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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Analysis of Move-Related Epistemic Stance in English and Chinese Abstracts by Chinese Second Language Learners

Siying Hu
School of Foreign Languages, Southwest Jiaotong University, Chengdu, China
Corresponding Author: Siying Hu, **E-mail**: 619849290@qq.com

| ABSTRACT
Based on the genre analysis approach, this study examines the consistency of epistemic stance information in the English and Chinese abstracts of 100 dissertations written by CSL (CSL) learners using the stance analysis framework proposed by Biber *et al.* (1999). It was found that the English-Chinese abstracts of dissertations written by CSL learners showed a similar structure of macro-moves. In terms of overall frequency, there are more awareness stance markers in Chinese abstracts than in English abstracts, but there are different degrees of non-consistency among the six categories of stance markers in each discourse move, which affects the credibility of the abstracts to a certain extent. This study aims to improve the awareness of CSL learners of epistemic stance markers, enhance their awareness of stance construction in cross-linguistic academic discourse, and improve the quality of their cross-language academic abstract writing.

| KEYWORDS
Dissertation abstracts; moves; epistemic stance; English-Chinese comparison

| ARTICLE INFORMATION
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1. Introduction

Academic discourse has traditionally been regarded as an objective and impartial presentation of scholarly knowledge. However, this viewpoint has been questioned and challenged by researchers (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990; Hyland, 2009; Harwood, 2005; Flowerdew, 2008). As research has progressed, scholars have come to recognize that academic discourse not only conveys objective factual information but also reflects the author's personal emotions, value judgments, and attitude assessments (Bazerman, 1988; Hyland, 1999; Biber, 2006), thereby enhancing the interpersonal interaction between authors and readers (Hyland, 2005; Xu Hongliang, 2011; Xu Fang, 2015). The expression of knowledge claims in academic discourse is highly contextualized, and the authors' linguistic choices can influence the acceptance of their work to some extent (Bazerman, 1988: 153-156). In recent years, the rhetorical devices used by authors to express personal opinions, attitudes, and emotions in the process of linguistic communication have received increasing attention from the academic community. Various synonymous terms have been used to conduct research in this field, including stance (Biber & Finegan, 1988; Barton, 1993; Hyland, 1999; Biber, 2006), evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), and appraisal (Martin *et al.*, 2000). These terms and research findings reflect the author's attitude and perspective towards propositions, highlighting the subjectivity of sociocultural contexts and interpersonal interactions. Among them, the concept of "stance" introduced by Biber & Finegan (1988, 1989) holds a prominent position in the academic field.

Biber *et al.* (1999) argue that stance is encoded in spoken/written language to express the author's personal emotions, viewpoints, attitudes, and value judgments (Biber & Finegan, 1988, 1989; Biber *et al.*, 1999). Based on different semantic functions, Biber *et al.* categorize stance into three subtypes: epistemic stance, attitude stance, and style stance (Biber *et al.*, 2004; Biber, 2006). In discourse, the author's judgments regarding the certainty and doubt, actuality and reality, limitations on a proposition, as well as

comments on the source of knowledge are considered manifestations of epistemic stance (Biber, 1990, 2006; Marín-Arrese, 2011; Uccelli *et al.*, 2013; Wang Ruijie & Liu Jianxi, 2018). The linguistic features that express epistemic stance in academic discourse, known as epistemic stance markers, reflect the author's position or self-positioning regarding the validity of their claims and commitments (Biber *et al.*, 1999; Marín-Arrese, 2009, 2011). Examining epistemic stance markers is crucial for studying academic stance information (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1983; Gray & Biber, 2012: 19). Numerous scholars have conducted relevant research on epistemic stance (Gray & Biber, 2012; Marie-France & Mathieu, 2012; Yang *et al.*, 2015; Poole *et al.*, 2019; Xu Jingning, 2012; Shen Fenghua, 2014; Wang Ruijie & Liu Jianxi, 2018; Yang Yun, 2022). Most of the research focuses on the epistemic stance in discourse by native English speakers (Charles, 2006; Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Hyland & Jiang, 2016), while some scholars have considered English as a second language in writing (Chen, 2012; Hyland, 2018; Wang Min & Liu Ding, 2013; Shen Fenghua, 2014; Xu Fang, 2015). In China, some scholars have examined the epistemic stance in Chinese. For instance, Xu Jingning (2012) conducted an initial exploration of the common epistemic stance marker "wo juode" in the spoken modern Chinese language. Zhang Jinquan and Tang Xuenin (2013) analyzed the epistemic stance marker "yao wo shuo" in modern Chinese. However, these studies mainly focus on epistemic stance information in spoken Chinese, and there is a lack of systematic research on epistemic stance in academic Chinese discourse (Fang Mei & Le Yao, 2017). Yang Yun (2022: 68) explored the distribution and influencing factors of epistemic stance markers in spontaneous Mandarin conversations based on a self-built corpus. Nevertheless, the aforementioned research is based on spoken Chinese corpora. With the growing popularity of learning Chinese worldwide, the academic community should pay attention to research on academic Chinese discourse, particularly the expression of stance by CSL learners (Xu Jiajin, 2019: 184). Investigating epistemic stance in academic Chinese discourse by second language learners can not only contribute to Chinese language teaching but also cultivate learners' awareness of stance construction in academic discourse and enhance their ability to consider different conventions in academic writing.

