the topic? / Why is the topic important? |
| Move 2 | **Present research/purpose** |
| | What is this study about? |
| Move 3 | **Methods/materials/subjects/procedures** |
| | How was it done? |
| Move 4 | **Results/findings** |
| | What was discovered? |
| Move 5 | **Discussion/conclusion /implications/recommendations** |
| | What do the findings mean? |

I have adopted Swales and Feak's model as the basis for my own rhetorical move structure analysis for three specific reasons. Firstly, as there is no prescribed model for abstracts in Economics and/or Management disciplines, it seems reasonable to opt for a very general model, and this model is based on the analysis and synthesis of a wide range of different disciplines across the whole spectrum of academia. Secondly, as can be seen in the table above, Swales and Feak provide code glosses in the form of accompanying questions (e.g. 'What do we know about the topic?' 'Why is the topic important?' 'What is this study about?' etc.). These proved to be very helpful as probes or tests for deciding which code to apply to particular moves during the course of the data analyses process. Finally, there is a more practical reason for choosing to base my research on the Swales and Feak model. I am considering using the EAP textbook in which this model is proposed in my own EAP abstract writing courses/seminars when I return to China after completing my research, so if the model proves to be applicable in my analysis, it will also be likely to be a good basis for materials writing and other pedagogic developments emerging from my research work. For the sake of

convenience, however, I will simplify Swales and Feak's somewhat lengthy move labels by referring to them in more abbreviated form as 'background', 'purpose', 'methodology', 'result', and 'conclusion/recommendation'.

### 4.1.2 Identifying move boundaries

As stated in Section 2.1.3, I followed an eclectic approach combining both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' approaches in analyzing rhetorical moves. However, as also conceded in Section 2.1.3, there is a risk of circularity in identifying rhetorical moves and their linguistic features by means of a 'bottom-up' approach[4]. Although some salient linguistic features inevitably presented themselves as indicators of rhetorical move divisions (as would be assumed in a 'bottom-up' approach), I tried to avoid relying heavily on linguistic features in forming judgments about move boundaries. Instead, my main strategy was more 'top-down' or 'Swalesian', in that I divided rhetorical moves primarily based on my understanding of the substantive content and/or rhetorical strategy being developed or presented at any given point in each text.

Closely interlinked with the identification and code labelling of rhetorical moves in abstracts (or in any other kind of generic text), the question of how move boundaries will be identified in the current research is another important issue which needs to be discussed here. Once again, the previous literature provides a variety of approaches. Some researchers, such as Santos (1996), Xiao and Cao (2013a, 2013b)[5] analyse and annotate abstract moves at sentence level. Even Swales (2004), who primarily views moves as rhetorical/cognitive units rather than as strictly linguistic units, specifies the clause as the minimum linguistic unit for analysing rhetorical structures. However, as Pho (2008, p.234) points out, "considering the fact that abstracts are very condensed texts, such exclusion[s do] not seem to be reasonable." My analysis will follow Pho's (2008) example and adopt a maximally flexible approach,

[4] From Chapter Five, I will compare and discuss linguistic realization of each move and salient linguistic features in abstract texts.

[5] However, even in their studies, there are clauses and even phrases segmented as one move, in the situation of move embedding.

defining moves as ranging in their potential realization from sentences and clauses to just phrases and words. In practice, by far the majority of move realizations identified in this research were sentences and clauses. A few moves were found to be realized by complex noun phrases, but there were no one-word or simple phrase moves.

Before moving on, it is also important to note that my analysis will also follow previous researchers (e.g. Santos 1996; Anderson and Maclean 1997; Pho 2008; Tseng, 2011; Cakir and Fidan, 2015; Huang, 2018) in recognizing the phenomenon of 'move embedding', i.e. that it is possible to treat one move as either partially or fully contained within another move. Tanko (2017, p.44) explains this phenomenon as follows: "[p]artial embedding occurs when the boundaries of two or more moves that occur within one sentence coincide with syntactic unit boundaries", while full embedding occurs when move boundaries do not match syntactic unit boundaries.

### 4.1.3 Distinguishing between 'obligatory' and 'optional' moves, and between 'moves' and 'steps'

From the groundbreaking studies by Swales (1990) and Bhatia (1993) onwards, many if not most genre analysts have been interested in asking which moves should be regarded as 'obligatory' parts of the rhetorical structure of a genre under analysis, and which moves can be regarded as 'optional' features. However, despite this interest, no consensus has yet developed regarding how 'obligatory' or 'optional' should be defined. For some genre analysts, like Nwogu (1997), Li and Ge (2009) and Kanoksilapatham (2005), a move only has to occur in 50% or 60% of texts to be classified as obligatory, while for others (e.g. Flowerdew and Dudley-Evans, 2002; Cross and Oppenheim, 2006; Tseng, 2011), a move is only deemed as being obligatory when it has a 100% frequency rate. Santos (1996) defines obligatory status at the 90% level, while 66% is the cut-off point used by Hatzitheodorou (2014).

The arbitrariness of these cut-off points is obvious, and is obviously problematic. While the 100% rate is at least logical, it may well be too harsh to be useful; but if I set 90%

as the cut-off point, then what about moves that have an 89% frequency rate? But beyond this, I am not convinced that such divisions are even necessary for move analysis studies such as the current one, which make use of computerized corpus linguistic methods. With the help of corpus tools, it is easy to calculate individual move frequencies, and these frequencies can simply be reported neutrally, without any need for judging their 'obligatoriness' or otherwise. In my study, therefore, I will not recognise any obligatory/optional move division. Instead, I will simply report frequency data and let the reader decide how (or whether) to interpret these figures as indicating 'obligatory' or 'optional' status.

Another distinction that move analysts have traditionally made is that between 'moves' and 'steps'. As explained in Section 2.1.3, the concept of 'step' is at a finer level of detail than the concept of 'move', and can be defined as the specific ways in which moves are achieved. Even though the RA abstract is a very concise genre, there are moves where previous studies indicate that the concept of step may be relevant. In particular, Santos (1996) suggests that different steps (which he refers to as 'sub-moves' rather than steps) can be identified for the 'background', 'purpose' and 'conclusion' moves. In my analysis, I found that Santos' sub-moves were indeed identifiable in two of these three moves, 'purpose' and 'conclusion', and these sub-moves will be included in the individual move analysis reported in section 4.5 later. (They will not be discussed in the move sequence analysis reported in section 4.4, however, as this analysis focuses for the sake of clarity on the sequencing of the five main moves as specified by Swales & Feak only.)

## 4.2 The move annotation process

As established in Chapter Two, rhetorical moves are primarily defined and recognized in terms of their communicative function, and not in terms of any surface features of form. An important practical implication of this is that the annotation of moves is fundamentally a manual task which can only be carried out by human analysts. Computer software is now available that can speed up the annotation process, by inserting the actual mark-up for a move

into a data file once the analyst has identified that move, but such software cannot at the present time reliably carry out the task of identifying moves automatically, in the same way that part-of-speech taggers can be relied on to accurately annotate individual words for their grammatical word class without any human intervention. (Automatic rhetorical move analysis software has been developed; a notable example is Laurence Anthony's *AntMover*. However, the accuracy rate of such programmes is low — an approximately 70% accuracy rate on its best estimates according to Anthony and Lashkia (2003). My experimental study showed an even lower accuracy rate，at around 40%. There are several possible reasons for this. First, AntMover was specifically designed as a tool for analyzing scientific research articles (it was based on an analysis of abstract structures in Computer Science articles), and it analyzes moves at sentence level. This is clearly problematic, given that my research focuses on two social science disciplines, and adopts an approach to rhetorical move analysis that is not limited only to sentences. Furthermore, it may be that such phenomena as move embedding and/or move overlapping are more common in my data.

Given the above issues, it is not surprising to note that automated analysis tools such as AntMover are not widely used in genre-based research, and that many researchers still prefer to carry out manual analyses of rhetorical structures. Even those few researchers who have used such tools in their work (e.g. Kang and Lee, 2014; Sabet and Minaei, 2017)[6] have also carried out a manual check afterwards. Inevitably, this means that – irrespective of whether an automatic analysis has been carried out or not -- rhetorical move analysis is extremely time-consuming, and this may explain why move analysis studies based on relatively large quantities of texts are still comparatively rare in the genre analysis research literature.

But as Upton and Cohen (2009, p.5) observe, while "it is highly labor-intensive to apply a top-down analytical framework to a large corpus … this investment of labor pays off by enabling more detailed but generalizable analyses of discourse structure across a representative sample of texts from a genre."

[6] These studies do not report any accuracy rates for AntMover.

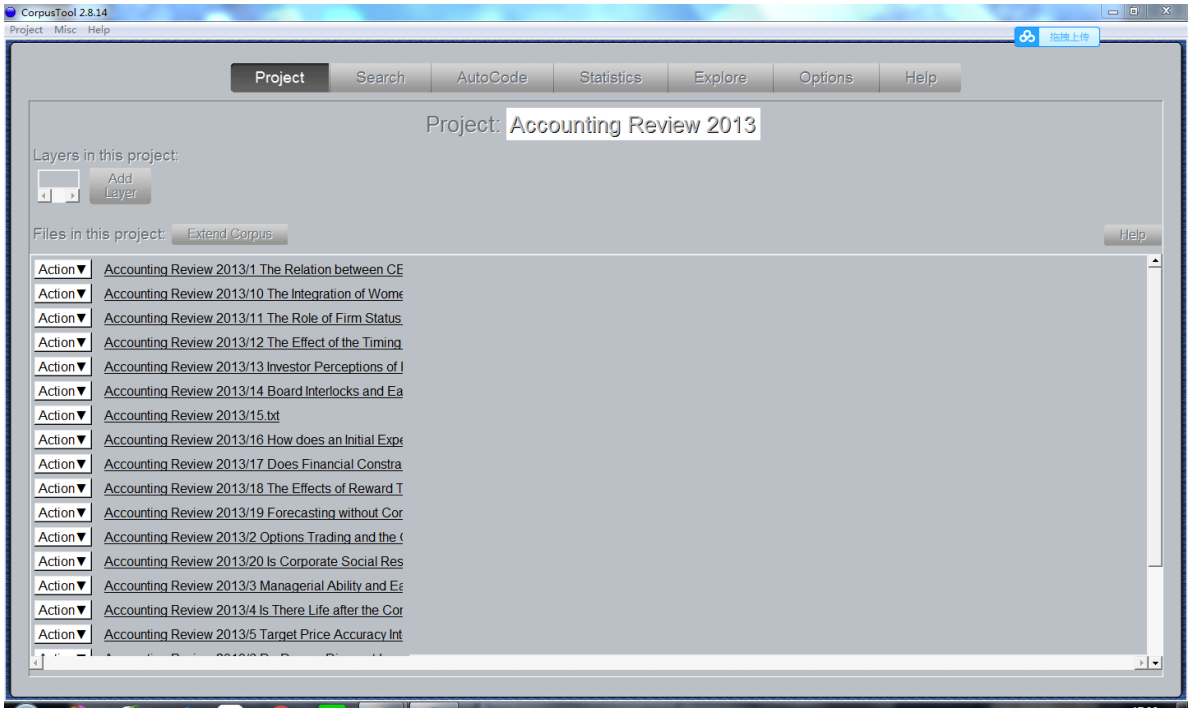
A comprehensive discussion of the new possibilities opened up by the computational analysis of move annotated corpora is provided by Biber et al. (2007, p.36), who note:

> in addition to conducting the traditional move analysis, quantitative counts permit the discussion of general trends, relative frequency of particular move types, and prototypical and alternate patterns of move type usage.

Both of these new computer-assisted quantitative approaches to move analysis will be applied in this chapter. That is, the analysis will focus both on the different sequences of moves used across disciplines and writer L1 backgrounds, and on frequency and usage trends for individual moves across the four sub-corpora.

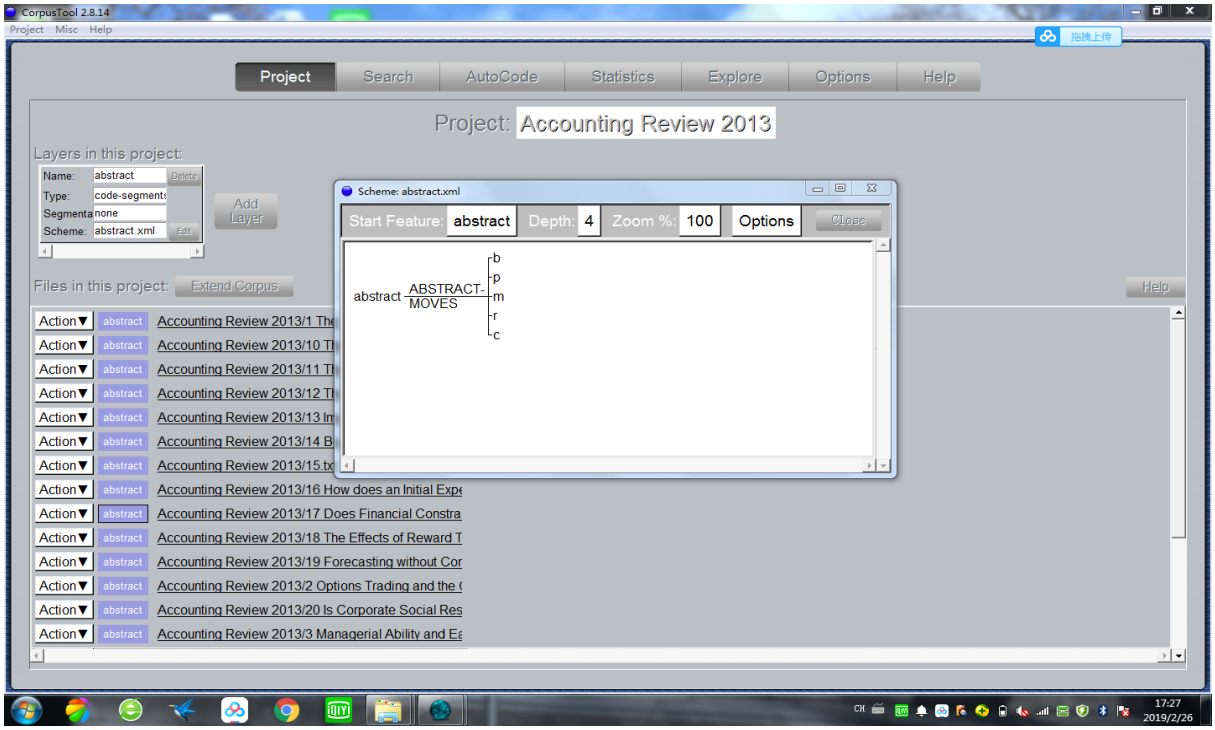
In the current study, each abstract was manually annotated using the UAM corpus tool (version 2.8; O'Donnell, 2012), following Swales and Feak's (2009) abstract move structure model as described in Section 4.1 above. The UAM corpus tool "is at base a system which allows a user to apply tags to segments of text" (O'Donnell, 2008, p.1). It was chosen for the current research for three main reasons. First, it is able to deal with multiple texts in the same set. Second, it allows the researcher to develop their own bespoke annotation scheme and apply it to any dataset. Last but not least, the UAM corpus tool also allows for the coding of overlapping or embedded move segments. This proved to be particularly useful in practice, because in both sub-corpora there were overlapping moves in a substantial number of abstracts.

I created 20 'projects' (as they are called in the UAM corpus tool) for the EJ sub-corpus and 36 'projects' for the CJ sub-corpus, according to the various academic journals and publication years. For example, one 'project' was set up for the publication year of 2013 for the *Accounting Review* in the EJ sub-corpus, as shown in Example 4.1.




Example 4.1 A "project" in the UAM corpus tool

Next, I utilised the UAM corpus tool's built-in coding facilities to specify a set of annotation codes (in this case, the five basic rhetorical moves), as shown in Example 4.2.




Example 4.2 Annotation codes in UAM corpus tool

I then manually annotated all of the 800 abstract texts in my corpora. In this annotation process, I was principally guided by Hyland's (2004) manual annotation procedure. By reading through the abstract texts, I first decided the location of each move. I then underlined each segment of the text to which a move category label could be assigned. Thereafter, I then selected the appropriate move code and assigned them the corresponding mark-up text, as shown in Example 4.3. The move codes inserted into the text files by the software consist of single letter codes, each one representing one of Swales and Feak's five moves, as follows:

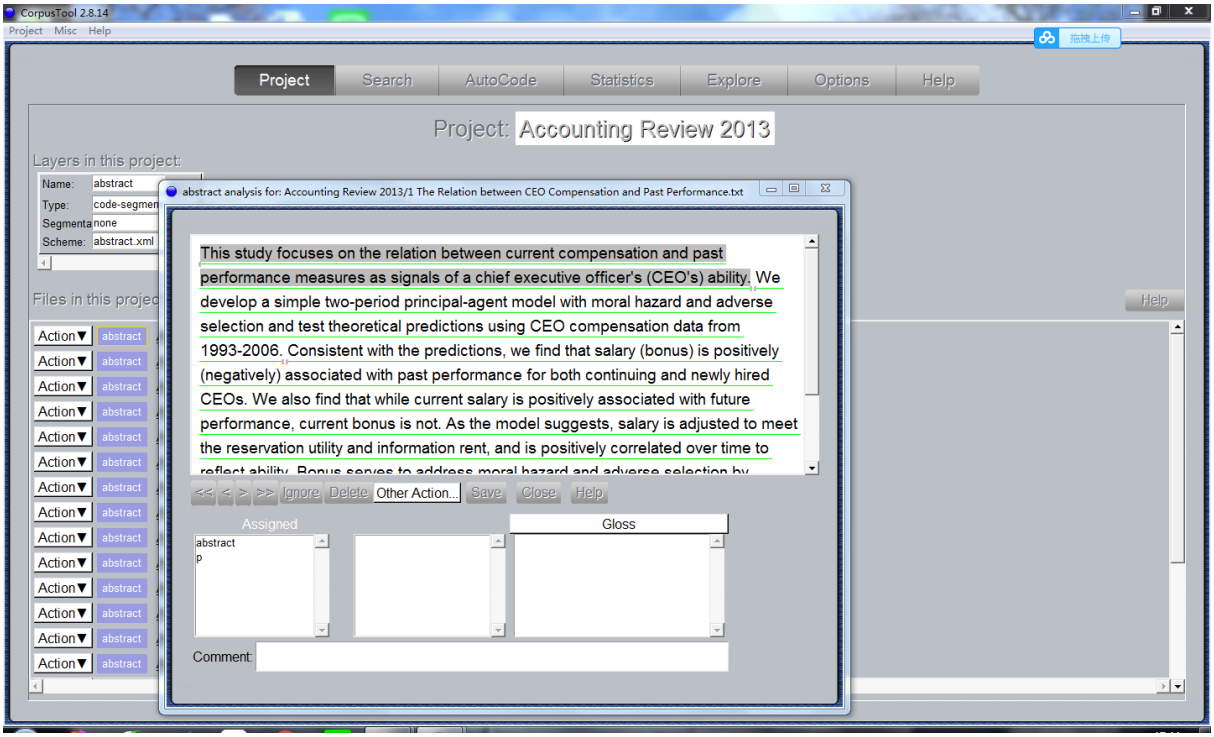
b = background

p = purpose

m = methodology

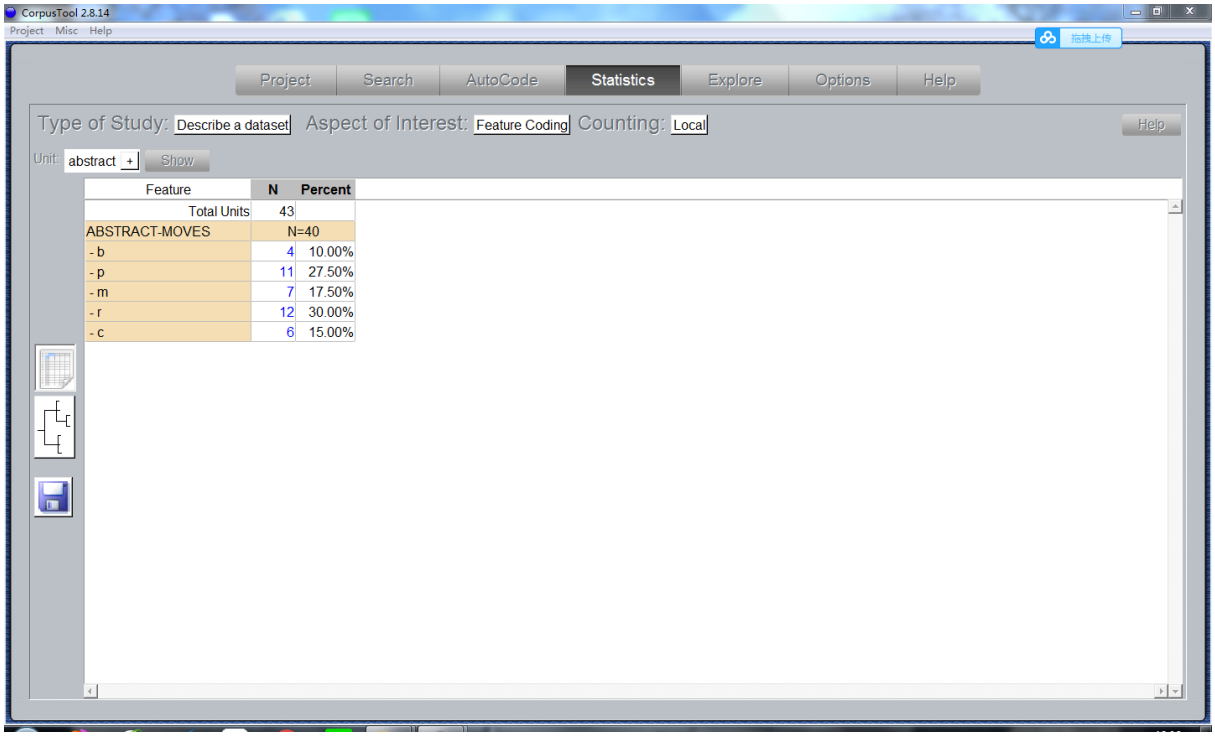
r = results

c = conclusion/recommendation



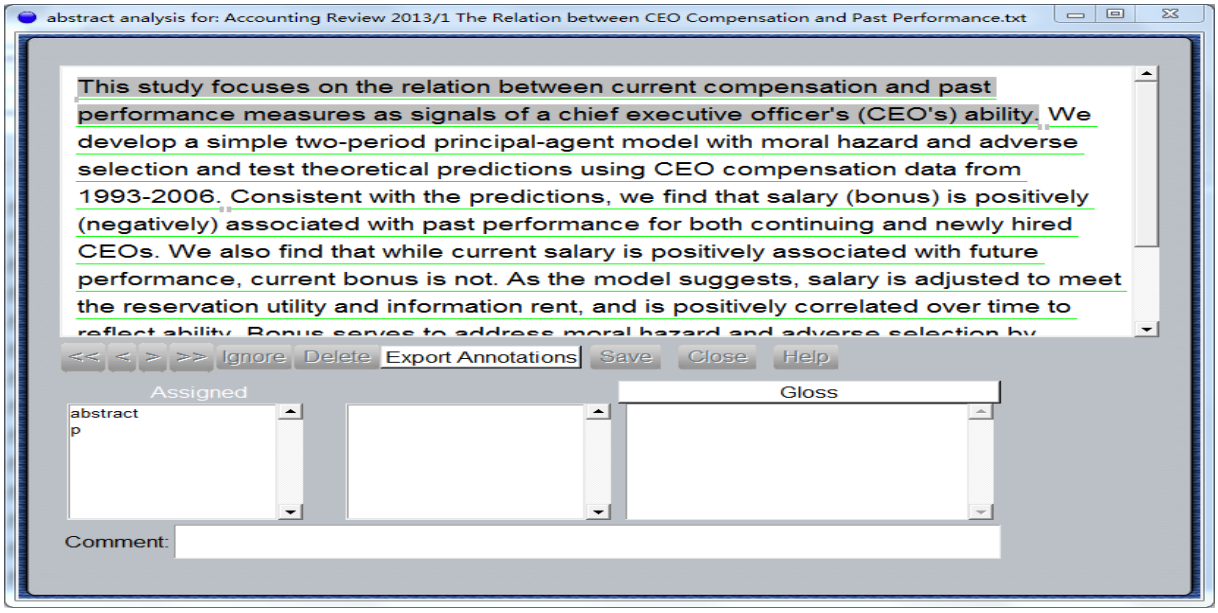

Example 4.3 Move annotation in UAM corpus tool

Then UAM corpus tool automatically calculated each move frequency in its statistical tool, as shown in Example 4.4.

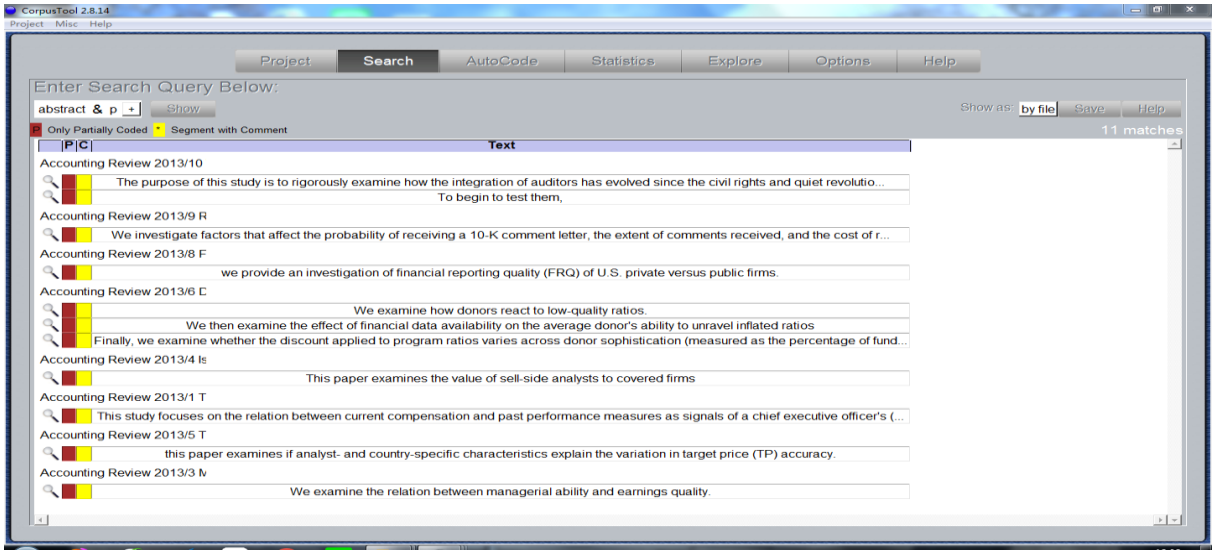



Example 4.4 Quantitative analysis of move codes in UAM corpus tool

Finally, I saved each whole annotated abstract text, as shown in Example 4.5, and saved all instances of each individual moves as a set, as shown in Example 4.6.




Example 4.5 Saving an annotated text in UAM corpus tool




Example 4.6 Saving individual moves in UAM corpus tool

In most cases, rhetorical move in my data corresponded to single complete sentence (usually for the 'background' and 'purpose' moves, as shown in Example 4.7) or to several sentences (usually for the 'result' moves, as shown in Example 4.8).

| |
|---|
| At present, whether through speeding up the convertibility of RMB cross-border financial transactions, to further promote the cross-border use of RMB, has becomes the focus of policy and theory of the areas of concern.<br>4 (2014)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.7

| |
|---|
| We find that risk shifting through pension underfunding (and, to a lesser extent, through pension asset allocation to risky securities) is stronger with compensation structures that create high wealth-risk sensitivity (vega) and weaker with high wealth-price sensitivity (delta). These findings are stronger for chief financial officers (CFOs) than for chief executive officers (CEOs), suggesting that pension policy falls within the CFO's domain. Risk shifting through pension underfunding is also lower when the CFO's personal stake in the pension plan is larger.<br>7 (2014)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.8

In line with move analysis procedure, textual boundaries between each move were identified principally by their content rather than grammatical form. Therefore, my move data contain not only structurally complete units but also sentence segments of various kinds. Examples of the main types of sentence segments coded as moves in my data are shown below. Examples 4.9 and 4.10 show segments featuring conjunctions:

```
...and show that it is negatively related to firm performance.
```
6 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 4.9 Example of a coordination segment realizing a 'result' move

```
...that it evaluates the auditing profession's integration by comparing it to samples of occupations similar to auditing for the purpose of isolating auditing-specific forces influencing integration.
```
10 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 4.10 Example of a finite subordinate clause segment realizing a 'methodology' move

Examples 4.11 and 4.12 show segments led by non-finite verbs, thereby including non-finite clauses:

```
Using data of bank loans of Chinese A-share listed companies from 2001 to 2007,...
```
14 (2013)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.11 Example of a non-finite clause segment realizing a 'methodology' move

```
... to analyze the correlation and causal relation between the industrial futures index and producer price index in China.
```
9 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.12 Example of a non-finite clause segment realizing a 'purpose' move

Finally, Example 4.13 presents segments in the grammatical form of phrases (in this case, a prepositional phrase):

```
In a large sample of funds, ...
```
3 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 4.13 Example of a phrase segment realizing a 'methodology' move

Most abstract moves consisting of sentence segments such as the above occurred in 'methodology' moves and/or 'purpose' moves. Usually, 'methodology' moves occurred with 'purpose' moves within one sentence boundary, such as in Example 4.14 and 4.15.

We analyze the impact of financial globalization on business cycle synchronization (**purpose**) using a proprietary database on banks' international exposure for industrialized countries during 1978 to 2006 (**methodology**).

5 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

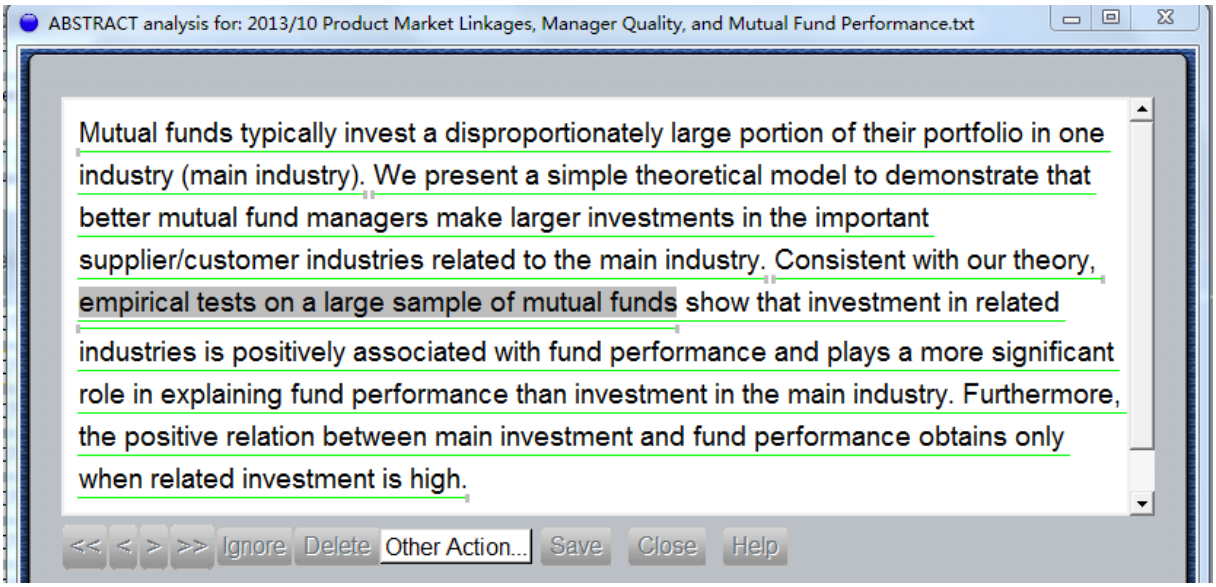
Example 4.14

This paper uses the difference-in-difference method (**methodology**) to empirically investigate whether auditors become more conservative after switching from LLC to LLP (**purpose**).

16 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.15

And in a few other occasions, one move was fully embedded within another move; and in such occasions, the merged moves are usually phrases.



**<result>** Consistent with our theory, **[methodology]** empirical tests on a large sample of mutual funds **[/methodology]** show that **</result>**...

10 (2013)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 4.16

As mentioned above, one of my reasons for choosing to use the UAM corpus tool was that it allowed me to annotate and analyze embedded moves such as these.

The following Tables 4.2 and 4.3 present two fully annotated example abstract texts, one taken from the EJ sub-corpus and one from the CJ sub-corpus. As can be seen, both of these examples conform to Swales and Feak's (2009) five-move framework.

Table 4.2 An abstract sample text with move division (by Swales and Feak's model)
(1 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting/EJ sub-corpus)

| | |
|---|---|
| Move 1 **Background** | Overconfidence managers overestimate future returns from their firms' investments. |
| Move 2 **Purpose** | Thus, we predict that overconfidence managers will tend to delay loss recognition and generally use less conservative accounting. Furthermore, we test whether external monitoring helps to mitigate this effect. |
| Move 3 **Methodology** | Using measures of both conditional and unconditional conservatism respectively, |
| Move 4 **Result** | we find robust evidence of a negative relation between CEO overconfidence and accounting conservatism. We further find that external monitoring does not appear to mitigate this effect. |
| Move 5 **Conclusion/ recommendation** | Our findings add to the growing literature on overconfidence and complement the findings by Schrand and Zechman [2011] that overconfidence affects financial reporting behavior. |

Table 4.3 An abstract sample text with move division (by Swales and Feak's model) (1 (2014)/Shanghai Finance/Finance/CJ sub-corpus)

| | |
|---|---|
| Move 1<br>**Background** | The research on the investment behavior of QFIIs is significantly meaningful for the QFII system to play an active role during China's limited liberalization of capital market. |
| Move 3<br>**Methodology** | Taking China's A-share listed companies during the period from 2004 to 2012 for example and by using logit and tobit model, |
| Move 2<br>**Purpose** | this paper examines the influence of cash dividend policies on the investment preferences of QFIIs from static and dynamic dimensions. |
| Move 4<br>**Result** | The evidence indicates that QFIIs show preferences for firms to pay (more) cash dividends in the previous year or pay cash dividends continuously during the last few years. Moreover, the shareholding ratios of QFIIs have significantly positive relationship with the level of cash dividends of firms. |
| Move 5<br>**Conclusion/ recommendation** | The results suggest that cash dividend policies convey some information about listed firms to QFIIs in China's capital market, and finally affect the decision making of QFIIs. |

### 4.3 Validation of move annotation

No matter how explicitly the researcher establishes criteria for a move analysis, and no matter how carefully the analysis is carried out, it must be acknowledged that move analysis is essentially a qualitative research methodology, which is based on the subjective judgement of the researcher. Consequently, as Nwogu (1997), among many others, has noted: "[i]t is possible that two individuals judge the move boundaries of a genre differently" (p.493). It is even possible that the same individual might code 'the same' move in different ways on different occasions, or make inconsistent decisions about what does or does not count as a

particular move. It is for this reason that inter-rater reliability testing has become an increasingly widely adopted practice in genre analysis (Biber et al 2007; Upton and Cohen 2009). For the current analysis, I carried out one intra-rater and one inter-rater reliability test in order to ensure that my annotation was both valid in itself and robust enough to act as a basis for the further comparative and lexico-grammatical analysis that will be reported in subsequent chapters of this thesis.

For the intra-rater reliability test, I randomly chose 80 sample texts from EJ and CJ sub-corpora (20 sample texts from each discipline for each sub-corpus), annotated them again, and then applied Cohen's Kappa (using the statistical software SPSS 20) to test the intra-rater reliability of the two annotations. The reliability rate was 90%, which is generally regarded as a 'very high' Kappa result (by convention, any score greater than or equal to 75% indicates that the two annotations are highly consistent). Nevertheless, this test identified a systematic area of weakness in the initial coding: the 10% shortfall mainly came about in the process of identifying and distinguishing between the 'background' and 'purpose' moves. In the light of this, after careful consideration, I made a few changes to my initial coding decisions relating to these two moves while carrying out the second stage annotation process.

For the inter-rater reliability test, I trained one independent rater, a former Corpus Linguistics PhD student who is now an English teacher in SWUFE, to annotate another group of evenly and randomly selected 80 sample abstracts and then attempted to reconcile the results obtained with my rhetorical move analysis template. As per the intra-rater reliability test, I used SPSS 20 to carry out a Kappa data consistency test. The inter-rater reliability rate was 75%. Though this rate was lower than the inter-rater reliability rate obtained previously, it is still equal to the required 75% and therefore acceptable. On this occasion, the annotation differences primarily lay in distinguishing between the 'purpose' and 'methodology' moves, and between 'result' and 'conclusion'. By further engaging in a process of discussion with the independent rater, I amended a few instances where we jointly reached an agreement about the move segments. I kept my previous annotations for those instances where we could not reach an agreement, however.

Overall, the two tests described above confirmed the validity of my move annotation work. This in turn indicates that the move divisions coded by these annotations can be used as basis for further rhetorical move and lexico-grammatical analyses.

### 4.4 Abstract move sequences comparison

In the remainder of this chapter I will present and discuss the findings of my computer-assisted analysis of my move-coded corpora. In this section, the focus will be on the analysis of whole sequences of moves, and Section 4.5 will look in more detail at individual moves.

As mentioned earlier, I used the UAM corpus tool to annotate every individual move in each of the abstract texts in my corpus with one of the following five move code labels:

b = background

p = purpose

m = methodology

r = results

c = conclusion/recommendation

Importantly, this coding allowed me to easily extract each sequence as a string of letter codes, each string representing the rhetorical structure of an individual abstract text. So, for example, a text having the rhetorical structure 'background > purpose > methodology > results > conclusion/recommendation' can be reduced to the simple code string representation **bpmrc**. For cases where one move was completely embedded within another, I used brackets to mark

those embedded moves. For example, an abstract where the ‘methodology’ move is embedded in the ‘results’ move would be represented as **pr(m)c**.

I extracted full sets of code sequences from all four sub-corpora and put them into plain text files. I then created a frequency list for each of these sets of sequences using AntConc’s ‘Word List’ tool. That is, I effectively asked AntConc to treat each move sequence, such as **bmpr**, **pmr**, **prc**, etc., as an individual word-form, and to create a standard reverse frequency list for each of these forms. Finally, I used these frequency lists to examine and compare moves sequence types across both disciplines and across both writer groups.

An overview of the different move sequence types found in each sub-corpus is provided in Figures 4.1 to 4.4 below.

