

# A Study of Pragmatic Stylistic Features of Reading Comprehension Texts in College English Test Band-4: Taking the Texts in December 2021 as an Example

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## Abstract

As one important test of English proficiency during college in China, CET-4 has long focused on examining students' reading ability since it started. To probe a nerve of it, this paper is lighted by the framework of pragmatic stylistics, combining ways of Black's signposts and Read's stylistic list. From the perspective of structure, vocabulary, and grammar, the pragmatic stylistic features of reading comprehension texts in CET-4 in December 2021 are thus analyzed. The results show that argumentative essays are structured on the author's opinion while expository essays are on the knowledge; at the vocabulary level, expository essays prefer to employ more diversely while argumentative essays tend to be more balanced in difficulty; at the grammatical level, these two types of texts both use object and adverbial clauses, and they choose simple present and past simple tenses. Also, their sentences are favored active voice.

**Keywords:** CET-4, reading comprehension, pragmatic stylistic features, signpost, stylistic analysis

## 1. Introduction

College English Test Band 4 (CET-4) is a national test for college English teaching in China, administered and instructed by the Education Examinations Authority of the ministry of education. It aims at measuring college students' English proficiency which results in bringing feedback for college English teaching. Reading ability has long been a favorite for all language texts, and so has the CET-4. This section occupies 32% of all text, valuing 35% of all points. It can be seen that this part plays an influential role in passing the test. The National Syllabus for College English Test Band 4 and Band 6 (Revised in 2016)

requires to access its candidates the ability to understand the English materials of applied style in daily life and work; to employ basic reading strategies to enhance understanding; to absorb information from written texts, including their main ideas, significant facts, and details, etc. (National College English Testing Committee, 2016) Thus the relevant information and knowledge about applied materials and discourse analyzing ability are what CET-4 focuses on. However, due to the intellectualization of education, CET-4 has a tendency of "only five targets", which is along with the removal of students' status as subjects

and the negative effect of CET-4 being utilitarian. (Yu, 2021) Under such circumstances, students prefer to take all the time doing exercises for preparation while teachers spend all the time lecturing on the language skills that are frequent in the tests. These contribute to the situation that put the cart before the horse, devaluing the knowledge about applied materials and training of discourse analyzing ability.

## 2. Literature Review

A large number of studies have already been done on the reading part of CET-4, covering the perspectives of reading strategies, relevance among different parts, backwash for teaching and eye-tracking, etc. Writing and listening part have been a focus for stylistic analysis, while cloze for discourse analysis. Combining these two methods, known as pragmatic stylistics has not yet gained a satisfying number of studies. Currently, this perspective is applied widely in the analysis of fiction. In 2011, Li Changbiao published his review of *Pragmatic Stylistics* by Black, in which he introduces and affirms the feasibility and innovativeness of adopting the perspective of pragmatics on fiction. (Li, 2011) Besides, a few studies have been done on news, public speech, and films from that perspective. (Liao, 2014; Liu, 2013; Qian, 2017) Particularly, Wang Lili has applied this method in analyzing the pragmatic stylistic features of English comprehension texts in College Entrance Examination (Wang, 2022), confirming the feasibility of its application in the practical texts.

Pragmatic stylistics, branching from pragmatics and stylistics, combines these two disciplines and is so-called as stylistics “with a pragmatic component” (Hickey, 1993). Black had built a theoretical framework for pragmatic stylistics, proposing specific methods for analyzing, which include signposts, narrative voices, direct and indirect discourse, etc. Considering the difference between literary and practical texts and also the characteristics of reading comprehension texts, this paper will selectively draw on these methods. To put it into a nutshell, a combination of methods of signposts and stylistic analysis will be adopted to dig out the stylistic and discourse features of reading texts in CET-4 in December 2021, and hopefully bring some reference for college English teaching and testing.