In academic articles, the abstract serves a special discourse function (Qian Duoxiu & Luo Yuan, 2014). While summarizing the research findings and results, the abstract also needs to present a unique stance in order to gain reader acceptance. How authors express their stance appropriately in academic abstracts has become a focus of attention in the academic community, but there is scarce research on the cross-linguistic expression of stance in corresponding English and Chinese abstracts of the same discourse (Zhao Yongqing *et al.*, 2019). Hu & Cao (2011) compared English and Chinese abstracts in Chinese journals and English abstracts in English journals, examining the similarities and differences in the use of hedges and boosters by Chinese scholars and scholars in other countries in a single discipline. The study found that Chinese abstracts written by the same Chinese authors had significantly more boosters than their corresponding English abstracts. Zhao Yongqing *et al.* (2019) compared the stance markers in the "Results" and "Discussion" moves of the Chinese and English abstracts of the same domestic journal article and found inconsistent stance information between the Chinese and English abstracts. Epistemic stance in academic abstracts can be expressed explicitly or implicitly, indicating the author's degree of involvement in a proposition or statement (Lü Changhong *et al.*, 2014), achieving both rhetorical and discourse construction functions within a relatively short length. However, most studies have only conducted stance analysis from a macro perspective, overlooking the importance of micro-level analysis from a genre perspective. This is because different discourse functions are carried by different language units, and the author's active choice of stance markers is bound to vary. Therefore, examining stance information after segmenting the discourse can lead to relatively accurate conclusions. Thus, based on a self-built corpus, this study focuses on the English and Chinese abstracts of master's theses written by Chinese second language learners in linguistics and applied linguistics. By comparing the stance information conveyed by the same authors across languages in specific discourse segments, it aims to provide empirical evidence for the expression of stance in cross-linguistic writing for Chinese learners.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

1) What are the characteristics of move structures in English and Chinese abstracts written by CSL learners?
2) How does the consistency of epistemic stance vary across each move in English and Chinese abstracts written by CSL learners?

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Move Analysis Model

Move structure refers to rhetorical units with specific communicative goals (Swales, 1990). Swales (1981) pioneered the genre analysis of academic article abstracts and proposed the "Four Move Model", which includes establishing the research domain, reviewing previous studies, preparing for the current research, and introducing the current research. The "Four-move Model" was later revised as the "Three-move Model" (Swales, 1990, 2004), also known as the CARS model, which has gained widespread

attention in academia (Nwogu, 1997; Martinez, 2003; Samraj, 2005; Ozturk, 2007; Soler-Monreal *et al.*, 2011). Bhatia (1993) proposed the IMRD model, which has also been recognized by many scholars (Dos Santos, 1996; Promsin, 2006). Subsequently, Dos Santos (1996) proposed the BIMRD (Background-Introduction-Methods-Results-Discussion) model based on an analysis of 94 abstracts from applied linguistics journals. These models have had a profound influence on various genre analysis approaches both domestically and internationally. Although they yield different schematic structures of move patterns, they all aim to connect discourse functions with genre structures, enabling researchers to understand how specific genres integrate form and function. Domestic scholars have conducted meticulous investigations into the linguistic features of Chinese and English academic abstracts and proposed the ITMRD (Introduction-Topic-Method-Result-Discussion) five-move analysis model (Ge Dongmei & Yang Ruiying, 2005). However, some scholars have suggested conducting genre research on thesis abstracts in the academic community after a diachronic visualization analysis of international journal articles (Deng Liming & Zhou Yun, 2020). The aforementioned move analysis models are generalizations of move patterns in journal paper abstracts, lacking an examination of the language features of thesis abstracts in Chinese and English. Drawing on the move analysis frameworks proposed by Biber *et al.* (2007: 34) and Cotos *et al.* (2015: 54), this study attempts to induce a "Six-move Model" through corpus-based move structure analysis, with the addition of the "Thesis Structure" move, which is unique to thesis abstracts (see Table 1).

Table 1. The Six-move Model of Abstracts of Academic Theses

Move	Function
M1: Background	Describe the background information of the research, the existing problems, or indicate the necessity of the study.
M2: Topic	Elaborate on the research subject, purpose or content.
M3: Method	Describe the theoretical framework or the study's subjects, tools, steps, or research methods.
M4: Product	Describe the research results or findings.
M5: Conclusion	Evaluate the research results in terms of the significance, value, and innovative aspects.
M6: Thesis Structure	Describe the structure of the thesis.