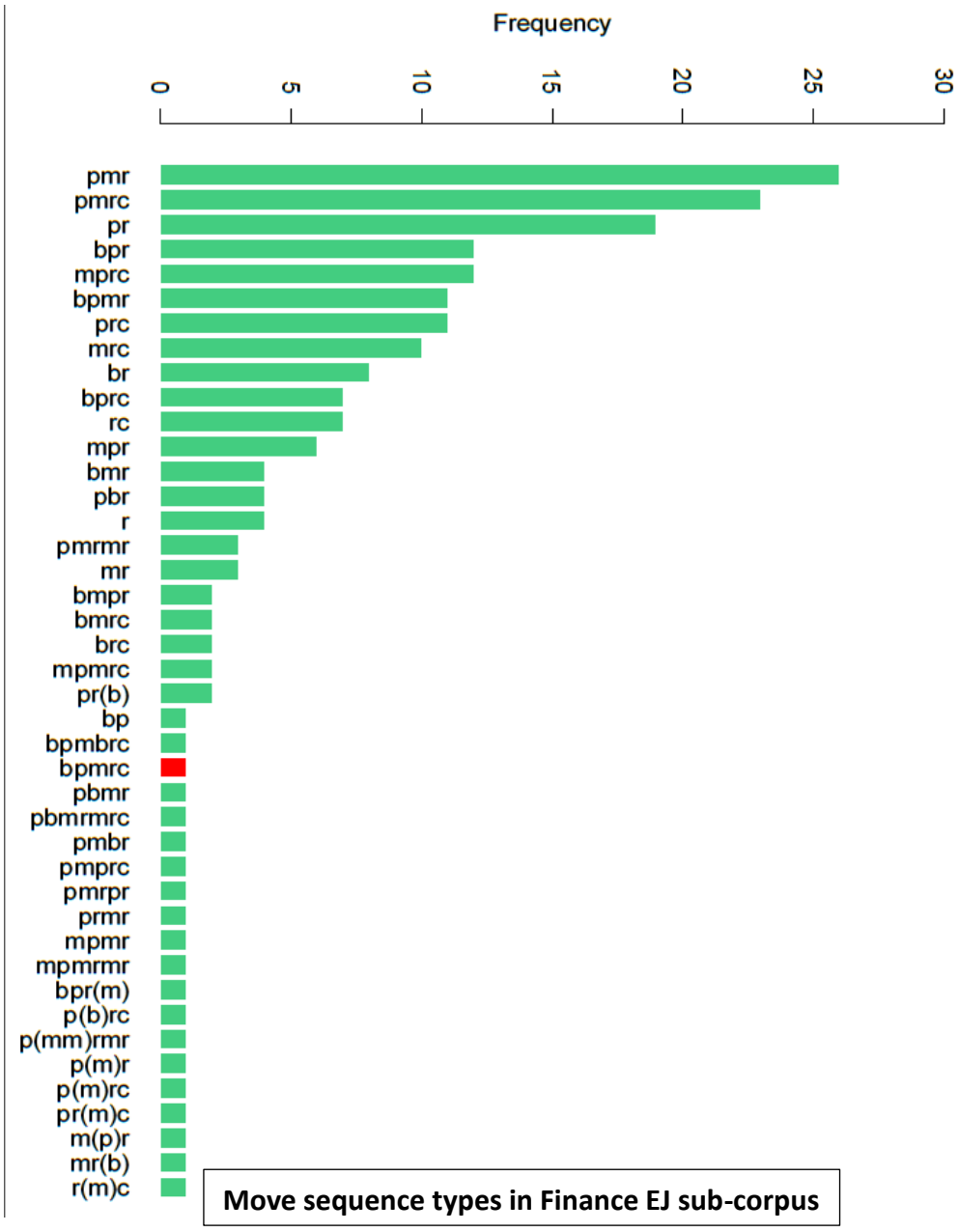
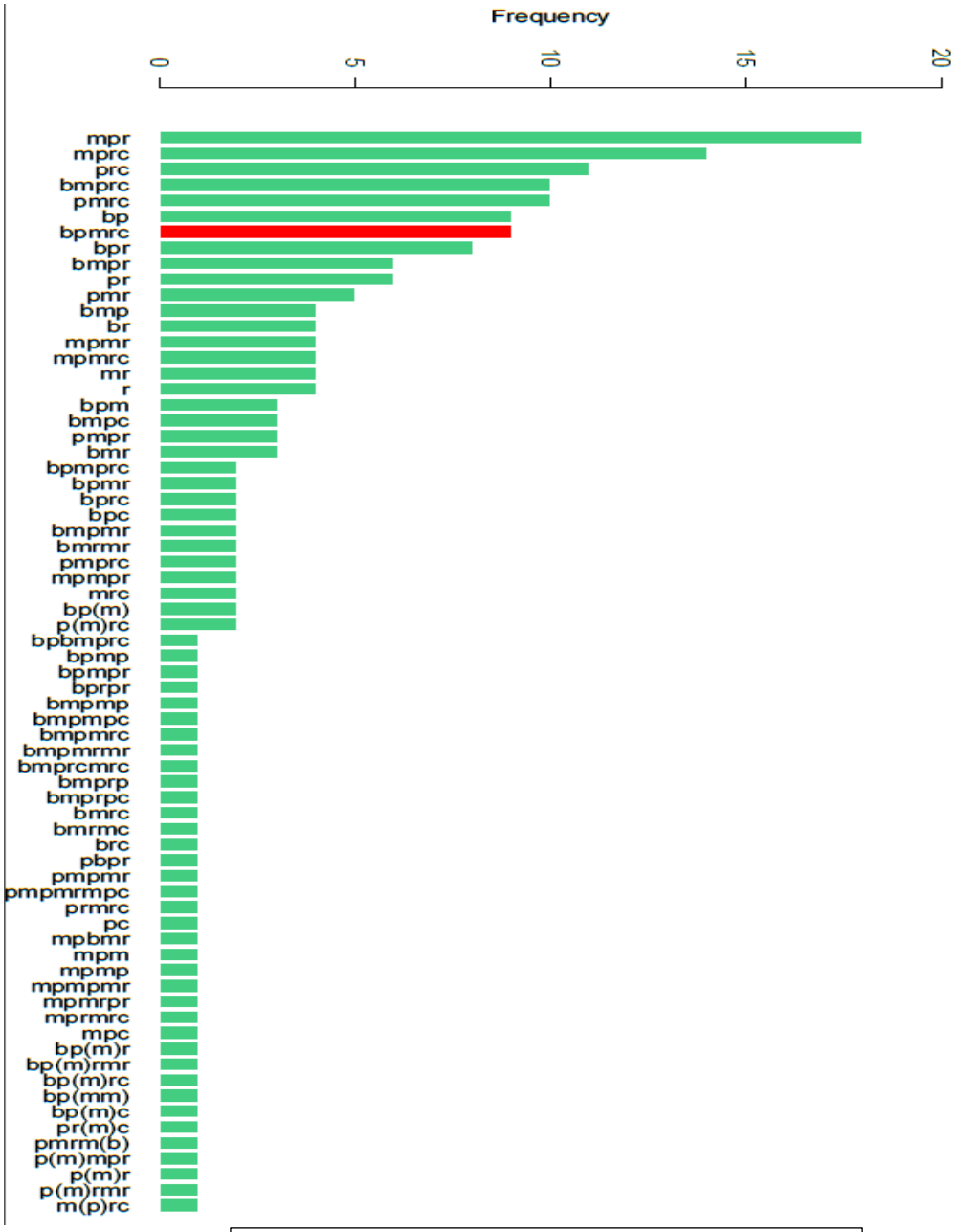



Figure 4.1 Move sequence types in Finance EJ sub-corpus




**Move sequence types in Finance CJ sub-corpus**

Figure 4.2 Move sequence types in Finance CJ sub-corpus

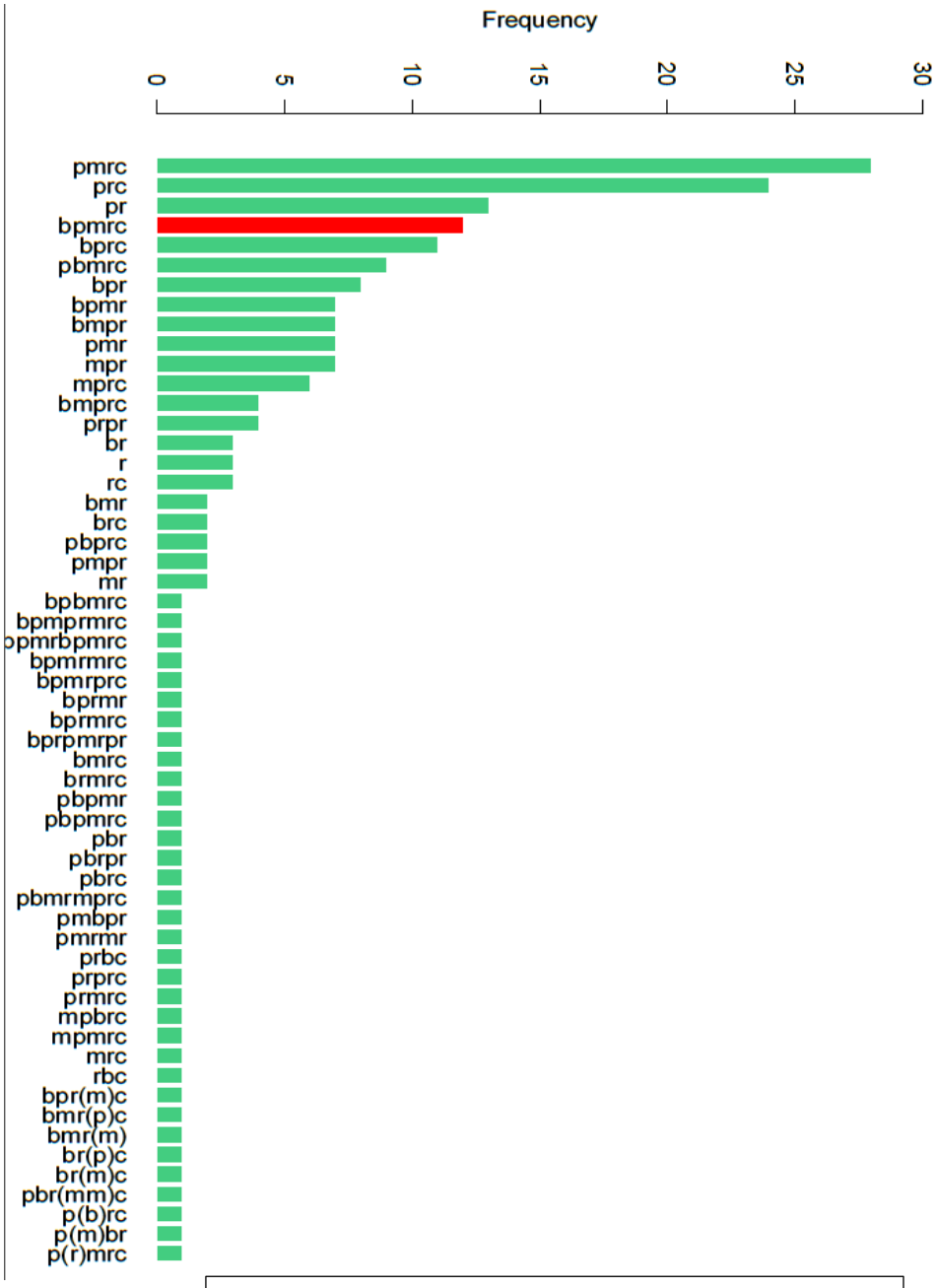



Figure 4.3 Move sequence types in Accounting EJ sub-corpus

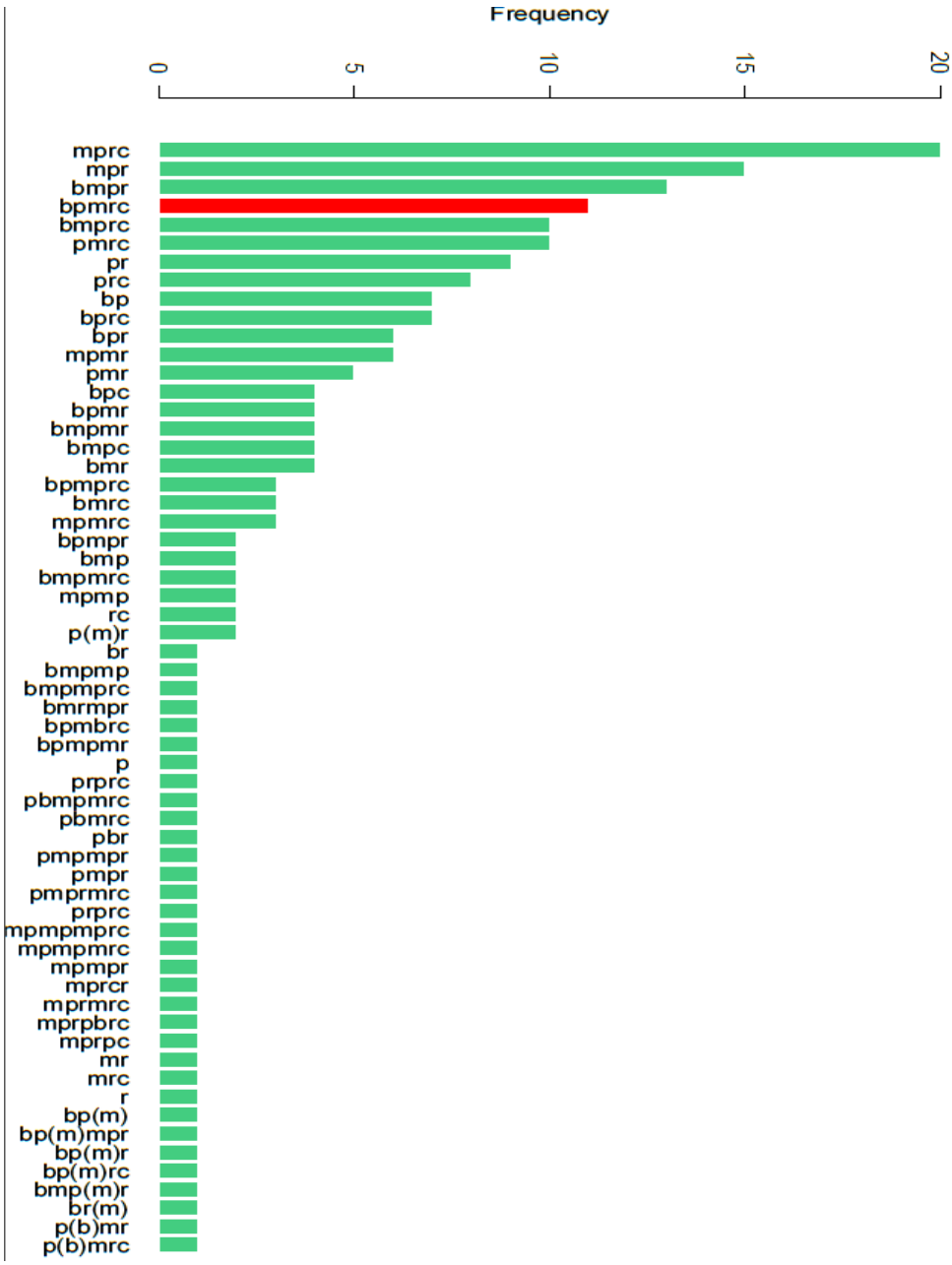



Figure 4.4 Move sequence types in Accounting CJ sub-corpus

There are three main observations to be made about these graphs. Firstly, they show very clearly that the distribution of sequences for all four corpora is Zipfian; that is, in all cases there is a relatively small number of sequences that occur very frequently, followed by a very long 'tail' of sequences that occur much more infrequently, many of which occur only once in each corpus. In all cases, these 'hapax legomena' or single instances account for approximately 50% of all sequences (20/42 sequence types in the Finance EJ sub-corpus, 33/55 in Accounting EJ, 33/69 in Finance CJ, and 32/60 in Accounting CJ).

Secondly, the graphs above also very clearly bear out the point made by a number of previous researchers (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Swales and Feak, 2009; Alharbi and Swales, 2011; Pique-Noguera, 2013; Can et al., 2016) that although "abstracts have the *potential* for all five moves" (Swales and Feak 2010, p.172), this does not mean that all or even a majority of the attested abstracts in a corpus will actually feature all of these moves. In fact, only 57 out of 400 abstract texts in the CJ sub-corpus feature all five moves, and in the EJ sub-corpus this figure drops to 40 out of 400.

The third main observation to emerge from these four graphs is that, in both disciplines, Chinese writers use a greater variety of move sequence types than international writers do. However, it should also be noted that this difference is much more striking in Finance than it is in Accounting. Specifically, there are 69 different sequences in Finance CJ, compared to just 42 in Finance EJ. In Accounting, there is only a difference of 5 between the two sub-corpora (i.e. 60 sequences for CJ compared to 55 for EJ).

On closer inspection there are a number of further interesting points of comparison and contrast to discuss, notably in relation to move sequence length across the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. For reasons of space, and also given the Zipfian distributions for all four sub-corpora as noted above, the following observations will focus only on the top 10 sequences for each sub-corpus. These sequences are listed in Tables 4.4 and 4.5 below.

Table 4.4 Ten commonly used move sequences in Finance EJ and CJ sub-corpora

| Rank | **Finance EJ sub-corpus** | Frequency | **Finance CJ sub-corpus** | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | pmr | 26 | mpr | 18 |
| 2 | pmrc | 23 | mprc | 14 |
| 3 | pr | 19 | prc | 11 |
| 4 | bpr | 12 | bmprc | 10 |
| 5 | mprc | 12 | pmrc | 10 |
| 6 | bpmr | 11 | bp | 9 |
| 7 | prc | 11 | bpmrc | 9 |
| 8 | mrc | 10 | bpr | 8 |
| 9 | br | 8 | bmpr | 6 |
| 10 | bprc/rc | 7 | pr | 6 |

Table 4.5 Ten commonly used move sequences in Accounting EJ and CJ sub-corpora[7]

| Rank | **Accounting EJ sub-corpus** | Frequency | **Accounting CJ sub-corpus** | Frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | pmrc | 28 | mprc | 20 |
| 2 | prc | 24 | mpr | 15 |
| 3 | pr | 13 | bmpr | 13 |
| 4 | bpmrc | 12 | bpmrc | 11 |
| 5 | bprc | 11 | bmprc | 10 |
| 6 | pbmrc | 9 | pmrc | 10 |
| 7 | bpr | 8 | pr | 9 |
| 8 | bpmr | 7 | prc | 8 |
| 9 | bmpr | 7 | bp | 7 |
| 10 | pmr/mpr | 7 | bprc | 7 |

[7] "Frequency" in these two tables means the total occurrence of each move sequence in 200 abstract texts (in one discipline one sub-corpus).

To begin, it is worth noting that there are a number of broad similarities or continuities across these four lists. Among the five basic abstract rhetorical moves, most abstract texts contain the three most important moves; namely, 'purpose', 'methodology' and 'result'; as can be seen from Figures 4.7-4.10, the ratio of these three moves is about or above 60%. Additionally, there is a widespread preference for the usage of the moves of 'purpose' and 'result'. Therefore, I can conclude that in both international and Chinese Accounting and Finance research articles, English-language abstracts are similar in that they both feature 'purpose-method-result' and/or 'purpose-result' sequences. This is further confirmed by a comparison of the commonly used move sequences for international and Chinese writers. As Table 4.4 and 4.5 show, the top ten commonly used move sequences contain at least one of the three principal moves discussed above. And more importantly, four to six move sequences patterns among the top ten for both groups of writers share the move sequences **pmr/mpr**, and there are also four to seven move sequence patterns that share the even more basic move sequence **pr**. Thus, regardless of whether writers are international or Chinese, in either discipline, in abstract writing, I can conclude that the essential moves are 'purpose', 'methodology' and 'result', and the essential move sequences are 'purpose (methodology)-methodology (purpose)-result' and/or 'purpose-result'. This finding is in agreement with the findings of many previous studies (e.g. Santos, 1996; Hyland, 2004; Hartley and Betts, 2009; Pique-Noguera, 2013; Cakir and Fidan, 2015).

While acknowledging these broad similarities, it is nevertheless fair to say that the above analysis is perhaps more striking for the systematic patterns of differences that it reveals across the four sub-corpora. Most striking of all, perhaps, is the general observation that Chinese writers exhibit very different sequence preferences to international writers in both disciplines. In Accounting, the most commonly used abstract move sequence among international academics is **pmrc** (N=28). In the Chinese sequence list, this sequence is ranked only at 6$^{th}$, and occurs only about a third as frequently (N=10). In Finance, the contrast is even more dramatic; to take just one example, the most frequently used sequence in the EJ sub-corpus is **pmr** (N=26). This sequences is not even listed in the top 10 for the CJ data, nor

does the most frequently used sequence in the CJ sub-corpus (**mpr**, N=18) feature in the EJ top 10 list.

Further differences are revealed upon closer inspection of the top 10 sequence data. In the Finance EJ sub-corpus, the move sequences are primarily combinations of two, three and/or four rhetorical moves (this finding shares some similarities with Alharbi and Swales's study of Linguistics abstracts). The move sequences in Finance CJ sub-corpus are somewhat longer, consisting primarily of combinations of three, four and/or five rhetorical moves. In Accounting, in contrast, move sequences are primarily combinations of three, four and/or five moves, and there are six moves that containing four or five moves appear in the top ten in both EJ and CJ sub-corpora. In short, I find once again that the Chinese vs. international contrast is more marked than the disciplinary contrast, and disciplinary differences are more marked in Finance than they are in Accounting.

A less obvious, but no less important, finding is that disciplinary differences are also more marked across the two disciplines in EJ sub-corpus than they are in the CJ sub-corpus. Specifically, a comparison of the top 10 sequence lists for EJ Finance and EJ Accounting reveals that seven (out of eleven) sequences (**bpr**, **bpmr**, **bprc**, **pmr**, **pmrc**, **pr**, and **prc**) are common to both. In contrast, a comparison of the top 10 sequence lists for CJ Finance and CJ Accounting finds that 9 out of 10 sequences are common to both, albeit not in the same frequency order. (In alphabetical order, these shared sequences are **bmpr**, **bmprc**, **bp, bpmrc, mpr, mprc, pmrc, pr** and **prc**.) In other words, it seems that in international journals, Finance and Accounting abstracts seem to be clearly distinguishable, and have developed clearly differentiated rhetorical conventions, but that Chinese writers seem to be unaware of these conventions; on the contrary, they seem to be applying the same broad sets of rhetorical patterns in their abstracts irrespective of discipline. Admittedly, this is only a hypothesis at the present time, but it is worth noting here that it is supported by the interview data that will be reported in a later chapter of this thesis.

Before moving on to the next phase of the analysis, there are two further contrasting move sequence observations that are worth reporting here. The first of these

relates to the particular move sequence **pr**. Although both international and Chinese writers both seem to treat these two moves as 'obligatory', there are still disparities in the frequency data for this specific sequence. Specifically, it occurs 19 and 13 times in the Finance and Accounting EJ sub-corpus respectively, but only 6 and 9 times in their CJ counterparts.

The other contrasting observation is that international writers appear to have a preference for the two-move sequence "pm", whereas Chinese writers seem to prefer the reverse order "mp". Eight out of the first ten move sequences in both the Finance and Accounting CJ sub-corpus involve this reversed sequence. In contrast, there are only three such reverse move sequences in the Finance and Accounting EJ sub-corpus; the rest of the move sequences involving these two moves follow the more conventional sequence of 'purpose > methodology'. Presentation of examples of this reversed sequence as well as the exploration of probable reasons for the Chinese writers' adoption of such a reverse sequence will be discussed in detail in the next sections of this chapter, where I turn to the closer analysis of individual moves.

### 4.5 Individual move analysis

This section provides a detailed analysis of each of the five individual rhetorical moves identified for abstract writing by Swales and Feak (2009) in turn. I will make detailed comparisons between every single move in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, focusing on move frequencies, average word lengths, move forms and functions, and relationships to other moves.

Before proceeding to a detailed move-by-move analysis, however, it may be useful to begin by providing a graphical overview of the frequency and distribution of individual move types across the four sub-corpora. Such an overview is provided in Figures 4.5 to 4.8 below. In these Figures, the numbers represent the total move occurrences in 200 abstract texts (as in one discipline one sub-corpus); the percentages represent the ratio of the specific move existence in 200 abstracts. For example, in 200 Finance abstracts in the EJ

sub-corpus, altogether there are 207 'result' moves, so every abstract has at least one 'result' move within the text.

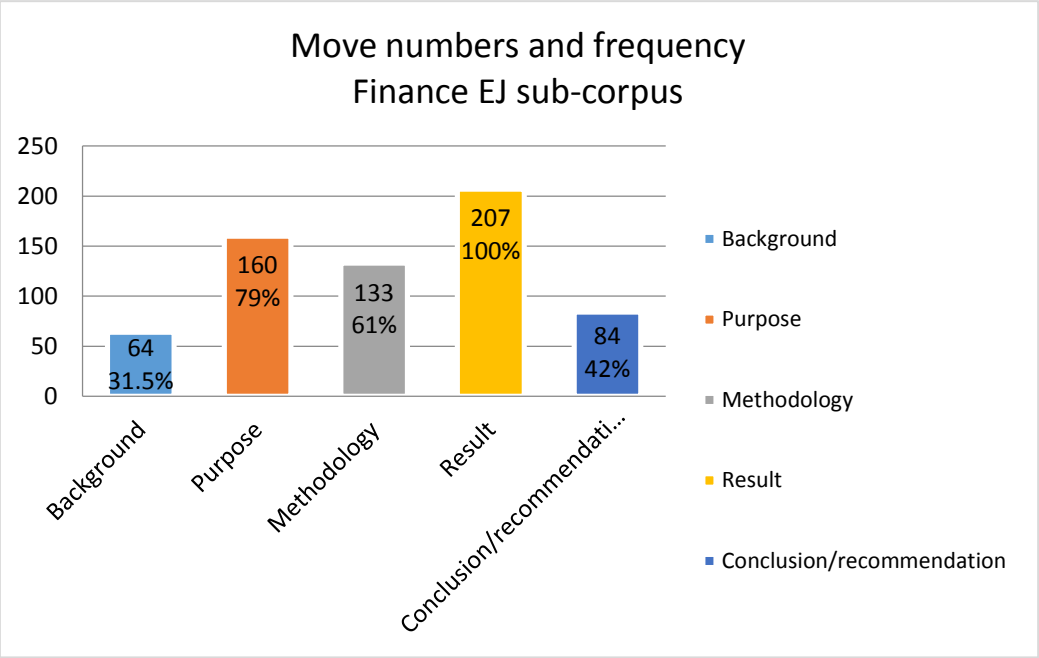



Figure 4.5 Move numbers and frequency in Finance EJ sub-corpus

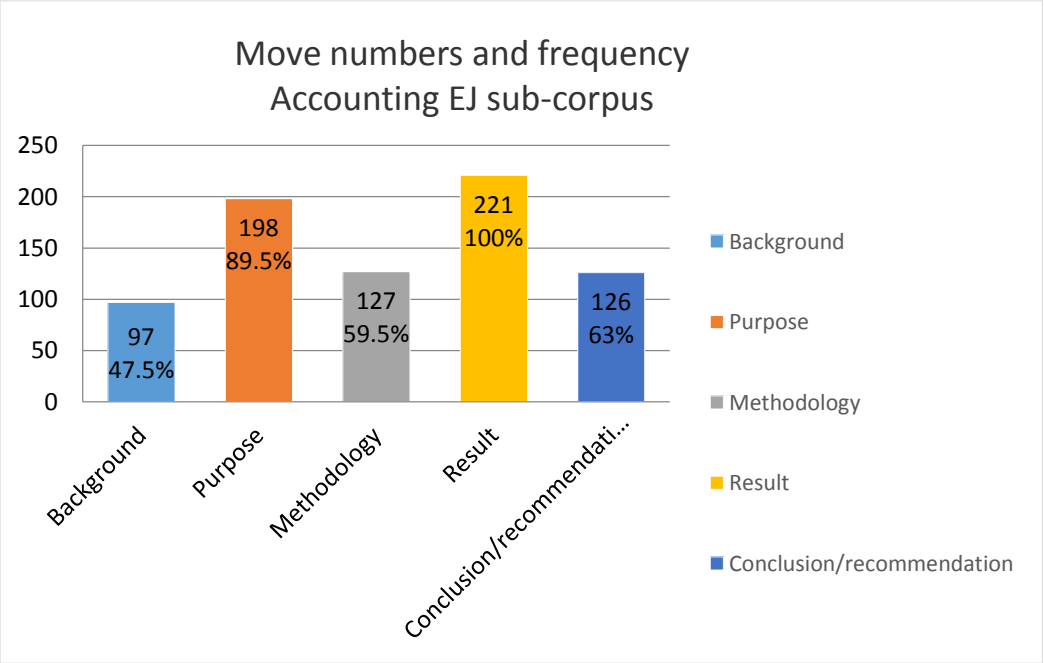



Figure 4.6 Move numbers and frequency in Accounting EJ sub-corpus

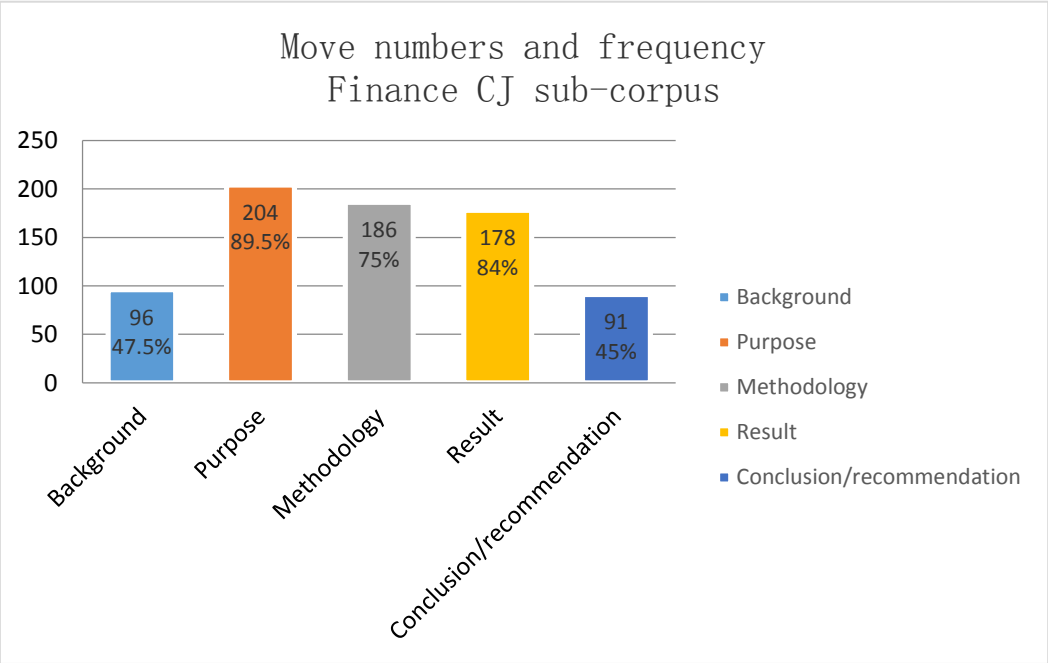



Figure 4.7 Move numbers and frequency in Finance CJ sub-corpus

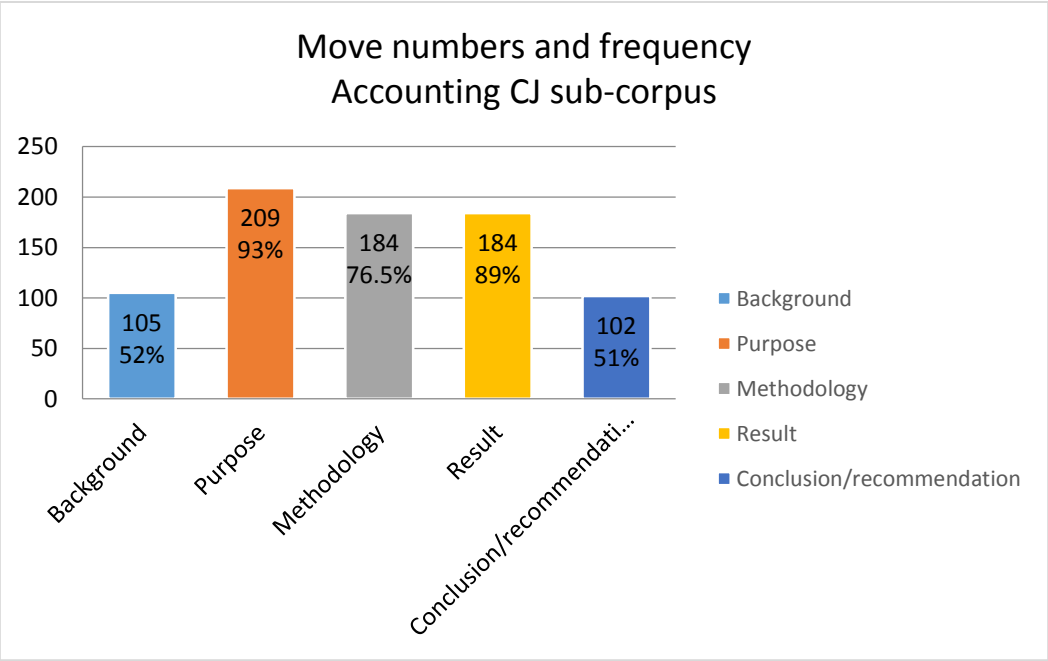



Figure 4.8 Move numbers and frequency in Accounting CJ sub-corpus

A detailed discussion of the quantitative data presented in these pie charts will be provided in the following sections, each of which will focus on each of the five individual moves in the coding model used in the current study in turn, following the canonical order as set out in Swales and Feak (2009). i.e. Background > Purpose > Methodology > Results > Conclusions/Recommendations.

### 4.5.1 Analysis of ‘background’ moves

Table 4.6 below provides a quantitative comparison of ‘background’ moves across the four sub-corpora, together with illustrative examples from the data.

Table 4.6 Comparison of 'background' moves[8]

| Sub-corpus | Move frequency | Average word frequency per text (raw) |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 64 | 7.905 |
| The evidence from the repo market is more supportive to the expectations hypothesis, but term structure anomalies still remain.<br>14 (2014)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 97 | 17.82 |
| Several studies report an audit fee premium for auditor industry expertise measured at the office level.<br>20 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Finance** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 96 | 17.48 |
| Existing literature show that, under the condition of further enhancement of the RMB exchange rate flexibility, there are still controversies about the changes in the effectiveness of monetary policy.<br>6 (2014)/Journal of Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 105 | 21.74 |
| "Accounting Standard for Business Enterprises No. 23-Hedging" regulates the accounting treatment of hedging tools, but it also gives a lot discretionary judgement to the firms' management which may challenge its reasonable use.<br>5 (2013)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus | | |

The most striking observation to be made about these quantitative data is that Finance of EJ sub-corpus abstracts are the 'odd one out' in terms of both frequency of usage and average

[8] In these Tables, "move frequency" means the total move occurrences in 200 abstract texts (as in one discipline one sub-corpus), as indicated in Figures 4.5-4.8; "average word frequency" means this move's average words length in every text from the total word counts of this specific move average to 200 abstracts.

length in words. International Finance academic writers are much less likely than any other group to include a ‘background’ move in their RA abstracts, and when they do include one, it tends to be much shorter than those observed for international Accounting academics or Chinese writers in either discipline. This move occurs only 64 times in the Finance EJ sub-corpus, which amounts to approximately 10% of the total number of moves in this sub-corpus, and has an average length of approximately 8 words, which is less than half the average word length for this move in the other sub-corpora. These findings are in accordance with Huang’s (2018) findings for three sub-fields in Marine Engineering; but differ from those of Cakir and Fidan (2015), who found ‘background’ moves (which they label as ‘introduction’ moves) to be more common among English native writers than English L2 writers in the fields of Linguistics, Sociology, Physics and Chemistry.

If we disregard the Chinese data for a moment, what this result seems to indicate is that there is a clear and observable difference in the international generic conventions for abstract writing in Finance and Accounting. In Finance, background statements are dispreferred, and when they are used they tend to be very terse. In Accounting, background statements are both more commonplace and more elaborate.

In other words, this result provides some limited empirical justification for regarding Finance and Accounting as distinctive disciplinary cultures. (Subsequent observations will add more weight to this view, as we will see as the current discussion unfolds.)

If I now bring the Chinese writer data back into the picture, the main finding to note is that, in both disciplines, ‘background’ moves are more frequently used and are longer on average in Chinese journal abstracts than they are in international journal abstracts. On the basis of these general observations it is tempting to draw the conclusion that the ‘background’ move is more rhetorically important to Chinese abstract writers in Finance and Accounting than it is to their international counterparts. On closer inspection, however, it becomes clear that the data do not really support such a claim; on the contrary, this contrast is only really significant in Finance. This tendency is reflected in a comparison of the overall frequency

figures for this move[9]. As can be seen from Table 4.6, there are 96 instances of 'background' in all 200 English abstracts written by Chinese Finance writers. This indicates that almost half of them utilise this move in their abstract writing, whereas only about one third of international Finance academics do so. This tendency is also reflected when comparing 'background' move word numbers. This comparison reveals that Chinese Finance writers not only like to utilise this move frequently within their abstract texts, but they also prefer to write much longer 'background' moves. From Table 4.6, I note that this move in the Finance of CJ sub-corpus is about twice as long (18 versus 8 words) per text on average than it is in the Finance of EJ sub-corpus. This does indeed suggest that Chinese writers seem to have a particular preference for beginning with a relatively detailed preamble before venturing into a presentation of their research themes.

In Accounting, however, this contrast is not as dramatic. The difference between 97 instances in EJ sub-corpus and 105 in CJ sub-corpus is not statistically significant, and the average word length differences are equally negligible. In short, it seems that for this discipline, international and Chinese writers share similar preferences in the manner and extent to which they explain the contextual background of their research. I can therefore infer that when executing a 'background' move, Chinese Accounting writers seem to follow international generic conventions.

Beyond this, it is also reasonable to conclude that there is a clear difference in the way that international Finance and Accounting writers use 'background' moves in RA abstracts. This move difference is plausibly interpreted as a reflection of different disciplinary values, but cannot be interpreted as reflecting anything to do with the linguistic or more general cultural backgrounds of the two different groups of writers. It should also be noted that this is the most salient rhetorical move difference between these different but closely related disciplines. As discussed in the move sequence analysis previously, international Accounting writers seem to prefer longer or more 'complete' abstract move patterns than Finance writers do. In line with this, about half of the international Accounting writers chose

[9] The log-likelihood value is significant, with $p<0.05$.

to include ‘background’ moves in their abstracts.

However, this apparent disciplinary difference is not salient in my CJ sub-corpus. Whether from the perspective of move numbers or the perspective of average word numbers, there is no clear or distinct usage difference between Chinese writers from either Finance or Accounting. The phenomenon of Chinese academic writers’ apparent preference for more and longer ‘background’ moves has also been observed in other studies, such as Ju’s (2004) analysis of abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics. This contrast not only verifies the findings in the move sequences studies in Section 4.4, but also - and more importantly - it demonstrates again that disciplinary differences are generally less clearly observable in abstracts written by Chinese academics than is the case among their international counterparts. This is corroborated by one of my ‘specialist informant’ interviewees at SWUFE, who reported the following:

> With almost the same writing standards and requirement (usually given in textbooks and/or journal requirements), it is not surprising to find that academic writers from various disciplines would write similar academic abstract texts and make similar mistakes.
>
> (Interviewee H, a teacher/academic in School of Accounting, SWUFE)

### 4.5.2 Analysis of ‘purpose’ moves

Table 4.7 below provides a quantitative comparison of ‘purpose’ moves across the four sub-corpora, together with illustrative examples from the data.

Table 4.7 Comparison of ‘purpose’ moves

| Sub-corpus | Move frequency | Average word frequency per text (raw) |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 160 | 15.08 |
| We investigate whether access to finance typically time-varies and, if so, what are the real effects.<br>3 (2014)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 198 | 26.33 |
| We examine whether voluntary deregistrations after the passage of Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX) were intended to benefit common shareholders by avoiding firms' costs of complying with SOX or to protect the control rents of managers or controlling shareholders (MCOs).<br>15 (2013)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Finance** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 204 | 22.725 |
| The paper makes an empirical research to check whether the there is systemic risk spillover from Hong Kong RMB offshore financial centre to onshore financial market in China mainland.<br>6 (2014)/Journal of Shanghai Finance University/Finance in CJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 209 | 24.92 |
| This study examines the relation between the competition in the market product and accounting conservatism<br>11 (2013)/Communication of Finance and Accounting/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus | | |

As Table 4.7 shows, there are no very distinct differences in the quantitative data for the ‘purpose’ move across the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, either in terms of frequency of occurrence or average word length. In other words, with regard to this move, Chinese writers seem to use this move in very similar ways to international writers, on the surface at least. This is perhaps not very surprising, as it would be reasonable to anticipate that the ‘purpose’ move is the least likely of all the moves of the abstract genre to be omitted by either group or either discipline.

In order to probe these findings in more detail, however, I decided to divide this move into two sub-moves, “indicating main features (sub-move 1A)/indicating main purpose (sub-move 1B)” and “hypothesis raising” (sub-move 2), following Santos (1996, p.485). This analysis found that sub-move 1A is the most popular sub-move among both international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics, followed by sub-move 2 and sub-move 1B. Given that these findings are in accordance with those of Santos (1996), it seems reasonable to conclude that such “descriptive” (ibid, p.490) statements are the dominant variant of the ‘purpose’ move not only in my data but in a wide range of academic disciplines.

The analysis did reveal one interesting difference, however, in the way in which international and Chinese writers present sub-move 2. It was observed that whereas international writers prefer to use declarative statements (with verbs such as *conjecture*, *predict*) when they raise research hypothesis, Chinese writers prefer to use interrogative questions to directly present their hypothesis. Examples of these contrasting styles are shown in Example 4.17.

| |
|---|
| Is there any auditor's trust to the clients in the field of audit which is in contrast to the Professional skepticism? |
| 13 (2014)/Communication of Finance and Accounting/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.17

Still, the contrastive difference about the involvement of this move with ‘methodology’ moves needs our attention. There are two perspectives to this involvement. The first relates to the reverse move sequence ‘methodology-purpose’, as already discussed in the move sequences analysis earlier in this chapter. The second relates to the concept of ‘move cycling’. I will discuss this issue in more detail in the following section.

Using the bank loan contracts **(methodology)**, we investigate the relationship between earnings management and bank loan guarantee, in order to examine whether banks are able to detect earnings management in listed firms **(purpose)**. Based on a sample of 1319 bank loans during 2001--2012 **(methodology)**, this paper measures earnings management **(purpose)** using discretionary Accruals **(methodology)**.

7 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.18 'Methodology-purpose' move cycles by Chinese writers

### 4.5.3 Analysis of 'methodology' moves

Table 4.8 below provides a quantitative comparison of 'methodology' moves across the four sub-corpora, together with illustrative examples from the data.

Table 4.8 Comparison of ‘methodology’ moves

| Sub-corpus | Move frequency | Average word frequency per text (raw) |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 133 | 10.06 |
| Our novel, model-free measure of these dislocations is a monthly average of hundreds of individual abnormal absolute violations of three textbook arbitrage parities in stock, foreign exchange, and money markets.<br>3 (2014)/Review of Financial Studies/Finance in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 127 | 10.795 |
| We use changes in tax expense as a proxy for earnings management.<br>5 (2013) Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Finance** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 186 | 14.14 |
| Taking China’s A-share listed companies during the period from 2004 to 2012 for example and by using logit and tobit model,<br>1 (2014) Shanghai Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 184 | 14.54 |
| Using a sample of Chinese listed firms for the period of 2001-2011 and employing the geographic distance between a firm and its auditor as a proxy for auditor-client geographic proximity,<br>16 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus | | |

There are no significant differences in the average word length figures for this move, nor in the overall frequency of this move per abstract text across the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. On average, both Chinese and international Accounting writers, write marginally more words than Finance writers do when writing this move. Nevertheless, closer inspection of the data reveals three noteworthy differences that require further exploration in this section, all of which emerge

from a comparison of international and Chinese writers.

The first difference becomes apparent when a move frequency comparison is conducted, and the contrast between the CJ and EJ sub-corpus for the discipline of Accounting is found to be more significant[10]. There is 7% difference (i.e. around 57 moves) in the frequency of this particular move in Accounting between the CJ and EJ sub-corpora. Given that the 'methodology' move has an overall frequency of about 75% in both the Finance and Accounting, I am able to infer that Chinese writers are particularly keen to report the methods and/or the data that they have used in their research in their abstracts. International writers (particularly Accounting academics), in contrast, prefer to state their methods and data in a more elaborated manner. This is in accordance with Anderson and Maclean's (1997) finding for Medical abstract writing.