## 3. Research Framework and Study Object

### 3.1 Theoretical Framework

This paper draws on the framework adopted by Wang Lili in analyzing the English reading texts in the college entrance examination, combining the methods of signposts and stylistic analysis. At the level of structure, vocabulary, and grammar, the pragmatic stylistic features of the reading texts are then analyzed. In specific, Elizabeth Black mentioned genre and Labov’s narrative theory, which includes external and internal evaluative devices (Black, 2005). Geoffrey Leech and Mick Short have ordered a checklist of linguistic and stylistic categories, including lexical, grammatical, figures of speech, and context and cohesion (Leech & Short, 2007). Lexical categories involve the complexity, style, class of words, etc. Grammatical categories include sentence complexity, types, clause types, etc. The figure of speech contains phonological schemes, structural repetition, tropes, etc. Context and cohesion are about the generative mode of the discourse and cohesive devices, etc. (Leech & Short, 2007) In view of the differences between practical and literary texts, some of those categories are selected while the category of the figure of speech is neglected for a reason. Also, the category of context and cohesion is integrated with the first part of structure analysis. Therefore, this research will combine the method of Leech’s categories and Black’s signposts to find out the pragmatic and stylistic features in the CET-4 reading comprehension texts in December 2021.

To be specific, it will begin with the categorization of all the texts, according to their genres, to discuss their structural features and aspect and the purpose of testing. On this basis of it, it will have a detailed look at the differences presented by the genres of texts at the lexical and grammatical levels. The quantitative process will be aided by AntConc (3.5.9) and Range 32 (1.32). It will be ended with the conclusions of the features and testing concerns that have been discussed above.

### 3.2 Research Questions

The purpose of this paper is to uncover the pragmatic and stylistic features embodied in the reading texts in CET-4, so its attempts to answer the following questions.

First, what are the features of CET-4’s reading texts in view of the genres, and through which ways are they tested?

Second, what are the differences of signposts shown in the CET-4’s reading texts at the level of

structure, lexis, and grammar?

### 3.3 Research Object

In order to answer the questions above, this paper selects the first set of reading comprehension texts from CET-4 in Dec. 2021 as the source of materials. In all, it contains 4 original reading texts, numbered respectively as discourse A, B, C, and D, which attach to 30 questions, amounting to 2504 words.

## 4. Discussion

### 4.1 Features of the Structure of Different Genres of Reading Texts

“Genre is comparable to schema: it draws on our previous knowledge and experience, and offers a framework for interpretation.”(Black, 2005) When reading the text, the way the readers choose relies on their previous knowledge about the genre and corresponding modes, which in return foster their interpretation and comprehension of the texts they’re reading now. Various genres own their patterns and structures to generate the passage, and so to be in good command of them, the ability to interpret the texts will be enhanced a lot.

#### 4.1.1 The Structure of Argumentative Essays

According to the classification, the two

argumentative essays are found, whose aim is to convey the author’s opinions, and through the argument, the author attempts to persuade the readers to agree and accept her views. Thus this genre of essay reflects the subjectivity of the author at large. Commonly seen types of argumentative essays include scientific, legal, journalist, and advertising ones, etc. Three basic components of argumentative essays are claim, evidence, and reason, which correspond to their three characteristics: valuable, innovative, and persuasive. (Pan, 2012) Generally, this genre of essay has a clear structure, usually beginning with an introduction, offering a brief lead into the topic and claim, and then followed by the argument and reason with evidence to achieve the goal of persuading readers, and finally ending up with a conclusion, confirming the rationality of the author’s claim and endowing significance for the argument above. Inside the argument, authors normally utilize some language skills and strategies to aid their reasoning, including analogy, statistics, cases, and direct and indirect quotations, etc. They are beneficial for increasing the credibility and persuasive effect of the whole argument.

Table one lists the structures and testing aspects of the two argumentative essays:

**Table 1.** The structure and testing aspect of argumentative essays

Text	The Gist	Text Structures	Paragraph Structure	Argument methods	Testing Aspects
Text A	Humility	Total-score-total	Propose a claim-argument-conclusion	Indirect quotes, examples, explanation	At the level of context, lexis and text
Text C	Remote working mode	Alternate claim-counter claim	Introduction-propose a claim-propose counterclaims-argument-conclusion and future outlook	Calculations, examples	Viewpoint and attitude, Reasoning and judgment, detail identification, text comprehension

The structure and testing aspects of the CET-4’s reading texts can thus be seen directly in this table. Text A belongs to the new type of testing after reform, requiring the candidates to select from the given words to fulfill the blank part in the passage. Therefore, it is tested more at the lexical level, examining students’ command and judgment of the words’ parts of speech and semantics. Therefore, the following will be focused on text C as an example for further

illustration.