2.2 Classification Framework of Epistemic Stance Markers

According to the *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English* (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 854-856), the epistemic stance is systematically classified into six categories based on the specific functions it serves: 1) certainty and doubt: indicating the author's attitude towards the proposition, either affirming it with certainty or expressing varying degrees of doubt. 2) Reality and actuality: indicating the actual state of the proposition or statement. 3) Limitation: reflecting the author's varying degrees of restriction or limitation on the proposition. 4) Imprecision/hedges: expressing the author's degree of uncertainty regarding the proposition. 5) Source of knowledge: indicating the source of knowledge as true or based on evidence. 6) Viewpoint or perspective: indicating the perspective from which the statement is accurate.

Since research on epistemic stance in the Chinese language is not yet systematic, this study takes the description of epistemic stance by Biber *et al.* (1999) as a starting point. The epistemic stance markers described by Biber *et al.* (1999) are translated into corresponding Chinese expressions. By combining these expressions with Chinese epistemic stance markers scattered throughout the literature, they are searched one by one in the "Academia Sinica Balanced Corpus of Modern Chinese" (china-language.edu.cn) and verified in the specific contexts. The result is the English-Chinese framework of epistemic stance expressions shown in Table 2, along with their examples. The analysis of epistemic stance in this study is also based on this classification framework.

Table 2. Classifications of Epistemic Stance Markers and Examples

Categories	Examples in English	Examples in Chinese
certainty and doubt	indeed, undoubtedly, no doubt, absolute, sure	必须、必、应该、毫无疑问、的确、当然
	may, might, maybe, possible, likely, potentially	可能、可以(表"可能"义)、可能是、也许
actuality and reality	actually, in fact, really, truly, for a fact	毕竟、发现、看到、其实、事实上、作为
limitation	in most cases, in general, mainly, typically	(绝)大多数、主要、大部分、通常
imprecision/hedges	nearly, approximately, roughly, kind of	大概、可以说、差不多、大约、稍微

source of knowledge	according to, based on, apparently, reportedly	根据、据报道、据传闻、据…所知、据说
viewpoint or perspective	in my opinion, in our view, from our perspective	我们认为、据我所见、依我看

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Corpus Collection

The corpus for this study consists of 50 master's theses in the field of linguistics and applied linguistics written by CSL learners. The corpus was selected from the CNKI China Outstanding Master's Thesis Full-text Database. This study focuses on a single discipline and tries to exclude interdisciplinary influences as much as possible (Hu & Cao, 2011). The specific sampling process is as follows: 1) Determine the total number of theses in the sole discipline within the time range of 2007-2021. 2) Conduct an exhaustive search for theses with author names in parentheses (e.g., "Siarhei Shamko"). Cross-reference with author biographies, acknowledgements, and other parts of the theses to exclude theses written by Chinese minority students whose L2 is Chinese. 3) Use proportional sampling to randomly select 50 theses written by CSL learners.

After careful text cleaning, the Corpus of English Abstracts (COEA) and the Corpus of Chinese Abstracts (COCA) were established. Each pair of English and Chinese abstracts is derived from the same thesis, with 50 pairs in total, as shown in Table 3. The EAC has a total of 22,083 tokens (excluding titles), and the COCA has a total of 32,122 tokens (excluding titles).

Table 3. Basic Information of EAC and COCA

Corpus	Number of Abstracts	Word Count	Average Length
COEA	50	22083	442
COCA	50	32122	642

3.2 Analytical Process

This study involves two main steps of analysis. Firstly, based on the "Six-move Model" proposed in section 2.1, two corpora were manually annotated with epistemic stance markers. To ensure the internal reliability of the stance identification, two researchers underwent systematic training on stance classification and the functions of each move. After completing the first round of annotation, the researchers discussed any disputed instances of stance markers and conducted a second round of annotation. Finally, the consistency of the annotations was tested. The consistency test results for the English corpus showed kappa=0.990, indicating a high level of agreement. Similarly, the consistency test results for the Chinese corpus showed kappa=0.970, indicating the high reliability of the annotations.

Secondly, using the tool AntConc 3.5.9, the epistemic stance markers in the COEA and COCA were retrieved and manually screened based on the classification criteria proposed by Biber *et al.* (1999). This process resulted in the establishment of an English-Chinese parallel corpus. Due to potential ambiguity in the expression of certain stance markers, such as the verb "think", which can indicate "certainty" (with a lower degree of certainty compared to "know" but higher than "doubt"), "source of knowledge", or "viewpoint or perspective", specific contextual judgments were made. Careful verification and discussion were conducted for each retrieved result to ensure the accurate classification of stance markers.