The second difference is found in the main types of syntactic forms used by international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics. In the EJ sub-corpus, the main syntactic forms of 'methodology' move are either complete sentences (79 samples, accounting for 31% of all syntactic forms in the 'methodology' move) or participle clauses (142 samples, accounting for 55% of all syntactic forms in the 'methodology' move), as shown in Example 4.19a and 4.19b.

| |
|---|
| In this article, I model bargaining between an entrepreneur and a venture capitalist over the profits from an investment project. |
| 20 (2014)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.19a

| |
|---|
| **Using a comprehensive sample of stock option repricings announced between 2004 and 2009 (methodology)**, we find that repricing firms following the restrictive policies of proxy advisors exhibit statistically lower market reactions to the repricing, lower operating performance, and higher employee turnover **(result)**. |
| 6 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.19b

[10] The log-likelihood value for Finance is 2.36; while for Accounting is 9.50 and thus $p<0.01$

However, Chinese academics from Finance and Accounting seldom use complete sentences (only 41 samples) when reporting research methods in their abstracts. Instead, they prefer to use sentence segments, usually in the form of either participle clauses (215 samples, accounting for 58% of all syntactic forms in the 'methodology' move) or main clause (grammatical subjects of clauses) (84 samples, accounting for 23% of all syntactic forms), as shown in Example 4.20a and 4.20b.

**Based on the bond pricing theory (methodology),** this paper analyzes the issuance features and the factors affecting pricing of CNY-denominated corporate bonds (purpose)

8 (2014)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.20a

**The paper selects A-share listed companies in manufacturing industry from 2005 to 2011 (methodology)** to test the relation between short-term debt structure and fluctuations in interest rates (purpose).

15 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.20b

Even when international and Chinese writers do use the same syntactic form for the 'methodology' move, I still find interesting differences between the two writer groups. This is particularly notable in the way in which these two groups of writers use participle clauses. As shown above in Example 4.20a, in Chinese abstracts the participle clause describing the methods of the study is typically followed by a main clause stating the purpose of the research. This explains the previously noted preference of Chinese academics for the use of the reverse sequence 'methodology-purpose'. In fact, no matter which syntactic forms Chinese writers adopted when textualising the methodology move, they typically prefer to present it in a reverse sequence form, as shown in Example 4.20b above as well in the following Example 4.21.

**This paper estimates the cost and profit efficiencies of commercial banks from 1999 to 2010, using the SFA model(methodology).** We analyze the change of bank efficiency in the transitional economy and examine the impact of strategic investors and IPOs on commercial bank efficiency **(purpose).**

1 (2013)/Journal of Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.21

It should be noted that this reverse move sequence is the most frequent special move sequence type in both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. However, the contrast between the two groups of writers in terms of the usage of this sequence is more significant: about 35% Chinese writers from Finance and Accounting prefer to present their methods before stating research purposes (70 samples in both Accounting and Finance, accounting for 38% of all 'methodology' moves), whereas only 13%-15% of international writers did likewise (26 samples in Finance, accounting for 20% of all 'methodology' moves; 29 samples in Accounting, accounting for 22% of all 'methodology' moves).

Chinese writers' apparent preferences for involving 'methodology' moves with 'purpose' moves (particularly with above mentioned reverse sequence) is also reflected in the the third main feature to be discussed in this section, that of 'move cycles'. 'Move cycling' is a common phenomenon in genre analysis texts (Swales, 1990), in which one or more moves recur in an exemplar text. For example, instead of a standard progression through the moves **BPMRC**, a move cycling text might feature two 'Background followed by Purpose' cycles, giving the sequence **BPBPMRC**.

My analysis finds that Chinese writers prefer to cycle 'methodology' with 'purpose'; these cycles account for 20 out of a total of 31 'methodology' move cycles in Finance and 21 out of a total of 28 'methodology' move cycles in Accounting. Generally, this kind of move cycle takes two major forms. The first is 'methodology-purpose-methodology-purpose', as shown in Example 4.22.

Using the indirect method **(methodology)**, this paper does estimate the China's international hot money from September 2005 to April 2014 **(purpose)**. And then by processing the monthly date after reform of non-tradable shares **(methodology)**, this paper attempts to demonstrate the relationship between the international hot money and the stock market volatility **(purpose)**.

7 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.22

The second pattern is what I would name as the "sandwich" pattern, as the purpose move is stated in the main clause of a sentence, and is both preceded and followed by dependent clauses (the preceding clause typically being in the form of a participle clause) containing 'methodology' moves, as shown in Example 4.23a and 4.23b. Altogether, there are 23 such 'methodology' move cycle patterns in the CJ sub-corpus, but only one instance of this pattern in the Finance EJ sub-corpus.

Using the monthly data of China from January 2002 to October 2012 **(methodology)**, this paper analyzes the relationship among money supply, inflation and economic growth **(purpose)** which based on VEC model **(methodology)**.

3 (2013)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.23a

Using event study methodology to build a new insider trading research model based on the window period **(methodology)**, this paper investigates the relationship among assets restructuring, stock price volatility and insider trading **(purpose)** by covering all major assets restructuring events from 2008 to 2012 in China's A-share markets **(methodology)**.

14 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 4.23b

International Finance and Accounting academic writers, in contrast, are more likely to cycle 'methodology' moves with 'result' moves, such as those shown in Example 4.24a and 4.24b. This indicates that in international Finance and Accounting academic communities, the accepted writing convention is to present one specific methodology as leading to one

corresponding specific research result.

| |
|---|
| We study such interaction between two risk-averse managers in continuous time, characterizing analytically their unique equilibrium investments **(methodology)**. Driven by chasing and contrarian mechanisms when one is well ahead, they gamble in the opposite direction when their performance is close **(result)**. We also examine multiple and mixed-strategy equilibria **(methodology)**. Equilibrium policy of each manager crucially depends on the opponent's risk attitude. Hence, client investors concerned about how a strategic manager may trade on their behalf should also learn competitors' characteristics **(result)**. |
| 1 (2014)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.24a

| |
|---|
| By using different portfolio sorts **(methodology)**, the results show that the impact of monthly changes in the Federal funds rate is greater for the returns of more financially constrained stocks (e.g., small and value stocks) than on the returns of stocks with a more favorable financial position (e.g., large and growth stocks)**(result)**. By using a VAR methodology **(methodology)**, the results indicate that the negative effect of Fed funds rate shocks on stock returns comes from a corresponding negative effect on future expected cash flows (cash-flow news), which is stronger than the impact on future equity risk premia (discount rate news)**(result)**. |
| 11 (2014)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.24b

### 4.5.4 Analysis of ‘result’ moves

A quantitative comparison of ‘result’ moves across the four sub-corpora is provided in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9 Comparison of ‘result’ moves

| **Sub-corpus** | **Move frequency** | **Average word frequency per text (raw)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 207 | 62.025 |
| We find that trades via full-service retail brokers are statistically and economically more informative than are trades via discount retail brokers. This finding holds in every year over the 12-year sample period and in various subsamples. We also find that past returns, volatility, and news announcements positively relate to the net volume of discount retail brokers, but these variables are unrelated to the net volume of full-service retail brokers.<br>4 (2014)/Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis/Finance in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 221 | 78.04 |
| We find that after the adoption of Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 131 in 1998, firms opting to discontinue disclosure of geographic earnings in their financial reports have lower worldwide effective tax rates. These results are consistent with managers perceiving that non-disclosure of geographic earnings helps mask tax avoidance behavior. However, the relation between tax avoidance and non-disclosure reduces after implementation of Schedule M-3 in the annual corporate tax filing beginning in 2004. Schedule M-3 requires a detailed reconciliation of book income to tax income and aims to make firms' tax avoidance activities associated with shifting profits to lower-tax foreign jurisdictions more apparent to the IRS.<br>17 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus | | |

Table 4.9 Comparison of ‘result’ moves (continued)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 178 | 54.48 |
| The results of the paper show that TMT's backgrounds have significant influences on the innovation ability of Chinese commercial banks and the influences show in different ways: innovation ability correlates positively with TMT's education and has an inverted U-shaped relationship with TMT's age and tenure; there is a watershed in the relationship, i.e. the age of 50 years old and the tenure of 7 years.<br>3 (2014)/Finance Forum/Finance in CJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 184 | 60 |
| Results show that the expense stickiness level of AH-share enterprises is significantly lower than that of A-share matched enterprises. The expense stickiness level in three years post cross-listing is significantly lower than that in three years before the listing. The expense stickiness of AH-share Central State-owned enterprises decreases more significantly.<br>14 (2013)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus | | |

As might be expected, the percentages of ‘result’ moves occurring in both Finance and Accounting abstracts are above 80% in the CJ sub-corpus and 100% in the EJ sub-corpus. It is the move percentage and word number differences across these two databases which are of interest and merit further discussion here. For this ‘result’ move, the frequency rates and percentages are higher in the EJ sub-corpus than in the CJ sub-corpus regardless of discipline. This is confirmed by a log-likelihood test of statistical significance: the value obtained is 11.94, indicating a very high confidence level of $p<0.001$. With 207 ‘result’ moves in the EJ Finance and 221 ‘result’ moves in the EJ Accounting, I can therefore deduce that on average, there is at least one research ‘result’ move in each abstract text, with a few international writers even presenting more than one ‘result’ move in their abstract texts.

Significant differences are found not only in the frequency of this move, but also

in its average length across the two writer groups. Overall, in the EJ sub-corpus the 'result' move is the longest of the five basic moves on average, at 62 and 78 words in Finance and Accounting EJ sub-corpora. In other words, this move occupies above half entire text length on average. I am therefore able to infer that the international Finance and Accounting academics pay more attention to and devote more text space to the presentation of their research results than they do to any other part of their abstracts. In international journals, then, it seems that the presentation of results is regarded as one of the most important – if not *the* most important – functions of the abstract genre.

In contrast to this, the current analysis also indicates that the presentation of research results is far less important for Chinese abstract writers. In fact, there are about 48 English abstract texts in my CJ sub-corpus that do not contain this move at all. Although it was argued previously that both EJ and CJ Finance and Accounting academic writers like to use the sequence of "pr", and seem to view these two moves as more or less essential in abstract writing, I can still find an interesting difference when comparing usage patterns between these two moves. In Figures 4.9 and 4.10, I can see that the move frequency and percentage of the 'purpose' move are higher than those for the 'result' move, in both CJ Finance and Accounting. Thus comparatively speaking, it seems that Chinese writers prioritise the presentation of research purposes over the reporting of their research results. Similar trends can be observed for the comparison of average word lengths for the 'result' move. Although this move's average word length is the highest amongst all the five basic moves for each sub-corpus, on average this move is less than half as long in CJ abstracts as it is in EJ abstracts (about 45%, to be more precise). I can therefore conclude that Chinese writers do not pay as much attention to the 'result' move in abstract writing as do their international counterparts. This finding is broadly in line with Cakir and Fidan's (2015) findings in their analysis of English abstracts written by Turkish Physicists.

### 4.5.5 Analysis of 'conclusion/recommendation' moves

A quantitative comparison of 'conclusion/recommendation' moves across the four

sub-corpora is provided in Table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10 Comparison of ‘conclusion/recommendation’ moves

| **Sub-corpus** | **Move frequency** | **Average word frequency per text** |
|---|---|---|
| **Finance** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 84 | 9.66 |
| This sheds new light on the 'distress puzzle'-the lack of a positive relation between equity returns and default probabilities-reported in previous studies.<br>18 (2014)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **EJ sub-corpus** | 126 | 19.325 |
| These results highlight the importance of considering collective bargaining and other outside pressures faced by managers of debt constrained companies because managers of these companies may be unable to respond to changing accounting standards by taking real actions.<br>7 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Finance** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 91 | 12.62 |
| According to the empirical conclusion, the author advised that fiscal should support the development of rural micro finance with the combination of rural finance's actual condition.<br>4 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus | | |
| **Accounting** of **CJ sub-corpus** | 102 | 15 |
| This paper provides addition evidences on the importance of improving earnings quality in China.<br>15 (2013)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus | | |

As with the contrastive investigation of ‘purpose’ moves reported earlier in this section, my analysis found no dramatic or statistically significant difference in the move frequency data for this move, irrespective of disciplines or writer group. On closer investigation, however, I

found that there are a number of noteworthy differences which are not immediately apparent from the data as presented in Table 4.10. When using the UAM corpus tool to annotate rhetorical moves, I took the additional step of further dividing this last move into 'conclusion' and 'recommendation' sub-moves. This is similar to what Santos (1996) did in his rhetorical move analysis in Applied Linguistics, where the 'conclusion' was specified as a sub-move whose purpose is either to summarize the abstract or to evaluate the research in terms of its applications/implications.

The results of this more fine-grained analysis revealed that international Finance and Accounting writers use these two sub-moves in consistent and comparable ways; I found 50 'conclusion' and 36 'recommendation' sub-moves in the EJ Finance sub-corpus[11], and 79 'conclusion' and 61 'recommendation' sub-moves in the Accounting EJ sub-corpus[12]. Chinese writers, in contrast, make much more infrequent use of the 'conclusion' sub-move as a means of ending their abstracts. I found 58 'recommendations' but only 26 'conclusions' in my CJ Finance data, and 64 'recommendations' compared to 48 'conclusions' in the CJ Accounting sub-corpus[13]. The sub-move numbers for 'recommendation' are obviously higher than those for the 'conclusion' sub-move in the CJ sub-corpus.

This data comparison shows that Chinese Finance and Accounting writers seem to be more limited than their international counterparts in terms of the rhetorical strategies that they use when writing abstract conclusion moves. Feedback from interviews also verifies this point. Two interviewees even asked, "What is the difference between 'conclusion' and 'result'?" All of this seems to point to insufficient formal EAP abstract writing training for Chinese academics at present, at least in the academic disciplines studied in this thesis.

Even though Chinese writers seem to be able to use the 'recommendation' -based approach to concluding their abstract, the way in which they implement this sub-move is still noticeably different from the approach used by international writers. Putting it simply, some Chinese writers often use vague, general or even clichéd concluding phrases such as "giving

[11] Among the five Finance journals, only the *journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis'*s 'recommendation' (12) is more than 'conclusion' (8), and its 'recommendation' sub-move numbers are doubled the average numbers of 'recommendation' in other four Finance journals.

[12] Comparing the two sub-moves in EJ sub-corpus, the log-likelihood value is significant, $p<0.05$

[13] Comparing the two sub-moves in CJ sub-corpus, the log-likelihood value is significant, $p<0.001$

advice", or "providing policy suggestion", instead of offering any concrete advice or suggestion. An example of this vague approach is shown in Example 4.25. Although both Santos (1996) and Huang (2018) found instances of similarly vague and implicit concluding moves in abstracts by international writers, their incidence was quite low.

| |
|---|
| According to the results of research, this paper puts forward some policy suggestions. |
| 4 (2014)/Journal of Regional Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 4.25

Santos (1996, p.496; cf. Huang 2018) evaluates this rhetorical strategy in very negative terms, calling it a "loss of Move 5 status" as it "leave[s] the reader guessing instead of delivering the hard facts." (ibid, p.496). It may be the case that Chinese writers are inclined to be less overtly 'self-promotional' (and may even have a dispreference for any form of self-promotion), and are thus attempting to make a more implicit case for the usefulness of their research. However, as Santos (1996, p.496) argues, this strategy may turn out to be "a turn-off for the [international] reader". In summary, the limited range of options currently available to Chinese writers for this move may well be hindering their chances of promoting their work and ideas to international peer audiences.

## 4.6 Discussion of findings

In both the move sequence analysis and the analyses of individual moves presented in the previous two sections, I have found that there are a number of clear, systematic and important differences between international and Chinese academics working and writing in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting. In the discussion that follows, I will propose several possible reasons for these differences.

The first reason may be attributed to the special characteristics of Chinese writers' RA abstracts. Some Chinese Finance and Accounting research issues are driven by purely national priorities, and thus have their own peculiarities. In such cases, it therefore becomes

necessary for writers who are interested in promoting their work internationally to provide quite substantial amounts of background knowledge before presenting their research purposes, as international readers cannot be expected to have such background knowledge already. As interviewee H from School of Accounting in SWUFE told me: “it is a requirement that Accounting academics should explain their research backgrounds specifically as different countries adopt various accounting standards”. Interestingly, this would also seem to explain why there are as many detailed ‘background’ moves in Accounting in the EJ sub-corpus as there are in the CJ sub-corpus.

The second reason for the systematic differences between Chinese and international abstracts as identified in the current research relates to what can only be described as the rather outdated views about academic writing requirements that are still being circulated in China. In the 1986 “rules for abstracts and abstracting” (GB6447-1986), it is indicated that writers should include the “premises for research… and any issues involved with the research themes” in their abstracts. According to these, Chinese academic writers, regardless of discipline, are advised to begin by providing a ‘research premises—background’ style introductory move, just as we saw with the Chinese writers in Finance and Accounting studied in this thesis. This clearly contrasts with the EJ sub-corpus, which reveals that in the international academic Finance community (at least), it is no longer considered appropriate to write such long and detailed research background introductions. On the contrary, it seems that concision is much more highly valued and widely practiced in contemporary abstract writing in this discipline.

The third possible explanation for at least some of the differences observed in the analysis reported in this chapter is that they may be linked to, or caused by, first language transfer. This possibility is reflected most clearly by the frequent use of the ‘reverse methodology’ sequence among Chinese writers. Santos (1996) argues that the ‘methodology-purpose’ reverse sequence is perfectly acceptable internationally, particularly as it facilities move embedding, and thus the overall drive for brevity which is a constant issue for all abstract writers. Certainly, there are some instances of such reverse sequences,

particularly in move embeddings, in the EJ sub-corpus. It is also the case that the **mp** sequence accounts for the largest number of all the special move sequence types in the EJ sub-corpus. However, I believe that the even stronger preference for this sequence among Chinese writers cannot be explained by brevity concerns only. It is also consistent with, and thus at least partly attributable to, more general organizational patterns which are traditionally taught to Chinese academic writers. Chinese composition writing (including academic writing) is usually purpose oriented[14] (Ma and Han, 2014; Fang and Wang, 2005) and assumes that one distinct methodological process refers to one specific research purpose. According to Cai (1993), traditional Chinese composition writing, such as the eight-legged essay and/or "three-foot monster pattern" (ibid, p.8), always centers in and develops related topics around specific writing purposes. And "[t]he same was true with regard to written academic discourse in the days of Mao and after" (ibid). I believe that this conventional writing pattern provides a better explanation for the move cycling samples found in my data. In short, Chinese writers have a general preference for cycling 'methodology' with 'purpose', rather than with 'results' as international writers do.

A fourth possible explanation or contributory factor is that Chinese writers seem to be unaware (or at least insufficiently aware) of the increasingly promotional role that the abstract genre is starting to play in contemporary academic discourse (Hyland 2004; Hyland and Tse, 2005a; Van Bonn and Swales, 2007). As Swales and Feak (2009) note, research article abstracts in international journals increasingly include rhetorical characteristics that are somewhat akin to those found in advertising discourse. Abstract writers are increasingly using language in ways designed to induce readers to continue reading their research articles or tempt journal editors to accept their articles in an ever-increasing fierce publication environment (Yakhontova, 2002, 2006). An example of this 'self-promoting' rhetorical strategy from my EJ data can be seen (in bold) in Example 4.26 below:

[14] This may also explain the popularity of 'purpose' move amongst Chinese Finance and Accounting abstract writers.

**This paper presents the first empirical evidence** showing that the marriage of a member of the controlling family adds value to public corporations.

12 (2013)/Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis/Finance EJ sub-corpus

Example 4.26

In general, evaluative statements such as this occur much less frequently in CJ abstracts than they do in their EJ counterparts; to borrow terms from Yakhontova, (2002), Chinese writers seem to prefer 'telling' to 'selling'. Further evidence in support of this can be found in Section 4.5.5 above, where it was noted that Chinese writers also tend to shy away from making very bold and direct claims when bringing their abstracts to a close, thereby suffering a "loss of Move 5 status", as Santos (1996, p.496) calls it. In the 'local' (i.e. Chinese national) writing context, it may be a perfectly good strategy for Chinese Finance and Accounting writers to write implicit 'recommendation' sub-moves, as by doing so, they assume that "they might attract readers to continue reading their original research articles" out of curiosity. (This was also reported by one of my interviewees.) However, in the international writing context, readers cannot be expected to share the same local interests, and the 'pressure to sell' is also far greater in the international academic publishing context. Under such circumstances, English abstracts must double up as mini-texts and/or summaries of research articles (Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995; Huckin, 2001) and are instrumental in 'hooking' (or failing to hook) their readers (Hyland, 2004). It seems that when Chinese writers write English abstracts, they do not always bear in mind that they are no longer writing solely for local readers.

The fifth and final possible reason for the rhetorical move structure differences identified in this chapter is that Chinese writers may lack training in academic writing, particularly in EAP abstract writing training. This was certainly borne out in interviews that I conducted with academics working at my own university in China. For the 'background' move writing, interviewee L told me that some Chinese Finance and Accounting academics are so used to writing long and informative English abstracts that they are often surprised to realise that they have exceeded the word limit for their intended journal. Interestingly, this

colleague reported that, what academics often do in such cases is simply cut down the latter half of their abstract texts. Consequently, the resulting abstracts would inevitably be made up of a long and detailed 'background' introduction, and a much briefer remainder.

Interviewee L's statement implies that, in these two disciplines, at least, many Chinese academic writers are not knowledgeable about appropriate abstract layouts, about which moves should be prioritized, or about appropriate word distributions among abstract moves. This observation is certainly corroborated by the findings obtained in the current research for the 'results' move. While all the abstract texts in the EJ sub-corpus contained a clear 'result' move (and a few even contained more than one 'result' move), about 25% English abstract texts written by Chinese writers did not display this move at all. Instead, Chinese writers treated the 'purpose' move as an obligatory move. This overuse may be partly due to their L1 (Chinese) influence, as discussed above. However, a few Chinese writers neglected the 'result' move altogether and this could possibly be a reflection of their unfamiliarity with the conventional abstract writing rhetorical patterns, as was noted in the case of the 'background' move discussed above.[15]

In any case, given that English-medium abstracts are quite possibly the only means for many Chinese academics to present and publicise their research to the international academic community, it is clearly counter-productive for these writers to exclude the 'result' move from their abstract texts. The different survey responses gathered from my data presentation has again emphasised the importance of professional EAP abstract writing training courses for Chinese academic writers. Apart from the macro perspectives of abstract rhetorical patterns discussed above, there are also certain lexico-grammatical issues that have come to light. One such example is that Chinese writers' utilization of the "sandwich" pattern in the 'methodology' move. This cannot be attributed to L1 influence, as these writers did not write similar sentence patterns in their corresponding Chinese abstract texts. One of the reasons could be that these writers have been told (perhaps by previous English teachers) to

[15] It must be conceded that my questionnaire and interview participants indicated that they do seem to have a clear understanding of the importance of the 'result' move in abstract writing. However, this may be because all the questionnaire participants had undergone formal EAP writing training courses, and all of my four interviewees are internationally well established academics who are very accustomed to reading original research articles from international journals.`

avoid writing ‘front-heavy’ sentences. Nevertheless, it may be the case that Salager-Meyer (1990) and Cross and Oppenheim (2006) are correct in arguing that the use of strategies such as move cycling may be seen by readers as equally unwelcome, as they may interfere with the expected ‘logical flow’ of the canonical ‘bpmrc’ abstract move sequence. In other words, the use of move cycling by Chinese writers may seem quite inappropriate and alien to international readers.

In addition to the similarities and differences discussed in the sections above, there is an additional phenomenon that warrants further explanation before I bring this chapter to a close. Very broadly speaking, if I compare the data for both move sequences and individual moves, it would seem that the abstract writing practices of Chinese Accounting academics are closer to those of their international counterparts than is the case with Chinese Finance academics. I believe that there are two possible reasons to explain this. One of these reasons relates to the nature of my data selection. In China, there are a greater number of academic journals with English abstracts in the field of Finance than there are in the field of Accounting. Furthermore, only academically top ranking Accounting journals in China have English abstracts, while Finance journals that feature English abstracts tend to be more varied in terms of their academic prestige and quality levels. Consequently, it is perhaps not so surprising that my Chinese Accounting abstract data more closely approximate international writing conventions than do my Chinese Finance data. Additionally, Finance has a broader appeal across the social sciences, and may thus show a greater variety of international abstract writing patterns.

Secondly, and possibly more importantly, one of my specialist informants (interviewee H) suggested to me that the greater degree of similarity between Chinese and International abstracts may be a reflection of the more general and widely acknowledged fact that the Chinese academic Accounting fraternity is more involved in the international academic community than is the Chinese academic Finance fraternity. In recent years, the Chinese academic Accounting fraternity as well as those in Accounting practice have taken active steps to improve their level of cooperation with developed countries, such as the EU

countries and Australia. This increased level of involvement has also been reflected in the adoption and assimilation of international academic writing conventions. This suggests that a greater degree of internationalisation could also help Chinese Finance writers to become more familiar with – and more likely to use - internationally accepted writing conventions.

## 4.7 Summary

In this chapter, I have carried out a large scale move analysis of Anglophone Accounting and Finance abstracts published in international and Chinese-language journals. The analysis has provided detailed investigations into both the sequences of moves and the individual move usage patterns found in each of these sub-corpora. While the analysis has found systematic differences of a disciplinary nature, differences between the two groups of writers – international and Chinese L1 -- have consistently proved to be more striking and important. In the move sequence analysis, international writers tended to prefer more canonical move sequence patterns broadly in line with the Swales and Feak model, while the sequence patterns of Chinese writers were consistently more divergent from this model. The main finding at the individual move level is that international abstracts tend to place more emphasis on the presentation and reporting of results, while abstracts written by Chinese academics are far more oriented towards communicating the researcher's purposes. Possible reasons for these and other more detailed differences have been provided.

In the next chapter, I will continue to add more detail to the analysis by focusing on the lexico-grammatical features found to be characteristic of abstract texts in each of my four sub-corpora. This analysis will culminate in the identification of two sets of linguistic features for further study in Chapters Six and Seven.

# CHAPTER FIVE: CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL-GRAMMATICAL FEATURES

In the previous chapter I presented the results of a large-scale rhetorical move analysis of RA abstracts in the fields of Finance and Accounting. Using the UAM corpus tool, I was able to uncover and describe systematic differences in the rhetorical move structure preferences of international and Chinese abstract writers.

However, as Biber et al (2007, p.39) point out, corpus-based genre analysis is not restricted to just the analysis of rhetorical moves:

> once texts have been segmented into moves, it is possible to analyze the linguistic characteristics of each move to determine the typical linguistic characteristics of the different move types. This type of analysis has not generally been done in "traditional" move analysis studies, and it can be argued that the lack of a description of the typical lexico-grammatical characteristics of these discourse units (i.e., move types) is a significant shortcoming of the non-corpus-based approach.

Some genre analysts (particularly those in the 'New Rhetoric' tradition) might argue that carrying out a lexico-grammatical analysis of rhetorical moves is an inherently futile exercise, given the current consensus (as acknowledged in Chapter Two of this thesis) that rhetorical moves are primarily defined and recognized in terms of their communicative function and not their form (cf. Miller 1984; Paltridge 1994). However, most ESP genre analysts have in practice generally preferred to take a more balanced view of the relationship between form and function in genres, and have always remained open to the idea that the two are interlinked to some degree. Biber et al (2007, p.39) express this view as follows:

> because different moves have different functional and semantic purposes, it seems reasonable to expect that move purposes will be realized through variations in linguistic features.

A fuller version of this argument is provided by Tardy and Swales (2014, p. 167):

> As an action is repeatedly required in similar situations, users develop an effective way to carry out that action; over time, this approach becomes … "typified" so that users recognize it as a common or conventional form. In other words, genres are recognizable by users. So, while genre is not limited to its form, form is indeed an important aspect of genre. Users – and in some cases, non-users – generally recognize a genre based on formal features like lexis, grammar [and] organizational patterns …

The key point to note here is that it is only since the advent of corpus-based methods in genre studies that it has become possible to investigate form-function relationships in a truly systematic way.

In this chapter, therefore, I will use corpus-based methods to search for lexico-grammatical features typically found in each of the moves that make up the RA abstract genre as it is practiced by international and Chinese writers, and I will then use similar methods to identify lexico-grammatical features that are either 'overused' or 'underused' (cf. Granger and Rayson 1998; Chen 2013) in Chinese RA abstracts as compared to international abstracts in general, that is, irrespective of individual moves. As in the previous chapter, our main aim will be to find out whether and to what extent English-language abstracts in Chinese-language journals in Accounting and Finance are consistent with abstracts written in international English-language journals in these fields. And as in the previous chapter, the current study will find significant and systematic differences between the two groups.

## 5.1 Methodology

For this study, I will use a variant form of the well-known corpus methodology of keyness analysis (Scott 1997, 2001; Scott and Tribble 2006; Baker 2006; Bondi and Scott 2010). As Gabrielatos (2018, p.227) explains, "keyness analysis is essentially a comparison of frequencies, [which] usually aims to identify large differences between the frequency of word-forms in two corpora (usually referred to as the *study* and *reference* corpus)". However, Gabrielatos (2018) also points out that the typical practice of "using 'keyword' as a default term to refer to the linguistic unit of focus in a keyness analysis is both restricted and restricting" (ibid, p.228). In fact, the core technique of comparing two corpora quantitatively in order to identify significant differences between them can be carried out on any kind of linguistic feature, as long as it can be reliably quantified. It is for this reason that Gabrielatos (2018) advocates calling the methodology key***ness*** analysis, and not key***words*** analysis as researchers have usually done in the past.

Given that my comparison study of salient linguistic features consist of two types - comparisons of individual moves and of the abstract genre as a whole - I thus need to clarify here the *study* and *reference* corpus used in each type. For the linguistic features in each individual moves comparison study, I set each individual move as the study corpus and the whole EJ/CJ sub-corpus as the reference corpus. By this means, I could first identify the salient key word classes in each move, compared with all the word classes used in whole sub-corpus. I then made comparisons between EJ and CJ for each rhetorical move, and identified the different key word classes and/or their usages by international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics. For the identification of key linguistic features in whole abstract genre comparisons, I set the CJ sub-corpus as the study corpus and the EJ sub-corpus as the reference corpus. In the second type of key word class comparison, my focus transferred from linguistic realizations of rhetorical moves to the whole abstract genre; at the same time, I tried to identify salient word classes underused and/or overused by Chinese academic writers. For this purpose, I set the EJ sub-corpus as the benchmark, to make the comparison with the whole CJ sub-corpus.

In the analysis that follows, my main focus will not be on the identification and analysis of individual keywords, but on the identification and analysis of key word classes, i.e. grammatical parts of speech that may be found to be both very frequent and statistically significantly associated with different moves and/or with different writer groups. The methodology of the study falls into four main phases, each of which will be described below. I will then conclude this methodological discussion by providing a more detailed justification for choosing keyness analysis as my general approach.

### 5.1.1 Corpus data partitioning

As announced previously, my aim in this study was to carry out two kinds of keyness analysis: an analysis of key word classes in individual moves across EJ and CJ, and an analysis of more general patterns of word class overuse and underuse in Chinese abstracts as compared to international abstracts. In order to carry out the first analysis, I needed as a preliminary step to partition both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, creating 5 smaller subsets for each corpus, each containing data for one individual move only. Each single move sub-corpus could then be treated as a 'study corpus' in its own right and compared against the complete EJ or CJ corpus acting as a reference corpus. This would allow me to identify features which are particularly strongly associated with a particular move within the RA abstract genre, rather than across the genre as a whole.

For the second analysis, no additional partitioning of the data was necessary, as the comparison in this case was between all abstract texts in EJ and all abstract texts in CJ, irrespective of moves.

For both analyses, however, it is vitally important to note that I dispensed with the variable of discipline; that is, I merged EJ Finance and Accounting texts into one single EJ corpus, and did the same with the CJ data. There are three reasons for this. Firstly, my main interest in this chapter (and in the thesis as a whole) is in investigating differences between Chinese and international writer groups, rather than differences between disciplines. Related to this, the second reason is that adding in a third variable, that of individual moves, would

make comparisons unhelpfully and perhaps needlessly complex (i.e. it would be necessary to cross-classify findings for moves, writer groups and disciplines all at the same time). Finally, we saw in the preceding chapter that although differences between the two disciplines could be observed in my data, these differences tended to be far fewer, smaller and less interesting than the differences observed between the EJ and CJ writer groups. Admittedly, it does not necessarily follow that just because this is true for rhetorical moves, it will also necessarily be true at the lexico-grammatical level.

Taking this into consideration, I conducted pilot key word classes analyses, focusing on plural first person pronoun *we* and subordinate clauses, and found that there was only a slight difference in their rankings and/or pattern frequencies. Compared with the differences observed across the two sub-corpora, these differences were relatively uninteresting as well as statistically small. Taking key word classes comparison as an example, when I compared Accounting with Finance in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, for each individual move comparison or EJ/CJ sub-corpus comparison study there were many overlapping results for key word classes differences, with only minor differences in Effect size (or Log Likelihood) rankings to distinguish between them. Similarly, for the whole EJ/CJ sub-corpus comparison, I found that there were only a few (4 to 5) key word classes differences, with low LL values and unsurprising lexico-grammatical associations, such as POS (possessive ending) and TO+VV, CC (coordinating conjunction). This indicated that for these two closely related disciplines, international as well as Chinese Accounting and Finance writers share similar writing conventions with minor variations. Therefore, based on the above-mentioned considerations and results of pilot studies, it is my contention that it will be reasonable for the rest of this thesis to dispense with disciplinary comparisons and to focus exclusively on comparing the two writer groups represented by the EJ and CJ corpora as single unified wholes.

### 5.1.2 Part-of-speech (POS) tagging

The next essential preparatory step in an analysis of key word classes involves tagging all of

the corpus data using an automatic part-of-speech (POS) tagger. For this task, I used Laurence Anthony's TagAnt (version 1.2.0 for Windows), a user-friendly freeware POS tagger tool based on Helmut Schmid's *TreeTagger*. (A listing for the *TreeTagger* tag set can be found in Appendix 2).

During the data tagging process, one issue I encountered is that there were some tagging errors to deal with, especially in the separate move file texts. According to Schmid (1994), the TreeTagger has an accuracy rate above 96%. Such accuracy rates are regarded as acceptable and therefore not requiring any further manual correction. However, I did manually correct tagging errors in my corpus, and this was primarily because of the high level of sentence segmentation (broken sentences) appearing in my 'separate move' subcorpora, especially in the 'methodology' and 'purpose' moves. ('Background', 'result' and 'conclusion/recommendation' moves are mostly complete sentences, and thus tended to confuse the tagger less often.) The reason why I had to correct these errors was not so much that there were errors per se, but because these errors created inconsistencies between the original full abstract texts and the separate move data. For example, some words that were tagged as NN (singular noun) in the original abstract texts where tagged as VV (base form verb) in the separate move texts, as shown in Example 5.1.

```
Using_VVG    cross-sectional_JJ    regression_NN    ,_,
instrumental_JJ  variable_NN  ,_,  and_CC  regression_NN
discontinuity_NN research_NN designs_NN ,_, ...
```

20 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.1

Similarly, in Example 5.2, the word *existing* was tagged as JJ (adjective) in original abstracts but tagged as VVG (gerund/participle verb) in the separate move texts.

```
... use_VVP existing_JJ finance_NN theory_NN...
```

18 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.2

In light of the above, after the data tagging, I examined the 'methodology' and 'purpose'

moves in each of the separate move file texts. I then compared them with the complete tagged abstract texts and corrected those that I considered as tagging errors accordingly. For the moves of ‘background’, ‘result’ and ‘conclusion/recommendation’, I limited my cross-checking examination to instances of sentence segmentation instead of checking the complete text files.

### 5.1.3 Removing word forms

As my analysis focuses on word classes rather than word forms, I carried out the additional step of removing all actual word forms from the research and reference corpora used in all of my keyness comparisons, thus leaving only the tag labels as corpus tokens for comparison. This process was carried out using the following UNIX script:

```
cat input.txt | tr " " "\012" | sed 's/^.*_\(.*$\)/\1/' > output.txt
```

In simple terms, the first part of this script (the ‘cat’ part) reads a tagged file into the UNIX shell; the second part (the ‘tr’ part) takes the precautionary step of removing any arbitrary line breaks in the file; and the third part (the ‘sed’ part) removes everything except the POS tags and saves the output of the entire process to a new .txt file. These files finally formed the data that were then subjected to the two keyness analyses described earlier.

### 5.1.4 Carrying out the keyness analyses

Once the data had been prepared following the steps above, I carried out the two sets of key word class analyses as described earlier in this chapter. For all analyses, I used the ‘Keywords’ tool in AntConc. For a word class to be considered ‘key’ in any of my research corpora, I set a minimum Log-likelihood threshold confidence level of $p < 0.01$, which meant that any item with a score below the critical value of 6.63 would fail the statistical significance test. Following current best practice in keyness analysis (Gabrielatos 2018), I then ranked the key

word class items that passed the statistical significance test according to their effect size rather than their log likelihood score. To calculate effect size I used the %DIFF metric, a simple ratio measure which gives "[t]he % difference of the frequency of a word in the study corpus when compared to that in the reference corpus" (Gabrielatos and Marchi, 2011). In comparison with pure statistical significance, effect size is more meaningful in keyness analysis as it "is a measure of the practical significance of a result, preventing us claiming a statistical significant result that has little consequence" (Ridge and Kudenko, 2010, p.272). A further advantage of using effect size rather than statistical significance as a means of ranking keyness analysis results is that it is independent of corpus size, which means that it can be safely applied to small corpora such as those used in my study (Rosenfeld and Penrod, 2011).

### 5.1.5 Why use keyness analysis?

Before moving on to present the results of my keyness analyses, I would like to explain why the methodology of keyness analysis was chosen for this part of the research. Previous studies along similar lines, such as those by Cao and Xiao (2013a, 2013b) and Friginal and Mustafa (2017), have mainly used multi-dimensional analysis (MDA) to examine and compare lexico-grammatical features in corpora of abstracts written by English native and non-native writers. Why did I not therefore follow them in using MDA in my own study? There are three reasons for my decision.

Firstly, keyness analysis is a much easier procedure to carry out than MDA. Although, as discussed immediately above, there is a certain amount of pre-processing work to be done when carrying out a key word class analysis, this work is much less arduous than the preparatory work required by MDA. Many linguistic features that are typically included in MD analyses cannot be tagged automatically, and require manual or semi-manual annotation. Also, the statistical procedure of factor analysis is far more complex than keyness analysis.

Secondly, although keyness analysis is easier to carry out as a procedure, the

main insights that it yields have been argued by previous researchers to be very comparable to those obtained through MDA (Tribble 1999). A good example of this is Xiao and McEnery (2005), who studied register variation in corpora of American English and found that keyness analysis "can achieve approximately the same effect as Biber's MDA" (ibid, p.63), and "provides a quick and simple means of evaluating a genre against Biber's dimensions" (ibid, p.77).

Thirdly, and most importantly, keyness analysis, unlike MDA, is totally inductive and data-driven; the researcher does not prespecify a list of linguistic features for analysis, as is the case with MDA; rather, the linguistic features emerge totally automatically as a result of the keywords algorithm, and are thus totally free from researcher bias or error (in MDA, there is always a danger that some of the features chosen for analysis are not actually relevant to the genre, or that there are features that are relevant to the genre but which the researcher does not think of including in their feature list).

## 5.2 Key word class analysis of individual moves in EJ and CJ abstracts

In this section I will present and compare the results of my key word class analyses of individual moves in two sub-corpora; one containing 400 English-language Finance and Accounting RA abstracts sampled from international anglophone journals, and the other corpus containing the same number of English-language Finance and Accounting RA abstracts sampled from Chinese-language journals on the other. The aim of the analysis is to investigate, firstly, whether there are any lexico-grammatical features (identified through key parts of speech) that seem to be particularly associated with any of the five moves across the corpora, and secondly, whether these lexico-grammatical preferences are similar or different across the two writer groups.

### 5.2.1 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘background’ moves

Table 5.1 below provides a comparative overview of key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘background’ moves.

Table 5.1 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘background’ moves

| Key word classes in EJ ‘background’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01)[16] | Key word classes in ‘background’ CJ sub-corpus | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VBN | 554.8782 | 20.28 | VBG | 359.1793 | 10.29 |
| VHZ | 227.4391 | 17.79 | VBN | 166.8734 | 9.8 |
| MD | 125.3021 | 22.58 | VHZ | 65.0982 | 8.62 |
| VHP | 92.9552 | 6.85 | VBZ | 63.3919 | 29.55 |
| NP | 86.6403 | 49.01 | VBP | 55.745 | 8.31 |
| VV | 31.233 | 8.36 | WDT | 55.1375 | 7.9 |
| TO | 18.8452 | 7.56 | NP | 25.0531 | 11.55 |
| JJ | 13.3589 | 8.6 | SENT | 22.7957 | 12.08 |
| | | | JJ | 13.6004 | 13.58 |

[16] Critical value for the Log Likelihood test at p<0.01 =6.63.