In the beginning, text C briefly introduced its topic, which is about the remote working mode. Then the author proposed her opinion that the remote working mode has passed the costs on to the workers, and thus should not be recommended and carried out widely. Then in the following paragraphs, the author stated the counterclaims and their reasons. After her

argument and practical calculations, she drew a conclusion that remote working does harm not only to employees but also to employers, and so it is supposed to be avoided as much as possible. The reason that the author did not directly state which side she stood by, it is more than important for the candidates to keep in reserve knowledge about this genre. Otherwise, it would cause unnecessary time and effort for them to recognize what the author truly proposes and support. The aspect of testing has typically reflected the characteristics of argumentative essays. Among the five questions attached to text C, there are two questions, 46 and 50, which ask about the author's opinion and attitude. These two questions also require the recognition of details and the understanding of the whole text. It can be told that the 46th tends to the testing of details in the text, while as the last question, the 50th attempts to tell whether the candidates seize the emotions and attitudes of the author. The latter examines and demands students to grasp the whole text and thus cannot be solved without a great deal of consideration and comprehension ability. However, it would not stand in the way of students who have a good command of the knowledge about this genre and grasp the core points, which smooth their way of sorting out all the information they look for immediately. This testing sequence ranging from the easy one to the hard one conforms to the human cognitive process and also leads the candidates from the shallow to the deep layers of meaning of the text step by step.

The 47th question follows the reading contents required by the last question, examining students' ability to infer from the known details and so to make a proper judgment and summary. The next question checks the process of argument and verifies the purpose of the evidence. Given the obvious sign offered in the text, it is not that hard for students to choose the right option. They only need to simply

transform the synonyms in the text and the options. The 49th question is arranged around the process of reasoning, telling students whether they figured out the result of it, also known as one of the supporting claims.

As we can see that the argumentative essay in CET-4 reading comprehension follows the general modes and patterns, and the testing favors the basic components of them. As long as the students are clear of this genre, and then locate the three elements of it, the structure of the passage and the questions followed is in their hands to solve, even the hard ones like the opinion and attitudes held by the author.

#### 4.1.2 The Structure of the Expository Essays

Among the reading comprehension texts in CET-4 in Dec. 2021, the genre of text B and text D belongs to expository essays. Different from argumentative essays, expository essay focuses on illustrating something, seeking to use scientific and objective language to explain something or some matters, and so to inform and provide knowledge for readers, rather than gain their favor and support for the author's opinion. Commonly seen materials of this genre involve textbooks, business writings, instrumental manuals, and so on. Their purpose is to provide their readers with relevant facts or information they need. Usually, an expository essay is generated in a linear structure, having a strict demand for the logic of paragraphs and sentences. The types of expository essays include cause and effect, classification, comparison, definition, process analysis, problem and solution, evaluation, etc. For the consideration of explicitness of illustration, the methods widely employed are citing examples, listing statistics, making comparisons and quoting from authoritative sources, etc. From doing this, the explanation and description are added with a sense of scientificity and objectivity. Table 2 lists the structure and testing aspects of the expository essays:

**Table 2.** The structure and testing aspect of expository essays

Text	The Gist	Text structure	Paragraph structure	Expository Methods	Testing aspects
Text B	Women's pressure	Phenomenon-cause-effect-solution	Propose the problem-analyze the cause-propose results-propose the solution	Quotations, statistics, and examples	Paraphrasing, detail identification, summaries of details, and



					structure of the text
					Detail identification, inference, and judgment, semantic coherence
Text D	Curiosity	Description-explanation	Propose a matter-explanation 1-explanation 2	Quotations and examples	

The details in the essays have occupied a great deal of the questions attached to the essays, as shown in the table. This is contributed to the features and nature of this genre, aiming to ensure readers harvest knowledge and information it conveys and that's what the CET-4's expository essays' questions attempt to test. It is an excellent way to tell whether students are prepared with the capacity to interpret and comprehend practical and intellectual texts frequently in daily life and work, which is what the National Syllabus for College English Test Band 4 requires. Text B is the reformed type, skimming reading, and thus takes up a space that is much beyond the average of other texts. Its testing aspect prefers to demand students to paraphrase and identify the details from a macro perspective. Therefore, the following will have a detailed look and further discussion on the traditional type of reading comprehension text D.