4. Research Results and Discussion

4.1 Comparison of Move Structure

According to the aforementioned six-move model, the author conducted a count of the number of moves in each abstract to understand whether all abstracts include these moves. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Occurrence of Types of Moves

Corpus	Two moves	Three moves	Four moves	Five moves	Six moves	Total
COEA	1 (2%)	8 (16%)	19 (38%)	16 (32%)	6 (12%)	50
COCA	1 (2%)	9 (18%)	19 (38%)	16 (32%)	7 (14%)	50

According to Table 5, it can be observed that the English and Chinese abstracts written by CSL learners do not include all six steps. The completeness of the abstracts is not high, as only 13 out of 100 abstracts contain all six moves. The majority of both English and Chinese abstracts involve four moves, accounting for 38% of the total. The next most common occurrence is abstracts with five moves, accounting for 32%. Abstracts with three moves and six moves account for 18% and 14%, respectively. There is only

one English abstract and one Chinese abstract that contain only two moves. No abstracts with only one move were found. This indicates that there is a tendency for CSL learners to include multiple moves in their thesis abstracts. However, overall, both Chinese and English abstracts exhibit incomplete structures, with varying degrees of missing moves. The frequency of move occurrences in Chinese abstracts and English abstracts written by CSL learners is shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Overall Distribution of Moves

	COEA		COCA	
	Number of occurrences	Frequency of occurrences	Number of occurrences	Frequency of occurrences
M1	48	96%	49	98%
M2	131	262%	130	260%
M3	70	140%	73	146%
M4	44	88%	44	88%
M5	35	70%	36	72%
M6	37	74%	38	76%

Table 6 shows that the total number of moves in the English and Chinese abstract corpora is similar. The frequency of moves in the COEA and COCA is ranked from highest to lowest as M2, M3, M1, M4, M5, and M6. The frequency of each move in the COEA is 262%, 140%, 96%, 88%, 74%, and 70%, respectively, while in the COCA, it is 260%, 146%, 98%, 88%, 76%, and 72% respectively. The data indicate that the frequency distribution of moves in both corpora is roughly similar, with the research topic move (M2) and method move (M3) being relatively important steps. However, the data also reveals that the move that is mainly lacking in both English and Chinese abstracts is the conclusion move (M5). This suggests that CSL learners have a relatively weak awareness of evaluating, summarizing, and generalizing research results in their abstracts. It is worth mentioning that in actual writing, authors often combine multiple moves in a single sentence based on the specific communicative functions they want to convey (Pho, 2008). In this study, the researchers frequently observed a preference among CSL learners to combine M2 and M6 or M3 and M6 in their descriptions in order to achieve conciseness and reflect the overall structure of the abstract. Referring to the research by Xue Shuyun and Zhang Yumiao (2019: 56), the lack of stance information due to the incomplete structural equivalence of Chinese and English abstracts is not included in the scope of this study's examination of each move.

4.2 Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers Distribution

In this study, through automatic retrieval and manual examination, the corresponding forms of epistemic stance in the COEA and COCA corpora were identified, and the variations in stance information were analyzed. Firstly, the overall distribution of epistemic stance markers was counted in each corpus (see Table 7).

Table 7. Overall Correspondence of the Forms of Epistemic Stance Markers

Categories	COEA		ACA		X-Square	*p*-value
	frequency	portion	frequency	portion		
doubt and certainty	11	8.27%	15	9.20%	+0.0265	0.871
actuality and reality	11	8.27%	14	8.59%	+0.1101	0.740
	38	28.57%	22	13.50%	+12.7005	0.000+++
limitation	49	36.84%	81	49.69%	-0.5013	0.479
imprecision/hedges	13	9.77%	23	14.11%	-0.3197	0.572

source of knowledge	8	6.02 %	10	6.13 %	+0.1024	0.749
viewpoint or perspective	3	2.26 %	8	4.91 %	-0.8265	0.363

The data in Table 7 shows that epistemic stance markers appeared 133 times in COEA and 163 times in COCA (p=0.141>0.05), with no significant difference in the overall occurrence of epistemic stance markers between the two corpora. However, there are noticeable differences among the subcategories of epistemic stance markers. The subcategory "limitation" has the highest proportion, with 11 occurrences (36.84%) in COEA and 15 occurrences (49.69%) in COCA. In academic discourse, the author uses stance markers related to "limitation" to define the scope of a proposition, impose conditions on its content, and enhance the authority of the paper to some extent. Stance markers of "actuality and reality" and "imprecision" have a relatively high frequency. In COEA, they appear 38 times and 13 times (28.57% and 9.77%), respectively, while in COCA, they appear 22 times and 23 times (13.50% and 14.11%). The use of stance markers related to "actuality and reality" enhances the truthfulness and certainty of a proposition, while the use of imprecision markers allows the author to express their point more tactfully. Doubt and certainty markers appear less frequently. In COEA, they both appear 11 times (8.27%), while in COCA, they appear 15 times and 14 times (9.20% and 8.59%), respectively. The limited use of certainty markers reflects the author's tendency to create an objective academic atmosphere, while the use of doubt markers helps the author minimize threats to their reputation among other members of the academic community. The source of knowledge markers (8 times, 6.02% in COEA; 10 times, 6.13% in COCA) are slightly higher than the least distributed viewpoint or perspective markers. In COEA, it appears 3 times (2.26%), while in COCA, it appears 8 times (4.91%). The low frequency of a source of knowledge markers and viewpoint or perspective markers is mainly determined by the nature of academic discourse, which requires strict writing conventions (Hyland, 2000). Statements about knowledge sources generally appear in news genres (Biber *et al.*, 1999: 863), and excessive use would weaken the authority and seriousness of the paper. The low frequency of viewpoint or perspective markers also considers the readers' acceptance, as maintaining a hidden self-image in academic discourse can help preserve the author's reputation to some extent. Therefore, compared to other categories of epistemic stance markers, these two categories have a low occurrence rate in academic papers. After conducting statistical calculations, we found that, except for the significant difference in the use of actuality and reality markers (p=0.000<0.05), there was no significant difference in the use of other categories.