This analysis finds that four lexico-grammatical forms are both significantly (in log-likelihood terms) and substantially (in %DIFF terms) associated with 'background' moves in Finance and Accounting abstract written by both international and Chinese researchers, when this move is compared against the reference corpus consisting of complete abstracts written by each group respectively. These are the past participle *been* (VBN); the auxiliary form *has* (VHZ); singular proper nouns (NP); and adjectives (JJ). The results for VBN and VHZ indicate that the passive voice, the present perfect tense and the third person present form of the lexical verb *HAVE* are frequently used in 'background' moves, as can be seen in Examples 5.3 to 5.6:

…it has **been_VBN** argued that…
8 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.3 Example of "VBN" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

…the public firms have **been_VBN** required to…
7 (2014)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.4 Example of "VBN" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

Social media **has_VHZ** become a popular venue…
10 (2014)/Review of Financial Studies/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.5 Example of "VHZ" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

…the monetary policy **has_VHZ** a fundamental impact on the…
2 (2013)/South China Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.6 Example of "VHZ" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

As can be seen, all of these forms appear in, and are a key part of, statements that sketch out the context of the research to be carried out in the article. This 'contextualizing' function also accounts for the keyness of adjectives in this move. As can be seen in Examples 5.7 and 5.8, adjectives in 'background' moves typically evaluate phenomena which the RA will study as being *current*, *contemporary*, *global*, *international* or *widespread*, thus indicating that they are worthy of study and thus worth reading about:

…the **current_JJ** accounting treatment for leases…
18 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.7 Example of "JJ" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

The **global_JJ** gold price surged during…
5 (2013)/Chinese Review of Financial Studies/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.8 Example of "JJ" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

The reason for the keyness of singular proper nouns (NP) in 'background' moves is not so immediately obvious, but on closer inspection it becomes clear that this word class is key because background statements often specify a named entity (e.g. a company, an institution, a piece of legislation or a more abstract economic phenomenon) which is in some way important or relevant to the topic of the research paper, as can be seen in Examples 5.9 and 5.10:

The **Sarbanes-Oxley_NP Act_NP(SOX_NP)** requires that firms wait…
11 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.9 Example of "NP" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

The number of listed companies in **China_NP** 's **Growth_NP Enterprise_NP Market_NP (GEM_NP)** has increased from…
11 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.10 Example of "NP" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

The analysis also identifies four lexico-grammatical forms that are significantly and substantially associated with 'background' moves in EJ abstracts only. In other words, these are features that international writers typically use in 'background' moves, but Chinese writers do not. These features are modal verbs (MD); *have* (i.e. the present non-3rd person form of the verb *HAVE*) (VHP); the base form of lexical verbs (VV); and the infinitive stem or preposition *to* (TO)[17]. The features MD and VV are probably due to the same underlying feature: EJ 'background' moves are particularly likely to select modal verbs, which in turn are followed by base forms of verbs, as shown in Examples 5.11a and 5.11b:

…revenues **should_MD reflect_VV** both selling price and timing of delivery.
8 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.11a Example of "MD" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

…regulation **may_MD give_VV** investors a false sense of security…
20 (2014)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.11b Example of "MD" in 'background' EJ sub-corpus

In Section 5.3 later in this chapter, we will see that, in a 'whole text' keyness comparison of EJ and CJ, modal verbs are identified as being overused by Chinese writers in comparison to international writers. On the face of it, the finding that modal verbs (MD) are key in EJ

[17] TreeTagger does not distinguish between these two uses.

‘background’ statements seems to contradict this. However, it needs to be borne in mind that this result comes from a different kind of comparison; here, I am comparing background moves in EJ against the whole EJ sub-corpus. What this means is that when international writers do use modal verbs in their abstracts, they are more likely to use them in ‘background’ moves than in any other move, whereas Chinese writers tend to use modals across all moves fairly indiscriminately. As can be seen in Example 5.12, international writers typically use modal verbs such as *may*, *might* or *would* in ‘background’ moves in order to make hedged generalizations which are then treated as issues that the paper will deal with:

```
However, in PE fund, diversification might_MD increase
returns by…
 10 (2013)/Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis/Finance EJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.12 Example of “MD” in ‘background’ EJ sub-corpus

The keyness of the non-3rd person form of the verb *HAVE* (VHP) in ‘background’ moves is hard to interpret with any certainty, but seems to feature most prominently in ***X have Y*** statements that establish properties of things that the research paper will go on to investigate, as illustrated in Example 5.13:

```
Firms have_VHP an incentive to manage media coverage…
                    2 (2014)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.13 Example of “VHP” in ‘background’ EJ sub-corpus

Finally, my keyness analysis of ‘background’ moves identifies five lexico-grammatical forms or features that are significantly and substantially associated with ‘background’ moves in CJ abstracts only: the gerund/participle *being* (VBG); the singular verb form *is* (VBZ); the plural forms *am/are* (VBP); wh-determiners (e.g. *which*) (WDT); and clause- or sentence-final punctuation marks (e.g. ?, !, .) (SENT). These are illustrated in Examples 5.14 – 5.18 below.

```
Rural finance is being_VBG an important driving force…
    9 (2014)/Journal of Regional Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.14 Example of “VBG” in ‘background’ CJ sub-corpus

```
The cross-listing is_VBZ accompanied by a lot of research
concerned about…
               14 (2013)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.15 Example of “VBZ” in ‘background’ CJ sub-corpus

```
…since credit firms are_VBP selected according to firm…
            7 (2013)/Quarterly Journal of Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.16 Example of “VBP” in ‘background’ CJ sub-corpus

…the existing literatures **which_WDT** usually resort to…
2 (2014)/Quarterly Journal of Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.17 Example of "WDT" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

…net profit can be easily manipulated.**_SENT**
12 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.18 Example of "SENT" in 'background' CJ sub-corpus

As can be seen in Examples 5.14 – 5.16, passives are even more prevalent in CJ 'background' moves than they are in EJ, although the reason for this is currently unclear. The keyness of relativizing which is interesting; my interpretation of this observation is that Chinese writers may not know how to use participle clauses as a way of reducing relative clauses, and thus keeping their word count down to a minimum, which is an essential requirement in abstract writing. To illustrate, the writer of Example 5.17 above could have written "the existing literatures **usually resorting** to…", instead of "the existing literatures **which usually resort** to…", but has not done so. Finally, the fact that clause- or sentence-final punctuation marks are key in CJ 'background' only indicates that CJ writers use more (and perhaps thus shorter and less grammatically complex) sentences than EJ writers do in this move.

### 5.2.2 Key word classes in EJ and CJ 'purpose' moves

Table 5.2 provides a comparative overview of key word classes in EJ and CJ 'purpose' moves.

Table 5.2 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘purpose’ moves

| Key word classes in EJ ‘purpose’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) | Key word classes in CJ ‘purpose’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VVZ | 49.3792 | 21.61 | VVZ | 77.4239 | 77.97 |
| WRB | 45.525 | 7.48 | POS | 33.6357 | 6.88 |
| PP | 32.7467 | 20.86 | DT | 18.6803 | 30.71 |
| VVP | 31.0122 | 21.17 | CC | 17.5681 | 9.23 |
| DT | 13.3311 | 10.18 | NN | 13.8319 | 42.53 |
| NN | 11.3027 | 20.67 | | | |

This analysis identifies three lexico-grammatical forms that are significantly and substantially associated with 'purpose' moves in Finance and Accounting abstracts written by both international and Chinese researchers. These are the present 3rd person singular form of lexical verbs (VVZ); determiners (e.g. *the*) (DT); and singular nouns (NN). As can be seen in Examples 5.19 and 5.20, the keyness of VVZ is largely attributable to the fact that purpose statements in both EJ and CJ often use the third person lexical verbs *examines* and *studies*:

This study **examines_VVZ** how options trading affects the rate of return expected by investors…
2 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.19 Example of "VVZ" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

This paper **studies_VVZ** the relationship between…
8 (2014)/Journal of Shanghai Finance University/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.20 Example of "VVZ" in 'purpose' CJ sub-corpus

The key word class DT is harder to interpret, but qualitative concordance analysis of this feature suggests that it may relate to the prevalence of complex nominalizations that follow the main verb in purpose statements, particularly in EJ 'purpose' moves. These complex nominalizations typically describe the phenomenon to be investigated in the paper, as illustrated in Examples 5.21:

We analyze **the_DT** investment behavior of affiliated funds…
11 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.21 Example of "DT" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

The prevalence of singular nouns in 'purpose' moves seems not to be reducible to any single explanatory factor, as can be seen from Examples 5.22 and 5.23:

We propose a new **definition_NN** of **skill_NN** as general cognitive **ability_NN**…
4 (2014)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.22 Example of "NN" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

This **paper_NN** empirically examines how the market_NN **environment_NN** affects corporations' vertical **integration_NN,**…
6 (2013)/Journal of Finance and Economics/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.23 Example of "NN" in 'purpose' CJ sub-corpus

Let us move on to consider the three lexico-grammatical forms that are significantly and substantially associated with 'purpose' moves in EJ abstracts only: wh-adverbs (e.g. *when*) (WRB); personal pronouns (PP); and present non-3rd person plural forms of lexical verbs (VVP). All three of these features will be discussed further in subsequent parts of this thesis, and it will be argued that they are all key lexico-grammatical resources which are missing from the Chinese writers' linguistic repertoires. The key status of WRB forms indicates that, unlike Chinese writers, international writers are not restricted to using *that*-clauses as finite subordinate clauses, but have a wider and more sophisticated range of options at their disposal, including how-clauses as illustrated in Example 5.24 below:

… we study **how_WRB** differences in culture across countries affect accounting conservatism…
13 (2014)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.24 Example of "WRB" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

Another crucial difference between international and Chinese writers that will be more extensively discussed later in this thesis is the prevalence of personal pronouns in EJ sub-corpus. As we can already see here, international writers are far more likely than Chinese writers to use first person personal pronouns to insert themselves explicitly into their own abstract texts:

**I_PP** investigate whether labor market…
6 (2014)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.25 Example of "PP" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

They are also far more likely to refer to themselves using the plural personal pronoun *we*, and although this is not directly reflected in the keyness data, it is indirectly reflected in the key status of present tense non-3rd person plural forms of lexical verbs (VVP), as shown in Example 5.26:

**We examine_VVP** how information risk and transaction costs…
20 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.26 Example of "VVP" in 'purpose' EJ sub-corpus

Finally, let us consider the two lexico-grammatical features that are significantly and substantially associated with 'purpose' moves in CJ abstracts only. These are possessive endings (POS) and coordinating conjunctions (CC), as shown in Examples 5.27 and 5.28:

| |
|---|
| The paper theoretically studies **firms'_POS** ability to pay… |
| 2 (2013)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 5.27 Example of "POS" in 'purpose' CJ sub-corpus

| |
|---|
| …the paper simulates the condition… **and_CC** writes down… |
| 7 (2013)/South China Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 5.28 Example of "CC" in 'purpose' CJ sub-corpus

While my interpretations of both of these features are somewhat speculative, concordance analysis does suggest that both features may be due to limitations in the general English language skills of Chinese academic writers. The prevalent use of the *'s* genitive form seems to indicate that Chinese writers may be using this form instead of using complex nominalizations in the frame ***the NP of NP*** – which is very common in the EJ data (as evidenced by the keyness of DT forms as discussed above). That is, Chinese writers seem to prefer to write "The paper theoretically studies **firms' ability** to pay…" than ""The paper theoretically studies **the ability of firms** to pay…", even though the latter would be preferred by, and sounds more appropriate to, most native English speakers. Likewise, the frequent use of coordinating conjunctions among Chinese writers seems to be indicative of another conservative approach to clause and sentence construction; specifically, Chinese writers seem to opt to use clause coordination instead of the syntactically more demanding option of using clausal subordination.

### 5.2.3 Key word classes in EJ and CJ 'methodology' moves

Table 5.3 provides a comparative overview of key word classes in EJ and CJ 'methodology' moves.

Table 5.3 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘methodology’ moves

| Key word classes in EJ ‘methodology’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) | Key word classes in CJ ‘methodology’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CD | 343.5209 | 242.43 | CD | 346.8964 | 354.65 |
| VVG | 109.2896 | 74.47 | NP | 126.0116 | 172.62 |
| NP | 76.9462 | 32.67 | VVG | 98.3369 | 65.62 |
| DT | 20.7944 | 13.11 | VVD | 90.4721 | 13.57 |
| | | | VVN | 84.7136 | 53.21 |
| | | | NNS | 16.7099 | 11.75 |

For this move, three lexico-grammatical features were found to be key in both EJ and CJ abstracts; cardinal numbers (CD):

```
Using an international sample of 16_CD countries…
                    5 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.29 Example of "CD" in 'methodology' EJ sub-corpus

```
Based on 9273_CD annual unbalanced panel observations…
                5 (2013)/Quarterly Journal of Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.30 Example of "CD" in 'methodology' CJ sub-corpus

singular proper nouns (NP):

```
For a sample of 1,492 NYSE_NP stocks over…
            20 (2014)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.31 Example of "NP" in 'methodology' EJ sub-corpus

```
This paper takes Shanghai_NP and Shenzhen_NP A-share_NP m
anufacturing listed companies…
                    7 (2013)/Accounting Forum/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.32 Example of "NP" in 'methodology' CJ sub-corpus

and gerund / participle verb forms (VVG):

```
Using_VVG a unique data set with detailed information on
the derivative positions of upstream oil and gas firms during
1996-2008, ...
 15 (2013)/Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis/Finance in EJ sub-corpus
```

Example 5.33 Example of "VVG" in 'methodology' EJ sub-corpus

The first two of these features are plausibly interpreted as grammatical reflections of the fact that methodological descriptions feature specific and concrete entities rather than the broad generalizations and abstract categories more commonly invoked in 'background' moves. As for the third feature, it is reasonable to see gerund/participle verb forms as further evidence of abstract writers using syntactic resources to achieve the concise and compressed forms of expression required by the very constrained word limits imposed by the RA abstract genre. That is, writers can enhance both the concision and the stylistic sophistication of their methodology statements by writing:

> *"**Using** a unique data set with detailed information on the derivative positions of upstream oil and gas firms during 1996-2008, **we** find that hedging intensity is positively related to factors that amplify chief executive officer (CEO) entrenchment and free cash flow agency costs"*

instead of:

*"**We use** a unique data set with detailed information on the derivative positions of upstream oil and gas firms during 1996-2008, **and we** find that hedging intensity is positively related to factors that amplify chief executive officer (CEO) entrenchment and free cash flow agency costs"*

Turning now to lexico-grammatical features found to be key in one corpus only, I find that the only key feature in EJ methodology statements is determiners (DT). Concordance analysis of the data reveals that, once again, the keyness of this feature is due to the very high incidence of complex nominalizations, as illustrated in Example 5.34:

We analyze **a_DT** sample of over 3,600 ex ante …
16 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.34 Example of "DT" in 'methodology' EJ sub-corpus

Finally, I note that three features were found to be key in CJ 'methodology' moves only. These were past tense verb forms (VVD); past participle verb forms (VVN) and plural nouns (NNS). While the prevalence of plural nouns in CJ 'methodology' moves has no clear explanation at present, I can more confidently comment on the other two features. The popularity of past tense verb forms among Chinese writers is noteworthy because it contrasts markedly with international writers, who are revealed by concordance analysis to have a clear (but not statistically significant)[18] preference for using present tense in this move. The following contrast between CJ and EJ statements is typical:

…we **used_VVD** two simultaneous equations models…
11 (2014)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.35 Example of "VVD" in 'methodology' CJ sub-corpus

…we **use_VVP** broker closures and broker mergers to identify changes in analyst coverage that are exogenous to corporate policies.…
15 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.36 Example of "VVP" in 'methodology' EJ sub-corpus

Finally, the key status of past participle verb forms in CJ abstracts is substantially due to the fact that Chinese writers very frequently use the phrase ***based on*** in this move (N=62, out of 130 instances of VVN forms in total):

[18] Again, the fact that this feature is not statistically significant is due to the part-whole comparison used in this part of the research; that is, present forms are used consistently throughout EJ abstracts, and are thus less likely to be significant in any particular move.

**Based_VVN** on the MSIH-VAR model, we make ...
1 (2013)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.37 Example of "VVN" in 'methodology' CJ sub-corpus

### 5.2.4 Key word classes in EJ and CJ 'result' moves

Table 5.4 below provides a comparative overview of key word classes in EJ and CJ 'result' moves.

Table 5.4 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘result’ moves

| Key word classes in EJ ‘result’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) | Key word classes in CJ ‘result’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| JJR | 58.7872 | 62.99 | JJR | 107.221 | 96.3 |
| RBR | 51.7398 | 24.18 | that | 77.0403 | 162.7 |
| VBZ | 28.5078 | 13.15 | EX | 62.9749 | 7.29 |
| VBP | 26.5455 | 10.54 | RBR | 58.0823 | 14.65 |
| that | 24.8198 | 38.87 | VBP | 44.3563 | 12.49 |
| RB | 24.4194 | 32.2 | VBZ | 41.1543 | 29.77 |
| | | | VVP | 34.0398 | 20.37 |
| | | | RB | 19.4465 | 15.37 |

For this move, five lexico-grammatical features were found to be key in both EJ and CJ abstracts. These were comparative adjectives (JJR); comparative adverbs (RBR); *is* (i.e. the present 3rd person singular form of BE) (VBZ); the verb form *am/are* (VBP); *that* complementizers (that); and adverbs (RB). Examples of these features are provided in Examples 5.39 – 5.49 below. As can clearly be seen, all of these features either have an evaluative function in themselves, or contribute to phrases expressing evaluative meanings. This is entirely appropriate and expected for the communicative purposes of this move.

These relations are **stronger_JJR** after periods of **higher_JJR** dispersion…
9 (2014)/journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.38 Example of "JJR" in 'result' EJ sub-corpus

… this kind of effectiveness are weakened in regions with **worse_JJR** financial ecology…
1 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.39 Example of "JJR" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

The increase in debt financing is **more_RBR** pronounced for firms…and **less_RBR** pronounced for firms…
14 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.40 Example of "RBR" in 'result' EJ sub-corpus

…Chinese households are **more_RBR** likely to invest in …
6 (2013)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.41 Example of "RBR" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

…and their impact **is_VBZ** similar to our estimate of delivered short sales.
20 (2014)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.42 Example of "VBZ" in 'result' EJ sub-corpus

There **is_VBZ** no evidence that different types of owners…
7 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.43 Example of "VBZ" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

We find that firms **are_VBP** more likely to stop providing…
19 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.44 Example of "VBP" in 'result' EJ sub-corpus

If there **are_VBP** more independent directors in the board…
1 (2013)/Chinese Review of Financial Studies/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.45 Example of "VBP" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

We find **that_IN/that** a firm is more likely…
14 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.46 Example of "that" in 'result' of EJ sub-corpus

The results show **that_IN/that** the size and capital adequacy ratio of bank…
1 (2013)/Finance Forum/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.47 Example of "that" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

…the number of brokers hosting a firm at conference is **positively_RB** related to…
20 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.48 Example of "RB" in 'result' EJ sub-corpus

…**however_RB** the significance is **only_RB** 10% under contiguity…
4 (2014)/Journal of Finance and Economics/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.49 Example of "RB" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

For this move, no features were found to be key in EJ only. For CJ 'result' moves, two uniquely key word classes were identified: existential *there* constructions (EX) and present tense 3rd person plural verb forms (VVP). These are illustrated in Examples 5.50 and 5.51 below. As can be seen, these features also either performs evaluative functions themselves (*the results* ***show***…) or form part of larger evaluative constructions (***there*** *are closer connections* …).

**There_EX** are closer connections in the textile and apparel industry…
2 (2014)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.50 Example of "EX" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

The results **show_VVP** that there are no significant changes in auditor's opinion…
16 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.51 Example of "VVP" in 'result' CJ sub-corpus

### 5.2.5 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘conclusion/recommendation’ moves

Table 5.5 below provides a comparative overview of key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘conclusion/recommendation’ moves.

Table 5.5 Key word classes in EJ and CJ ‘conclusion/recommendation’ moves

| Key word classes in EJ ‘conclusion/ recommendation’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) | Key word classes in CJ ‘conclusion/ recommendation’ moves | Effect size (%DIFF) | Log-likelihood (p<0.01) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| VB | 122.0907 | 10.33 | MD | 110.3351 | 32.28 |
| MD | 75.5671 | 10.24 | VV | 82.9597 | 58.82 |
| IN/that | 33.4411 | 20.25 | TO | 34.7601 | 21.77 |
| | | | PP | 32.5915 | 7.18 |

For this move, the only lexico-grammatical feature found to be key for both international and Chinese writers was modal verbs (MD). Interpreting this finding is straightforward; researchers typically become somewhat more circumspect when coming to conclusions or making recommendations, and therefore employ modals as hedging devices, as can be seen in Examples 5.52 and 5.53.

Our findings **may_MD** justify the common practice of "pay-for-luck".
20 (2013)/Review of Financial Studies/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.52 Example of "MD" in 'conclusion/recommendation' EJ sub-corpus

…reasonable salary system **should_MD** be built,…
4 (2014)/South China Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.53 Example of "MD" in 'conclusion/recommendation' CJ sub-corpus

Two lexicogrammatical features were found to be key in EJ 'cnclusion/recommendation' only: the base form *be* (VB); and *that* complementizers (IN/that). The high incidence of *be* is clearly related to the use of modals as hedging devices in this move:

…firms' cost structures **should be_VB** made in light of…
11 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.54 Example of "VB" in 'conclusion/recommendation' EJ sub-corpus

Likewise, the prevalence of *that*- complementizers in EJ 'conclusion/recommendation' moves is clearly a grammatical reflection of the two main communicative purposes of this move, i.e. to offer conclusions and/or recommendations. Example 5.55 provides a clear illustration of this usage.

Our findings suggest **that_IN/that** auditors often reach…
2 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 5.55 Example of "that" in 'conclusion/recommendation' CJ sub-corpus

To conclude this analysis, let us finally consider the three lexicogrammatical features that were found to be key in CJ 'conclusion/recommendation' moves only. These were the base forms of lexical verbs (VV); the infinitive stem or preposition form *to* (TO); and personal pronouns (PP). The first of these features can easily be interpreted as a relevant and appropriate structure for expressing recommendations, as shown in Example 5.56:

…the MES method can be used to **measure_VV** the systemic…
5 (2013)/Finance Forum/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.56 Example of "VV" in 'conclusion/recommendation' CJ sub-corpus

The above example is also useful in helping us to understand why the infinitive stem *to* is also key in this move; it seems that Chinese abstract writers particularly frequently use purpose clauses in making recommendations or drawing conclusions. A further example is given in 5.57 below.

…provide a reference **to_TO** build a theoretical model…
1 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.57 Example of "TO" in 'conclusion/recommendation' CJ sub-corpus

Likewise, the function of drawing conclusions or making recommendations would seem to explain the keyness result for personal pronouns in this move. Interestingly, however, concordance analysis reveals that, even here, Chinese writers seem to be reluctant to use first person pronouns, preferring instead to use impersonal forms such as *it*, as illustrated in Example 5.58:

…**it_PP** also has important implications for corporate risky investment.
8 (2013)/Journal of Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 5.58 Example of "PP" in 'conclusion/recommendation' CJ sub-corpus

### 5.3 General patterns of overuse and underuse in CJ abstracts

In the previous section I used key word class analysis to identify a variety of lexico-grammatical features associated with individual moves in Finance and Accounting RA abstracts. Some of these features were common to both international and Chinese writers, but many others were key for only one of these groups of writers.

While this analysis has provided convincing evidence that Chinese writers frequently diverge from international conventions in their lexico-grammatical choices when writing RA abstracts in English, there is one significant limitation to the previous study. By comparing each individual move against all moves for each writer group, our key word class analysis has only been able to identify lexico-grammatical features that are particularly strongly associated with particular moves. What such an analysis cannot show us is whether there are any lexico-grammatical features which Chinese writers generally underuse or overuse in comparison to their international peers in their abstract texts as a whole. To investigate this, I carried out a second type of key word class analysis, which compared the CJ

sub-corpus as a whole against the international benchmark provided by the whole EJ sub-corpus. This analysis generated two key word class lists: one consisting of word classes that are quantitatively underused by Chinese abstract writers as compared to international conventions, and the other consisting of word classes that are quantitatively overused by Chinese abstract writers in comparison to their international peers. These lists are presented in Table 5.6. Once again, in accordance with current best practice guidelines in keyness analysis (Gabrielatos 2018), both key word class lists are ranked according to effect size (i.e. proportional size of difference between two corpora) rather than statistical significance.

Table 5.6 Key word classes underused and overused in CJ abstracts as compared to EJ abstracts (reference corpus)

| **Rank** | **Key word classes underused in CJ abstracts** | **Effect size (%DIFF)** | **Log-likelihood (p<0.01)** | **Key word classes overused in CJ abstracts** | **Effect size (%DIFF)** | **Log-likelihood (p<0.01)** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | VVP | 165.1696 | 512.84 | VHZ | 65.0596 | 59.89 |
| 2 | WRB | 133.6553 | 70.96 | EX | 61.6919 | 23.78 |
| 3 | WP | 128.1639 | 13.93 | VBN | 58.4067 | 10.72 |
| 4 | JJS | 124.6439 | 11.33 | MD | 40.5437 | 39.02 |
| 5 | FW | 106.6724 | 9.51 | NP | 39.4442 | 151.03 |
| 6 | PP | 100.9489 | 268.42 | VVZ | 29.528 | 55.02 |
| 7 | VBP | 87.1975 | 67.88 | DT | 28.6097 | 304.4 |
| 8 | RBR | 81.8726 | 41.56 | VBZ | 24.8942 | 24.5 |
| 9 | that | 62.7715 | 77.33 | VVD | 23.6387 | 6.91 |
| 10 | JJR | 54.8027 | 49.81 | NN | 18.0357 | 302.49 |
| 11 | NNS | 49.1816 | 466.52 | CC | 17.552 | 35.4 |
| 12 | WDT | 38.9343 | 14.84 | JJ | 5.8934 | 11.01 |
| 13 | VVG | 22.9979 | 21.54 | | | |
| 14 | TO | 16.9935 | 13.92 | | | |
| 15 | RB | 16.987 | 19.45 | | | |
| 16 | VVN | 14.5347 | 9.5 | | | |
| 17 | SENT | 10.8428 | 10.91 | | | |

In the following two sections, I will discuss each of these two sets of findings in more detail.

### 5.3.1 Lexico-grammatical features underused by Chinese abstract writers

As Table 5.6 shows, 17 features were identified as being generally underused by Chinese abstract writers compared to their international peers. As this is a relatively long list of features, it will be useful to provide examples of each of these forms to provide an at-a-glance view of features that are noticeably less frequently found in Chinese abstract texts than they are in abstracts published in international Finance and Accounting journals. Table 5.7 below provides this overview.

Table 5.7 Overview of lexico-grammatical features found to be underused in CJ sub-corpus
(All examples are taken from EJ abstract texts)

| **Features** | **Examples** |
|---|---|
| VVP | We **develop** a new way to examine tax evasion… |
| WRB | I explore **how** executive peer networks can affect managerial decision making… |
| WP | Firms **whose** stocks are most underpriced… |
| JJS | the preferred presentations of managers result in the **highest** firm valuations from investors… |
| FW | From 1994 to 2012, CTA excess returns to investors ( **i.e.** net of fees) were insignificantly different from zero |
| PP | …**we** find that tax-aggressive firms pay higher fees for external audit services… |
| VBP | …auditors in larger offices **are** more likely to issue going-concern audit reports… |
| RBR | Our findings suggest a **more** complex relationship… |
| IN/that | We show **that** a vector-autoregressive (VAR) model captures stock return serial dependence in a statistically significant manner |
| JJR | evidence of predictability is **stronger** among firms with low visibility. |
| NNS | …our **results** support the view that information diffusion among the investor population influences trading behavior… |
| WDT | These increases are incremental to those found in control firms **that** face similar pressures… |
| VVG | **Using** a novel measure of industry exposure to government spending, we show predictable variation in cash flows and stock returns over political cycles. |
| TO | higher complexity leads **to** increased price volatility… |
| RB | …**especially** about the modern technology. |
| VVN | we find that higher ERM quality is **associated** with **improved** accounting performance… |
| SENT | The design of CEO incentives is particularly important for firms in financial distress**.** |

For reasons of space, it will not be possible to provide a full and detailed discussion of each of these features here. Instead, I would like to draw attention to what I see as the most significant and interesting of these features. In particular, it is clear that Chinese abstract writers are less likely to use first person pronouns to represent themselves directly in their abstract texts. They are also consequently less likely than their international peers to use third person present tense verbs to describe their research purposes or findings. Chinese writers seem less willing or able than international writers to use such resources as finite subordinate clauses or participle clauses in a concise form, and they tend to use fewer comparative adjectives and adverbs. In short, the underuse patterns revealed here suggest that Chinese abstracts are generally less syntactically complex, less condensed, less evaluative and less personalized than are abstracts published in international journals.

### 5.3.2 Lexico-grammatical features overused by Chinese writers

I now turn attention to the twelve lexico-grammatical features that our keyness analysis has found to be overused by Chinese writers in comparison to their international peers. An overview of these features is provided in Table 5.8 below.

Table 5.8 Overview of lexico-grammatical features found to be overused in CJ sub-corpus
(All examples are taken from CJ abstract texts)

| **Features** | **Examples** |
|---|---|
| VHZ | …this paper finds that auditors play a role in supervising executive pay chaos, to which more attention **has** been paid by capital market's investors… |
| EX | The result reveals that **there** are significant differences among the characteristics of NDF rate fluctuations… |
| VBN | In view of the above mentioned-facts, several general suggestions for improvement have **been** proposed. |
| MD | These problems **might** adversely affect financial stability. |
| NP | As for **Central Bank**'s macro-policy, it may be confronted with the "monitoring dilemma". |
| VVZ | This paper **proposes** a heterogeneous model that can be extended to infinite-investor scenario. |
| DT | **The** article divides the volume of housing sales into residence demand and investment demand… |
| VBZ | Bitcoin **is** a new attempt to solve the problems faced by legal tender currencies… |
| VVD | This paper **constructed** a theoretical model… |
| NN | The **paper** also investigates the relationship between consumers' expectations and actual inflation in China… |
| CC | The availability of corporate loans will increase, **and** cash gap become smaller… |
| JJ | …there is a **positive** relation between **real** earnings management and **environmental** uncertainty… |

Once again, a summary of the main overuse features will suffice for present purposes. As can be seen in Table 5.8, Finance and Accounting abstracts written by Chinese academics and published in Chinese-language journals are far more likely to use the passive voice and impersonal there-BE constructions than are abstracts published in international journals, where (as we saw previously) the use of active voice and direct self-representation via personal pronouns is more common. Chinese writers also use modal verbs and past tenses

significantly more frequently than international writers do, and they are also more likely to use simple clause coordination (using the coordinating conjunctions *and* or *but*) in preference to more syntactically complex resources such as finite subordinate clauses or participle clauses. Chinese abstract writers tend to make far more extensive use of adjectives than do their international peers, although concordance analysis indicates that these adjectives are mostly descriptive adjectives related to topics in the fields of Finance and Accounting (e.*g. financial, commercial, real, vertical, corporate, budgetary* or *domestic*); evaluative adjectives appear to be less frequent. To sum up, the underuse patterns revealed here paint a general picture of Chinese abstracts in the fields of Finance and Accounting as typically being more neutrally descriptive, more impersonal, syntactically simpler and yet more modalized and more heterogeneous in their verb tense usage than are abstracts published in international journals.

## 5.4 Summary

The key word class analyses reported in this chapter have been successful in identifying a number of substantial and systematic lexico-grammatical differences in the abtract writing practices of international and Chinese academic researchers in the fields of Finance and Accounting. However, these analyses have necessarily been quite brief and general, and much more detail could be provided for each observation. Given that, for reasons of space, it will not be possible for this thesis to provide full and detailed analyses of every single lexico-grammatical feature or difference identified in this chapter, it will be necessary to select some features for closer and more detailed analysis in subsequent chapters of this thesis. The two features, or more precisely, sets of features that I have chosen for more detailed study are personal pronouns and finite subordinate clauses. Both of these features have been identified as substantially underused by Chinese writers in comparison to their international counterparts, and both seem to cause particular difficulties for Chinese writers. In the next two chapters, I will attempt to establish why Chinese abstract writers seem to avoid using, or have difficulty in using these lexico-grammatical features.

# CHAPTER SIX: FIRST PERSON PRONOUNS IN INTERNATIONAL AND CHINESE ABSTRACTS

In this chapter I will discuss the first salient lexico-grammatical feature that came to light when I conducted the analysis of keywords and key word classes analysis reported in Chapter Five. This chapter compares the first person pronouns usage preferences of international and Chinese abstract writers in the fields of Finance and Accounting. The analysis will be in two parts. The first part will provide a quantitative analysis focusing on the rank and frequency of first person pronoun occurrences across the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. The second part goes into more qualitative detail, studying first person pronouns in terms of their collocates and the commonly used phraseological patterns in which they participate across the two corpora. The chapter will conclude by discussing possible reasons for the patterns and trends identified by my analysis.

Before proceeding any further, however, it will be useful to begin with a brief review of previous relevant theoretical and empirical research literature, in order to provide a context for the present study.

## 6.1 Literature review

One of the richest strands in the EAP research literature is one that focuses on how scholars use rhetorical devices to represent themselves in academic writing. In an influential series of studies, Ivanic (1994, 1998) has usefully proposed that academic writer identity construction can be studied from four perspectives. These are the 'autobiographical self', shaped essentially by the writer's own life; the 'discoursal self', where writers form images in their texts; the 'self as author', reflecting the writer's active involvement within the texts; and lastly the "possibilities for self-hood in the socio-cultural and institutional context" (Ivanic, 1998, p.27). In this chapter, it is the "self as author" (ibid, p.23) perspective that I will be mainly concerned with.

Amongst the numerous ways in which writers can express themselves to readers,

(cf. Hyland, 1999; Hunston and Thompson, 2000), perhaps the most obvious and significant way is through the use of first person pronouns in academic writing (Kuo, 1999; Tang and John, 1999; Hyland, 2001, 2002). By their very definition, personal pronouns are explicit markers of the identity roles that writers assume in their texts.

Previous research on the use of first person pronouns in English academic writing has primarily focused on their usage and discourse functions in genres such as research articles and/or students' theses (e.g. Kuo ,1999; Hyland, 2001, 2002; Harwood, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c; Martinez, 2005; Samraj, 2008; Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017). Some of these are comparative studies across different academic disciplines (e.g. Hyland, 2001; Harwood, 2005b, 2005c; Samraj, 2008; McGrath, 2016 among many others); others are comparative studies between English native writers and non-native writers (e.g. Martinez, 2005; Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017).

These studies have provided important insights in four main areas: discourse function (e.g. Kuo, 1999; Hyland, 2002; Harwood, 2005a, 2005b), authorial identity (e.g. Tang and John, 1999; Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017), semantic reference (e.g. Kuo, 1999; Harwood, 2005c; Molino, 2010) and/or distributional frequency (usually in comparative perspective, e.g. Hyland, 2002; Chang, 2015; Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017). About the discourse function studies, Hyland (2002) has proposed five discourse functions in the rhetorical devices accompanying first person pronouns. Tang and John (1999) have set up a scale with six categories evaluating the singular pronoun *I* from having the "least powerful to most powerful authorial presence" (p.S29) in students' academic essays. Along somewhat similar lines, Leedham and Fernandez-Parra (2017) examined the authorial identities of *we* and *I* across Chinese, Greek and British students' Engineering assignments.

In semantic reference studies, most scholars have distinguished the semantic referents of *we* and/or *our* in simple binary terms as either 'inclusive' or 'exclusive' (e.g. Harwood, 2005c; Zhang, 2008). However, a more sophisticated approach has been developed by Kuo (1999), who distinguishes five referent identities for the plural pronouns *we*, *our* and *us*, each of which has at least one distinct discourse function. In distributional studies, English non-native writers have been found to under use or even entirely avoid using first person pronouns in their academic writing, in comparison with English native writers (Ivanic and Camps, 2001; Hyland, 2002; Martinez, 2005). However, other studies focusing on EFL students (with a relatively lower level of English proficiency) have produced contrasting

results, with most studies (e.g. Petch-Tyson, 1998; McCrostie, 2008; Chang, 2015; Leedham and Fernandez-Parra, 2017) finding that English L2 student writers seem to use more first person pronouns than do English native speaking students, and that their 'self as author' identities are therefore much more overtly present in their writings" (Luzon, 2009, p.194).

While less attention has been paid to first person pronoun usage in abstracts, there have been a few noteworthy studies over the last two decades. Stotesbury (2003b), for example, has studied and compared reporting verbs collocating with the plural pronoun *we* in abstracts across three academic disciplinary domains. Another study of abstracts in the Chinese Applied Linguistics community is Zhang's (2008) comparative study of English abstracts written by English native and non-native (Chinese) writers. Zhang found that native English writers tended to use both the singular pronoun *I* and the plural pronoun *we* more frequently than Chinese writers did. Zhang also found that there were significant differences in the discourse functions of these pronouns, especially in terms of the usage of the plural first person pronoun *we*.

In summary, previous research presents a mixed picture regarding both first person pronoun use in English academic writing in general and more specifically in relation to RA abstract writing. This uncertainty is reflected in the fact that there are some very conflicting views about pronoun usage in academic writing currently in circulation. The traditionalist view is that academic writing should always be "author-evacuated", in Geertz's (1988) terms; that is, in academic writing, writers should try to avoid representing themselves directly and explicitly in their texts, and should in particular take care to avoid using first person pronouns to signal their presence (e.g. Arnaudet and Barrett, 1984; Lester, 1993; Spencer and Arbon, 1996). The following textbook guidance is typical:

> In general, academic writing aims at being 'objective' in its expression of ideas, and thus tries to avoid specific reference to personal opinions. Your academic writing should imitate this style by eliminating first person pronouns...as far as possible (Arnaudet and Barrett, 1984, p.73).

Likewise, The American National Standards Institute (ANSI 1979) suggests that it is unnecessary for writers to refer to themselves in abstracts, and in another document advises authors to "[u]se the third person unless use of the first person will avoid cumbersome sentence constructions and lead to greater clarity" (ANSI 1977, p.254). Even Graetz (1985)

states directly that the abstract genre "is characterized by the use of ... third person, ..." (p.125).

On the other hand, some other academic discourse scholars have pointed out that such prescriptive advice is routinely contradicted by academic writers across the disciplines – a frequently-cited case in point being the first sentence of arguably the most famous scientific research paper ever published (Watson and Crick 1953, p.737): "We wish to suggest a structure for the salt of deoxyribose nucleic acid (D.N.A.)" – and argue against the prescriptivist view that using personal pronouns makes academic texts sound inappropriately 'casual' or 'informal' in tone (Mills and Water, 1986). As Swales and Feak (1994, p.20) put it:

> ...most of our recommendations are designed to help you maintain a scholarly and objective tone in your writing. This does not mean (and we have not said) that you should never use I or we in your writing. The use of I or we does not make a piece of writing informal (Swales and Feak, 1994, p.20).

While recent research (e.g. Hyland 2002; Luzon, 2009) has shown that there is considerable variation in conventions for pronoun use across disciplines, and that the overall frequency of first person pronoun usage in academic writing has actually declined over the last three centuries (Biber and Gray 2010), there is nevertheless a growing consensus among EAP researchers that the traditional view of academic prose as 'author-evacuated' is far too simplistic. In particular, it is increasingly recognized that the use of first person pronouns "is a powerful means by which writers express an identity by asserting their claim to speak as an authority" (Hyland 2002, p.1094).

However, Hyland also points out that making effective and appropriate use of this rhetorical resource may pose particular difficulties for scholars from non-native English speaking backgrounds, "whose rhetorical identities may be shaped by very different traditions of literacy." (p.1092). There are reasons for hypothesizing that this may be the case for Chinese academics writing abstracts in English. In China, it is stated clearly by the national "rules for abstracts and abstracting" (GB 6447-1986), that abstract writers must write in the third person and that they should reflect and summarise original research articles 'objectively', that is, without any presentation of the writer's own identity or views in the text. Nor are such prescriptivist attitudes restricted to academic discourse; on the contrary, this preference for downplaying individual identity is central to the broader 'collectivist' conventions of many

Asian traditional cultures, including the Chinese one. In traditional Confucian culture, social structure is strongly hierarchical, and collectivity is valued much more highly than individuality. Indeed, "[s]elf-expression [is believed] to cause conflict, dissension, or even catastrophe, which may eventually be harmful to both the speaking individuals and social harmony" (Cai, 1993, p.6). This may explain why first person pronoun usage is commonly avoided in Chinese academic writing, and in other formal written registers in Chinese (Zhang, 2008): it is likely to be perceived as overemphasizing the values of individualism, which are viewed negatively in Chinese culture (Ohta, 1991; Scollon, 1994).

The hypothesis that Chinese abstract writers will thus for various reasons be likely to avoid first person pronouns in their abstracts seems to be well supported by previous research; Zhang (2008), Ding (2009), Zhao (2011), Cao and Xiao (2013a, 2013b) and Peng and Zhang (2017), have all found that in English abstract writing, Chinese writers use fewer first person pronouns (and a correspondingly greater use of passive voice) than native English writers do regardless of their discipline. However, none of these studies has focused on Finance or Accounting, the disciplines of interest in this thesis, and all of these studies have been on a much smaller scale than the current research. In the remainder of this chapter, therefore, I will carry out a large-scale comparative analysis of first person pronoun use in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, in order to find out whether and to what extent Chinese abstract writers use personal pronouns in ways that are consistent with, and thus likely to be deemed acceptable by, their international peers.

I will first examine the frequency and distribution of first person pronouns among different moves in each sub-corpus, and then compare their collocates and their frequently used phraseological patterns, referring also to their correlative discourse functions, in order to establish whether pronouns are being used in the same way qualitatively as well as quantitatively.. Unlike most previous studies, my study will particularly focus on the collocates and phraseology of the first person plural pronouns *we* and *our*. Several studies (Myers, 1992; Gledhill, 2000a, 2000b; Oakey, 2002; Charles, 2006) have already demonstrated that academic discourses often have quite conventional phraseology and that expertise in any particular academic discourse involves knowing which specific collocations and phraseology to adopt in relevant genres (Luzon, 2009). Conversely, it has also been established that "miscollocations or collocations uncommon for the genre may affect the intelligibility of the paper and may reduce its effectiveness" (Howarth, 1998, quoted in

Martinez, 2005, p.187). If first person pronoun usage among Chinese Finance and Accounting academics is indeed found to be different from international writing conventions, the qualitative perspective provided by my analysis of Chinese and International usage patterns may be of considerable pedagogic as well as theoretical value.

## 6.2 Methodology of the study

For this analysis, I examined all the first person pronouns in each of the abstract texts in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. In the first place, I separated and compared first person pronoun usages in the two disciplines as I did for the abstract rhetorical structure analyses. But it turned out that there were hardly any notable differences in their rankings and/or phraseological patterns. Thus, I decided to combine Finance and Accounting together, and the analysis to be reported in this chapter will focus exclusively on comparisons between the EJ and CJ sub-corpora[19]. Of the full range of first person pronouns in English (i.e. *I*, *me*, *mine*, *my*, *myself*, *we*, *us*, *our*, *ours* and ourselves), the majority either occur very infrequently (and well below statistical significance according to a log-likelihood test), or do not occur at all. In EJ, there are no instances of *me*, *myself* or *ourselves*, *my* occurs only 14 times; and there are a mere 3 results for *us*. Similarly, in CJ, there are no results for *me*, *my*, or *myself*, 7 instances of *us* and only one use of *ourselves*). These results are in line with previous studies by Hyland (2001, 2002) and Martinez (2005). At the same time, the first person pronouns *we*, *I* and *our* are all more frequent in my data (as will be reported in full below) and were found to be statistically significant in an EJ versus CJ comparison. This suggests that international writers use these three pronouns far more frequently than Chinese writers do. Accordingly, in the discussion that follows I will limit myself to examining and comparing the three first person pronouns *we*, *I* and *our*, with particular emphasis on the usage of *we* and *our*. (The reasons for this specific focus will be explained later.)

The analysis of the three pronouns reported below is based on three separate forms of comparison: a rank and frequency comparison, a comparison of statistical collocates, and a comparison and the phraseological patterns most commonly used by international and Chinese academic writers. For all of these three comparative studies, I used AntConc

[19] I have also stated the reasons for disciplinary combination in Chapter Five. In this Chapter, I will comment the disciplinary variations wherever these are significant.

(Anthony, 2018). For the rank and frequency analysis, I examined and compared the three first person pronouns using AntConc's"Word List" tool.

I then used the "Collocates" tool to identify and compare the collocates of the subject pronouns *we* and *our*[20]. As I was interested in their usage as subjects of declarative clauses (interrogative clauses featuring first person pronouns simply do not occur in my data), I set a narrow "Window Span" of 0 to 3R, i.e. from zero to three words to the right of the node or search word, thus restricting the analysis to three subsequent words, in order to identify the first ten most frequently collocating words with *we* or *our* when they functioned as subjects in sentences. Collocates were ranked according to raw frequency, as the small numbers of word co-occurrenced frequencies in the data did not make statistical collocation analysis feasible. (I did run a t-score analysis as an experiment but found the scores to be generally low, and in any case the words and ranks obtained by the t-score analysis were the same for both corpora as those obtained by means of simple raw frequency analysis.)

Lastly, I studied and compared the most frequently used phraseological patterns of the two subject words. As both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora were small corpora are very small in terms of word tokens (see Table 3.3 in Chapter 3), they are not amenable to some popular approaches to phraseological analysis, notably lexical bundle analysis (e.g. Cortes, 2004; Biber and Barbieri, 2007), which looks for exact repetitions of multi-word strings and thus requires much larger corpora than mine to yield sufficient results for the purposes of meaningful analysis. Therefore, in this study, I decided to adopt Gledhill's (2000a, 2000b) alternative approach to phraseological analysis to examine the patterns for these two subject words. Gledhill's approach involves identifying collocations of grammatical words (such as *we* and *our*), which of course occur very frequently even in very small corpora. Basing searches on grammatical words is not just a matter of quantitative convenience, however; as Gledhill points out, grammatical words are also interesting in their own right as they have a particularly significant role in the construction of idioms, sentence frames and collocations: "high frequency items… are embedded in set phrases which have rhetorical force" (Moon, 1992; quoted in Gledhill, 2000b, p.117). Therefore, though there is a widely-held belief that grammatical words are not as fruitful as lexical words as a starting point for phraseological research, Gledhill (2000a, 200b) was still able to identify a very large number of interesting and noteworthy lexico-grammatical characteristics by means of a phraseological description

[20] As for the situation of small numbers of *I*, especially in CJ sub-corpus, I did not include this subject word *I* for further analyses.

of a set of grammatical words found to be statistically associated with different moves in scientific research articles. On essentially the same basis, I was able to examine and identify some interesting phraseological patterns based on the two pronouns *we* and *our* in my corpora of abstract texts.

For this phase of the analysis, I used a combination of automatic and manual search techniques. Starting with the assumption that there might be some fixed phraseological sequences occurring sufficiently frequently to be detected by automatic analysis, I used the "Clusters/N-Grams" tool in AntConc to carry out an initial search for sequences featuring *we* and *our* in each sub-corpus. After a few initial explorations, I found the optimum approach was to ask the tool to search for clusters with a minimum word length of 3 and a maximum of 4 for the word *we*, and a minimum of 4 and maximum of 5 for *our*. **(**Incidentally, this supports Mason's (1999) argument that different words have different 'lexical gravities', i.e. different 'powers of collocational attraction' on either side, and may thus require different span widths when being subjected to any kind of collocational analysis.) I then augmented the results of this automatic search procedure by manually searching concordances of each pronoun for variant forms of these sequences. Finally, I consolidated all similar patterns together, classified them into different groups, and examined these patterns in terms of their move distributions and discourse functions.

## 6.3 Analysis

In this section, I will firstly discuss the three first person pronouns *we*, *our* and *I* in terms of their rank and their frequency of usage. I then go on to discuss *we* and *our* in more depth, focusing in particular on their collocates and the commonly used phraseological patterns in which they appear.

### 6.3.1 Rank and frequency comparison

Table 6.1 provides an overview of rank and frequency data for *I*, *our* and *we* in EJ and CJ sub-corpora.

Table 6.1 Rank and frequency data for *we*, *our* and *I* in EJ and CJ sub-corpora

| | EJ sub-corpus | | | CJ sub-corpus | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Word | Rank | Raw frequency | Frequency (per10,000 words) | Rank | Raw frequency | Frequency (per10,000 words) |
| We | 8 | 792 | 155 | 18 | 259 | 51 |
| Our | 29 | 194 | 38 | 64 | 109 | 21 |
| I | 69[21] | 93 | 18 | 957 | 7 | 1 |

Table 6.1 shows that *we* is the 8th most frequently occurring word in the EJ sub-corpus (N=792). This word is almost evenly distributed across 333 abstract texts among the 400 abstracts written by international Finance and Accounting writers. *I* was found to be the 69th most frequently used word in EJ, appearing 93 times altogether in 45 abstracts. Ranked as the 29th most frequently used word was the possessive pronoun *our*, with 194 occurrences in 151 abstracts[22]. In fact, in the 400 international Finance and Accounting research articles, 64 of them are single-authored and 336 are multi-authored. Thus, from the above-mentioned raw frequency and distribution observations, we can see that multiple-authored articles are more common than single-authored articles in international Finance and Accounting academic journals. However, for the greater use of the plural forms *we* and *our* in international Finance and Accounting RA abstracts, this may also indicate a tendency among English professional writers to use the pronoun *we* in a more general sense to state their research ideas, irrespective of the number of authors involved in the research.

Turning now to the data for the CJ sub-corpus, the most obvious point to note is that the rank order for the three pronouns is the same as it is for EJ, but the rank positions for each word are much lower than they are for their EJ counterparts. *We* appears in only 151 out of the 400 RA abstracts in the CJ sub-corpus, and with a total frequency of occurrence of 259, it occurs almost three times less frequently than it does in EJ (in both raw frequency and normalized frequency per 10,000 words). In other words, the vast majority (about 85%) of international writers choose to use *we* to represent their authorial selves in their abstracts and on average, *we* appears twice in each abstract text. In contrast, only 40% of Chinese writers ever use *we* in their abstract writing, and this pronoun only appears in the CJ sub-corpus at a

[22] Generally speaking, there are more instances of first person pronouns in Accounting abstracts than in Finance abstracts.

rate of 0.65 occurrences per abstract text. In both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora, it seems that Accounting writers like to use this pronoun more frequently than Finance writers do. This may be partly due to the fact that Accounting writers tend to write longer English abstracts, although it may also be that Accounting writers are more willing to use first person pronouns in their abstracts. However, irrespective of discipline, threefold or even fourfold frequency differences are observed between international writers and Chinese writers.

In relation to the word *our*, though there is a much less significant disparity in terms of overall frequency of use, this word's distribution is nevertheless similar to that of *we*. Whereas *our* was found in 151 abstracts in the EJ sub-corpus, it only occurs in 80 abstracts in CJ. Finally, if the CJ corpus is a representative sample of English abstracts in Chinese Finance and Accounting journals, then the first person pronoun *I* seems to be used very rarely by Chinese abstract writers. There are only 7 instances of *I* in just four abstracts, resulting in a very low word frequency rank position of 957th. However, compared with international Finance and Accounting academics, there are more research articles with only one author. In the Chinese 400 research articles, there are 98 RA abstracts are single-authored and 302 are multi-authored. It is noteworthy here yet, Chinese academic writers are reluctant to use the singular first person pronoun *I*, even with more single authored research articles.

In summary, then, from the perspectives of word frequency and ranking, I am able to deduce that present-day Chinese academic writers in the fields of Finance and Accounting are – as hypothesized earlier in this chapter – very reluctant to use first person pronouns, such as *I*, *we* and *our*, to represent themselves in their abstract texts, in comparison to their international peers. This is despite the fact that some (perhaps even a substantial number) of these researchers have come to the knowledge that it is perfectly permissible to use these pronouns and to represent their own identities explicitly when writing for international academic audiences.

This result is in line with previous findings in comparative studies of research articles in general (e.g. Molino, 2010), and of the genre of the abstract in particular (e.g. Martin-Martin, 2003; Yakhontova, 2006; Van Bonn and Swales, 2007; Zhang, 2008; Friginal and Mustafa 2017; Peng and Zhang 2017). Previous studies have also offered various reasons for this apparent dispreference. These include the desire to maintain objectivity in scientific writing (Cao and Xiao, 2013a, 2013b), an adherence to outdated academic writing guidelines (Zhang, 2008; Peng and Zhang, 2017), a culturally-motivated aversion to self promotion in

academic writing (Hyland, 2002), and/or the local preferences of particular academic disciplinary communities and/or of the specific genres in which academic writers are composing (cf. Luzon, 2009). A more detailed discussion of the possible reasons for this and other discrepancies relating to the use of first person pronouns among international and Chinese academics will be provided later in this chapter, after we have looked in more detail at the collocates and phraseological patterns associated with these words.

### 6.3.2 Collocates and phraseological patterns

Important as it is for us to examine and compare the ranking and frequency of the usage of the three pronouns studied in this chapter, it is even more important for us to explore collocates, frequently used phraseological patterns and their rhetorical functions, in order to find out where and how "writers choose to make themselves visible in their texts through self-reference" (Hyland, 2002, p.1098). In other words, we need more information than mere frequency data if I am to provide EAP teachers with empirical observations that can be translated into practical and effective teaching points which will help Chinese academics to improve their writing competency so that it matches the level shown by their international counterparts.

The chapter has already shown that the singular pronoun *I* is used a lot less than the plural pronoun *we* (in the CJ sub-corpus, there are only 7 instances of *I*) among Chinese academics. Given that *we* and *I* are used as subjects and share similar patterns of usage, and given that 7 instances simply do not provide enough empirical data to support a phraseological investigation, I will from here onwards focus exclusively on *we* and *our*, and exclude *I* from further analysis. I will discuss the usage of *we* in the first sub-section below, and then continue with an analysis of *our* in the second sub-section.

#### 6.3.2.1 Collocates and phraseological patterns with *we*

The top ten raw frequency 0-3R collocates of the plural first person pronoun *we* are given in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2 Top ten collocates for *we* in EJ and CJ sub-corpora

| Rank *We* | EJ sub-corpus | | CJ sub-corpus | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw frequency | Collocate | Raw frequency | Collocate |
| 1 | 362 | that | 103 | that |
| 2 | 316 | find | 96 | the |
| 3 | 166 | the | 90 | find |
| 4 | 75 | examine | 19 | also |
| 5 | 73 | show | 16 | a |
| 6 | 69 | a | 15 | use |
| 7 | 57 | also | 14 | found |
| 8 | 52 | evidence | 11 | investigate |
| 9 | 45 | whether | 8 | test |
| 10 | 28 | provide | 8 | examine |

Although these data are, strictly speaking, nothing more than single word co-occurrence observations, they are also very informative about the typical colligational – and thus phraseological – behaviour of *we* in EJ and CJ sub-corpora. In both the two disciplines of Finance and Accounting, international and Chinese academic writers share the first three collocates as *that*, *find* and *the*. Specifically, in EJ sub-corpus, the presence of the words *that* and *whether* indicates *we* is frequently followed by a finite subordinate clause in Finance and Accounting abstracts written by by international writers (i.e. ***we [VERB] that …*** and ***we [VERB] whether …***). The presence of the determiners *the* and *a* indicate that direct objects also frequently follow *we* in EJ. The verbs that most frequently follow *we* are *find*, *show*, *examine* and *provide* (in Finance and Accounting alike), all of which are in the present tense. Interestingly, *evidence* is the only noun in the top ten collocations. Later in this section, I will examine and discuss this specific collocate in more detail.

Turning now to the top ten collocates of *we* in the CJ sub-corpus, the most immediately striking observation is that the frequencies for all collocates are much lower than is the case for the EJ data. However, this is only to be expected, given my previous observation that *we* is itself much less frequent in CJ than it is in EJ. On looking at the data in

more detail, I note first of all the prevalent co-occurrence of *that*, once again indicating that *we* is most commonly followed by a finite subordinate clause. However, the word *whether*, which in EJ appears 45 times to the right of *we*, does not even figure in the top 10 for CJ (i.e. it co-occurs less than 8 times in the Chinese writer data). This suggests that Chinese writers may be more limited than their international peers in their selection of finite subordinate clause usage types featuring the pronoun *we*. That is, while Chinese abstract writers in Finance and Accounting journals do know and use the pattern ***we [VERB] that …*** , they hardly ever use the pattern ***we [VERB] whether ….***

From a comparison of verb collocates, it would seem that Chinese writers make a wider range of choices than do their international peers, at least at the top end of the frequency range for each group as shown here. While the present tense is once again used in nearly all cases, it is interesting to note that the verb *to find* used in the past tense form *found* (in Finance and Accounting alike). In the following sections, I will examine and discuss its specific collocation with the plural pronoun *we* and explore further to ascertain if there are any other past tense verbs used in similar patterns.

Next, I move on to examine the phraseological patterns of the plural pronoun *we*. The five most commonly used phraseological patterns for *we* in the EJ sub-corpus are presented in Table 6.3. (All of the top five most commonly used phraseological patterns in both EJ and CJ were subjected to a log-likelihood test and found to be statistically significant at $p<0.0001$.)

Table 6.3 Five most common phraseological patterns for *we* in EJ sub-corpus

| | |
|---|---|
| *we* | we (also/do not/further/generally) find that |
| | we (also/then) examine whether/the/how |
| | we (also/further/then) show that |
| | we study/investigate/analyze/test/propose |
| | we find/provide evidence that/of/for/consistent with |

From Table 6.3, I note that the first and the third most common patterns for the usage of *we* are ***we + (also/do not/further/generally) find + that*** and ***we + (also/further/then) + show + that***. These two patterns appear 291 times in total. These two phraseological patterns appear principally in 'result' move in EJ abstract texts, and are both used to state the writers'

empirical results, as shown in Examples 6.1 and 6.2. Accounting writers seem to have a particular strong preference for the pattern ***we + find + that***, while Finance writers use both of the two previously stated patterns. (Consequently, the pattern ***we + show + that*** occurs more in the Finance EJ sub-corpus.) These two patterns reflect the brevity of abstract writing (Swales and Feak, 2009): professional writers use the first person pronoun to represent their stance, and the following finite subordinate clause states their research findings in a compact and direct way.