Text D is generated from the general to the specific and finally draws its conclusion. It begins with a clear statement that curiosity is both beneficial and dangerous for human beings and then the rest of the essay makes an explanation respectively. So the whole text is distinctively constructed and arranged with gradation. With abundant quotations from professionals and research discoveries, text D is therefore equipped with a strong degree of knowledge and objectivity. As it has mentioned above, the testing content closely relates to the core of expository essays, which is their informative nature. The 51st, 52nd, and 53rd questions ask students to search and identify details in the essay and test whether they are aware of the main points and illustrations of the expository essay. These three questions are relatively simple for students to select because, on the one hand, they only require a detailed look and search in the essay and underlining the keywords, do the paraphrasing when necessary; on the other hand, the same words in the

options have appeared directly in the text, such as "force, information, environment", therefore, only if students pay attention to them with caution, it will be solved correctly without consuming too much time and effort. The 54th question tests students on the purpose of citations. It is located in the 5th paragraph, which thus demands the ability to summarize the whole paragraphs and distinguish details and then it is possible to answer correctly. So it can be sensed that the difficulty rises higher than the questions above. Question 55, on the other hand, involves the cohesive devices of the essay, requiring the students to catch the transitions in the paragraph and the specific meaning of the cohesive markers, making a reasonable inference from the existing information gained in the essay. Its content is a part of the second point, the harm done by curiosity, of this expository essay. So if the candidates master the expository object of the essay, they will pick the right item without a second hesitation.

Above all, the questions attached to the expository text D are less difficult than that of argumentative text C, which is attributed to the characteristics and properties of these two genres. Therefore, the expository texts are chosen to examine the details recognition and summary. Because of their objectivity, difficult types of questions like distinguishing the author's attitude and opinions are not available and proper to be tested.

## 4.2 Features of Reading Texts at the Vocabulary Level

### 4.2.1 The Diversity of Vocabulary

The diversity of vocabulary is a significant factor in showing how diverse and plentiful a text uses vocabulary. (Read, 2000) In general, it is measured by the ratio of type and token, which is thus called TTR. Type refers to the morphemes in the same form while token refers to any lexical form that appears in this text. The formula is expressed as the diversity of

vocabulary.

$$TTR = \frac{\text{all the types in the text}}{\text{all the tokens in the text}} \times 100\% \quad (1)$$

Considering the variety existing in the length of the 4 texts, that formula may not be as that precise and correct. Common sense happens that as the text goes longer, its diverse vocabulary will grow. Here, to get rid of that influence and gain a rather accurate result for

the following discussions, another formula is put in to compare and analyze. This formula is the Uber index (Vermeer, 2000).

$$U = \frac{(\log \text{tokens})^2}{\log \text{tokens} - \log \text{types}} \quad (2)$$

To analyze the vocabulary of the 4 texts, AntConc (3.5.9) will be utilized to do the statistical computations, and the results are as follow.

**Table 3.** The diversity of vocabulary of the reading texts in CET-4

Test	The genre of the text	Types	Tokens	TTR (%)	Uber index
Test A	Argumentative essay	138	240	57.5%	23.57
Test B	Expository essay	436	1012	43%	24.69
Test C	Argumentative essay	182	343	53%	23.35
Test D	Expository essay	207	341	60%	29.59