4.3 Comparison of Epistemic Stance Markers in Each Move

Through examining the different expressions used by CSL learners in writing the English and Chinese abstracts of the same thesis, the author conducted a statistical analysis of the consistency of epistemic stance markers in each move of the abstracts.

4.3.1 Background Move

Table 8. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Background Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
doubt and certainty	indeed, inevitable, certainly, must	确实(0)，难免(1)，无疑(地)(0)，必须(1)	33.3%
	likely, seem, tend	可能(0)，似(乎)(1)，倾向(于)(1)	66.7%
actuality and reality	(in) fact, prove, find	事实(上)(1)、实际上(1)，证明(1)，发现(1)	100.0%
limitation	mainly, in general, generally	主要(1)，一般(2)，普遍(情况)(2)，大部分(1)	100.0%
imprecision/hedges	almost, certain	几乎(2), 一定(程度)(1)	100.0%
source of knowledge	——	——	——
viewpoint or perspective	——	——	——

Note: The numbers in parentheses represent the quantities of consistency.

According to Table 8, it can be observed that in the Research Background (M1), the consistency of the epistemic stance conveyed by the English certainty markers in COEA to COCA is quite unsatisfactory (33.3%). One specific example where the consistency is not reflected is as follows.

(1)a<M1>Both Chinese and Korean have their own nouns of locality, and there are *indeed* a lot of differences between them. (COEA-42)

(1)b<M1>汉语和韩语都有方位词，两种语言的方位词各有不同。(COCA-42)

In (1a), "indeed" is used to indicate the author's affirmation of the authority and reliability of the proposition based on previous research. However, in (1b), this stance information is neglected, which to some extent, reduces the author's level of confidence in the proposition.

From the perspective of the correspondence of doubt markers in Table 8, the corresponding rate of epistemic stance markers appearing in the English abstracts to their data in Chinese is 66.7%. There are instances where the stance is not consistent. For example, in (2a), the use of "likely" somewhat reduces the author's responsibility for the discourse information, increases discourse acceptability, and expands the discourse space. However, in (2b), the author's tone is very certain, which introduces some deviation in information transmission.

(2)a<M1>While it is also a word that Thai students are *likely* to use incorrectly, study about Chinese and Thai use of it is rare. (COEA-30)

(2)b<M1>现代汉语方位词"上"是一个日常生活使用频率很高的词语，也是泰国学生最容易犯错的方位词，但有关汉泰方位词"上"的专门研究成果较少。(COCA-30)

In the Research Background move (M1), there are instances where the actuality and reality markers, limitation markers and doubt markers are missing, resulting in a lack of transmission of stance information. Additionally, the source of knowledge markers and viewpoint or perspective markers did not appear in both the English and Chinese abstracts.

4.3.2 Topic Move

Table 9. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Topic Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
doubt and certainty	clearly, point out	明确(地)(0)，指出(1)	50%
	should	应、应该(1)	50%
actuality and reality	actually, find	实际(上)(1)，发现(2)、找出(6)	81.8%
limitation	mainly, generally	主要(17)，大体(0)	85.0%
imprecision/hedges	——	——	——
source of knowledge	according to	根据(1)	100.0%
viewpoint or perspective	——	——	——

According to Table 9, it can be observed that in the Research Topic move (M2), the consistency of certainty markers in COEA to COCA is only 50%, indicating instances where the stance information does not correspond. This phenomenon is exemplified in (3).

(3)a<M2>The reader is hereby informed about the specific areas in which was "Uvod do hovorove cinstiny" affected by its predecessors and how did it impact its followers, thus *clearly* determining the historic position of "Uvod do hovorove cinstiny" among Czech textbooks of Chinese language. (COEA-15)

(3)b<M2>我们将了解《汉语》在某些特定的范围受到早前出版的教科书的影响，并对后期出版的教科书起着作用，从而确定了《汉语》在捷克出版的汉语教科书中的历史地位。(ACA-15)

In (3a), "clearly" reflects the author's clarity and certainty regarding the proposition, indicating that the author has sufficient confidence in the research value. However, in (3b), this meaning is partially diluted, which may weaken the effective communication of the research value.