```
... we find that changes in efficiency are positively
associated with changes in current and future profitability.
```
16 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.1

```
... we show that these firm characteristics are correlated
with the ratio of growth opportunities to firm value, ...
```
18 (2013)/Review of Financial Studies/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.2

In the 'results' move, I found the pattern ***we find/provide*** and the noun *evidence* to be prevalent (in Finance and Accounting alike). (There are a few instances in the 'purpose' move also.) This pattern has two main variants: ***we + find/provide + (little/some/substantial/strong) evidence + that*** and ***we + find/provide + evidence of/for/consistent with/on***. These are shown in Examples 6.3a-c.

```
... we find some evidence that income-increasing tax accrual
decisions are related to characteristics generally
associated with weak corporate governance.
```
6 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.3a

```
We find evidence consistent with each of the model's five
central predictions:
```
11 (2014)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.3b

```
We provide evidence that hedge fund assets under management,
short interest and aggregate share turnover have led to the
decline in anomaly-based trading strategy profits in recent
years.
```
10 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.3c

Drawing on the first person pronoun discourse function classification schemes proposed by Kuo (1999) and Hyland (2002), the above mentioned phraseological patterns found in my EJ sub-corpus can be classified as relatively typical examples of "stating/showing results or findings" in academic discourse (Kuo, 1999, p.130; Hyland, 2002, p.1099). According to Hyland (2002, p.1104), "[p]ledging your personal conviction in your results with a first person commitment is a risky strategy", but apparently, writers who publish their research articles in the most prestigious English language academic journals have such confidence in their ideas and control of their arguments, and hence "they are best able to explicitly foreground their distinctive contribution and commitment" (Hyland, 2002, p.1103). An important part of this, I would argue, involves using self-reference statements such as ***we find/show that…, we find/provide evidence that***…

Returning to Table 6.3 above, I note that there are two other phraseological patterns featuring *we* that are frequently used by international writers: ***we (also/then) examine whether/the/how*** and ***we study/investigate/analyze/test/propose***. These are the most frequently used patterns in the 'purpose' move in EJ abstracts (and among them, the former pattern is the most frequent, occurring about 59 times). These patterns have the discourse function of "stating a goal or purpose" (Kuo, 1999, p.130; Hyland, 2002, p.1099). In both of these patterns, international academics are quite flexible in their verb selection, so long as these verbs can briefly and positively express their research intentions. I also note that international Finance and Accounting writers use the signal words *whether* and/or *how* as well as *that* with verbs such as *examine* and/or *investigate* in subordinate clauses. This frequent usage is seen mostly in the 'purpose' move. Examples are given in 6.4 – 6.6 below.

**We examine whether** corporate social responsibility (CSR) creates value for acquiring firms' shareholders.
8 (2013)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.4

**We study** optimal compensation contracts that ...
15 (2014)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.5

**We investigate the** association of intraorganizational trust (i.e., employees' trust in management) with three aspects of financial reporting: ...
18 (2014)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.6

Let us now compare and contrast these phraseological observations with those obtained from the CJ sub-corpus. Similar to international academics, Chinese Accounting and Finance academics use *we* most frequently in 'result' and 'purpose' moves (as 140 and 65 times). However, there are significant differences in the phraseological patterns which Chinese writers use this pronoun, as we will now see[23].

Table 6.4 shows the most commonly occurring patterns featuring *we* in the CJ sub-corpus.

Table 6.4 Five most common phaseological patterns for *we* in CJ sub-corpus

| | |
|---|---|
| *we* | we (also/can't/further) find/found that |
| | we (also/empirically) investigate/examine the/whether/how |
| | we use/used |
| | we (also/only) find/found a/the/out/evidence |
| | we (also) study (studied)/explore/test/analyze (have analyzed) the/whether |

The first and the fourth phraseological patterns in Table 6.4 (***we (also/can't/further) find/found that*** and ***we (also/only) find/found a/the/out/evidence***) are the most commonly used patterns featuring *we* in Chinese writers' 'result' moves. This pattern is illustrated at Example 6.7 below.

**We find that** there is a negative relationship between the monetary multiplier and the size of shadow banking.
7 (2014)/China Finance Review/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.7

However, in comparison with the EJ patterns shown in Table 6.3, I note that there is one missing pattern from the EJ sub-corpus. This pattern is ***we (also/further/then) show that***, which is the second most common pattern adopted by international writers in the 'result' moves. In the entire CJ sub-corpus, there are only two instances of this pattern. These are ***we show that...*** and ***we innovatively showed the...***.

On closer investigation, however, it turns out that Chinese writers do use this phraseological pattern, but with different collocates -- or in other words, with other subjects

[23] Similar to the disciplinary comparison in EJ sub-corpus, in CJ sub-corpus, the major differences of phraseological patterns in Finance and Accounting lie in the frequency and ranking.

instead of *we*. In the 'result' moves, Chinese academics prefer not to express their own agency or identity, instead using the noun *result(s)* as the subject of the clause: "***result(s) show(s/ed) that...***". There are 97 such samples in the CJ sub-corpus, occurring with a higher frequency than the pattern ***we find that*** in the CJ sub-corpus). This contrasts very strongly with international Finance and Accounting researchers; when international writers do opt to use *result(s)* instead of *we* as the subject of their result-reporting clause, they are more likely to co-select the verb SUGGEST than SHOW, i.e. ***results suggest that…*** (44 instances in the EJ sub-corpus)[24], rather than the CJ-preferred ***result(s) show(s/ed) that...***.

It would therefore seem that Chinese writers mix two common and popular phraseological patterns in international academic abstract writing. This may be attributed to inappropriate or perhaps even incorrect EAP writing instruction and training. Alternatively, this above phraseological preferences could be due to first language influence; in Chinese, the two words 表明(*Biǎomíng*) and/or 显示 (*Xiǎnshì*) both share the meaning of *show* and usually collocate with the word 结果(*Jiéguǒ*), meaning *result*). Some Chinese writers may directly translate their abstracts from Chinese into English, and hence would choose the corresponding word *show* rather than some perhaps more internationally commonplace collocates.

Meanwhile, from another perspective, I note that Chinese writers are reluctant to use the first person possessive pronoun *our*, even with such an evaluatively neutral collocate as "result(s)". Again, a contrast with EJ is instructive here; 28 instances of ***our results suggest that…*** in the EJ sub-corpus, but only 8 instances of this phraseological sequence in the CJ sub-corpus.

**The empirical results show that** tangible information and intangible information both significantly affect the four forecasting items, ...

9 (2013)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.8

**Our results suggest that** insiders of foreign firms believe that the regulation makes the extraction of value from minority investors more difficult and costly for them.

12 (2014)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.9

[24] Most instances of this phraseological pattern appear in the 'conclusion/recommendation' move in the EJ sub-corpus.

Let us now turn to consider the fourth commonly used pattern among Chinese writers listed in Table 6.4 above, ***we (also/only) find/found a/the/out/evidence***. This pattern tends to feature nouns or noun phrases as direct objects, as illustrated in Example 6.10.

| |
|---|
| **We find a** U-shape relationship between audit tenure and audit quality… |
| 3 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 6.10

Once again, the data indicate that Chinese writers seem to have fewer options at their disposal in relation to this phraseological sequence than their international counterparts do. Two commonly used phraseological patterns in 'result' moves in the EJ sub-corpus, namely, ***we find/provide evidence that*** and ***we find/provide evidence of/for/consistent with/on***, are not found at all in the CJ sub-corpus, and there are only four instances of the pattern ***we find/provide evidence of***. In summary, it is reasonable to conclude that Chinese writers are relatively inflexible in their verb/pattern usage when presenting their research results, especially so when it entails using the first person pronoun as the sentence subject.

In relation to the 'purpose' move, it would seem that Chinese writers share similar writing conventions with international writers. Both prefer to use the phraseological patterns ***we investigate*** and ***we examine***, and both are both quite flexible in their selection of verbs (in addition to the words *investigate* and *examin*e, Chinese writers also used verbs such as *test*, *study* and *analyze*). Luzon (2009) showed that expert writers used highly conventionalized patterns based on ***we + verbs*** to state their research purposes, and that the most frequently chosen verbs in this pattern are *study*, *analyse*, *propose* and *identify*. It would seem that on this occasion, Chinese writers follow closely internationally accepted phraseological patterns in stating their purposes. However, international writers have a statistically significant preference for the pattern ***we examine whether/the/how***[25]. They only used the verb *investigate* as a supplement (following an initial verb selection such as *study*, *analyze*, etc.). In comparison, Chinese writers seem to treat ***we investigate*** and ***we examine*** as interchangeable as 'purpose' move statements, and even use ***we investigate*** more frequently than ***we examine*** in the CJ corpus. While this may not actually seem incorrect to an international or native speaker reader, or even consciously strike them as 'odd' or 'unidiomatic', my analysis does show that such lexical co-selections are strongly divergent

[25] Statistic shows that log likelihood of this pattern $p<0.0001$.

from the international benchmark, and may thus contribute – even if in a small and imperceptible way – to an overall impression on the part of an international or native speaker reader that Chinese abstracts are written in an unusual or even 'non-nativelike' way.

Another difference lies in the grammatical objects typically following these verbs. International writers either select ***the + noun/noun phrase*** or ***whether/how + subordinate clause***, depending on the level of detail they wish to present in their statements relating to their research purposes, as shown in Examples 6.4 and 6.6above. Chinese writers, in contrast, use ***the + noun/noun phrase*** following those verbs principally (as the Examples 6.11a and 6.11b). And infrequently, they also tend to use subordinate clauses as objects[26].

And then **we investigate** the value premium in these three emerging markets, ...
1 (2013)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.11a

**we examine** the effect of a firm's political connections on the firm's future stock price crash risk.
12 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.11b

In addition to phraseological patterns used in the 'result' and 'purpose' moves, Chinese writers also tend to use the phraseological pattern ***we use/used + noun/noun phrases*** in 'methodology' moves, as shown in Examples 6.12a and 6.12b.

... **we use** Logistic regression method to analyze the impact of the current bid...
8 (2014)/South China Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.12a

... **we used** two simultaneous equations models to analyze our data.
11 (2014)/Accounting Research/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.12b

Before moving on to the next section, there is another significant difference revealed by a phraseological analysis of *we*. In all of the five patterns identified in Table 6.4 earlier, Chinese writers tend to a greater variety of verb tenses than international writers do. In particular, I find a mixture of simple present, simple past and even present perfect forms distributed fairly evenly across sequences and also across moves. While international writers may also use

[26] About this point, I will have a detailed discussion about the use and comparison of subordinate clauses in EJ and CJ sub-corpora in Chapter Seven.

verbs in the present, past and present perfect tenses in abstract writing, they do not normally use verbs in either the past or the present perfect tense in opening statements (i.e. in purpose moves). Instead, they tend to use verbs in an assortment of tenses to describe events that happened in the past, such as a financial crisis happened in the past. This form of usage resonates with some findings from previous comparative studies of learners and expert writers (e.g. Luzon, 2009), which found that while expert writers keep to one kind of verb tense according to the specific genre/move they are writing in, learner writers tend to drift almost randomly between tenses.

The paper **analyzed** the data of a series of questionnaire surveys about Chinese household's asset allocation, and **compared** the results with international evidence.
6 (2013)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.13a

...following the unprecedented 2003 reduction in dividend tax rates, non-dividend-paying firms **outperformed** dividend-paying firms.
17 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.13b

6.3.2.2 Collocates and phraseological patterns with *our*

I now turn to an analysis of the most frequent collocates and phraseological patterns associated with the first person possessive pronoun *our*. A list of the top 10 collocates of *our* in EJ and CJ, ranked by their raw frequency in the two sub-corpora, is provided in Table 6.5 below.

Table 6.5 Top ten collocates for *our* in EJ and CJ sub-corpora

| Rank *Our* | EJ sub-corpus | | CJ sub-corpus | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw frequency | Collocate | Raw frequency | Collocate |
| 1 | 71 | results | 31 | results |
| 2 | 66 | that | 26 | that |
| 3 | 45 | suggest | 13 | research |
| 4 | 32 | findings | 11 | suggest |
| 5 | 20 | evidence | 10 | study |
| 6 | 18 | are | 10 | show |
| 7 | 10 | analysis | 10 | findings |
| 8 | 9 | study | 8 | empirical |
| 9 | 8 | suggests | 6 | provide |
| 10 | 8 | consistent | 6 | also |
| 10 | 9 | the | 8 | the |

As can be seen, international writers most frequently use the nouns *results*, *findings*, *evidence*, *study* and *analysis* immediately after *our*, and these noun phrases typically form the grammatical subjects of clauses and sentences. Following these noun phrases, the most commonly collocating verbs used by international writers are *suggest(s)* and *are*. Interestingly, the first and fourth ranked plural nouns *results* and *findings* are always collocated with the verb *suggest* in EJ, while the singular noun *evidence* is always collocated with *suggests*, forming the pattern ***our evidence suggests that***. International writers either complete such sequences with a finite subordinate clause initiated by the word *that*, or by using the word *the* followed by another noun phrase.

Turning now to the top ten collocates of *our* in the CJ sub-corpus, I note that the most frequently occurring nouns are *results*, *study*, *findings*, and *research*. All of these words tend to be premodified by the adjective *empirical*. Both international and Chinese writers use the word *suggest* to collocate with the *our* noun phrases; however, whereas international writers' usually choose the simple verb form *are*, Chinese writers tend to prefer to use a lexical verb such as *show* (the same as discussed above and shown in Example 6.8). In line

with my findings for the verb collocates for the subject pronoun *we*, the number of collocating verbs used by international writers is far higher than those used by Chinese writers (71 as opposed to 27).

There are no verbs in the past tense for the possessive pronoun *our* in the CJ sub-corpus. However, I will still devote some degree of attention to verb tense choices made by Chinese writers later in this section. As with international writers, the overall picture emerging from the collocates listed in Table 6.5 is that in Chinese Finance and Accounting abstracts, *our* tends to colligate with finite subordinate clauses (as shown by the signal word *that*) or with a noun phrase beginning with the definite article *the*.

Utilizing the same procedure as I did for the plural subject word *we*, I went on to examine the phraseological patterns in which the plural possessive pronoun *our* participates. Thereafter, I proceeded to conduct a comparative analysis of the data for *our* across the two sub-corpora. However, given that *our* is used less frequently than *we* in both the two sub-corpus, the numbers of collocations are fewer, especially in the CJ sub-corpus, in this section. In fact, in this section, only the first three most frequently used patterns are quoted here for the purpose of the comparison study. The three most common patterns in either corpus occur sufficiently frequently for me to be able to offer any meaningful analysis of them. In the EJ sub-corpus, the three most common usage patterns for the word *our* can be found in Table 6.6.

Table 6.6 Three most common phraseological patterns for *our* in EJ sub-corpus

| | |
|---|---|
| *our* | our result(s)/findings/evidence/analysis (thus) suggest(s) that |
| | our results/findings are |
| | our result(s)/evidence/analysis (also) indicate(s)/shows that |

As can be seen, the most commonly used pattern revealed by my phraseological analysis of *our* in the EJ sub-corpus features one of the nouns *result(s)/findings/evidence*, followed by *suggest*, then followed by a finite subordinate clause, as shown in Example 6.14. This phraseological pattern most frequently occurs in ‘conclusion/recommendation’ moves in the EJ sub-corpus, and thus may be said most frequently to have the discourse function of ‘summarizing’ (cf. Kuo, 1999; Hyland, 2002).

Overall, **our results suggest that** geographic location is an important dimension of board structure that influences directors' cost of gathering information.
11 (2014)/Journal of Financial and Quantitative Analysis/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.14

A closer look at the second frequently used phraseological patterns with *our* in the EJ sub-corpus as listed above finds that international writers tend to have their own set patterns. For example, ***our results are robust***, usually appears as the last sentence in 'result' moves and functions as an alternative form of verification of their research results. And the pattern ***our findings are consistent with*** performs primarily as a connection between 'purpose' and 'result' moves. The pattern ***our findings are + adjective*** is mostly used as an evaluation of research results. Examples 6.15a-c are illustrations of these variant phraseological patterns.

**Our results are robust to** using alternative measures of conservatism and near insolvency status,...
16 (2014)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.15a

**Our findings are consistent with** the hypothesis that,...
19 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.15b

**Our findings are striking.**
5 (2014)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 6.15c

There are only a few instances of the third phraseological pattern in the EJ sub-corpus, and all these instances occur in 'result' moves, and seem to function in the main as an alternative to the most widely used pattern, ***we find that***.

As we have seen, all three of the most commonly used phraseological patterns of *our* used by international Finance and Accounting writers begin with the noun *result(s)* immediately following the plural possessive *our*, yet they exhibit considerable flexibility in their subsequent elements. Secondly, the dominant discourse function of all these three phraseological patterns is "stating/showing results or findings" (Kuo, 1999; Hyland, 2002, p.1099), and principally appear in 'result' and 'conclusion' moves in the EJ sub-corpus.

Finally, I turn to the three most frequently occurring phraseological patterns associated with *our* in the CJ sub-corpus. These patterns are listed in Table 6.7 below.

Table 6.7 Three most common phraseological patterns for *our* in CJ sub-corpus

| | |
|---|---|
| *our* | our (empirical) results/study (also) show/suggest/indicate that |
| | our research extends/provides/will improve/suggests/enriches/has/deepens/indicates |
| | our (empirical) findings (also) provide/suggest |

While the first phraseological pattern listed here (***our (empirical) results/study (also) show/suggest/indicate that*)** is broadly similar to the first pattern listed for the EJ corpus in Table 6.6, a noticeable difference is that Chinese writers exhibit a preference for a wider range of verbs; whereas international writers consistently use *suggest that*, Chinese writers also select the verb *show* and *indicate*. As might be expected, this pattern appears in 'result' moves and has the primary discourse function of "showing results or findings" (Kuo, 1999, p.131), as shown in Examples 6.16a-b.

**Our empirical results show that** as non-family professional managers have divergent benefit target and ...
4 (2014)/Chinese Review of Financial Studies/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.16a

In addition, **our results suggest that** the changes of income tax rates have weakened the value relevance of deferred tax expenses.
11 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.16b

In the second commonly used phraseological pattern in the CJ sub-corpus, Chinese Finance and Accounting academics typically collocate the noun *research* with the possessive pronoun *our*, and then with various verbs and verb phrases, such as *extends*, *will improve*, *enriches*, etc. Most instances of this pattern occur in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves. An illustrative example is given in 6.17 below.

On the one hand, ... **our research deepens** the product market competitive hypothesis.... On the other hand, ... **our research enriches** the interpretation of ...
5 (2014)/Journal of Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 6.17

The last pattern appearing in the 'conclusion/recommendation' moves serves principally (except for two instances of our findings provide evidence that, appearing in 'result' moves),

as an evaluation of research results and thus as part of a final 'recommendation' move, as shown in Example 6.18. In this pattern, Chinese writers seem to be conflating two commonly used phraseological patterns utilised by international writers and discussed earlier; namely, ***we provide evidence that*** (primarily occurring in 'result' moves) and ***our evidence suggests that*** (primarily occurring in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves). As argued earlier, such divergences from international conventions may contribute to an overall impression of non-idiomaticity.

| |
|---|
| **Our findings provide** important implications for policy-makers in China.<br>1 (2014)/Journal of Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 6.18

Generally, both international and Chinese writers mainly use ***our + NOUN*** as the first element in a clause or sentence. This is why *our* is the first element in all of the phraseological patterns discussed in this chapter. Yet there are a few occasions when *our* is non-initial, and participates in other forms of sentence constituents. In such cases, English and Chinese writers once again have their own preferred patterns. The 'non-initial' pattern used most by international writers is ***consistent with our predictions/theory*** (see Example 6.19a). This pattern was not found at all in the CJ sub-corpus. Likewise, the most common pattern utilised by Chinese writers, ***preposition + our country*** (see Example 6.19b), was not found in the EJ sub-corpus.

| |
|---|
| **Consistent with our predictions** we establish two principal findings.<br>6 (2014)Contemporary Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 6.19a

| |
|---|
| Then it analyzes the causes of rural financial risk **in our country** at present stage.<br>9 (2014)Journal of Regional Financial Research/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 6.19b

The latter observation is easy to explain: the CJ data are taken from Chinese national journals, where a shared national culture and national terms of reference can be taken for granted in ways that would simply not be possible in international journals. Instead of mentioning the specific country name as "China" and/or "PRC", Chinese writers and readers have shared knowledge that "our country" indicates the "PRC". However, facing international readers,

Chinese writers are advised to write the specific country name instead. The former observation is more difficult to explain, however. It seems to indicate that Chinese Finance and Accounting researchers may be less concerned than their international counterparts with testing theories against empirical observations, but this conclusion is highly speculative and thus needs to be subjected to further investigation in a future study.

Finally, in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves, both international and Chinese writers use the pattern of ***our understanding of***, as one way to showcase research applications. An illustration of this usage is given in Example 6.20.

| |
|---|
| ...contributes to **our understanding of** social networks in emerging markets... |
| 6 (2014)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 6.20

## 6.4 Probable reasons for writing differences

Zhang (2008) has proposed two explanations for the phraseological differences that manifest themselves in abstracts written in English by Chinese academics and International academics. It is my view that these explanations could also be helpful in explaining why Chinese writers write as they do in my study.

Zhang's first explanation relates to the influence of traditional values, particularly those going under the general term of Confucianism. Chinese Confucianist culture advocates modesty, self-restraint and the avoidance of overemphasizing oneself (Zhao, 2011; Yan and Luo, 2015; see also Scollon, 1994). In the Confucianist culture, the core 'Doctrine of the Mean' proposed placid and balanced behaviour as an ideal form of social conduct (Xu and Liu, 2005; Wang, 2014). It emphasized social unity, which meant that individual persons should be devoted to their society, and subordinate to the collectivity (Cai, 1993). Chinese scholars have long behaved in compliance with such beliefs (Xu and Liu, 2005; Wang, 2014). In modern academic discourse, this manifests itself as a view that the research findings presented in a new book or journal article could not have been discovered or generated without the benefit of cooperation with one's disciplinary peers. "[T]he "I" [is] still not important and should be subject to the "we", and the individual to social groups and society" (Cai, 2013, p.9). Related to this, it is argued that, for Chinese writers, objective phrases such as *the research/the paper*

and/or the word *we* bring about a feeling of 'collectiveness', which in turn helps to boost the credibility of a new set of claims or research findings as it implies that there are other scholars who support or subscribe to the views put forward by the writer. While these hypotheses are difficult to prove directly, the analysis presented in this chapter and in this thesis more generally has provided empirical evidence that Chinese writers use self reference forms much less frequently do their international peers.

The other explanation put forward by Zhang (2012; for similar arguments see also Cao and Xiao 2013a, 2013b) for the Chinese writers' reluctance to use first person pronouns lies in the "rules for abstracts and abstracting" (GB6447-1986), which is the Chinese national guidelines for writing academic abstracts. In this set of rules, the emphasis is on the objectivity of the material presented in the abstract, and there are explicit requirements to use the third person wherever possible. Many Chinese academic writers, as well as those in the business of publishing Chinese academic journals, have been profoundly influenced by this standard. They therefore omit the first person pronouns consciously and deliberately, in order to achieve the neutrality and objectivity that they feel – and have been taught – is an absolute pre-requisite for academic abstract writing.

However, in recent years, some Chinese linguists have begun to realise the positive value of using the first person pronouns in academic abstract writing, as practiced in international academic discourse communities. These scholars have argued in particular that first person pronouns can make abstract texts more concise yet more convincing and persuasive (e.g. Teng and Tan, 2004; Zhang, 2008). Yet such opinion holders are few in number (and no research has ever referred to concrete usage of the first person pronouns in academic texts), and most Chinese linguists' views are still highly traditional and could be argued as being outdated. My study suggests that in the international Finance and Accounting academic communities, international writers are certainly more inclined to use first person pronouns such as *we* and *I* to express their views. In contrast, many Chinese linguists and academic writers still adhere to old abstract writing conventions, and seem unaware of, or resistant to, the writing conventions of contemporary international academic discourse communities.

On this point, it is useful to bring in some observations from my interview data. (These data will be explored in full in Chapter Eight.) Interviewee H's answers in relation to the use of first person pronouns in academic abstract writing are of particular interest, as they

provide another possible explanation. He told me that he had read many research articles (including abstracts) in English Accounting academic journals and he believed that international Accounting researchers, like Chinese writers, prefer to use impersonal constructions instead of first person pronouns as sentence subjects in abstracts. When I informed him that it was not true and showed him my data, he was genuinely surprised. I would venture to suggest that at least some Chinese researchers may simply not notice instances of first person usage in international journals because, as non-native users of English, they are concentrating their energies on trying to understand the propositional content of abstracts, rather than analyzing the linguistic forms in which this content is expressed. I therefore believe it is the EAP teachers' responsibility to guide those professionals to notice, learn and master the proper form of first person pronoun usage and writing conventions adopted by international academic writers. One way in which they could do this is by presenting authentic samples obtained through corpus analyses such as that carried out in this thesis.

The last probable explanation to be considered here (which I have already briefly touched on in Chapter 5) is that EAP writing training is simply inadequate, and that there is thus an urgent need to acquaint Chinese academics with the writing conventions now practiced and accepted by international academic communities. No genre is invariable, and "directness and conciseness have become the expected style that is typical of the academic circle in recent decades" (Cao and Xiao, 2013a, p.225). There therefore needs to be proactive and explicit encouragement for Chinese academics to adopt current first person pronoun usage patterns and to make correspondingly less use of passive and impersonal constructions in academic writing. Regrettably, only a few Chinese linguists have thus far acknowledged any such stylistic writing shifts as potentially beneficial to the Chinese government's aim of becoming a global leader in academic research across the disciplines. Given this, EAP writing teachers in China seem to be facing a twofold task. Firstly, they need to undertake a process of investigation, summarise their findings and come to some form of consensus in formulating ways and means of updating writing styles among Chinese academic writers. They also need to create teaching materials and textbooks based on and including authentic sample texts from the prestigious international academic journals that Chinese researchers aspire to publish in.

## 6.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have carried out a detailed comparative analysis of first person pronoun usage in international and Chinese journal abstracts in the fields of Finance and Accounting. I began with a word frequency comparison for the three first person pronouns of *I*, *we* and *our*. This analysis revealed differences not only in the overall frequency figures for these pronouns across the two corpora, but also in their distribution across the five main moves of the abstract genre. I then identified and discussed the most frequent collocates and phraseological patterns associated with *we* and *our* (primarily as sentence subjects). Here again, I found usage differences when comparing the data for international and Chinese writers. These differences related to commonly used patterns, move distributions and even verb tense selection.

In the next chapter, I will examine another important lexico-grammatical feature of the abstract genre: the use of finite subordinate clauses, focusing once again on both quantitative and qualitative usage differences as observed in my two corpora representing abstracts written byinternational and Chinese academics. I will compare different types of finite subordinate clauses found in 100 abstract texts from both the EJ and CJ sub-corpus. I will then study and discuss the evaluative *that* complement clause in further detail.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: FINITE SUBORDINATE CLAUSES IN INTERNATIONAL AND CHINESE ABSTRACTS

In Chapter Five it was established that finite subordinate clauses are a characteristic and thus important lexico-grammatical feature of the RA abstract genre. In this chapter, I will discuss and compare the finite subordinate clauses used by international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers in more detail. After a brief preliminary review of relevant theoretical and empirical research literature, I will present and compare the various types of finite subordinate clauses (namely, nominal clauses, relative clauses and adverbial clauses) used in English abstracts, analysing 100 randomly selected abstracts from the EJ and CJ sub-corpus respectively. I will then narrow the focus of the analysis by examining in more detail evaluative *that* complement clauses, as featured particularly in Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) classification model. Finally, I will briefly discuss some possible reasons for the differences that will come to light in the course of this chapter.

## 7.1 Brief discussion of previous studies on finite subordinate clause

As one structural unit (Townsend, 1997) of language, there are various types of clauses in English. As is well known, the basic classification division is encompassed between the main/independent clauses and dependent/subordinate clauses. Within the broad classification of the subordinate clauses, a further distinction is canonically made between there are further classification known as finite and nonfinite clauses (Biber et al., 2000; Collins and Hollo, 2017). There are similar clause types describing both the finite and nonfinite clause constructions (Vercellotti and Packer, 2016). Generally, grammarians distinguish there are three clause types, namely, nominal (complement) clauses, relative clauses and adverbial clauses. As Biber et al. (2000, p. 193) point out, "Nominal clauses are used as subject, subject predicative, or direct object in the main clause."

We **find that** top executive moves from an origin firm to destination firm…
6 (2014)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.1 Example of nominal clause

Relative clauses will be understood in this study as "further specify[ing], identify[ing], or giv[ing] more information about the referenced noun phrase" (Vercellotti and Packer, 2016, p.180).

We analyze a model **in which** traders have different trading opportunities and learn information from prices.
7 (2014)/Review of Financial Studies/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.2 Example of relative clause

Adverbial clauses[27], as Biber et al. (1999, p.194) point out, "are used as adverbials in the main clause", and usually provide information about time, place, condition, and other circumstantial elements (Biber et al., 1999; Vercellotti and Packer, 2016; Collins and Hollo, 2017).

The negative association…is more pronounced **when** executives' personal interests are more aligned with the interests of the firm.
5 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.3 Example of adverbial clause

Amongst the three major types of finite subordinate clause, previous studies of relative clauses primarily focus on processing issues based on three hypotheses. The first is the perceptual difficulty hypothesis (PDH) (Kuno, 1974), discussed in such studies as in Kidd and Bavin (2002) and Mellow (2006). The second is the noun phrase accessibility hierarchy hypothesis (NPAH) (Keenan and Comrie, 1977; Comrie and Keenan, 1979), discussed in such studies as Eckman et al., (1988), Doughty (1991) and Li (2006). The third is the subject object hierarchy hypothesis (SOHH) (Hamilton, 1994), discussed in such studies as in Izumi (2003). In addition to the three hypotheses studies in second language acquisition, there are also other studies focusing on extraposition (e.g. Rochemont and Cullicover, 1997; Kiss, 2005) and attachment preferences, usually from a cognitive linguistic perspective (e.g. Kamide and Mitchell, 1997; Carreiras and Clifton, 1999; Papadopoulou and Clahsen, 2003).

In studies of nominal clauses, linguists have primarily focused on the *that* complement clause subtype. There are numerous studies of verbs used before the *that*

[27] In my study, I classify comparative clause into adverbial clause.

complementizer (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985; Biber et al., 1999; Proost and Glatz, 2000), of clause positioning, (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985; Kaltenbock, 2004) and of the role of the complementizer word *that* (e.g. Dixon, 1991; Kaltenbock, 2006). In addition to these previous studies, there has been considerable interest in *that*-complement clause extraposition (e.g. Quirk et al., 1985). Extraposition is "the syntactic process which in English moves a syntactic unit, characteristically a subordinate nominal clause, to the right of the predicate in the superordinate clause and replaces it with the dummy pronoun *it*" (Collins, 1994, p.8). Extraposed clauses have been identified as particularly important in academic writing (Hyland and Tse, 2005a, 2005b), as this structure 1) allows for the normal end-weighting pattern, simultaneously leading readers to focus on the clause bearing information (Rodman, 1991); and 2) allows writers to present their attitudinal/evaluative meaning before the *that* clause (Rodman, 1991; Herriman, 2000; Hewings and Hewings, 2002).

In comparison with above two finite subordinate clauses types, studies of adverbial clauses have been more sporadic. Such work as has been done has focused mainly on temporal adverbial clauses (e.g. Diessel, 2008; Haegeman, 2009) and adverbial clauses of condition (e.g. Ferguson, 2001; Warchal, 2010).

Although there are many previous studies of finite subordinate clauses in academic writing in general, there has as yet been comparatively little research on subordinate clauses in the genre of the RA abstract. I would venture that this lack of research may be partly due to a widespread perception that the "[abstract] avoids subordinate clauses, [and] uses phrases instead of clauses, words instead of phrases" (Graetz, 1985; p.125; quoted in Swales, 1990, p.179). This situation is now starting to change, however, largely as a result of Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) ground-breaking investigation of the evaluative *that* complement clause (constructions) in abstract writing.

Hyland and Tse (2005a) examined and compared *that* complement clauses in 240 abstracts across six disciplines, and found that even in "this brief, and supposedly neutral factual summary" genre (ibid, p.48), there are 1.2 such type of finite subordinate clauses in every abstract text; and abstracts from Business Studies and Computer Science have even more of such clauses than do the Social Science disciplines. Following on from this study, Hyland and Tse (2005b) then studied and compared evaluative *that* complement clauses in abstracts from academic journals and students' dissertations. They found that both expert and student writers used the evaluative *that* complement clauses in their abstract writing, though

comparatively speaking, academic journal writers were (as might be expected) more skilled in using such clauses in their abstract wring than the student writers. Not only did expert writers use more complement clauses, but they were also more inclined to use these forms to introduce their personal voice into their texts even when expressing epistemic statements. Later in this chapter I will compare international and Chinese abstract texts in much the same way, to see how well Chinese writers correspond to international conventions and practices when using evaluative *that* complement clause (constructions) in their abstracts.

## 7.2 Methodology

For this analysis, I randomly chose 100 English abstracts from each sub-corpus, and then examined each text in detail, marking out instances of usage of subordinate clauses, their frequency and functional characteristics. In order to achieve a balanced dataset, I randomly chose 5 texts per journal from my EJ sub-corpus, 8-9 texts per journal from the Accounting CJ sub-corpus and 4-5 texts per journal from the Finance CJ sub-corpus. The year of publication was not taken into consideration. I then carried out the examination manually. I preferred the manual approach as I wanted to obtain a complete overview by examining every instance of use of subordinate clauses, clause misuse, and clause connection. Nevertheless, my manually derived findings were cross-checked and verified using computational methods. For a detailed study and investigation of the finite subordinate clauses, I then used AntConc to explore my POS-tagged data, in both the complete abstract texts and the separate files texts.

On comparing the three major types of finite subordinate clauses, I found that *that* complement clauses were the most frequently used clause type in both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. I also noticed that these clauses often seemed to be used to make evaluative meanings. This observation is in line with Hyland and Tse (2005a, p.41) who noted not only that, "*that*-complement clauses are always involved in evaluative patterns", but also that they are "one of the least noticed …interpersonal feature[s]" (ibid, p.40) in academic writing. I, therefore decided to specifically examine and compare how international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics employ clause constructions to express evaluative meanings in the brief and concise form of the RA abstract genre. To this end, I employed Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) model to examine and compare evaluative *that* constructions in the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. It is important to note that Hyland and Tse's conception of evaluative *that*

constructions includes not only the *that* complement clause in itself, but also the main (super-ordinate) clause adjacent to it, as their analysis also takes into account such aspects as the evaluative source (usually expressed by the grammatical subject of the main clause) and the meanings expressed by the predicates before the *that* complement clause element itself. In most cases, this clause pattern is in the form of **main clause [evaluation]+*that* complement clause [evaluated entity]**, with the main clause containing "the source and the stance" (ibid, p.52), and the evaluated entity presented in the *that* complement clause (Hyland and Tse, 2005a). Hyland and Tse (2005a, 2005b) argue that it is necessary to look at this construction as a whole in order to fully understand how academic abstract writers present evaluative meanings in their abstracts. Therefore, in my analysis, I will also treat the *that* construction as one whole unit, and not restrict the analysis to just the subordinate element in isolation.

Another decision needing to be made is whether I should include omission of *that* to my analysed data. According to Hyland and Tse (2005a, p.45) "retention of *that* is overwhelmingly the norm in academic writing" not only because it is considered more appropriately formal, but also because it acts as an explicit division indicating the boundary between the main clause and the complement clause (Winter, 1982). In line with Hyland and Tse's (2005a) findings, my manual scan of 100 sample abstract texts revealed that there are only a few cases where *that* was omitted in both the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. As a result, I too decided to focus just on clauses featuring *that* retention and examined those concordance lines with AntConc. I also followed Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) approach when identifying and selecting for analysis instances the *that* construction (main clause+complement clause). Specifically, I used the search query IN/that (*that* functioning as complementizer) in the two sub-corpora, and examined every concordance line yielded by this search. I retained all the instances of *that* complement clause based on Hyland and Tse's (ibid) three criteria: "the subject of the projecting/[main] clause was either *it* or a participant" (ibid, p.45), "the lexical verb, noun, or adjective presented the type of projecting" (ibid, p.45) and "the *that*-clause presented the projected idea or speech" (ibid, p.45). In case there were instances missing from those concordance lines retrieved by the IN/that (due to tagging errors), I also searched for other *that* clause instances, using queries such as *that*_DT and *that*_WDT. After compiling all instances from these concordance samples, I studied and compared the resulting set of evaluative *that* constructions from four different functional perspectives suggested by Hyland and Tse (2005a, p.47): "Evaluated Entity, Evaluative Stance, Evaluative Source and

Expression" (presented in Table 7.1), comparing my own results with Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) findings.

Table 7.1 Classification model for evaluative *that* construction
(Source: Hyland and Tse, 2005a:47)

| Aspect | Subcategories |
|---|---|
| Evaluated entity | a. interpretation of authors' claim<br>b. interpretation of previous studies<br>c. interpretation of author's goals<br>d. interpretation of methods, models, theories |
| Evaluative stance | a. attitudinal i. affect ii. Obligation<br>b. epistemic |
| Evaluative source | a. human<br>b. abstract entity<br>c. concealed |
| Expression | a. non-verbal i. noun predicate<br>ii. adjectival predicate<br>b. verbal predicate i. research acts<br>ii. discourse acts<br>iii. cognitive acts |

### 7.3 Comparison of different types of finite subordinate clauses

Echoing the findings of the key word classes analysis reported in Chapter Five, my data show that Chinese academic writers in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting are less adept at utilising finite subordinate clauses than are their international peers. This is borne out both by the results obtained from a clause frequency comparison analysis, and when a comparison of the complexity levels of clause usage is undertaken. As can be seen in Figure 7.1, here are big differences between international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics in their usage of subordinate clauses in their respective abstract texts. Chinese writers seem actively to avoid writing finite clauses in their English abstracts, and even when they do use them, the range of clause types that they employ is very limited in comparison to International usage

conventions.

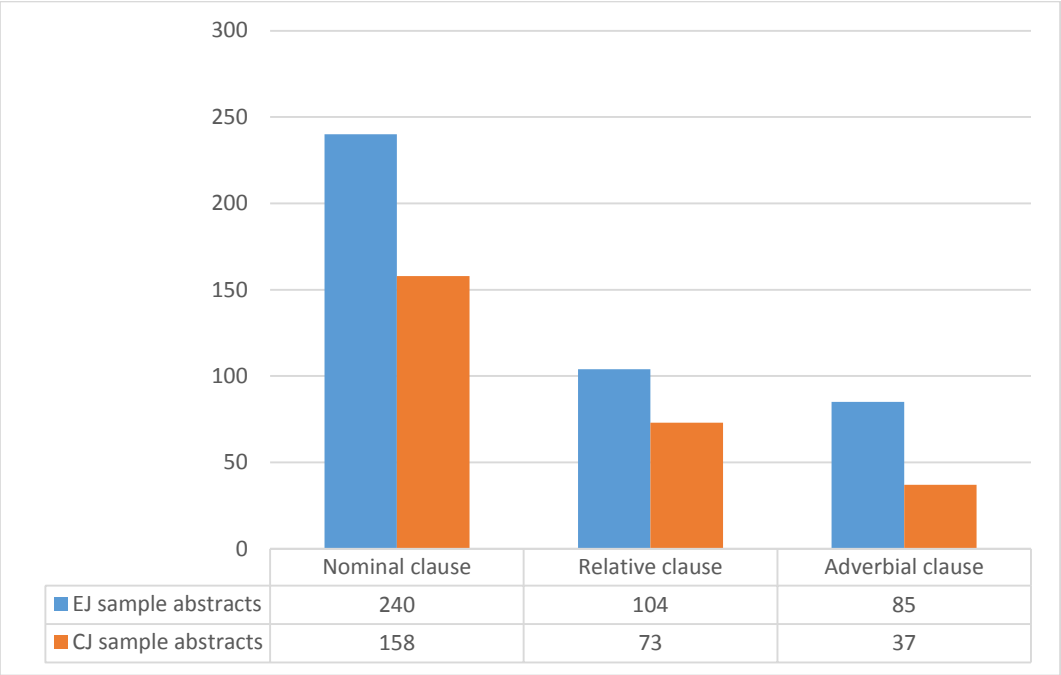



Figure 7.1 Frequency comparison of finite subordinate clauses in 100 sample abstracts from EJ and CJ sub-corpora

When writing compound/complex sentences, instead of using finite subordinate clauses, Chinese writers prefer to use correlations (in compound sentences) and/or nonfinite clauses (in complex sentences), as illustrated in Example 7.1.

China should maintain and develop the G20 mechanism constructively, **clarifying** its position and core interests, **participating** actively **and making** more contributions, **establishing** the inside-out concept, **and balancing** the relations between internal and external, benefits and loss, bilateral and multilateral, etc.

6 (2013)/China Finance Review/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.1

Looking at the finite subordinate clause frequencies in the subset of 100 abstracts drawn from EJ and CJ separately, I note that in the 100 texts from the EJ sub-corpus there are 429 finite subordinate clauses. On average, this amounts to 4.29 sub clauses per abstract. In the CJ subset of 100 texts, there are only 268 finite subordinate clauses in total, at an average of 2.68 clauses per abstract. In other words, international Finance and Accounting academics use finite subordinate clauses nearly twice as frequently as Chinese writers do in their abstracts. In

the EJ sample, the maximum number of finite clauses in one abstract is as high as 17 and the minimum number is 1. In the CJ subset, the maximum number of finite clauses in one abstract is 12 and the minimum number is 0. There are 14 abstracts with no finite clauses at all and another 16 abstracts with only one clause. From these observations I am able to conclude not only that Chinese Finance and Accounting academics use fewer finite subordinate clauses than do their international peers, but also that some Chinese Finance and Accounting academics are either unwilling or unable to use finite subordinate clauses at all in the compact format of the RA abstract genre.

This contrast is not only reflected in the above finite clause frequency comparison, but also in the clause type usage trends observed for the two groups of Finance and Accounting abstracts. As Figure 7.1 shows, both international and Chinese writers tend to make frequent use of nominal clauses (and amongst them, object clauses most of all) in their English abstracts. In the EJ subset of 100 abstracts, there are 199 object clauses (accounting for 46% of all finite clauses). In the CJ sample of 100 abstracts, there are 143 object clauses (accounting for 53% of all finite clauses). Based on a direct comparison of object clause usage, the CJ subset presented fewer instances of usage in comparison to the EJ subset. However, at 46% and 53% respectively, the proportion of all finite clauses shows even greater usage on the part of Chinese writers than it does for international writers. I can therefore surmise that in Finance and Accounting and in relation to RA abstracts at least, the adoption of the object clause is a salient writing feature, regardless of whether the writers are Chinese or from a wider international pool of academics.

There are also interesting observations to report for other types of nominal clauses found in my analysis of the two 100-abstract samples, most of which indicate a lack of understanding or an inability on the part of Chinese writers to construct complicated subordinate clauses. Specifically, international Finance and Accounting writers make use of appositive clauses (35 samples, accounting for 8% of all finite clauses), predicative clauses and subject clauses. Whilst showing some degree of knowledge of these three types of nominal clauses, Chinese Finance and Accounting academics use them much more infrequently in comparison. To illustrate this in more detail, let us compare appositive clause usage across the two groups of writers.

In academic English, antecedents used in appositive clauses are usually abstract nouns, such as *idea*, *fact*, *evidence*, etc. Among all 35 samples of appositive clauses in the EJ

sub-corpus sample, *evidence* and/or *view* were most commonly used as antecedents, with the element following the appositive usually explaining what evidence the writers found or what views they hold in relation to this evidence. Using this construction, international Finance and Accounting academics are able to express and connect together complex ideas in a concise manner, thereby simultaneously achieving the two potentially conflicting requirements of the abstract genre: to be informative on the other hand, and to be brief on the other (see Example 7.2). Abstract nouns in the Chinese writers' sample, however, present a more random selection, including such nouns as as *scene* and *wisdom*, indicating that Chinese Finance and Accounting writers are unfamiliar with the conventional phraseology associated with the selection of antecedents and the usage of the appositive clause.

Prior research provides **evidence that** acquiring firms use earnouts to minimize agency costs associated with acquisitions.
2 (2014)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.2

Turning now to relative clauses, I note that the frequency difference between the two groups of writers is the smallest amongst all the three finite subordinate clause types. When investigating this clause type in detail, in this instance too, I am able to identify both similarities and differences in the way international and Chinese Finance and Accounting writers utilize relative clauses.

Both international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academics use many relative clauses as modifiers of the objects of main clauses, and, less frequently, as modifiers of subjects of main clauses. It would seem that both international and Chinese academics are confident in using relative clauses to modify and/or constrain antecedents wherever they occur (see Example 7.3a and 7.3b). This finding has also confirmed the view that PDH (the perceptual difficulty hypothesis of acquisition and construction of clauses) is not particularly applicable for high-level/expert writers.

The audit quality is higher for **those auditors who** took several times exams to get qualification and ...