It can be obviously seen that text B has both outstanding numbers in the number of types and tokens. As we have mentioned above text B belongs to the new reformed text, requiring students to skim and grasp the main idea from the numerous paragraphs and paraphrase when necessary. Though much longer and more than the other 3 texts, its text and vocabulary are, both TTR and the value of U not as prominent as its number of types and tokens. For the consideration of its length, its value of U is more reliable than TTR. According to its value of U, it could be estimated that the diversity of its vocabulary is higher than the two argumentative essays, namely text A and text C. Among the 4 texts, the one that calculated the highest value of U is text D. In the view of the numbers of tokens, text D shares a relatively similar amount to text C, however, the TTR of text D ranks higher than text C with 7%, and the value of U with 7 points. In this condition, can we regard text D possesses a more diverse vocabulary than text C, which follows the nature of expository essays, to offer knowledge as much as possible. Also, text D provides a rather complete version of the matter, proved by a rich vein of examples. In contrast, as an argumentative essay, text C's focus is in the author's opinion, and thus its width of content and diversity of vocabulary is relatively limited. Overall, the value of the TTR and Uber index of each text is roughly close, reflecting that their employ of words is around a standard level which is both acceptable and distinguishing to measure the candidates' English proficiency.

This stability of the values among different genres of texts in CET-4's reading comprehension also displays the test's scientificity and effectiveness. More or less, the value of one text is more than the standard, it is compromised by other texts, therefore, the whole testing reading comprehension of CET-4 is kept in balance. On the other hand, connected with the testing aspects of the texts, the relatively easy questions are attached to the more diverse texts while the comparatively difficult ones are followed to the texts with a vocabulary of less diversity. So students are bound to consider more deeply the texts that demand less time for reading. This arrangement ensures a balanced testing time and supposed reading depth of each text.

#### 4.2.2 The Difficulty of Vocabulary

Another indication of the measurement of the richness of vocabulary, according to Read, is the difficulty of vocabulary (Read, 2000). In order to calculate and obtain the results of the difficulty of the vocabulary of the 4 texts, the corpus tool Range32 (1.32) is utilized to analyze and calculate the texts one by one. There are three base word lists coming with Range32, among which the primary base list contains the most commonly used word families, amounting to 1000. The secondary vocabulary base list is comprised of the next frequently used 1000-word families. The third vocabulary base list instead includes the academic English vocabulary, which frequently appears in senior

high school and various college disciplines. The working mechanism of Range32 is to compare the text with the three vocabulary base lists, and then respectively calculate the frequency of the vocabulary in the text appearing in the base lists and the proportion of them in the whole text. Then it manages to assist researchers in

recognizing the distributions of the text vocabulary in each list. According to the percentage of each item in the three vocabulary lists, a rough impression of the difficulty of vocabulary is thus gained. The results of the four texts are as follows.

**Table 4.** The report on the distribution of the texts' vocabulary

Vocabulary List	Tokens (%)				Types (%)				Families			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
Text												
One	75.5	77.1	79.2	74.3	65.5	62.9	67.0	67.0	78	215	102	114
Two	6.6	5.2	4.1	8.3	8.4	9.1	6.6	8.3	12	34	12	16
Three	8.7	8.8	9.1	8.6	13.3	12.3	14.8	12.6	16	51	26	22
Not in the lists	9.1	9.0	7.6	8.9	12.7	15.7	11.5	12.1	-	-	-	-

From the table above, it can be obtained without much effort that the vocabulary in the four reading texts in CET-4 in Dec 2021 is ranked the highest in the first base vocabulary list, manifesting that most part of their vocabulary belongs to the most commonly used English words list. This caters to what the syllabus demand for students, requiring them to understand the materials in daily work and life, which are comprised of all the commonly seen words. So it can be said that the difficulty of the vocabulary is close to what the students will meet in future work and life. It satisfies practical needs and abilities. Each value of percentage shows no tremendous ups and downs, and instead, they all seemingly surround a standard value, indicating a supposed difficulty of vocabulary. Thus, there's little differentiation of the difficulty of vocabulary in the four texts, and the difficulty of vocabulary among the selected materials is rather balanced and reasonable. Liang Maocheng holds the opinion that the proportion of the vocabulary in the third base list and the vocabulary not in the lists of tokens occupying the text are the most reliable gauge of the difficulty of vocabulary in the texts. (Liang, 2010) Therefore, these two statistics will be utilized and gauged to estimate specifically the vocabulary differentiation of the four reading texts from the perspective of difficulty.