The consistency of the doubt markers in COEA to COCA is also only 50%, as indicated in Table 9. Instances where the consistency is not reflected, can be seen in example (4).

(4)a<M2>This thesis *should* serve as an examination of the historical importance of the textbook "Uvod do hovorove cinstiny'', its influence on 20th and 21st-century Czech textbooks of Chinese and how They presented the Chinese language to Czech and Slovakian students.
(4)b<M2>本论文旨在探讨《汉语》的历史意义，及其对20世纪与21世纪捷克汉语教科书的影响和该书针对捷克和斯洛伐克学生所编写的教程。

In (4a), "should" conveys the author's intention to broaden the space for interaction and discussion with the readers. However, in (4b), the original intention of the author to downplay the tone is missing.

The consistency of the actuality and reality markers in COEA to COCA reaches 81.8%. Instances where the correspondence is not reflected, can be seen in example (6).

(5)a<M2>*Actually*, we described and analyzed how the same animal can be expressed through the proverbs in two different languages, than we compared differences and similarities. (COEA-12)
(5)b<M2>本文的重点是找出汉一塞"狗"俗语的异同点并对它们进行对比分析。(COCA-12)

In (5a), "actually" conveys an emphasis on the actuality of the proposition, as suggested by Hinkel (2005). However, in (5b), this information is lost, and it becomes a simple statement of fact. Such a statement may potentially weaken the readers' level of attention and importance placed on the proposition.

The consistency of the limitation markers in COEA to COCA reaches 85.0%. However, there are also a few instances where the correspondence is not reflected.

(6)a<M2>Chapter two is *mainly* about methods of creating characters, system of strokes of a Chinese character, writing rules, etc. (COEA-2)
(6)b<M2>在第二章中本文对汉字的造字法、笔划系统、书写规律等方面进行研究。(COCA-2)

In (6a), the use of "mainly" reflects the author's cautious approach to the use of epistemic stance markers, aiming to enhance the acceptability of the discourse. However, in (6b), this stance information is missing.

In the Research Topic move (M2), the consistency of the source of knowledge markers reaches 100%. However, there is no appearance of doubt markers and viewpoint or perspective markers in this move.

4.3.3 Method Move

Table 10. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Method Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
——	——	——	——
doubt and certainty	possible	可能(1)	100%
actuality and reality	find	发现(1)	50%
limitation	mainly	主要(3)	100%
imprecision/hedges	——	——	——
source of knowledge	according to, based on, based upon	根据(5)，依据(1)，基于(1)	100%
viewpoint or perspective	——	——	——

As shown in Table 10, in the Research Methods move (M3), the consistency of various epistemic stance information categories in COEA to COCA is relatively good. The highest consistency rate is observed for doubt markers (100%), limitation markers (100%), and source of knowledge markers (100%). However, there is a partial lack of consistency for actuality and reality markers (50%).

In the Research Methods move (M3), the lack of consistency of actuality and reality markers can be seen in example (7).

(7)a<M3>....., as well as differences between Slavic and Chinese cognition, language and culture, and also to *find* factors which cause this difference. (COEA-6)

(7)b<M3>.....，分析两者之间所存在的认知和文化等因素，并且分析相同之处与相异之处的原因所在。(COCA-6)

In (7a), the author aims to indicate the reliability of the research moves through the use of "find", clearly stating the research facts. However, in (7b), this stance information is not conveyed accordingly, which may weaken the effectiveness of conveying the factual information of the proposition.

4.3.4 Product Move

Table 11. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Product Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
doubt and certainty	must, certainly	必、必须(0)、必然(0)	0%
	should	应(2)	100%
actuality and reality	(in) fact, find	事实(上)(1)，发现(13)、找到(1)、找出(1)	80%
limitation	mainly, generally, mostly, most of, largely, in some cases	主要(12)，一般(1)，大多(2)，大部分(1)，有些(1)	85.0%
imprecision/hedges	roughly, about, certain	大致(1)，几乎(0)，一定(程度)(5)	85.7%
source of knowledge	XX think	XX认为(1)	100%
viewpoint or perspective	we think/believe	我们认为(1)	50%

According to Table 11, in the Research Product move (M4), there are varying degrees of lack of consistency in epistemic stance. The stance conveyed by certainty markers in COEA is not reflected in COCA, as shown in example (8).

(8)a<M4>..., if the three textbooks have a target, the student can take the Chinese Proficiency Test (HSK) after graduation from elementary school and secondary school; all three textbooks *must* add more content. (COEA-45)

(8)b<M4>就是如果这三套教材的目标是在完成小学阶段和中学阶段的学习后，能够达到HSK相当级别的水平，还需要增加不少内容。(COCA-45)

In (8a), "must" reflects the author's confidence in presenting the research results, indicating a strong commitment to the proposition. However, the Chinese expression in (8b) clearly demonstrates that the author is somewhat reserved in committing to the proposition information.