16 (2013)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.3a

**Firms whose** stock are most underpriced have considerably lower investment and ...
14 (2013)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.3b

Both international and Chinese RA abstract writers use relative clause attachment in their abstract writing. However, it seems that international academics prefer using just one layered form of attachment in order to keep the pattern and the meaning expressed by it clear (as in Example 7.4a). A few Chinese writers tend to use multiple layers, which may confuse readers and sometimes perhaps the writers themselves (see Example 7.4b).

...**the introduction of regulations that** curtailed the informational advantage...
4 (2013)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.4a

...**regional differences of the efficiency of financial system which** affect county urbanization, ...
1 (2014)/Financial Theory and Practice/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.4b

The most significant difference, however, lies in the usage of the conjunctive word *which* in relative clauses. In the CJ 100-abstract sample, there are 45 instances of conjunctive *which* in relative clauses altogether. This is the first and only occasion where Chinese writers' finite clause usage surpasses that of international writers, as there are only 27 instances of *which* used as a conjunctive word in relative clauses in EJ 100-abstract sample. I also note that in relative clauses, Chinese Finance and Accounting writers prefer to use *which* as conjunctive word to *that*, though I assume that they fully understand that both words may be used in relative clauses. (This was confirmed by the questionnaire results and via the responses from my interview participants).

There are two other major differences in the usage of the specific conjunctive word *which*. Firstly, about half of the international Finance and Accounting writers use corresponding prepositions before *which*, such as *under*, *in*, *of*, etc. It would seem that the reason international writers use *which* instead of *that* as a conjunctive word is because it allows them to reduce the relative clause to a prepositional phrase, as in Example 7.4:

We identify conditions **under which** public information increases ...
7 (2014)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.4

Notice that here, again, this usage helps the writer to achieve the brevity desired in the abstract genre. And again, Chinese writers seem to be largely unaware of, or unable to use, this grammatical resource; there are only 5 samples of prepositions with the conjunctive word *which* co-occurring in sample texts amongst Chinese writers. This point is corroborated by the less frequent use of conjunctive adverbs (such as *when*, *where*, etc.) in relative clauses by Chinese Finance and Accounting writers.

Most international writers use *which/that* in relative clauses to modify and/or constrain closely connected antecedents (as preceding nouns, pronouns or noun phrases). While some Chinese writers also broadly follow this writing convention, they still use the conjunctive word *which* to modify and/or further explain preceding main clauses (see Example 7.5), which I could deem as the preferred use of the non-restrictive clause as altogether there are 27 such instances (i.e. about 60% of relative clauses introduced by *which* in the CJ 100-abstract sample).

| |
|---|
| The ageing of Chinese population is approaching, **which makes more concern of pension.** |
| 1 (2014)/Journal of Shanghai Finance University/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.5

Conjunctive adverbs/pronouns are also sometimes used as conjunctive words in relative clauses. When exploring "WP($)" in AntConc, I found that conjunctive pronouns, such as *who* and *whose*, primarily occur in relative clauses in both the EJ and CJ samples. While exploring "WRB", I found that conjunctive adverbs, such as *when*, *where*, and *how*, primarily occur in adverbial clauses, and only very occasionally in relative clauses. On this point of usage, at least, I am able to surmise that Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers follow essentially the same writing convention as international writers.

With regard to the usage of conjunctive adverbs[28] in relative clauses, however, important differences emerge once again. First of all, conjunctive adverbs are three times more frequently used in abstracts by international writers (even though the numbers are small in both samples). Beyond basic frequency differences, I also note differences in conjunctive word selection. In most circumstances, Chinese Finance and Accounting writers prefer to use *when* as a conjunctive word. International writers, in contrast, also use *where*, *why*, and even *whereby* (as shown in Example 7.6). Once again, it seems that international Finance and

[28] When examining the "WRB" in AntConc, I found that there are only 1 and 7 such object clauses in CJ and EJ sub-corpus. Given its small numbers, I did not study and compare the object clauses with interrogative adverbs in my research.

Accounting academic writers are more confident and flexible in their selection of appropriate lexico-grammatical resources.

| |
|---|
| Prior studies attribute the turn-of-the-year effect **whereby** small capitalization stocks earn unusually high returns ... |
| 1 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.6

Before I commenced my examination of adverbial clauses in my sample abstracts, I had assumed that this type of finite subordinate clause would be comparatively easy for Chinese writers to handle. This finite clause generally involves special lead words, such as *because*, *when*, *where*, *if/whether*, *even if* etc., which arguably makes it relatively easy to recognize and use. However, my analysis revealed that, even here, Chinese writers still make less frequent or effective use of this clause variety than international writers do. This applies not only to the total numbers of adverbial clauses Chinese writers adopted in their abstracts, but also to the various semantic types found within adverbial clauses. Whereas Chinese writers generally prefer to use temporal adverbial clauses with *when* and adverbial clauses of concession with *although (though)* and *despite*, international writers seem to be more diversified in their usage. Among all the 85 samples of adverbial clauses examined, there are not only temporal adverbial clauses (this type is also the most frequent at 42 instances), but also adverbial clauses of reason (15 instances), of condition (9 instances) and of concession (8 instances). Greater flexibility of expression among EJ writers is also reflected in the selection of lead words. In addition to the commonly used *if* for the condition clause and *even if/even though* for the concession clause, international writers also use such lead words as *in case* for the condition clause (as shown in Example 7.7) and *whereas* for the concession clause.

| |
|---|
| We argue that managers seek private equity backing **in case** they are more constrained to finance the deal themselves. |
| 16 (2013)/Review of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.7

Having now examined and discussed finite subordinate clause types found in the sample abstracts, I now wish to discuss three distinct writing deficiencies in the Chinese writers' use of finite clauses. The first problem involves their improper use of clause connection/coordination. The second problem relates to the lack of predicate verbs in some finite clauses. The third problem is the indiscriminate use of the finite clause by Chinese abstract writers. Each of these issues will be discussed in turn below.

In both the EJ and CJ 100-text samples, there are instances where two or more finite clauses co-occur in one sentence. However, the primary sentence pattern adopted by Chinese writers is "object clause + relative clause", as in Example 7.8a:

Further analysis **shows that** the key factor is the change in executive compensation schemes **that aligns** the executive pay with stock price and measures of accounting performance.
1 (2013)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.8a

In a few cases, Chinese writers seem confused and lost themselves in clause co-occurrences. When confronted with such instances, it is difficult for readers to parse these clauses and then decipher the exact meaning, such as the example shown in Example 7.8b.

Along with the development of market economy and the evolution of the organization of enterprise, the relationship between company shareholders and managers gets more complicated, **become** system bottleneck **that** restricts the development of the company, **which** cannot be solved effectively by the traditional economics theory.
15 (2014)/Contemporary Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.8b

While international Finance and Accounting academic writers were sometimes found to adopt such kinds of clause pattern as well, their clause overlaps were clear and precisely used. It would be easy for a reader to follow their ideas rather than getting themselves tangled in different sentence layers as a result of clause usage. As Examples 7.9a and (especially) 7.9b below suggest, the use of commas is clearly helpful in this regard:

...**although** the bid-ask spreads of stress test participants generally increased after the mandatory stress test in 2011, our results **suggest that** the decrease in market liquidity is entirely attributable to those stress-test participants **that** did not commit to voluntarily maintaining the disclosures of sovereign risk exposure.
14 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.9a

This adverse effect of fair value accounting is more likely **when** the price volatility of the hedged asset is higher, **which** is a situation **where**, paradoxically, hedging is more beneficial.
12 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.9b

While the first problem may be due to Chinese writers' lack of proficiency in employing multiple finite clauses, the second problem is primarily due to a poor level and/or insufficient knowledge of the writing conventions pertaining to basic English syntax among at least a few Chinese writers.

In this article, listed companies **that debt restructured** in Shanghai A-stock market in 1999, 2006 and during 2007-2011 were selected as samples,
8 (2013)/Journal of Shanghai Finance University/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.10a

This paper finds that, Affecting by the spin-off listing **that caused by** issuance control system,
9 (2014)/Accounting Forum/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.10b

These two examples show that a few Chinese writers confuse finite subordinate clauses with the use of non-finite verbs. In such circumstances, they might consider using relative clauses to modify and/or constrain preceding nouns. Yet, they unintentionally and inaccurately use non-finite verbs instead. This type of inaccurate usage leads to instances of ungrammatical sentences occurring in academic writing.

The third problem is that a few Chinese writers even seem to use finite clauses just for the sake of using them.

This paper surveys all the internal control assurance reports in 2011, **which amount to 988 reports.**
3 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.11

In Example 7.11, this relative clause functions only to emphasise the total numbers of reports. However, I could easily rewrite the sentence in a simpler way, such as <u>This paper surveys all 988 internal control assurance reports in 2011.</u> In short, this third problem is that in some instances, even when they have the option of writing a concise manner, some Chinese abstract writers seem to consciously decide to use redundant and inappropriate finite subordinate clauses.

## 7.4 Comparison of evaluative *that* constructions

As can be seen from Table 7.2, whereas both international and Chinese abstract writers use evaluative *that* constructions in English abstracts, there are almost double the number of such constructions in the EJ sub-corpus than in the CJ sub-corpus. On average, in the EJ sub-corpus, there are about 1.86 (raw frequency) *that* clauses per abstract text, while in CJ, there are about 1.215 *that* clauses per abstract text.

Table 7.2 Frequency of evaluative *that* complement clauses in EJ and CJ sub-corpus

| | Raw frequency | Per 1,000 words | Per abstract text |
|---|---|---|---|
| EJ sub-corpus | 744 | 14.515 | 1.86 |
| CJ sub-corpus | 485 | 9.425 | 1.215 |

### 7.4.1 "Evaluated entity"

Broadly in line with Hyland and Tse's (2005a) findings, both international and Chinese academic writers most frequently (over 80%) use *that* complement clauses when evaluating their own results and/or proposing their conclusion. No Chinese writer and less than five international writer used the *that* complement clause to comment on their own research methods. This too is similar to Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) findings. As Hyland and Tse (2005a) explain, as the RA abstract genre possesses both promotional and informational characteristics, it "involves emphasising both the relevance and importance of what they have to say and their own credibility in saying it" (ibid, p.50). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that most of the evaluative *that* complement clauses in my data function to interpret the writers' own findings (see Example 7.12).

**We find that** a mismatch between the location of decision rights and a firm's environment is associated with weak firm performance.
2 (2013)/Journal of Accounting Research/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.12

However, my findings differ somewhat from Hyland and Tse's findings in terms of the middle subcategories. In both the CJ and EJ sub-corpora, evaluations of the writers' own goals and of previous studies account for almost the same frequencies. These finite clauses are thus also

distributed in ‘purpose’ (see Example 7.13) or ‘background’ (see Example 7.14) moves accordingly.

We **predict that** managers’ true expectations are close to the upper bound of range forecasts.
18 (2014)/Review of Accounting Studies/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.13

Historical decompositions **show that** most of sharp fluctuations in output were not explained by monetary policy shocks.
5 (2014)/Quarterly Journal of Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.14

Hyland and Tse (2005a) have demonstrated that academic writers in ‘soft’ knowledge disciplines (i.e. the humanities and social sciences) use more evaluative *that* complement clauses in evaluating their own goals and the claims of previous studies than do those from the ‘hard’ knowledge fields of the physical and natural sciences. My Finance and Accounting data add further confirmation to this finding. Similarly, in the use of *that* clauses in evaluating ones’ own research purposes, this kind of structure “evaluates positively the direction or outcome of the research” (p.53) while overtly it adopts the move of ‘purpose’, such as those shown in Example 7.13. Yet another correspondence between the current study and Hyland and Tse (2005a) lies in the use of *that* complement clauses in evaluating previous studies. Most clauses in my data also “seek to align current with previous work” (p.53), and negative evaluations, such as in Example 7.14, are very infrequent.

### 7.4.2 “Evaluative stance”

Hyland and Tse’s (2005a) category of “evaluative stance” has two further subcategories, each of which will be discussed here. These are “Attitudinal” (yet further subdivided into “affect” and “obligation”) and “Epistemic”. An analysis of these subcategories in my data finds, once again in line with Hyland and Tse’s (ibid) findings, that attitudinal stance is seldom found in evaluative *that* constructions in RA abstracts, irrespective of whether they are written by Chinese or international academics. Both groups of writers strongly prefer to frame evaluations in terms of epistemic stance, “representing the writer’s assessment of the truth value or credibility of statements about the world” (ibid, p.56).

Given the prevalence of epistemic stance clauses in my data, I decided to further

investigate this category. Once again echoing Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) findings (particularly for Business Studies), I found the results of my analysis to be dominated by expressions of certainty. Hyland (2005a) interprets the prevalence of certainty expressions as a reflection of the 'promotional' function of abstracts; the claim here is that abstracts that make bold and assertive central claims are more likely to attract the attention of busy readers.

Table 7.3 Top five verb collocates of *that* in evaluative *that* constructions

| | EJ sub-corpus | Raw frequency | CJ sub-corpus | Raw frequency |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | find/finds/finding | 267 | show/shows/ showing/shown/ showed | 161 |
| 2 | show/shows/ showing | 127 | find/found/ finds | 153 |
| 3 | suggest/suggesting/ suggests | 131 | suggest/suggests/ suggested | 37 |
| 4 | demonstrate | 16 | indicate/indicates/ indicated/indicating | 35 |
| 5 | provide | 14 | argue | 10 |

Generally, both international and Chinese academics use the reporting verbs *find* and *show* to construct a stance of 'certainty' in abstract writing, although international Finance and Accounting academics also quite frequently use the more tentative verb *suggest* as the predicate in *that* complement clauses (with most instances in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves). Compared to international writers, Chinese Finance and Accounting academics have a wider selection of tentative verbs, such as *indicate*, *argue*, and *suggest*, as can be seen in Table 7.3. Such usage of tentative verbs reflects the abstract writing characteristics in Social Sciences (Hyland and Tse, 2005a, 2005b). However, I believe that there is another reason for Chinese writers' selection of tentative verbs. It seems that a few Chinese academic writers believe that it is appropriate for them to be prudent and modest when evaluating the merits of their research in their abstracts. However, as Hyland and Tse (2005a, p.58) note, adopting an unduly modest self-evaluative stance may at best only give skeptical readers "opportunities…for challenging [the writer's] interpretations", and may at worst result in the reader deciding that the accompanying article is probably not worth reading at all.

### 7.4.3 “Evaluative source”

The next evaluative subtype to be analysed here, “Evaluative Source” (Hyland and Tse, 2005a, p.47), can also be further divided into more fine-grained subcategories, each representing one of three main source types: “Human”, as in the writer herself or himself, or other human sources; “Abstract Entity (Inanimate Source)”, as in “the findings”, “this research”, etc.; and “Concealed (Source not identified)”, which includes clauses featuring inanimate *it* (e.g. ***it*** *is interesting to note that …*).

Some of the findings to be reported here echo those relating to first person pronoun usage and frequency trends that were noted earlier in Chapter Six of this thesis. In my analysis, I found more instances of “humans” as the evaluative source than the latter two source types combined in the EJ sub-corpus. Of the 744 instances identified in this sub-corpus, the majority were found to use first person pronouns, such as *we* and/or *I*, representing (of course) the writers themselves. Only in a very few cases (11 instances, to be precise) did the “human” sources turn out on closer inspection of concordance lines to be other humans, such as quoted persons or experimental participants. Next follows the abstract entity, or inanimate sources, such as shown in Example 7.15. Despite having the option of choosing from among all these seemingly objective ‘evaluative source’ options, international writers still prefer to represent themselves overtly. That is, instead of using an impersonal determiner, such as *the* and/or *this*, they prefer to the first person possessive pronouns *our* before *results*, *findings*, etc. This again verifies the findings described for this possessive pronoun *our* in Chapter Six.

| |
|---|
| **Our results suggest that** the business press plays an important role in ... |
| 17 (2014)/Accounting Review/Accounting in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.15

Of all the available options for this category, international writers use the concealed source least, with only two instances attested in my data. It is therefore reasonable to conclude from these observations that it is conventional practice for authors of abstracts in international journals in the fields of Finance and Accounting to confidently assert their authorship and to evaluate positively their own research purposes and/or findings. The question that this raises, then, is: to what extent do abstracts written by Chinese academics in these fields correspond to these international academic literacy practices? It is to this question that I now turn.

Broadly speaking, the findings obtained from the CJ sub-corpus are in line with

those described in Chapter Six. In stark contrast to the abstract writers in the EJ sub-corpus, Chinese writers have a clear preference for using inanimate sources rather than human sources. In fact, the frequency of inanimate sources utilised by Chinese academics is higher than the other two source types combined. Even in the human sources, apart from the first person pronouns, in some instances Chinese writers also like to use *author(s*) and/or *he*; that is, a few Chinese writers like to use third person forms when representing themselves in their abstract writing, as shown in Example 7.16.

**The author found that** there is really asymmetry between the executive pay and performance sensitivity, ...
9 (2013)/Communication of Finance and Accounting/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.16

Even when using abstract entities to refer to their research, Chinese academic writers prefer to use determiners such as *the* and/or *this* before *paper, research,* etc., instead of the possessive pronouns *my* or *our*. These findings are in line with the keyword comparison results of the CJ sub-corpus in Chapter Five, wherein the key word class "DT" ranks at seventh place, and mostly consists of definite articles. On the other hand, the manner in which first person pronouns are used in Chinese abstract writing is consistent both with my own findings in Chapter Six, and with the findings of other research reviewed previously in this chapter. Fundamentally, the evidence suggests that Chinese writers prefer to 'hide themselves' behind seemingly objective evaluative statements. Although, as previously explained, the adoption of such objective statements certainly helps to retain the values of 'preciseness' in scientific research, it may also relate to previously discussed underlying preferences for traditional Chinese conservatism. By undertaking this comparison exercise, we have been able to ascertain that such values and preferences are at variance with those of the international Finance and Accounting discourse communities, where writers are more forthright and explicit in presenting themselves in RA abstracts.

This is not to say that there are no similarities between international and Chinese academic writers, however. One notable similarity revealed by my analysis of 'evaluative source' clauses is that both international and Chinese academic writers use unidentified sources only very sporadically, although even here, in keeping with the broader trends discussed above, there are more samples of unidentified sources in the CJ sub-corpus than there are in the EJ sub-corpus. Chinese writers particularly like to adopt passive and

impersonal forms such as those shown in Example 7.17 and 7.18.

**It's found that** sponsor reputation does affect IPO discount in that more practical experience of sponsors, lower IPO discount of recommended companies, **and that** the IPO discount is lowered for sponsors or security firms they serve ever punished by CSFC.
6 (2013)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.17

**It also shows that** countries with higher stock market liquidity are more likely to attract ODI inflows and ...
5 (2013)/Studies of International Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.18

7.4.4 "Expression"

The last evaluative subtype classification to be discussed here is "Expression" (Hyland and Tse, 2005a, p.47). What distinguishes this subtype is its focus on the predicates before the *that* clause. It usually takes the form of non-verbal (noun or adjectival) predicates or verbal predicates, which can be further divided into "Research Acts, Discourse Acts and Cognitive Acts" (ibid, p.47). In the following analysis, I will compare and discuss these two different kinds of predicates in turn.

Table 7.4 Predicate forms in evaluative *that* constructions

| | EJ sub-corpus (raw frequency and percentage) | CJ sub-corpus (raw frequency and percentage) |
|---|---|---|
| **Non-verbal** | 65 (8.74%) | 29 (5.98%) |
| Noun | 65 | 27 |
| Adjectival | 0 | 2 |
| **Verbal** | 679 (91.26%) | 456 (94%) |
| Research Acts | 500 | 378 |
| Discourse Acts | 160 | 66 |
| Cognitive Acts | 19 | 12 |

Firstly, let us examine and compare non-verbal predicates across the two corpora. Both international and Chinese writers make only very infrequent use of adjectival predicates; as can be seen from Table 7.4, there are only 2 instances (accounting for 0.41%) in the CJ sub-corpus and no occurrences of this variant at all in the EJ sub-corpus. Comparatively speaking, international writers prefer to use noun predicates more. The reason for this may relate to the apparent preference of international Finance and Accounting academics for first person pronouns instead of the dummy subject *it*.

Both international and Chinese academic writers use such clauses primarily in 'result' moves. As discussed in Chapter Six, international writers prefer the pattern ***we find/provide evidence that*** in evaluative *that* constructions. Compared with this relatively fixed choice of pattern, Chinese writers use a wider range of noun predicates before *that* complement clauses, such as shown in Example 7.16.

| |
|---|
| **The preliminary conclusion is that** the more eminent risk is the non-quantifiable risk in China's insurance industry and ... |
| 3 (2014)/Shanghai Finance/Finance in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.16

In comparison with the usage of non-verbal predicates, both groups of writers are more likely to use verbal predicates in evaluative *that* constructions. This mirrors Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) study, which found that "a marked preference for verbal predicates, and particularly those reporting research activities" (2005a, p.58). In my data, both international and Chinese academic writers prefer to use research act verbs such as such as *show*, *find*, and *indicate* more frequently than the other two kinds of verbal predicates indicating research acts. And naturally these samples principally appear in 'result' moves.

However, there are also differences in the usage of these research act verbs that deserve closer attention. Specifically, international academic writers prefer to use these verbs in the present tense and active voice. While the majority of Chinese Finance and Accounting abstract writers also employ those verbs in a similar way, about 10% of these writers prefer using the verbs in the past tense and/or passive voice, as is shown in Examples 7.18a and 7.18b. This result is consistent with the keyword POS tag analysis presented in Chapter Five, which indicates clearly that Chinese writers like to use VVD (verbs past tense) in their

abstract writing[29].

| |
|---|
| **Further study found that** managerial ability on dynamic adjustment of capital structure is ... |
| 6 (2014)/Accounting Forum/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.18a

| |
|---|
| **Conclusions are drawn that** underwriters' regional oligopoly is one of the factors that affect IPO pricing. |
| 6 (2014)/Journal of Accounting and Economics/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.18b

Although Graetz (1985, p.125, quoted in Swales, 1990, p.179) stated that "[t]he abstract is characterized by the use of past tense, third person, passive, and the non-use of negatives", subsequent research on verb tense usage in academic abstracts has found this characterization to be largely inaccurate. However, in many comparative studies, Chinese linguists (Teng and Tan, 2004; Zhang and Liu, 2009; Shi, 2012) have noticed that abstracts written by Chinese academic writers tend to fit Graetz's description far more accurately than are their international or native speaker peers. In particular, they are far more likely to use verbs in the past or perfect tense and in the passive voice than native English or other international academic writers. There are still substantial numbers of Chinese writers who insist on the use of past tense and/or passive voice, particularly when presenting results/implications (as opening statement of one rhetorical move).

While both international and Chinese academic writers use discourse act verbs as predicates before *that* complement clauses, Chinese academic writers use about 10% fewer discourse act verbs than international writers. More significantly, their verb selections, as well as the distribution of these selections across rhetorical moves, are quite different from those of international academic writers. In the EJ sub-corpus, it seems that in most instances, international Finance and Accounting academic writers use the verb *suggest* and have such *that* construction in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves (see Example 7.19), functioning in 'final summary' and/or 'recommendations for further studies' statements.

| |
|---|
| Overall, our results **suggest that** diversity in political beliefs among corporate board members is valuable. |
| 15 (2014)/Journal of Financial Economics/Finance in EJ sub-corpus |

Example 7.19a

[29] Although this result does not verify another finding in Chapter Five (the "VVN", verbs past participle), we should bear in mind that "VVN" is not only used in passive verbs, but also in other usages as well.

In CJ sub-corpus, in contrast, two types of discourse act verbs are attested. The first type, consisting exclusively of the verb *suggest*, is in most circumstances found in 'result' moves (see Example 7.20a). The second type features the verbs *argue*, but occurs in various moves, such as in 'conclusion/recommendation', or 'result' moves (see Example 7.20b).

SYS-GMM results **suggest that** both monetary policy and industrial policy cause effects on credit financing behavior significantly.
3 (2013)/Journal of Finance and Economics/Finance in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.20a

We **argue that** auditing brands bring about fees premium.
4 (2013)/China Accounting Review/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus

Example 7.20b

Systematic differences can even be observed in the most infrequently used of the three types of verbal predicates discussed here, the 'cognitive acts' group. While both international and Chinese writers use only a small selection of cognitive act verbs, close inspection finds that Chinese writers prefer verbs such as *believe* and *think*, and tend to deploy these evaluative *that* complement clauses primarily in 'conclusion/recommendation' moves. International academic writers, in contrast, also use verbs such as *posit* and *hypothesize*, and use these evaluative *that* complement clauses primarily in 'purpose' moves (see Example 7.21).

We **hypothesize that** a decrease in analyst coverage increases information asymmetry and ...
15 (2013)/Journal of Finance/Finance in EJ sub-corpus

Example 7.21

## 7.5 Discussion of findings

In this closing discussion, I would like to consider two possible explanations for the various quantitative and qualitative differences in finite subordinate clause usage among Chinese and international Finance and Accounting academic writers presented in this chapter. The first is that at least some of the differences that we have observed may simply be attributable to first language transfer factors. Unlike Indo-European languages (such as English), there is no finite subordinate clause in Chinese. It is therefore not surprising that in my analysis I found instances such as those presented in Example 7.22.

**We find:** fair value change is bigger in growing industry, ...
14 (2014)/Communication of Finance and Accounting/Accounting in CJ sub-corpus
Example 7.22

Such non-conventional usages could be a result of direct translation from Chinese; certainly, in Chinese there would be no *that* in an object clause. On the other hand, even after years of English writing instruction, Chinese writers may still not be familiar with some of the clause types found in the English abstract writing. This could exacerbate the apparently 'improper' selection of subordinate clause types and at the same time perhaps cause Chinese writers considerable confusion in their use of finite subordinate clauses.

In my view, however, perhaps the most important contributory reason may be the inadequate level of EAP writing training that many Chinese academics have been exposed to. I have already emphasised this point in the last chapter. The participants in my survey (full results of which will be reported in the next chapter) said that they had noticed different types of finite clause usage by international writers. As one of the participants said, "Finite subordinate clauses in international academic abstracts seem so smooth and easy…Our use of clauses in abstracts seems quite complex, but we lose ourselves in those complicated clause patterns and sometimes don't even know what our own writing means after we have written it".

Given these problems, it becomes the responsibility of English writing teachers and researchers to investigate the lexico-grammatical characteristics of English abstracts in detail, and to instruct academics appropriately. Taking appositive clauses as an example, as mentioned above, this clause type is scarce in my CJ sub-corpus. Given this scarcity, it is perhaps not surprising that only four of my questionnaire participants and one expert interviewee (with a Master's degree in English and a PhD in Finance) claimed to be familiar with the proper use of appositive clauses in their English abstract writing. The majority of the questionnaire participants just mentioned object clauses and relative clauses. In fact, and as we have seen from our analysis of international writers' abstracts, appositive clauses have a number of useful functions in academic abstract writing. It is the same for the evaluative *that* complement clause. It seems that Chinese academic writers are even less unfamiliar with the concept of this clause, let alone its evaluative functions in academic abstract writing.

## 7.6 Summary

In this chapter I have discussed the findings of my comparative study of finite subordinate clause usage in international and Chinese abstracts in abstracts in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting. This study was based on a detailed analysis of 100 randomly selected abstracts written by international and Chinese writers. I examined evaluative *that* constructions in these texts, primarily using Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) classification model.

I will continue in the next chapter by providing a more detailed contextual understanding of the results presented in this and the previous three chapters, by means of a discussion of the insights that I obtained from questionnaires and interviews conducted with Chinese academic writers in the fields of study represented in my corpus analysis.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRES AND INTERVIEWS

In this chapter, I will discuss the questionnaires and surveys that I conducted as a means of contextualizing and triangulating the findings of the corpus-based analyses reported in previous chapters of this thesis. The chapter will include a discussion of the results of a questionnaire that was given to Finance and Accounting PhD students at SWUFE, the university where I work in China, as well as a review of the most interesting observations to emerge from a series of interviews that I conducted with Finance and Accounting academics at the same institution. I shall also attempt to use these data to identify some possible reasons for the apparent writing differences that manifested themselves in my corpus analyses. I shall also attempt to use my colleagues' responses to get a better understanding of their own concerns about and perspectives on their own EAP writing practices.

During the interview process, I interviewed two Finance academics and two Accounting academics. For the sake of anonymity and privacy, I will be using the initial letters of their respective surnames to represent these interviewees, as shown in Table 8.1.

Table 8.1 Initials for interviewees

| Interviews | | |
|---|---|---|
| Finance | Interviewee L | Interviewee W |
| Accounting | Interviewee H | Interviewee D |

## 8.1 Brief literature review

In his work *The Problem of Meaning in Primitive Languages*, anthropologist Malinowski (1946) proposed that understanding meaning is not a simple matter of decoding words, but rather requires knowledge of the ways that words are embedded in certain social/cultural contexts (Jones, 2012). After Malinowski, a series of studies have put forward different models to study context; amongst them, one of the most influential is that proposed by

Halliday (1978). Halliday's model proposes that context consists of three interrelated variables as 'field', 'tenor' and 'mode'.

Whilst very influential, Halliday's explanation of context has been criticized on the grounds that it is from a purely linguistic perspective. As linguistic anthropologist Dell Hymes puts it, "The sharing of grammatical (variety) rules is not sufficient. There may be persons whose English I can grammatically identify but whose messages escape me" (1974, p.49). Context, whether it is a narrow one as a "context of situation" (Malinowski, 1946, p.296) or a broad one as a context of culture (Malinowski, 1946), could have an influence on how discourse is produced and/or interpreted (Jones, 2012).

Although the importance of surveys has been widely acknowledged in discourse analysis research, their adoption in abstract writing studies has been scarce. To my knowledge, the only studies that have incorporated such methods are Van Bonn and Swales (2007), who used email interviews in an attempt to gain greater insights into the process of French/English abstract reformulation, and Martin-Martin (2005), who used interviews with writers and experiments with readers in order to better understand abstract writing from a contrastive perspective. Most other research on the abstract genre has only used textual analysis.

I believe that for a comprehensive and robust genre analysis study, contextual analysis is vitally important. According to Jones (2012, p.25), contextual analysis "requires a different approach to the analysis of discourse, an approach which is summed up in the word *ethnography*." Although now widely used in applied linguistics, ethnography as a broad methodological tradition has its roots in Anthropology. Putting it simply, the aim of ethnography is to try to capture, as faithfully as possible, the lived experiences of human subjects as they go about their daily lives (Jones, 2012). This aim is carried out by means of observation, interviews, case study descriptions and other techniques, and the researcher tries to build up as detailed a picture as possible using such sources.

Tardy and Swales (2014) argue that rhetorical move analysis in genre analysis is enhanced by survey approaches such as interviews as such data provide insiders' insights into the nature, purpose, functions and social meanings of generic texts. Combining these two together, "linguistic and ethnographic methods can provide a more robust understanding of the meaning that particular generic features hold for users or even of the ways in which moves influence readers' textual interpretations" (ibid, p.169).

In my research, I have therefore, also utilised questionnaires and conducted

interviews in order to obtain another perspective on my textual data, and in so doing to better understand how Chinese Finance and Accounting writers view the English abstract writing context (including both cultural context and local context), and what motivates their own writing practices with regard to this genre.

## 8.2 Survey methodology

The main survey approaches I adopted for the purposes of the current research are interviews and questionnaires. I have chosen to employ both of these methods as they have complementary strengths. As Brown (2001) notes, questionnaires are well suited to collecting a relatively large body of data in a "standardized, uniform, and consistent" (ibid, p.77) manner. Interviews, on the other hand, are better suited to exploring research questions in more depth.

### 8.2.1 Sampling

In constructing a sample of informants, I chose to adopt a "convenience or opportunity sampling" approach (Dornyei, 2010, p.72). There are two main reasons for this. The first has to do with simple convenience (Dornyei, 2010). As a former English teacher in the School of Foreign Languages for Business at SWUFE, I had relatively easy access to the teachers/academics and PhD students in the Schools of Finance and Accounting at SWUFE. The second reason relates to what Aiken (1997) calls purposive factors. Regardless of whether they are teachers/academics, or PhD students in the Schools of Finance and Accounting, all of my research subjects have to publish research articles. They therefore need to write and publish English abstracts for the purpose of publication in both international and Chinese academic journals[30]. As researchers from one of the leading Finance and Economics universities in China, teachers/academics and PhD students from the Schools of Finance and Accounting have ongoing and pressing reasons to improve their EAP writing ability and to integrate themselves into international academic communities.

In order to disseminate my questionnaire as widely as possible, I firstly tried to distribute questionnaires to academics in the Schools of Finance and Accounting at SWUFE.

[30] Although there are some Chinese academic journals that do not require English abstracts when publishing research articles.

Regrettably, the response rate achieved by this strategy was very low, and the academics that I tried to recruit were less than enthusiastic about responding to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire. I therefore decided to disregard this group of academics as my potential questionnaire participants. Instead, I decided to focus on PhD students from the Schools of Finance and Accounting who were also registered for EAP writing courses in the academic year 2016-17 as my questionnaire participants. It is conceded that in comparison with professional academics, PhD students may not be considered as "researchers" in the strictest sense. However, it is my view that this group of participants has its own set of unique advantages. Firstly, as PhD students in SWUFE, they were all required to publish at least two research articles in core Chinese or English academic journals. It is my contention that these students could therefore be viewed as bona fide "researchers" in their own right. Secondly, these PhD students were also registered for the EAP writing course. On this course they had studied English abstract writing; and from this perspective alone, this group of participants had a basic understanding of abstract writing in English, as well as a relatively clear recognition of the problems typically encountered during the course. Given the circumstances described, these PhD students were quick not only to understand but also to appreciate the significance of the questions in my questionnaire. They were also subsequently able to provide me with some insightful and thought-provoking feedback when they replied to the open-ended questions. Lastly, I adopted the "group administration" (Dornyei, 2010, p.68) format to carry out the questionnaire survey. That is, I gave all the questionnaires to the teacher of the EAP writing course, and asked him to get the students to complete the questionnaire during class time. By means of this approach, this "captive group" (Dornyei, 2010, p.82) of questionnaire participants provided me with a 100% return rate.

As soon as I had finished processing the questionnaire responses, I made a summary of all the feedback received. I then carried out an informal interview with the EAP writing teacher, who happened to be the only EAP writing teacher at SWUFE at the time. I then proceeded to conduct interviews with Finance and Accounting experts. All the four teachers/academics were PhD graduates and were from the Schools of Finance and Accounting at SWUFE. Two of them were Associate Professors, and the other two were Lecturers. One interview participant had graduated with a Master's Degree in English and then subsequently gained a Ph.D in Finance.

Before conducting the questionnaires and interviews, I informed all the survey

participants about the nature and purpose of the research (Participant Information Sheet, see Appendix 4), and asked all of them to fill in the survey Participant Consent Forms (see Appendix 5) before officially conducting each survey. It was explained to them that they did not have to participate if they did not wish to do so. For the questionnaire participants, except for the Participant Information Sheet, I also stated clearly this survey's purposes in the beginning of questionnaire form; and the EAP writing teacher re-stated the purposes of the survey and its ethical consent guidelines. Before conducting the questionnaires, the EAP writing teacher (representing me) asked each participant to fill in the Participant Consent Form if they were happy to participate in the study. For the interview participants, I asked all of them to fill in the Participant Consent Forms; and before every interview, I re-stated my survey purposes to them and asked them to confirm whether they were happy to continue or not.

### 8.2.2 Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a quantitative instrument that is utilised to elicit individuals' self-reports (Dornyei and Csizer, 2012). In my study, I conducted questionnaires with the main purpose of learning the views of Chinese Accounting and Finance students and researchers about their English abstract writing. In designing my questionnaire, I took into consideration such issues as interview and question length, objective and subjective responses and data processing. I then decided to make use of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The short-answer questions (as one major form of open-ended questions), according to Gillham (2000, p34), "can be motivating for the respondent, and they enable the researcher to trawl for the unknown and the unexpected." The combination of a few open-ended questions with closed-ended questions provided me with quantitative as well as qualitative data. This comprehensive set of data enabled me to lay a strong foundation for the next stage of interviews.

Before finalizing the questionnaire, I asked the four participants from my interviews to carry out the process of piloting the questionnaire. They were ideal candidates as they shared similar characteristics with the Chinese Finance and Accounting researchers whom I intended to survey, and they too needed to publish research articles with English abstracts. Also, they were themselves to be included among my targeted survey participants, so piloting the questionnaire could help them to familiarise themselves with my interview

questions as well. Based on their feedback, I made some final minor alterations to the questionnaire before sending the final version out (cf. Dornyei, 2010).

### 8.2.3 Interviews

On the basis of responses garnered from the questionnaire, I conducted my interviews. The interview was conducted in the hope of verifying and further exploring the questionnaire questions, as well as providing some insights into the reasons behind the writing differences observed in my corpus analyses.

All the interviews were conducted by telephone. To ensure the success of the interview, I first sent my interview outlines and quoted examples from my data analyses to all interviewees so that they had a good understanding of the objectives of the interview. During the interview process, I did extend my line of questioning following the respondents' replies to elicit further information. For example, I asked the interviewees to furnish some illustrations, and/or personal experiences in relation to writing English abstracts, and/or any issues, confusions or concerns that they had in relating to English abstract writing. Throughout the entire interview process, I tried my best to ensure that each meeting would be entirely successful, but I did need to approach two interviewees again and ask them to answer a few supplementary questions on a separate occasion.

## 8.3 Analyses of questionnaires and interviews

Both the questionnaire and interview questions contained five sections, covering all the major research topics in my study. The first section focused on eliciting Finance and Accounting academics' general impressions about English abstract writing. The next three sections dealt with rhetorical structures, first person pronoun usage and finite subordinate clause usage in English abstract writing. The last section aimed to identify any urgent issues that my participants felt needed to be resolved in their English abstract writing. A discussion of my participants' responses on each of these five topics will now be provided.

### 8.3.1 General questions about English abstract writing

In the first section of the questionnaire, 28 out of 30 students stated that generally English abstracts are fundamentally written by themselves, with the aid of computer translation tools, and/or editing by somebody else. And they all said that there were only a few sentences and/or even some phrases/words in any of the abstracts that they had written that were the product of direct translation from Chinese to English. Only two participants thought that English abstracts in Chinese journals are typically entirely translated from Chinese original versions. By combining the responses to these two questions, I am able to conclude that the Finance and Accounting PhD students in my survey study believe that their English RA abstracts are made up of a combination of writing and translation, but are principally the product of original writing. Echoing the PhD students' replies, three of my interviewees stated that their English RA abstracts are their own original texts, with some help from online translation tools and sometimes writing coaches, such as journal English editors. Interviewee W (from the School of Finance) not only described her English RA abstracts as definitely her own original writing, but also said that she translated them into Chinese when she submitted her papers to Chinese academic journals (we should also take note that interviewee W had studied abroad and had earned her PhD degree in the UK).

Regarding the purposes and functions of RAs abstracts, all 30 questionnaire participants thought that this was to summarize research articles. Some said the function of the abstract was to present research article structures to the reader. Others ventured that the main function of the abstract genre was to attract the attention of anglophone readers and thus increase opportunities for raising the international profile of the research. The four academic interviewees' responses were largely consistent with the students' views. They believed that writing English abstracts for Chinese academic journals could offer them an opportunity to practice English academic writing and prepare them for publication in English language academic journals. They also thought that English abstracts would be an (and sometimes the only) avenue for presenting their research to international academic peers, albeit to a limited extent. They also felt that publishing English abstracts might lead to increased opportunities to engage in collaborative research with scholars from other countries, thereby increasing their own opportunities for international academic community acceptance (including publication, conference attendance, etc.).

Given these replies, I would argue that in comparison with the situation some

twenty years ago, some Chinese Finance and Accounting academics have now fully realised the importance of English academic writing for their research career development. In general, they now have quite a positive attitude towards English abstract writing, although it should be noted that this does not do anything to ease the feelings of suffering that they report experiencing when actually engaged in the activity of writing academic abstracts in English.

My interviewees also made another interesting point which cannot be ignored: as teachers/researchers working at one of the most prestigious Economics universities in China, they said that it was natural for them to attach a great deal of importance to academic writing in English and to publishing in international (English language) journals. However, they also said that in their local Chinese discourse communities, there are also many researchers who view English abstract writing as unnecessary, and some even view it as a chore, and that some of these academics were more likely to be from less prestigious universities or be of older age, and thus less motivated to engage in English academic writing for the purposes of publication in international journals. These researchers may not care about or even recognise the status or functions of English abstracts published in Chinese academic journals.

### 8.3.2 Questions about the rhetorical structure of English RA abstracts

28 out of 30 questionnaire participants believe that an English abstract should be between 100 and 250 words. The four interviewees also felt likewise. Although they said that they read English research articles and abstracts from relevant disciplines, they hardly paid attention to the rhetorical structure (or any other linguistic features) of these texts. As interviewee H (from the School of Accounting) put it, “We are more concerned about the contents”.

25 out of 30 PhD students said that they know about the typical moves of the abstract genre, and that they could write them down in their correct sequence. There was however, some disagreement about the most important moves in abstract writing. All questionnaire participants said that the ‘purpose’ was among the most important; about twenty five participants also included the ‘result’ move, and about twenty participants also included ‘background’ and ‘methodology’ in their lists. Their choices are in line with, and thus confirm, my previous finding that Chinese scholars put emphasis on the ‘purpose’ move, rather than on the ‘result’ move. In comparison with other moves, there is also some degree of focus on the ‘background’ move.

Initially, I had assumed that my interviewees would not know anything about the

rhetorical structure of the RA abstract genre, or at the most, have only a vague idea. However, all four of them said that they were quite well acquainted with the overall structure of the abstract, even though two of them had not received formal training like the PhD students in my study were engaged in (one Accounting interviewee has just graduated, and another Finance interviewee had graduated from a UK university). They said that they had familiarised themselves with English abstracts by reading English research articles. Interviewee L told me that reading English RAs, rather than the Chinese RAs, has already become routine for almost all the Finance teachers and researchers in the Finance School at SWUFE. They also reported that some prestigious Chinese academic journals employ specialised English editors who help contributors edit and modify their English abstracts, and that they had learned significantly from the advice of these experts as well. This response is consistent with my findings related to abstract rhetorical structures. In those academic journals with higher impact factors, abstract structures are closer to the move structures of English abstracts from prestigious English language journals. In Chinese academic journals with lower impact factors, the differences from international journals are larger and more distinct; in particular, English abstracts in these journals often do not have a 'result' move. Yet at the same time, interviewees also admitted that in China, there are some older Finance and Accounting scholars who are not acquainted with English abstract structures at all. Differing from the questionnaire participants, all the four interviewees believe strongly that 'result' move is more significant than the 'purpose' move in English abstract writing.

Compared with the positively knowledgeable replies about individual abstract moves, both questionnaire and interview participants stated that they were not familiar with commonly used move sequences and/or move pattern differences between international and Chinese writers. For the question " What are the frequently used move sequences that you use in English abstract writing?", twelve students wrote "bpmrc", seven students left the answer blank while rest of them wrote some scrambled answers, such as "pmr", "mr", "bp", etc. It is obvious that students have never been presented with the concept of move sequences in EAP classes, and are therefore unaware of the move sequences commonly used by international writers in prestigious journals. The EAP writing teacher confirmed that he has only taught abstract moves rather than move sequences. He also mentioned that it was difficult for him to prepare and teach specifically designed teaching materials for any particular discipline. The four interviewees also told me that they had no knowledge about move sequences. They were

quite certain that they were aware of, and that they used, the ‘result’ move. However, they were not so sure about other moves. “There should be a ‘purpose’ move, like “pr”; maybe supplementing the ‘background’ move, like “bpr” and/or “br”,” stated interviewee L from Finance. Interviewee D from Accounting also said, “I think in some cases we should combine ‘methodology’, ‘background’ and/or ‘purpose’ moves to form our frequently used move sequences in abstract writing. But the most important thing is that all writing forms should base on contents, so I suppose I didn’t have a clear view of what move sequences I use, at least before I began my own writing.” Similarly, although they were unclear about what move sequences their international counterparts frequently used, they were sure that there should be a ‘result’ move somewhere in the abstract.

In summary, the above responses and replies from my questionnaire and interview participants reflect that (at least) some Chinese academic writers have never concerned themselves about the issue of move structures or sequences. It is natural for Chinese Finance and Accounting academics, regardless of whether they write or read English abstracts, that they should focus more on the contents of abstract texts than on the forms in which these contents are typically expressed. However, it is also clear that EAP writing teachers working at Chinese universities need to help their students to develop a better awareness of move sequences in various disciplines and to write in a manner that adheres to abstract writing conventions. Judging from the response of the EAP writing teacher in my (informal) interview, it would certainly seem that my research would be of important and of use to them.

### 8.3.3 Questions about first person pronouns in English abstracts

In this section, I focused on the use of first person pronouns in abstract writing. About half of the questionnaire participants say that they use first person pronouns, such as *we*, *our*, *I*, *my*, etc. in their abstract writing, while the other half do not. However, all 13 participants who chose “yes” as their answer to this question all declared that they would use first person pronouns only moderately. Interestingly, when asked the same question, Finance and Accounting interviewees had quite distinct replies. The two Finance interviewees believed that they should use first person pronouns to represent their stance and present their findings. The two Accounting interviewees, in contrast, stated that they should avoid using first person pronouns, and in line with PhD students’ views, said that they would use third person

statements instead, such as *this research*, *this paper*, etc. and verbs in the passive voice as alternatives to using first person pronouns. Their replies verify my findings in Chapter Five, which indicated that Chinese writers use more determiners than international writers do.

Although only about half of the PhD students said that they would use first person pronouns in English abstracts, they were unanimous in selecting first person pronouns locations. When asked in which move they would use first person pronouns, all of them selected the 'purpose' and 'result' moves. I obtained similar replies from the four interviewees. This shows that some Chinese researchers understand and know how to conform to international academic writing conventions on this point of usage.

The last two questions in this section were related to, and designed to cast light on, the findings of my corpus study of collocations and commonly used phraseological patterns as reported in Chapter 6. Students and expert researchers alike identified verbs such as *find*, *show*, and *think* as collocates of personal pronouns in English RA abstracts, and the phraseological patterns associated with *that* clauses. For these two questions, the four expert interviewees gave me another interesting but unexpected answer. When writing abstracts in which there is more than one result that needs to be presented, they said that they would use various forms of opening statements (while the UK graduate interviewee was not sure about this) in order to showcase their writing proficiency. They believed that repetition of such a simple opening statement would be a display of poor English writing proficiency. I then went on to randomly select 50 international abstracts and paid special attention to this feature. I found that international academic writers are quite consistent in their opening statements even if they are presenting more than one research result. It would thus seem that international academic writers are perfectly happy to use forms repetitively, and do not seem to feel the need to show off their English abilities by using varied structural forms. On this point, it is interesting to quote interviewee H, who said "Sometimes our deliberate writing styles lead us to write less appropriately instead."

### 8.3.4 Questions about finite subordinate clauses in English abstracts

Let us now consider participants' views on the use of finite subordinate clauses in abstract writing. All the questionnaire participants replied that they used finite subordinate clauses in their English abstracts. Twenty seven participants either chose "many times" or "sometimes" to describe the frequency of their use of clauses. The four interviewees gave me similar

answers.

However, when asked about what specific finite clauses they typically use, only six students chose ‘all types of finite subordinate clauses’; the majority chose ‘object clause and relative clause’ only. And when asked about what kinds of finite clauses they most commonly use, almost all the PhD students had the same choices as the above mentioned two types, and while some others (about 21 students) wrote ‘adverbial clauses (time and reason)’, no one mentioned any of the other types of clauses. I received almost the same response from the four expertise interviewees. Two expert interviewees even asked me what appositive clauses are, and what the differences are between these clauses and subject clauses. These observations suggest to me that my questionnaire and interview participants are quite familiar with object clauses and relative clauses but are not so well aware of, or confident about using, other clause types. To extend Hasselgren’s (1994) term somewhat, object and relative clauses are ‘grammatical teddy bears’ for these writers. The EAP writing teacher confirmed this, commenting specifically on their students’ use of relative clauses. In (academic) English writing, Chinese writers (students) would rather choose this relatively simple and easy clause type, and sequentially extend one simple and/or short sentence. This allows them to exhibit their knowledge and ability in employing finite subordinate clauses, whilst still maintaining accuracy and control over their English.

For the last questions, I focused on conjunctive word selections in finite subordinate clauses, and in particular in relative and adverbial clauses. Different from my text findings, only four students thought that they ever used *which* in relative clauses; seven students thought that they would use both *that* and *which*, while all others chose *that* (and one student did not reply at all). However, three of my four expert interviewees could not distinguish between *that* and *which*, and when I presented my data and some CJ sub-corpus examples to them, they were surprised by this usage point. For conjunctive word selections in adverbial clauses, questionnaire and interview participants’ answers were in accordance with my data analyses. 27 out of 30 questionnaire participants wrote *when*, *because*, *while* and 18 out of 30 questionnaire participants wrote *although*, *if*, *as though*, indicating that Chinese writers are accustomed to writing adverbial clauses of time, reason and concession.

### 8.3.5 Questions about writers’ concerns of English abstracts

When asked about channels for becoming acquainted with English abstract writing knowledge,

all PhD students said that the EAP writing course in which they were currently enrolled was the most effective means available for them to learn about the appropriate conventions for academic abstract writing. A few students said that they acquired knowledge simply by reading international journal abstracts. My interviewees said that they had no other choice but to read widely and imitate the writing styles of international Finance and Accounting academics. The same as PhD students, none of the four interviewees has ever heard about the rules for abstracts and abstracting. One interviewee told me that he went to an EAP writing course for PhD students but was unable to continue for a number of reasons. Thus, all four interviewees considered that setting up specifically designed EAP writing courses for university teachers and researchers was essential as they are the group of people most in need of training. They also considered it necessary to increase the proportion of time devoted to abstract writing teaching in academic writing courses. They believed, as the summary of the whole research article and the most (indeed, the only, in Chinese publications) accessible part of an academic article for international readers, the English abstract has a special and vitally important role for English non-native writers (such as Chinese writers) who wish to reach out to international audiences. Therefore, from a practical point of view, expert interviewees believed that it was necessary for Chinese EAP teachers to place greater emphasis on the teaching of English abstract writing.

For their current concerns about academic abstract writing, questionnaire student participants' views primarily focused on very concrete and specific matters relating to sentence/text level usage, such as sentence connection, finite subordinate clause usage, and abstract text structures. While following this line of questioning, the four expert interviewees provided me with more insightful and measured views and explanations. Similar to PhD students' views, they too thought that the top priority was raising awareness of the generic structure of the RA abstract. Interviewees said that they had a rough idea about to the typical RA abstract rhetorical structure, but they did not know how much space to allocate to each move within the required word limits, or what the most commonly used move sequences used by English native speakers or international writers were. Normally they did not pay attention to the structural properties of abstracts and they had not received the kinds of formal training that are now provided to students. In most instances they simply had to rely on their own limited knowledge or learn by noticing rhetorical patterns on their own initiative. Consequently, there arose a strong demand for more instruction, as well as a demand for

authentic examples of well written abstracts by international writers. Regarding their language usage concerns, expert interviewees specifically pointed to verbs tense and voice selection as being particularly problematic. Four interviewees said they were confused and had even been given contradictory advice about verb tense and voice usage from different English academic writing textbooks. Interviewee L told me, "Usually we pay attention to abstract contents when we read English abstracts from international academic journals, while these issues [i.e. verb tense and voice] are too trivial for us to notice. But when we write English abstracts ourselves, these trivial things frequently come out and interrupt our normal thinking." When I presented them with authentic samples from my EJ sub-corpus, all four interviewees felt a bit surprised as it turned out that international writers also use past and perfect tenses in their abtracts, albeit with certain peculiarities of usage.

The interviewees also expressed concerns about finite subordinate clause usage, even though they could not confidently point out the usage differences between their own writing and those of international abstracts. Although hardly any PhD students expressed concerns related to word or phrase usage, and none of the four interviewees expressed any concerns about first person pronoun usage, this question nevertheless arose when I presented them with the phraseologies of *we* and *our* as identified in my corpus analysis and highlighted the different usage preferences of international and Chinese writers. The interviewees indicated that they had never thought about abstract writing from this phraseological perspective before. They responded that they would typically choose whatever collocates they were familiar with. Thus, they never realized that there were collocating patterns conventionally used by international writers. I speculate that questionnaire and interview participants' understanding of this language issue was that it was inconsequential, and not an area that needed urgent attention.

Questionnaire and interview participants were even less concerned with writing differences between various academic disciplines. My interviewees told me that there probably are differences between disciplines. However, given that Finance and Accounting are closely related disciplines, and given that my data do not reveal huge differences between Finance and Accounting in terms of rhetorical structures or lexicogrammatical usage, this issue was not considered so urgent as other issues and was not pursued any further.

For the last question, PhD students and expert interviewees alike both emphasised the importance of having well written and authentic abstract writing examples to

hand and/or extracting and summarising the essential abstract writing practices of international academics. On this point, their replies could be seen as criticisms of the EAP teaching materials (such as textbooks) in current EAP writing courses. And in turn, I also see this as giving credence to my original motivations for undertaking the research described in this thesis. While all of my four interviewees were aware that the abstracts they had written themselves were different from abstracts published in international prestigious journals. However, none of them could articulate any of these differences clearly or specifically. One thing they did confirm, however, was that it was totally inadequate to rely on themselves to identify international abstract writing conventions. They all believed that this was an inefficient approach, and that formal training was necessary to instruct teachers/researchers how to write appropriate academic English abstracts. Such seminars could provide university teachers and researchers with a platform from which they could communicate with other scholars, learn from authentic samples in their respective disciplines and master appropriate and internationally accepted writing conventions. As interviewee H put it: "We need such seminars or training urgently, as we do not have such formal training. But more importantly, I do not want to stop again and again when writing my own English abstracts, as a result of not being well versed in the internationally conventional writing styles, and struggling to recall what I have noticed in international RA abstracts before."

## 8.4 Summary

In this chapter, I have analysed the responses from questionnaire and interview surveys carried out in support of the current research. Using both questionnaires and interviews, I have explored a sample of Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers' views about English abstract writing. I have found some possible explanations for at least some of the writing differences identified by my research, and I have verified my textual findings from the writers' own perspectives. Contextual analysis, in other words, has not only helped me to arrive at a better understanding of my textual analysis data but also to provide relevant explanations for these textual findings. In particular, my questionnaire and interview participants have provided insights into their writing situations, their level of awareness about the rhetorical and lexico-grammatical characteristics of the RA abstract genre, and their concerns about RA abstract writing.

I have now completed all of the analyses that I planned to carry out for this thesis. In my corpus-based analyses I found many interesting contrasts between international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers, including both differences in rhetorical structures and lexico-grammatical features. The findings of these studies have been substantially corroborated and confirmed by the survey data presented in this chapter. In combination, these two analyses have provided a relatively comprehensive picture of Chinese writers needs and difficulties in writing English RA abstracts, which may thus act as a basis both for further research in genre studies and as a basis for more effective pedagogic instruction.

# CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

The overall aim of this thesis was to investigate how closely the rhetorical move structure and lexico-grammatical characteristics of English-language abstracts in Chinese-language academic journals meet the international writing conventions as set by abstracts published in prestigious English-medium international academic journals. In brief, the answer is that they do not correspond very closely at all; on the contrary, the thesis has identified some very substantial differences between the typical English-language abstract writing practices of Chinese academics and those of their international peers. It has been argued that these differences may hamper Chinese academics' attempts to communicate their research and ideas to international audiences, and in so doing may thus also hamper the Chinese government's broader aim of promoting China as a research superpower for the 21st century.

This final chapter begins with a brief reflection on the overall achievements of the thesis. I will then review the main findings of the research, relating them to each of the research questions stated in the first chapter of this thesis. I will then briefly discuss main implications for EAP teaching, and finally bring the thesis to a close by considering directions for further research.

## 9.1 Main achievements of the research

This thesis has contributed new knowledge to the now burgeoning sub-field of ESP genre analysis focusing on the research article abstract genre. Although there have been several previous cross-cultural studies of this genre, most of these have been from a 'contrastive rhetoric' perspective, and have tended to lack the detailed textual analyses provided by the current study. And while there have been some previous English-English abstract comparison studies in the Chinese context, most of these studies have only scratched the surface. At the very least, my research can confidently claim to have provided a far more comprehensive and methodologically varied analysis of English RA abstract writing practices among Chinese academics than has been attempted before. My research has combined textual and contextual perspectives on Chinese academics' English RA abstract writing practices in order to develop

a richly detailed and yet quantitatively rigorous account of both how and why Chinese Finance and Accounting scholars write as they do when faced with the task of writing abstracts in English. This detailed picture will be of theoretical interest to genre analysts, and of practical interest to EAP practitioners whose task it is to help their students write abstracts in ways which will help them to participate fully in their international disciplinary discourse communities.

The research reported in this thesis is also of considerable methodological interest in its own right, in that it provides a model for future researchers who are interested in using corpus-based approaches in genre analysis. Furthermore, the thesis provides ample demonstration of the value of such methodology, as it revealed not only the move sequence patterns typically used by Chinese and international Finance and Accounting academics, but also a number of pervasive differences in the move sequence preferences of writers in these two groups. It would be difficult or perhaps even impossible to obtain such findings from an entirely traditional manual analysis of a small set of exemplar texts.

The thesis has also demonstrated how keyness analysis can be used to study lexico-grammatical patterns, rather than just individual words, in both generic texts as a whole and in the individual rhetorical moves that structure these texts. By comparing word class distributions across large corpora of abstracts written by international and Chinese academics, the thesis has been able to identify substantial and statistically significant differences in the lexico-grammatical choices that these two groups of writers typically make when composing RA abstracts.

Finally, although this thesis has been more strongly motivated by practical concerns than theoretical ones, I believe that it is also of theoretical interest. As we have seen, many of the Chinese academics who participated in my questionnaire and interview research strongly feel that the English-language abstracts that they have written themselves tend to sound ‘odd’ or unidiomatic when compared to abstracts published by other authors in prestigious international English-medium journals in their research fields, but are not able to pinpoint exactly what it is about their abstract texts that is falling short of international writing conventions. The research reported in this thesis provides a possible explanation for why this is so: it turns out that there is no big or obvious linguistic difference or small set of big and obvious differences for writers to point to. On the contrary, the differences between Chinese and international abstracts identified by my research are extremely numerous, extremely

varied, and – perhaps most important of all – often extremely subtle. Differences such as the use of *which* instead of *that*, or *the study* instead of *our study*, or of the use of past tense instead of present tense, may seem so minor in themselves that they are hardly worth noting at all, but taken together, such small differences may add up to an overall impression of 'oddness' that is very pervasive despite being difficult to account for. Indeed, some of the differences that I have identified in my study may not be open to conscious notice at all; to take just one example from the current study, we noted in Chapter 4 that Chinese abstract writers often construct 'move cycles' featuring 'purpose' and 'methodology' moves, whereas international abstract writers more commonly construct such cycles out of 'methodology' and 'result' moves. It seems extremely unlikely that either Chinese or international writers would be consciously aware of such differences, and yet it is also very possible that they are aware of such differences at a subconscious level, and that this will contribute to their overall assessment of whether an abstract sounds 'odd' or not to them. In summary, then, the main theoretical contribution of the thesis is that it suggests that judgments about the idiomaticity or non-idiomaticity of a genre text may be based on a very large and complex set of small and subtle observations, none of which is decisive in itself, and some of which are not even available to conscious inspection.

## 9.2 Review of research questions

In the discussion that follows, I will return to each of the research questions posed at the beginning of the thesis, and provide a brief summary of the answers to each of these questions that have emerged from my empirical studies.

### 9.2.1 First research question

The first research question posed by this thesis was:

1. ***To what extent do the rhetorical move structures of abstracts in international and Chinese academic journals in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting conform to the conventional abstract rhetorical move structure model proposed by Swales and Feak (2009)?***

To answer this question, I started off by carrying out a comparison of the most frequent 'move sequences' in each of my sub-corpora. Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers could be described as using a larger, but also more piecemeal and scattered, set of move sequence patterns in comparison to international writers. When a comparison was made among academics within one discipline, I found that the international and Chinese academic writers within Finance executed a total of just five same-move sequences, while Chinese Accounting writers executed a total of seven same-move sequences. I also detected some differences in single move usage in the comparison study of move sequences. These were particularly associated with in the 'background' move and the 'purpose-methodology' sequence, a 'reverse sequence' (as I have termed it) favoured by Chinese writers. These differences laid a foundation for the following single move comparison between international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers.

I then went on to examine and compare each move individually. Among my findings pertaining to single moves, the most interesting one relates to the different move cycle preferences found in 'methodology' moves. Chinese academics preferred to cycle 'methodology' moves with 'purpose' moves, in the reverse sequence mentioned above, while international writers preferred to cycle 'methodology' and 'result' moves. This would seem to suggest that abstracts written by international writers have a tendency to be result-oriented, while Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers' abstracts are more purpose-oriented. With the final move of 'conclusion/recommendation', at the first sight there seemed to exist no salient differences between international and Chinese abstract writers' texts. When further divided into 'conclusion' and 'recommendation' sub-moves, however, I found that in comparison with international academic writers, Chinese academic writers prefer to make recommendations rather than offer concrete conclusions at the end of their abstracts, even though this results in what Santos (1996; cf. Huang, 2018) refers to as 'status loss', that is, a weaker representation of the strength and importance of the researcher's contribution to knowledge in the field.

Overall, the answer to the first research question is that the rhetorical move structures of abstracts in international and Chinese academic journals in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting conform to the conventional abstract rhetorical move structure model proposed by Swales & Feak to a limited degree only; there are several important areas of divergence, all of which may hamper Chinese academics' attempts to 'hook' international

readers, in Hyland and Tse's (2005b) terms.

### 9.2.2 Second research question

The second research question posed by this thesis was:

2. ***Are there any characteristic lexico-grammatical features associated with each move in abstracts written by each of the above mentioned groups, and are there any notable similarities and/or differences in the patterns of linguistic feature usage across the two groups of writers?***

This question involved carrying out a comparison of key lexico-grammatical features across my EJ and CJ corpora. I used keyness analyses to identify both similarities and differences between Chinese and International abstract writers in terms of their lexico-grammatical preferences both in individual moves and in abstracts more generally. I was also able to identify from this analysis two sets of lexico-grammatical features underused by Chinese abstract writers for further contrastive study.

Firstly, I examined and compared key word class item lists representing lexico-grammatical found to be particularly strongly associated with individual moves. A number of significant differences were noted, such as differences in first person and third person usage, differences in verb selection, etc. I then compared EJ and CJ abstracts at the whole-text level, once again finding a number of important differences in lexico-grammatical usage preferences across the two groups of writers. Among other things, Chinese academic writers tended to underuse adverbs and comparative adjectives, and tended to overuse singular nouns and/or proper nouns, third person verbs and modals in comparison to their international peers. Finally, I selected first person pronouns and finite subordinate clauses as two salient lexico-grammatical features for further investigation.

Regarding the first of these sets of lexico-grammatical features, I found that international Finance and Accounting academic writers not only adopted more plural first person pronouns than did Chinese writers, but they also utilised more varied and sophisticated collocates. For instance, international writers preferred the noun collocate *evidence* and the finite subordinate clause collocate *whether*. When comparing the five most commonly used phraseological patterns, international Finance and Accounting academic writers used the first

person plural pronoun *we* mainly in 'purpose' and 'result' moves. International and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers shared similar conventional usage preferences in 'purpose' moves, but in 'result' moves, international academic writers used some patterns that were different from their Chinese counterparts, such as the patterns ***we show that***, and ***we find/provide evidence that***.

For the other plural first person pronoun *our*, though both international and Chinese academic writers used this pronoun mainly in 'result' and 'conclusion' moves, there were a few differences in the phraseological patterns typically used here as well. My comparative analysis of phraseological patterns also found evidence of a preference among Chinese academic writers for using past tense verbs; specifically, the phraseological patterns "we found that" and "we found out". This form of usage was also verified by findings related to the contrastive study of finite subordinate clauses. This trait seemed to suggest that a few Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers preferred to use past and perfect tense verb forms when stating their research outcomes. This is yet another salient writing difference from international academic writers.

In my study of finite subordinate clauses reported in Chapter Seven, I firstly examined and compared various types of finite subordinate clauses in 100 randomly selected abstract texts from the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. It was found that international Finance and Accounting academic writers used more finite clauses than their Chinese counterparts did. I then investigated the usage of three major types of finite clauses in abstracts written by international and Chinese academics. For nominal clauses, I found that although Chinese academic writers shared some writing conventions with international writers, such as the preferred use of object clauses in abstract writing, there were some differences as well. One of these differences was in the antecedent selection of an appositive clause. For relative clauses, I observed that there were some differences in the use of the conjunctive word *which* and in conjunctive adverbs across the two sets of writers. A closer comparison of adverbial clauses revealed that when international writers used adverbial clauses they co-selected from a wide range of conjunctive adverbs. Chinese academic writers, in contrast, preferred to use temporal adverbial clauses, and used the conjunctive word *when* without much variation. On the basis of these observations, I went on to identify three writing problems faced by Chinese writers when they used finite subordinate clauses. These were described as inappropriate clause connections, a lack of predicate verbs with finite clauses, and finite clause misuse.

In the second section of my finite subordinate clause analysis, I adopted Hyland and Tse's (2005a, 2005b) model to examine in detail evaluative *that* complement clauses across the EJ and CJ sub-corpora. Overall, my findings were quite similar to Hyland and Tse's. The majority of evaluative *that* complement clauses were used to present writers' research results by both sets of writers. Both international and Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers preferred epistemic stance evaluations and mainly used research act verbs in front of the *that* complement clause element. However, in the "Evaluative Source" *that*-clause sub-type, it was noted that international academic writers displayed a preference for the use of "Human" sources, while Chinese writers preferred the use of "Inanimate Source" noun phrases, such as *the research*, *this paper*, etc.

In both the first and second research questions, while I found some clear similarities between my EJ and CJ data, these were not as numerous or as striking as the differences found between them. It is these differences that matter to Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers, and cause them the most concerns. As Interviewee L (a Finance academic) stated, "I think my English abstracts are [grammatically] right. But they always look a bit different and sometimes even strange when compared with English abstracts from international journals." I believe that many Chinese academic writers would subscribe to the views expressed by Interviewee L. From a number of comparison studies undertaken in the course of my research, I was able to pinpoint and describe these differences, both in the rhetorical move structures and lexico-grammatical features. This achievement is important because, as we have seen, Chinese scholars such as Interviewee L do not have such a clear or detailed understandings of exactly where and how their writing differs from, and sounds 'strange' in comparison to, international norms and conventions for abstracts in their fields of study. They have a clear intuition that such differences exist, but they are not able to articulate exactly what these differences are. Therefore, my research has the potential to contribute to the setting of benchmarks for Chinese Finance and Accounting academics to follow, and thus improve their English abstract writing skills. This in turn may help Chinese academics to become more accepted as academic equals in the arena of their international academic discourse communities.

In the last section of each of my comparative analysis chapters, I have also briefly discussed and offered some possible reasons for the differences that my research has found. Some of these reasons have been from a macro perspective, noting such things as the possible

influence of both national abstract writing conventions and traditional Chinese rhetorical writing patterns. Other explanations have been from a more micro perspective, noting such possible contributory factors as insufficient EAP writing training, out of date academic writing instructional materials, and/or the use of direct translation strategies. I do concede that these discussions have been brief and speculative and do not in themselves answer the underlying question of why Chinese writers write abstracts as they do, but I hope that these discussions will act as a catalyst for further research into these issues, in the hope that their further exploration and investigation will also contribute to the goal of improving Chinese academic writers' English abstract writing proficiency.

### 9.2.3 Third research question

The third and final research that this thesis posed was:

3. ***How do Chinese Finance and Accounting academics view the process of writing abstracts in English?***

As we saw in Chapter Eight, answering this question required me to exchange textual analysis for contextual analysis. I conducted questionnaires with Finance and Accounting PhD students who were also attending an EAP writing course at SWUFE, and interviews with four teachers/academic researchers from the Schools of Finance and Accounting at the same university in China. The information gathered from my questionnaires and interviews provided fresh and contextually rich new perspectives on the abstract writing practices of Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers, and in particular on these writers' own perceptions of these practices. The questionnaire and interview participants all held the view that the English RA abstracts that they wrote were 'their own' writing; that is, these abstracts reflected their own understandings of how English abstracts should be written. While the four interviewees and most questionnaire participants held a positive attitude towards the activity of English abstract writing, this attitude did not help to eliminate writing differences or ease their anxieties about English academic writing. With regards to both abstract rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical features, it was noted that participants highlighted abstract writing issues and problems that echoed the differences that I found in my textual analyses of the CJ sub-corpus. Interestingly, however, they were not able to make productive use of their

awareness of such issues when actually engaged in the writing process. Finally, questionnaire and interview participants also pointed to some broader English abstract writing issues and questions, most notably the (as they saw it) inadequate coverage of abstract writing skills development in EAP writing courses and seminars.

### 9.3 Practical applications of the research

As I stated in the Introduction Chapter, my initial motivation for carrying out the research reported in this thesis was a pedagogic one; as an academic writing teacher at SWUFE, I am keen to help the Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers with whom I work to improve their English abstract writing proficiency. I believe that my research findings have a number of possible pedagogic and other practical applications. For example, they could be used as a reference for Chinese journal (English-language) editors; or they could be used as comparison materials for translation studies. Above all, my research findings could form the basis of detailed and comprehensive EAP abstract writing courses that could be taught in Chinese universities. As Salager-Meyer (2014, p.81) has recently argued, academics working in non-anglophone countries should not be expected to figure out how to write abstracts by themselves; rather, "universities should … be responsible for training researchers ... to become acquainted with the culture of academic publishing and written communication skills ... both in the scholars' L1 and in English." Therefore, taking into consideration my interviewees' demands for EAP abstract writing instruction in particular, I would like to put forward some pedagogical recommendations and applications that emerge from my research. These are as follows:

1) Drawing on the detailed insights and descriptions provided by corpus-based research such as that carried out for this thesis, EAP teachers should teach their students about abstract writing differences in terms of both characteristic rhetorical moves and characteristic lexico-grammatical features. Relating more specifically to the findings of my study, the following insights could all be presented as key teaching points:
    a. Finance and Accounting abstracts are result-oriented, rather than purpose-oriented. Thus, EAP abstract writing teachers should emphasise the importance of the 'result' move in abstract writing;

b. The normal and conventional pattern of 'move cycling' in RA abstracts (in Finance and Accounting, at least) is 'methodology-result'. Thus, EAP abstract writing teachers should present this move cycle type to their learners, and advise them to avoid using other cycling patterns such as the "sandwich" pattern identified in Chapter four;
c. EAP abstract writing teachers should remind learners to explicitly present their research applications/implications in the last move of an abstract;
d. Learners should be encouraged to view first person pronouns in academic abstract writing as an important rhetorical device for explicitly presenting themselves. Thus, EAP abstract writing teachers should help learners to overcome any aversion they might have towards 'individualistic' forms of expression, and to understand that self-promotional strategies are an essential part of contemporary academic communication. Teachers should also encourage learners to pay attention to the collocates and commonly used phraseological patterns associated with first person pronouns in English RA abstracts;
e. The evaluative *that* construction is quite significant in abstract writing (as it is in other genres of academic writing). EAP abstract writing teachers should instruct learners in the appropriate use of finite subordinate clauses, paying particular attention to the special usages of clauses in abstracts, which relate to the general need for brevity in this genre.

2) While the current research shows that it is possible to make generalizations about abstract writing conventions that are relevant to more than one discipline (at least when the disciplines in question are relatively closely related, as was the case in my study), teachers should also provide learners with more discipline-specific observations, and encourage them to be aware of particular points of usage that apply in their own fields. Drawing on the findings of my study, for example, the following points could be presented to learners:
   a. Abstracts in Accounting are usually longer and occupy more (complete) rhetorical moves than Finance abstracts;
   b. Finance abstracts tend to be concise, and often omit 'background' moves;
   c. Finance writers tend to use ***we show that*** together with ***we find that*** in presenting their research results;
   d. Accounting abstracts contain more finite subordinate clauses, as they are usually

longer than Finance abstracts.

## 9.4 Limitations of the research

Inevitably, the research reported in this thesis has a number of limitations, the most important of which will be identified and discussed here. The first limitation concerns the fact that I only selected two academic disciplines for my research. And although Finance and Accounting are two distinctive disciplines, they are nevertheless closely-related to each other. Thus, this research did not present as many disciplinary differences as might have been found if I had analysed more disciplines, and/or disciplines which are more radically different from each other. In mitigation, it should be noted that these narrow disciplinary choices relate to my own working context as a lecturer at a university specializing in Finance and Economics disciplines. Furthermore, it has been interesting to note that disciplinary differences can be observed even when making comparisons between closely related fields; in this sense, the current study could be argued to be more a stricter test of the 'disciplinary differences' hypothesis than is usually done in EAP research.

The second limitation concerns the linguistic realizations of each rhetorical move. In Chapter Five, when studying and comparing significant linguistic features of rhetorical moves, I only examined the key word classes in each individual move. However, it would also be interesting to examine and compare individual words within those key word classes. This would yield a more detailed and complete understanding of linguistic realizations of each rhetorical move in my corpora of abstract texts. I hope to take this challenge up in future research.

Finally, the biggest limitations come from the surveys I conducted. First of all, the numbers of questionnaire and interview participants were quite limited — I only obtained the consent of 30 students and 4 academic researchers as survey participants. Secondly, only Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers participated in these surveys; I did not obtain survey or interview data from international peer writers. In future it would be particularly interesting to seek the perspectives of English non-native writers, in order to investigate whether they have encountered similar writing issues as Chinese academic writers, or whether any of the issues identified in the current research are specific to the Chinese context. Similarly, the limited survey resources confined my understanding from other perspectives,

such as those of journal editors, and/or international academic audiences.

### 9.5 Direction for future research

Inevitably, it must be conceded that there are some inadequacies and limitations in the current research; however, these weaknesses point to avenues for further exploration in future research.

Firstly, as presented in Chapter Five, there are numerous statistically significant lexico-grammatical features in my data, and it was only possible within the space available for me to investigate two of these in any detail. In future research, I would like to explore and investigate other salient linguistic features in my data, such as hedges and boosters (as shown in Table 5.1, modal verbs are overused by Chinese writers in comparison to their international counterparts), and/or verb tense and voice selection (as also shown in Table 5.1, there are indications that past participles are also overused by Chinese writers).

Secondly, I would like to extend the scope of my analysis to other Economics and/or Business disciplines. Studying related disciplines more extensively and thoroughly, I could thereby help to create discipline-specific research communities for English abstract writing. With a better understanding of abstract writing conventions and appreciation of writing differences in Economics and/or Business disciplines, I could also better apply my research in my teaching practice, and set up a range of EAP abstract writing courses/seminars that offer more targeted instruction to scholars in particular disciplines.

Thirdly, there is scope for investigation into the issue of Chinese-English translation, which has only been very briefly touched on in this thesis. Having to conduct my research among people with varying levels of English proficiency, I was mindful to ask myself to what extent did the participants in my research study need help with translation. I was curious about (but did not have the opportunity to investigate) whether writers' translation practices were limited only to individual words/phrases/clauses using on-line translation tools, as my questionnaire and interview participants told me, or whether they needed to have sentences or even larger chunks of texts translated and/or edited with external assistance. A future study could explore such issues in more detail, by comparing Chinese abstracts with English abstracts, both written by Chinese writers, with the objective of identifying the amount of translation involved in the production of these texts.

Fourthly and finally, it was reported in Chapter 8 that Chinese academics feel strongly that their abstracts 'sound odd', and it has been suggested in this thesis that this perception may hamper their chances of being taken seriously by international peers. But to what extent is this pessimistic view actually warranted? Do Chinese academics' abstracts actually strike international readers as unidiomatic? Can they tell which is written by a Chinese academic and which is not? There is a clear need for a more 'reader-reception' oriented to check this assumption by investigating international readers views of abstracts written by Chinese academics.

## 9.6 Summary

Motivated by my colleagues in the Schools of Finance and Accounting at SWUFE, and also partly inspired by Cao and Xiao's (2013a, 2013b) contrastive studies, I have chosen the genre of RA abstract as my research object. I believe that this research is a relatively comprehensive study of the RA abstract genre as it is practiced by Chinese and international writers. It has filled some gaps in the previous literature on the abstract genre, and has attempted to analyze and compare abstract texts from some relatively new perspectives. In bringing this thesis to a close, I hope that my research will form the basis for further related studies and encourage further detailed work on academic abstract writing in the future. I also hope that my research findings will usefully feed into the construction and development of improved EAP writing courses devoted to the academic English RA abstract genre. Given the rapid development of Chinese academic research in recent years, and the Chinese government's ambitions to boost China's international research profile across the disciplines, I hope that my research findings may play a role in helping Chinese academics to become more fully integrated into their international academic discourse communities, and that a greater number of Chinese research articles will be accepted for publication in international academic journals in the future.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1 Sample text from Chinese Finance academic journals

金融论坛 2014 年第 9 期(总第 225 期)

### 风险投资与创业企业的博弈分析

蒋 伟 李 蓉

[摘 要] 本文针对风险投资与创业企业合作的三个阶段分别建立三个博弈模型,对二者的关系进行研究。研究发现,创业企业家的私人收益是影响合作效果的重要因素。在风险资本初次投资阶段,当私人收益不足以超过隐瞒信息所付出的成本时,创业企业家会拿出高质量的项目进行融资;在继续投资阶段,风险投资方通过有效的合约设计,适度提高对创业企业家的奖励水平,以降低道德风险并实现双赢;在退出阶段,当企业发展较好时 IPO 是最优的方案,风险资本在获取资本增值的同时还获得声誉收益,创业企业不仅获得更大的融资平台,创业企业家也获得高额的私人收益。

[关键词] 风险投资;风险资本;创业企业;道德风险;博弈分析

[文章编号] 1009-9190(2014)09-0035-05 [JEL 分类号] L29 [文献标志码] A

### An Analysis of the Game of Venture Investment and Start-Up Enterprise

JIANG Wei LI Rong

[**Abstract**] This paper constructs three game models to analyze the relationships between venture investment and start-up enterprise in three stages of cooperation. It is found that entrepreneur's private return is a key factor to influence cooperation effects. In the initial investment stage of venture capital, the entrepreneur of start-up enterprise will offer high-quality projects that need financing if the private return does not exceed the costs due to concealing information; in the continued investment stage of the capital, the venture investor designs effective contracts to increase incentive for the entrepreneur moderately so as to reduce moral hazard and achieve a win-win; in the withdrawal stage of the capital, IPO is the best scheme on condition that the enterprise develops smoothly, the venture capital obtains both appreciation and reputation benefits, the start-up enterprise obtains greater financing platforms and the entrepreneur gets high private return.

[**Key words**] venture investment; venture capital; start-up enterprise ; moral hazard; game analysis

#### 一、引 言

伴随着科学技术的日益发展和社会的不断进步,新技术、新需求、新市场孕育了大量创业企业。但是在宏观经济飞速发展和专业化分工不断细化的今天,创业企业的生存和发展面临着从未有过的不确定性,对风险控制有着较高要求的银行等传统的金融机构难以为飞速发展的创业活动提供足够的资金支持,由此追寻高风险、高回报的风险投资便应运而生。风险投资在向创业企业提供资本支持的同时,也在公司战略、财务管理等方面向

## Appendix 2 Tree Tagger Tag Set (58 tags)

| POS Tag | Description | Example |
|---|---|---|
| CC | coordinating conjunction | *and, but, or, &* |
| CD | cardinal number | *1, three* |
| DT | determiner | *the* |
| EX | existential there | *there is* |
| FW | foreign word | *d'oeuvre* |
| IN | preposition/subord.conj. | *in, of, like, after, whether* |
| IN/that | complementizer | *that* |
| JJ | adjective | *green* |
| JJR | adjective, comparative | *greener* |
| JJS | adjective, superlative | *greenest* |
| LS | list marker | *(1),* |
| MD | modal | *could, will* |
| NN | noun, singular or mass | *table* |
| NNS | noun plural | *tables* |
| NP | proper noun, singular | *John* |
| NPS | proper noun, plural | *Vikings* |
| PDT | predeterminer | *both the boys* |
| POS | possessive ending | *friend's* |
| PP | personal pronoun | *I, he, it* |
| PP$ | possessive pronoun | *my, his* |
| RB | adverb | *however, usually, here, not* |
| RBR | adverb, comparative | *better* |
| RBS | adverb, superlative | *best* |
| RP | particle | *give up* |
| SENT | end punctuation | *?, !, .* |
| SYM | symbol | *@, +, *, ^, /, =* |
| TO | to | *to go, to him* |
| UH | interjection | *uhhuhhuhh* |
| VB | verb *be*, base form | *be* |
| VBD | verb *be*, past | *was/were* |
| VBG | verb *be*, gerund/participle | *being* |
| VBN | verb *be*, past participle | *been* |
| VBZ | verb *be*, pres, 3rd p. sing | *is* |
| VBP | verb *be*, pres non-3rd p. | *am/are* |
| VD | verb *do*, base form | *do* |
| VDD | verb *do*, past | *did* |
| VDG | verb *do* gerund/participle | doing |
| VDN | verb *do*, past participle | *done* |
| VDZ | verb *do*, pres, 3rd per. sing | *does* |
| VDP | verb *do*, pres, non-3rd per. | *do* |
| VH | verb *have*, base form | *have* |
| VHD | verb *have*, past | *had* |
| VHG | verb *have*, gerund/participle | having |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| VHN | verb *have*, past participle | *had* |
| VHZ | verb *have*, pres 3rd per. sing | *has* |
| VHP | verb *have*, pres non-3rd per. | *have* |
| VV | verb, base form | *take* |
| VVD | verb, past tense | *took* |
| VVG | verb, gerund/participle | *taking* |
| VVN | verb, past participle | *taken* |
| VVP | verb, present, non-3rd p. | *take* |
| VVZ | verb, present 3d p. sing. | *takes* |
| WDT | wh-determiner | *which* |
| WP | wh-pronoun | *who, what* |
| WP$ | possessive wh-pronoun | *whose* |
| WRB | wh-adverb | *where, when* |
| : | general joiner | *;*, -, -- |
| $ | currency symbol | *$, £* |

## Appendix 3 Explanation of scripts by UNIX tools