The consistency of the actuality and reality markers in COEA to COCA is 80%. Instances of information loss can be observed, as shown in example (9).

(9)a<M4>By the way, we studied Chinese Proverbs from Chinese sources， trying to *find* teaching methods, such as comparative teaching method, context method, sentence method, etc. (COEA-32)
(9)b<M4>为此，我们研究了中国谚语在汉语教材中的分布情况，指出了中国谚语的教对学方法，如对比教学方法、语境法、造句法等。(COCA-32)

In (9a), "find" indicates the factual regularities discovered by the author through research and investigation, leaving an objective impression on the readers. However, in (9b), "指出" (point out) carries the implication of presenting arguments and opinions, which makes the author's tone appear very certain.

COEA中表"命题的局限性"的标记语在COCA中的对应的情况为85.0%，立场信息为对应的情况如例(10)所示：

The consistency of the limitation markers in COEA to COCA is 85.0%. Instances where the stance information does not consiste can be seen in example (10).

(10)a<M4>However, there are some idioms; spatial metaphor is *mainly* based on cultural sense, metaphor interpretation requires a certain level of cultural knowledge. (COEA-40)
(10)b<M4>然而，俄汉语中有一部分成语，方位隐喻义的形成跟文化常识有关，其理解和解读需要一定的民族文化知识。(COCA-40)

In (10a), "mainly" reflects the author's acknowledgement of the limitations of the proposition, which can reduce the level of commitment to the current proposition and minimize potential criticism from peers (Myers, 1989) or disagreement with readers (Ma Jing & Qi Yawei, 2016). However, this stance information is not accurately conveyed in (10b), where the tone appears certain.

The consistency of the doubt markers in COEA to COCA is 85.7%. Instances of information loss can be observed, as shown in example (11).

(11)a<M4>There are *about* 76 types of original Hokkien vowels, but the respondent pronounced only 49 types. (COEA-23)
(11)b<M4>厦门话韵母总共有 76个，但是发音人只有 49 个。(COCA-23)

In (11a), "about" conveys a sense of vagueness, reflecting the author's cautious approach to presenting the research results, which helps establish a connection with the readers. However, in (11b), this cautious attitude is not reflected, and the research results are presented directly.

The consistency of the viewpoint and perspective markers in COEA to COCA is 50%. Instances where the correspondence is not reflected, can be seen in example (12).

(12)a<M4>*We believe* that the functions of verb reduplication in both Chinese and Malagasy present similarities. (COEA-11)
(12)b<M4>本文初步认定汉语和马达加斯加语动词重叠式的功能具有相同之处。(ACA-11)

In (12a), the author uses "we believe" to enhance the reliability of the proposition's source, reflecting active author involvement and creating a sense of proximity between the readers and the author. However, in (12b), this stance information is not presented,

the sentence becomes non-self-referential, and the tone becomes certain, narrowing the space for negotiation between the author and the readers to some extent.

4.3.5 Conclusion Move

Table 12. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Conclusion Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
	clearly	清楚(地)(1)	100%
doubt and certainty	believe, should	相信(1)，应(1)、应该(0)	50%
actuality and reality	find	发现(0)	0%
limitation	——	——	——
imprecision/hedges	certain	一定(程度)(1)	100%
source of knowledge	——	——	——
viewpoint or perspective	we believe	我们认为(1)	100%

According to Table 12, in the Research Conclusion move (M5), the consistency of the doubt markers in COEA to COCA is 50%. Instances where the information is hidden can be seen in example (13).

(13)a<M5>Third, teacher *should* be good at distinguish the contrasts. (COEA-42)
(13)b<M5>第三是善于进行对比教学。(COCA-42)

In (13a), the author presents a tentative conclusion based on evidence. The use of "should" reflects the author's subjective speculation, making the research conclusion more likely to be accepted by readers and shaping the author's humble and cautious image. However, in (13b), this stance information is expressed as a fact, and the author's original inference tone is hidden, resulting in a more rigid tone.

The stance conveyed by the actuality and reality markers in COEA is not reflected in COCA, as shown in example (14).

(14)a<M5>At the same time, the people learning Chinese in Uzbekistan *found* that through Proverbs to learn the Chinese culture is very practical way using it can more deep study Chinese historical and cultural heritage. (COEA-32)
(14)b<M5>同时，对乌兹别克斯坦的汉语学习者讲授中国谚语，将是他们学好汉语和了解中国文化的一个有效途径，通过让他们学习中国谚语，可以加深他们对中国历史文化底蕴的了解。(COCA-32)

In (14a), "found" reflects the truthfulness of the stance information. The author, while presenting the research value, also increases the space for mutual negotiation with the readers. However, in (14b), this stance information is missing, which may result in the sentence losing a certain degree of truthfulness.