```
~$ cat input.txt | tr “ ” “\012” | sed ‘s/^.*_\(.*$\)/\1/’ > output.txt
```

- Computer went through the whole text file (original abstract texts with POS tags) and produced its content to the “standard output” (Wynne, 1997, Chapter 3) with the same order.
- I used the pipeline | to send the output (original abstract texts with POS tags) into another Unix command tool *tr*, an abbreviation form for translating and operating tool to change or remove some specified characters into its output (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Unix_programs).

  The tr “ ” “\012” (with escaped character \, 012 here is “the octal code for the linefeed character”) (Wynne, 1997, Chapter 11), is a useful script to transform characters and/or string literals into a “vertical list of words (characters)” (ibid). In this command, I left a blank space inside the double quotation marks, by this means telling computer to get rid of all blank space, retain and then start new lines only with words, numbers, punctuation, together with underlines (as one obvious feature for the later tool *sed* to handle) and tags (following the command “\012”). By this means, it formed featured and organized lines as any characters+_+any characters (tags).
- In next step, I replaced each line by its third part (the part after the underline, which are the POS tags), in which way I could remove all concrete words, numbers and punctuation, and finally save the text only with annotations. This time I used the tool *sed* and its most well-known substitute command *s* (http://www.grymoire.com/Unix/Sed.html) to complete this task. As a “stream oriented editor”, *sed* is a powerful tool primarily for texts modifying and editing (Dougherty and Robbins, 1997, p3).

  Its mostly-used command *s* is a replacement command, which is to alter all the regular expression cases into new ones; and the fundamental command syntax I would use is ‘s/A/B/’, in which B is the new value to substitute A in its place (Robbins and Beebe, 2005).

  In this command, A consisted of three parts: the part prior to the sign _, the sign _, and the part after (tags). For the first part, starting from the beginning of a line, I wanted to include any character until the sign _. Thus I used the meta-characters ‘.*’, which

indicated every character (and any number of it) (Dougherty and Robbins, 1997). Then accordingly, the part after the sign _ begins with .* and extends to the end of a line. For this script, the most important part was the third part (the part after the underlines, for which I wanted to retain as tags) because I needed to place the substitute instruction to this part, as I would replace 'XYZ' by 'Z'. Therefore here I used \( \) to enclose this part. The escaped round brackets would save the contained pattern into some specified space (maximally nine patterns could be held in such way) and later it could be "replayed in substitutions" by the escaped number 1 to 9 (Dougherty and Robbins, 1997, p361).

Besides complicated part A, in this script B was just a simple escaped 1, which was a back-reference and indicated all the items in the first escaped round bracket. Back-referencing is quite helpful in regular expression command syntax: it is telling computer to "match whatever was matched by the nth earlier parenthesized subexpression" (Robbins and Beebe, 2005, p39). In this case, I just told the computer to get back to the first prior parenthesized subexpression, which was the part behind the sign _.

- Via this script, finally I got the output file and the task was finished: I saved and retained all the POS tags for the key word classes analyses.
- The last and only issue concerned about this script was that I did not transform the characters (retained POS tagging) from vertical line form to horizontal line form. Because I thought the only thing matters was the key word classes counting and had nothing to do with the text forms.

## Appendix 4 Participant information sheet

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

**Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics**

参与者信息须知

研究题目： *English-language Abstracts in Finance and Accounting Journals: A Corpus-based Comparison of International and Chinese L1 Writers*

**参与者信息须知表**是告知您此项研究的背景，目的，调查问卷/访谈参与者的选拔，以及您撤出此项研究的权利。您在**参与者同意书**上的签字表明你已经收到这份**参与者信息须知**，有机会考虑所有关于此项研究的信息，并随时向研究者提出您的相关问题。请认真阅读此**信息须知表**，并决定是否参与此项调查。

研究背景

此项研究会研究及对比在学术期刊上发表的英文摘要，对比的其中一个为中国金融和会计专业作者发表在中文期刊上的英文摘要，对比项则为国际金融和会计专业作者发表在国际顶尖期刊上的英文摘要。这项研究是为了找出在以上两种期刊发表的英文摘要是否存在特有的差异（包括摘要的体裁结构以及词汇语法上的特征），以期获得中国专业作者的注意，并由此帮助他们提高英文摘要写作的效率，最终帮助他们写出国际学术圈要求的英文摘要，更加有效地在国际学术圈分享传播自己的研究成果。

研究目的

- 研究并找出发表在国际及中文金融和会计学科学术期刊上的英文摘要在体裁结构上的相似和不同之处；
- 研究并找出发表在国际及中文金融和会计学科学术期刊上的英文摘要在词汇语法特征上的相似和不同之处；
- 调查问卷和访谈的参与者是否曾经有过/意识到以上两点提到的英文摘要写作的不同之处

## 参与者选择

在这次调查问卷及访谈中，我需要中国的金融/会计的专业作者，他们曾经/正在/将会以期刊发表（中文或国际学术期刊）为目的来写英文摘要。

## 调查的参与

这项调查包括了调查问卷和访谈。如果您同意参与，您需要：

- 如果您是学术英语写作课的博士研究生，请参加调查问卷并回答相应问题；
- 如果您是西南财经大学金融/会计四名教师/学术研究者之一，请参加调查问卷预备研究，访谈并回答相应问题。

## 告知及撤出研究的权利

参与这项调查是完全自愿的。如果您决定参加调查，您也可以在 2017 年 6 月之前随时撤出。如果您同意参与，请您完成并交回**参与者同意书。**

## 保密性

所有您的个人信息及数据都会被保密，仅有研究者及她的导师会接触到这些信息。访谈的回答会以非匿名的方式提交；但是，在论文中您（调查问卷及访谈）的所有信息及数据都会以匿名的方式出现。这些匿名的信息及数据不会导致任何个人被辨认出。

## 可能的好处

- 此项研究会应用于教学中：研究的发现可以用于中国大学学术英语写作课程的建设。
- 参与者可以要求得到此论文的副本。

## 可能的危险

此项研究没有任何已知的危险。但是如果您还有任何顾虑，请随时联系研究者。

如果您还对此项研究有任何问题，请随时联系我。

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**Appendix 4 (con.) Participant information sheet**

**(English version)**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

**Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics**

# Participant Information Sheet

**Research title**: *English-language Abstracts in Finance and Accounting Journals: A Corpus-based Comparison of International and Chinese L1 Writers*

This *Participant Information Sheet* is to inform you the proposed research background, aims, selection of questionnaire/interview participants, and your right to not participate/withdraw from this research. Your signature on the *Consent Form* will signify that you have received this *Participant Information Sheet* and have had an opportunity to consider all the information, and raise any question to the researcher. Please take your time to read this *Sheet*, and then you decide whether to participate or not.

## Research background

This research studies and compares English-language abstracts written and published in academic journals. One is by Chinese Finance and Accounting academics writing for Chinese journals, and the other is by international Finance and Accounting academics writing for prestigious international journals. The purpose of the research is to identify characteristic differences (in both rhetorical structure and lexico-grammatical features) so that they may be drawn to the attention of Chinese academic writers, with the aim of improving their English abstract writing efficiency and thus helping them to meet the international academic community's expectations and thus more effectively disseminate their research internationally.

## Research aims

- To study and find out the similarities and/or differences of rhetorical move structures of abstracts in international and Chinese academic journals in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting;

- To study and find out the similarities and/or differences of lexico-grammatical features of abstracts in international and Chinese academic journals in the disciplines of Finance and Accounting;
- Whether questionnaire/interview participants have had/realized above-mentioned writing differences

**Selected participants**

In the questionnaire and interview surveys, I am looking for Chinese Finance/Accounting academic writers who wrote/are writing/will write English abstracts for publication purpose (with original research articles), in either Chinese or international academic journals.

**Participation in this survey**

This survey combines a questionnaire and an interview. If you agree to participate in the survey, you will need to:

- If you are a PhD student in the EAP writing class: take part in the questionnaire survey and responding to questions accordingly;
- If you are one of the four Finance/Accounting teachers/researchers in SWUFE: take part in the questionnaire pilot study, the interview survey and share your writing experience with the researcher.

**Informed consent and withdrawal**

Participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you are still free to withdraw (before the deadline of June, 2017) without giving any reasons. If you agree to take part, you are kindly required to return the signed *consent form* before participation into the questionnaire/interview.

**Anonymity and confidentiality**

All your personal details and data will be kept confidential, accessed only by the researcher and her supervisor for the purposes of this research. Your responses to the interview questions will be submitted non-anonymously; however, any quotation/sharing of your data (questionnaire/interview) will be in an anonymised form. And these anonymised data will not allow any individual to be identified or identifiable.

**Possible benefits**

- The research will have pedagogical application: research findings could be applied to form detailed and comprehensive EAP abstract writing courses in Chinese universities;
- Participants may request a copy of the thesis.

**Risks for participation**

Participation in this research does not involve any risk. But if you still have any concerns, please feel free to ask the researcher at any time.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me by email: NXZ528@bham.ac.uk or by telephone number: (0086)15908180314.

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**Appendix 5 Participant consent form**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

**Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics**

# 参与者同意书

研究题目：*English-language Abstracts in Finance and Accounting Journals: A Corpus-based Comparison of International and Chinese L1 Writers*

感谢您同意参与这项研究。在阅读了**告知书**以后，请完成这份**同意书**。如果您还有关于此项研究的任何问题，请随时联系研究者（或您的学术英语写作老师）。

- *在**告知书**中，我了解了此项研究（如研究性质，参与情况等），如果我还有关于此项研究的任何问题，我可以随时联系研究者。对此我完全了解。*
- *参与此项研究是基于完全自愿的立场。如果我决定退出此项研究，我可以在不告知原因的情况下，于2017 年6 月之前退出。如果我拒绝参加或退出，将不会引起任何不愉快，或影响日后研究者（或我的学术英语写作老师）对我的评价，更不会损及我的任何权利。对此我完全了解。*
- *数据（访谈的回答）会以非匿名的方式提交。但是，在论文中，所有调查问卷和访谈的参与者都会以匿名的方式出现（以姓氏的初始字母代替）；所有的数据也都会以匿名的方式出现。对此我完全了解。*

…….. …….. ……

参与者姓名 签名 日期

…….. …….. …… 研究者姓名 签名 日期

**Appendix 5 (con.) Participant consent form**

**(English version)**

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

**Department of English Language and Applied Linguistics**

## Participant Consent Form

**Title of research**: *English-language Abstracts in Finance and Accounting Journals: A Corpus-based Comparison of International and Chinese L1 Writers*

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this survey. Please complete this *Consent Form* after reading the *Information Sheet*. If you still need further explanations/clarification, please feel free to ask the researcher (or EAP writing teacher) before signing this *Consent Form*.

- *I understand the nature of the research, and if I have any question about the research, I am aware that I can get information from the researcher.*

- *My participation in this survey is voluntary. And I understand that if I no longer wish to participate in this research, I can withdraw from it before the deadline on June 2017 without giving any reason. There will be no negative consequence if I no longer wish to participate.*

- *I understand that my data (interview responses) will be submitted non-anonymously. However, all questionnaire and interview participants will be anonymous in the thesis (by use of initial letters of surnames), and all the data will be made anonymous in the research outputs.*

…….. …….. ……
Name of Participant Signed Date

…….. …….. ……
Name of Researcher Signed Date

## Appendix 6 Questionnaire

# 问卷调查

此问卷调查的目的是要了解中国财经科研工作者在学术论文的英文摘要写作中的情况和问题。问卷调查经过后期整理及分析后，其数据会（部分）用于研究者的博士论文中。
感谢您的时间与配合。
年龄_____ 性别_____
专业_____ 已写（发表）过几篇含英文摘要的学术论文_____

1. 您认为英文摘要的作用是？（可以多选）
简要概括学术论文☐ 吸引读者继续阅读学术论文☐ 增加我的论文录用机率☐
展示出学术论文的结构☐ 不知道，编辑（出版社）要求写☐
其它☐， 请说明_____
2. 基于不同的学科，您认为它们的英文摘要写作（结构及语言）是？
完全相同☐ 大体上相同，会有一些差异☐
有部分相同点，有部分不同点☐ 有很大差异，但也有相似的地方☐
完全不同☐ 不太清楚☐
3. 在英文摘要的写作中，您认为翻译占了多大的比例？
全篇文章☐ 大部分的句子☐
部分的句子和词☐ 个别的单词☐
4. 在您的英文摘要写作中，您最常采用的方法是？（例如：自己写作，机器翻译，请人修改，编辑润色等，以上选项可叠加）
_____
_____

一. 关于英文摘要的结构
1. 您认为一篇英文摘要大概需要写多少字？
100 字以内☐ 100--150 字☐ 150--200 字☐
200--250 字☐ 250--300 字☐ 300 字以上☐
2. 您了解英文摘要的结构吗？
很清楚☐ 知道一些☐ 完全不了解☐
3. 您认为在英文摘要的写作中，哪些部分是最重要，必须写入摘要中的？（可以多选）
背景知识介绍☐ 论文写作目的☐ 研究方法使用☐
研究结果展示☐ 结论、成果应用☐ 论文结构、框架☐
对论文的评价☐ 其它☐，请说明_____

4. 您了解英文摘要结构的顺序吗？
很清楚☐ 知道一些☐ 完全不了解☐
5. 如果您了解（一些）英文摘要的结构，请在下面列举出您使用的摘要结构
_____
6. 在英文摘要的写作中，您会使用到的句型有？（可以多选）
完整的句子☐ 从句，例如：宾语从句☐
分句，例如：using this method,☐ 其它☐ ，请说明_____
7. 在英文摘要的写作中，写哪些部分的时候您会使用其它句型（即不使用完整的句子）？
_____

二．关于英文摘要的第一人称使用

1. 在英文摘要的写作中，您会使用第一人称吗？（例如使用 we, I, our, my）

会□　　不会□

2. 如果上一题您选择的“会”，那么使用第一人称的频率是？

基本每句话都会用到□　很多□

一般□　　一般不会使用到□

3. 在不用第一人称的情况下，您会使用以下哪种方式进行替代？（可以多选）

第三人称（例如： this research/study）□　被动语态（例如： it is found that）□

无人称句□　　其它□，例如：_____

4. 您一般会在哪些部分使用第一人称？

背景知识介绍□　论文写作目的□　研究方法使用□

研究结果展示□　结论、成果应用□　论文结构、框架□

对论文的评价□　不分部分，全篇都使用□

其它□，请说明_____

5. 您一般会用什么动词搭配第一人称？

We/I: _____

Our:_____

6. 您一般会用什么句式搭配第一人称？（例如： we find that/our results show）

We/I：_____

Our: _____

三．关于英文摘要中的从句使用

1. 在英文摘要的写作中，您会使用从句吗？

会□　　不会□

2. 如果上一题您选择的“会”，那么使用从句的频率是？

基本每句话都会用到□　很多□

一般□　　一般不会使用到□

3. 在英文摘要的写作中，您会使用到的从句有？（可以多选）

宾语从句□　主语从句□　表语从句□

同位语从句□　定语从句□　状语从句□

4. 在英文摘要的写作中，您最常使用的从句是？（可以多选）

_____

5. 您一般会在哪些部分使用从句？

背景知识介绍□　论文写作目的□　研究方法使用□

研究结果展示□　结论、成果应用□　论文结构、框架□

对论文的评价□　不分部分，全篇都使用□

其它□，请说明_____

6. 在英文摘要的从句使用中，您会用到哪些引导词？（例如： that,which, whether,if,when,where,why,how,what,whatever,who,whom,whose,as）（可以多选）

_____

7. 在英文摘要的定语从句使用中，您一般会用 that 还是 which?

that□　　which□　　两个都会用□

8. 您觉得 whether 和 if 两个词，

使用一样，可以互换□　whether 常用于宾语从句□

if 常用于状语从句□　不太清楚具体的差别，哪个顺手就用哪个□

9. 在英文摘要的状语从句使用中，您会用到哪些连接词？（例如：because,as,since,when,while,until,after,before,whenever,where,wherever,if,as long

as, unless, in case, though, although, even if, even though, as if, so that, in order that, as as）（可以多选）

_____

_____

四. 关于英文摘要的写作培训

1. 目前，您是通过何种渠道了解到应如何写作英文摘要？（可以多选）

学术英语写作课程□　　出版社（编辑）的要求□

自己看国际学术期刊□　　国标文摘编写规则（GB6447-86）□

其它□，请说明_____

2. 您目前觉得在英文摘要的写作中，哪些方面是您急需解决的问题？（可以多选）

篇章结构□　　句子的衔接□　　句子的写作□

适当的用词□　　从句的使用□　　时态、语态的使用□

符合国际惯例的写法□　　不同学科的写法□

其它，请说明_____

3. 您认为英文写作老师还可以从哪些方面入手（或用哪些方式），帮助学生了解英文摘要写作的知识？

_____

_____

_____

谢谢！

**Appendix 6 (con.) Questionnaire**

**(English version)**

The purpose of this questionnaire is to have a better understanding of the situations and issues in English abstract writing by Chinese Finance and Accounting academic writers. All the questionnaire feedback will only be used (partly) in researcher's PhD thesis, after further sorting out and analyses.

Age_____ Sex_____

Discipline_____ Published academic articles (with English abstract)_____

**General questions about English abstract**

1. In your view, what are English abstracts' functions? (multi-selection)

   summary of research article□ attract readers and know my research□

   exhibition of research article structures□ do not know, (journal) requirement□

   Others, please state_____

2. Do you think English abstracts (including both rhetorical structures and lexico-grammatical features) in various academic disciplines are?

   the same□ almost the same, but still with a bit differences□

   some are the same, and some are different□

   big differences, but still with a bit similarities□ totally different□

   no idea□

3. How do you write your English abstracts? (such as: writing, computer translation, English language revision, editors' modification, etc.)

_____

_____

4. In your English abstract writing, what percentage do translation account for?

   the whole text□ most sentences and clauses□

   parts of sentences, clauses and words□ single phrases and words□

**One About rhetorical structures in English abstract writing**

1. In your view, how many words does an English abstract usually contain?

   within 100 words□ 100-150 words□ 150-200 words□

   200-250 words□ 250-300 words□ above 300 words□

2. Do you know the structures of English abstract?

   quite clear□ know some□ nothing□

3. In English abstract writing, which parts (moves) do you think are the most important? (multi selection)

   background information□ purpose statement□

   methodology employment□ result presentation□

   research conclusion/application□ article frame□

   others, please state_____

4. Do you know the move sequence of English abstract?

   quite clear□ know some□ nothing□

5. If you are aware of move sequences, what are the frequently used move sequences in your English abstract writing?

   _____

6. In English abstract writing, which type of sentence structures do you usually use?

   complete sentence□ subordinate clause□ participle clause□

   others, please state_____

7. In English abstract writing, when do you use other sentence structures (other than the complete sentence) (in which parts/moves)?

_____

**Two About first person pronouns usage in English abstract writing**

1. Do you use first person pronouns in English abstract writing? (such as we, I, our, my)

   Yes□ No□

2. If you choose "Yes"in lase question, the frequency is?

   almost in every sentence□ many□

   average□ rare□

3. Which alternative do you use to replace the first person pronouns in English abstract writing?

third person (such as: this research/study)□

passive voice (such as: it is found that)□ impersonal sentence□

others, please state_____

4. Usually in which move do you use the first person pronouns?

background□ purpose□ methodology□

result□ conclusion/recommendation□ frame□

evaluation□ in whole abstract, any move□

others, please state_____

5. Which verbs do you usually use to collocate with first person pronouns?

We/I: _____

Our: _____

6. Which phraseological patterns do you usually use to collocate with first person pronouns? (such as: we find that/our results show)

We/I: _____

Our: _____

**Three About finite subordinate clause usage in English abstract writing**

1. Do you use finite subordinate clauses in English abstract writing?

Yes□ No□

2. If you choose "Yes"in lase question, the frequency is?

almost in every sentence□ many□

average□ rare□

3. Which type of subordinate clause do you usually use in your English abstract writing?

object clause□ subject clause□ predicative clause□

appositive clause relative clause□ adverbial clause□

4. Which type of subordinate clause do you use most in English abstract writing?

_____

5. Which lead words do you usually use in English abstract finite subordinate clause writing? (such as, *that*, *which*,*whether*,*if*,*when*,*where*,*why*,*how*,*what*,*whatever*,*who*,*whom*,*whose*,*as*, etc.) (multi-selection)

_____

6. In relative clauses, do you usually use *that* or *which*?

   *that*□ *which*□ both of them□

7. Do you think the two words *whether* and *if*,

   same usage, can exchange□ whether mostly in object clause□

   if mostly in adverbial clause□ do not know differences, use at will□

8. Which conjunctions do you usually use in English abstract adverbial clause writing? (such as,*because*,*as*,*since*,*when*,*while*,*until*,*after*,*before*,*whenever*,*where*,*wherever*,*if*,*as long as*,*unless*,*in case*,*though*,*although*,*even if*,*even though*,*as if*,*so that*,*in order that*,*as as* etc.) (multi-selection)

_____

_____

**Four About English abstract writing training**

1. How do you learn about English abstract writing? (multi-selection)

   EAP writing course□ academic journals requirement□

   international academic journals by self reading□

   abstract compilation rules (GB6447-1986)□

   Others, please state_____

2. Which issues in English abstract writing are you now concerned most? (multi-selection)

   rhetorical structures□ sentence connection□ sentence writing□
   proper usage of words□ usage of finite subordinate clause□ tense and voice□
   international conventional writing□ disciplinary differences□
   Others_____

3. Can you suggest some ways by which the EAP writing teachers can help you improve English abstract writing (knowledge)?

_____

_____

_____

**Thank you for your time!**

## Appendix 7 Interview questions guideline

**第一部分**

1. 参阅问卷调查一般情况的问题；
2. 问题关于
   a) 英文摘要写作的目的（功能），
   b) 英文摘要写作的方式（是否涉及翻译）。

**第二部分**

1．参阅问卷调查第一部分问题；
2．问题关于
   a) 英文摘要的字数，
   b) 英文摘要的结构（语步），语步顺序，
   c) 英文摘要中主要用的句式。

**第三部分**

1．参阅问卷调查第二部分问题；
2． 问题关于
   a) 英文摘要中第一人称的使用，
   b) 第一人称的替代使用，
   c) 第一人称常用的动词搭配/常使用的句式搭配。

**第四部分**

1．参阅问卷调查第三部分问题；
2． 问题关于
a) 英文摘要中从句的使用情况，
b) 从句中常用引导词的使用，
c) 对于 that 引导的名词性从句，其评价功能的使用情况。

**第五部分**

1．参阅问卷调查第四部分问题

a) 是否会阅读英文顶级期刊中的摘要，

b) 是否注意到了这些摘要与自己英文摘要写作的差别，

c) 能否给出一些原因（写作差异）。

2．参阅问卷调查第五部分问题

a) 英文摘要写作中目前急需解决的问题，

b) 需要英文学术写作老师怎样的帮助？

**Appendix 7 (con.) Interview questions guideline**

**(English version)**

**Section one**

1. Referring to questionnaire General questions;
2. Generally, about

   a) purposes (functions) of English abstract writing,

   b) their ways of English abstract writing (also containing the translation issue).

**Section two**

1. Referring to questionnaire Part one questions;
2. Generally, about

   a) English abstract word numbers,

   b) English abstract rhetorical structure (moves), move sequences,

   c) Sentence forms usually used in English abstract writing.

**Section three**

1. Referring to questionnaire Part two questions;
2. Generally, about

   a) The first person pronoun usage in English abstract writing;

   b) The replacement for first person pronouns;

   c) Verb collocates/commonly used phraseological patterns for first person pronouns.

**Section four**

1. Referring to questionnaire Part three questions;
2. Generally, about

   a) Finite subordinate clause usage in English abstract writing,

   b) Conjunctive words usage in finite subordinate clause,

   c) Evaluative *that* complement clause usage.

**Section five**

1. Referring to questionnaire Part four questions

   a) Read the English abstracts from international prestigious English-language journals,

b) Notice the abstract writing differences from own writing,

c) Give some reasons for the writing differences.

2. Referring to questionnaire Part five questions

a) Issues most concerned in English abstract writing,

b) How can EAP writing teachers help?