4.3.6 Thesis Structure Move

Table 13. Consistency of Epistemic Stance Markers in Thesis Structure Move

Categories	Forms in English	Forms in Chinese	Consistency
doubt and certainty	——	——	——
	should	应该(1)	100%
actuality and reality	find	找出(1)	100%
limitation	mainly, generally	主要(10)，大体(0)	83.3%
imprecision/hedges	——	——	——
source of knowledge	——	——	——
viewpoint or perspective	——	——	——

During the investigation, we found that the Thesis Structure move (M6) often combines with the Research Topic move (M2) or the Research Method move (M3). This phenomenon reflects the concise and compact nature of abstract texts (Xiao Zhonghua & Cao Yan, 2014: 264).

According to Table 13, the consistency of the limitation markers in COEA to COCA is 83.3%. There are a few instances of inconsistent information transmission, as shown in example (15).

(15)a<M6>Chapter 1 deals *generally* with the introduction and the research methods employed. (COEA-15)
(15)b<M6>第一章为绪论及所采用的研究方法。(COCA-15)

In (15a), "generally" reflects the limitations the author recognizes regarding the proposition, to some extent adjusting the distance between the author and personal viewpoints. However, in (15b), the author does not reflect a relatively cautious personal emotion or attitude when presenting their research content, and the tone is very certain.

5. Conclusion

Combining the genre analysis, this study focuses on the epistemic stance markers in English and Chinese abstracts of the same thesis by CSL learners to examine the consistency of stance in specific moves. In terms of macro-level move structure, the examined English and Chinese abstracts have relatively low completeness. Among the 100 abstracts, only 13 fully contain all six moves, with the majority of abstracts involving only three or four moves. Looking at the distribution of moves, M2 and M3 have the highest frequencies in both corpora, followed by the research M1 and M4, while the M5 and M6 have the lowest frequencies. When examining the distribution of stance markers in the abstracts, it is found that except for actuality and reality markers, which show significant differences in use between the two corpora, the use of other categories does not show significant differences. However, it should be noted that such differences may be due to the lack of attention to the consistency of stance expression during cross-linguistic academic writing, possibly resulting in arbitrary translations. A further in-depth investigation is needed, particularly regarding the consistency of stance information across different moves.

This study found that due to the different discourse functions of each move, the expression of stance by authors will have certain emphases. M1 is generally used to describe the background of the current study, including summarizing the research background, describing existing problems, or indicating the necessity of the study (Ge Dongmei & Yang Ruiying, 2005). The use of certainty markers in this move shows poor correspondence between the English and Chinese abstracts, reflecting the relatively stronger authority and reliability of propositions in English discourse compared to Chinese discourse, where such certain personal viewpoints are often concealed. This finding may be related to the concept of face in Chinese culture, which CSL learners are accustomed to. In M1, the use of doubt markers allows authors to maintain a humble stance while reducing the threat to the face of other academic community members. The poor consistency of such stances in English and Chinese abstracts may affect the objectivity of research statements. M2 generally clarifies the purpose, object, or content of the study. It is found that there are different degrees of non-correspondence in the usage of various cognitive stance markers in this move, which may weaken readers' recognition of the research value or raise doubts about the author's academic attitude. M3 presents the specific methods and processes used in the study (Hu Xin & Huang Yan, 2021), aiming to avoid subjective emotions and describe objective facts. It is found that the consistency of stance is relatively ideal. M4 presents the results of the research data, leaving readers with a clear and objective impression (Pho, 2008). The examined M4 has the highest number and variety of stance markers among all moves, consistent with previous findings by researchers such as Vassileva (2001) and Crosthwaite *et al.* (2017). In M4, there is a lack of correspondence between the English and Chinese abstracts for the certainty markers, which may affect readers' acceptance of the results and the author's contribution to the research. M5 primarily summarizes the research conclusions or indicates the significance, value, or innovation of the study (Dos Santos, 1996). It is found that although this move has a very limited number and variety of stance markers, the consistency of stance information in the English and Chinese abstracts is relatively ideal. M6 shows relatively good correspondence. This may be due to the fact that in M6, authors primarily need to objectively convey academic viewpoints without the need to promote personal opinions, resulting in a higher consistency of stance information between the English and Chinese abstracts.

This study examines the consistency of epistemic stance markers in English and Chinese abstracts of CSL learners' theses and finds varying degrees of consistency in different moves. While the overall comparison of epistemic stance markers in English and Chinese abstracts does not show significant differences, it highlights the importance of focusing on different moves. The study identifies limitations, including a small sample size of 100 abstracts, a focus on macro-level move structure overlooking other influential linguistic aspects, cross-linguistic challenges, and neglect of individual differences. To overcome these limitations, future research should employ larger and more diverse corpora, conduct fine-grained analyses, and include longitudinal studies to track stance development. Qualitative investigations and cross-cultural comparisons are recommended to understand the underlying factors affecting stance expression. Additionally, intervention studies and comparisons with expert writers can inform effective pedagogical approaches to enhance CSL learners' consistency in expressing stance in academic writing.

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ORCID iD : https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7128-9433
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