In the list of types, the percentage of the vocabulary of the four texts both belonging to the third vocabulary base list and outside the lists rating in their all types respectively are 26.0%, 28.0%, 26.3%, and 24.7%. From that, it can

be proved that the two argumentative essays are rather close in regard to the difficulty of vocabulary, while the expository essays are not as close as that. Text B ranks as more difficult in vocabulary than text D. This may be attributed to the reading type of text B, classified as the fast-reading test, only requiring students to grasp the key points in each paragraph and paraphrase. There is no need for them to do the detailed reading text, so it should not be counted as an obstacle in their reading in view of the difficulty of vocabulary. It could be inferred with confidence that the quantification of the difficulty of vocabulary in the reading comprehension texts of CET-4 should be around 26% of the tokens in the texts occupied by those belonging both to the third vocabulary list and outside the list in Range 32.

To summarize, this part has analyzed the four reading texts in CET-4 in Dec 2021 in regard to their vocabulary diversity and difficulty. The statistics assisted by two applications, namely AntConc and Range32, have illustrated that influenced by the various genres of the four texts and testing aspects, the expository essays tend to employ a wider range of vocabulary, at the same time, argumentative essays are more stable than expository essays in regard to the difficulty of vocabulary. Also, it is inferred that the difficulty of vocabulary is counted as 26% approximately, standing for the tokens in the texts occupied by those belonging both to the third vocabulary list and outside the list in Range 32.

#### 4.3 Features of Reading Texts at the Grammatical

Level

### 4.3.1 The Length and Type of Sentences

Grammar is one of the constitutions in the scope of stylistic analysis methods put forward by Leech, which includes the length and types of sentences and the type of their clauses, and so

on. (Leech & Short, 2007) These factors indispensably have an effect on the difficulty of the texts they constitute. Also, they belong to the inner evaluation features of signposts, giving a hint of the characteristics of various genres. The aspects mentioned above and their results of them are put in the table below.

**Table 5.** The distribution of sentences in the four reading texts

Text	Sentences	Average sentence length	Simple sentences	Coordinate sentences	Attributive clauses	Objective clauses	Adverbial clause	Appositive clauses
Text A	15	15.9	7	1	2	2	2	1
Text B	60	17.0	20	3	7	7	4	2
Text C	18	18.1	9	2	2	3	3	0
Text D	20	16.8	13	2	2	2	3	0

From the table above, it is effortlessly accessible to gain the information that Text B is ranked the most in regard to the number of sentences, which attributes to the mentioned issues. Text D is the next one that contributed with the most quantity of sentences, though it is apparent that the rest three texts share a proximate number of sentences. So it could be estimated that the average number of sentences of traditional reading texts in CET-4 is roughly 18. However, when considering the sentence length, text C stands outside the average line, amounting to 18.1 words per sentence. From that, it may be supposed that the sentences are formed in a relatively complicated structure than in other texts. In contrast, in the sentences of text A exists the least average number of words, which is 15.9 per sentence. Simple sentences, according to the statistics, overweigh all the other types of sentences overwhelmingly no matter in which text. Specifically, the percentage of simple sentences in the four texts separately is 46%, 33%, 50%, and 68%. Hence, sentences in text B are formed with somewhat more complicated structures and clauses. In contrast, more than half of the sentences in text D are simple sentences, fairly painless for scanning and looking for details during the test. On the whole, the proportion of simple sentences varies in every text, with the gap reaching as large as 35%. Through this phenomenon, could it be assumed

that the test has a higher requirement for its candidates in the aspect of the sentence?

Apropos of the statistics of the types of clauses, the table unveils an especially scattered result, seemingly spotting each type of clause without preference. But with a detailed look at each of them, the attributive clauses, objective clauses, and adverbial clauses are the most frequently-used ones among the clauses listed in the table. In the condition of argumentative essays, the selection of objective clauses satisfies its need to state opinions and quotes from studies. For example, in text C, it is used in “employers argue they make considerable savings...” and “rough calculations show that the savings...”. The former objective clause describes the opinion held by one side, in this case, the employers. The latter clause is utilized to be evidence of the author’s opinion, quoting from the statistics to prove the reason for his opinions. The application of objective clauses for citing the studies also finds its position in expository essays. Take an example from text B as well, “Research from Nova Southeastern University found that female managers...”. The objective clauses work to add the scientificity and reliability of the texts. The attributive and adverbial clauses are exploited to determine the conditions and supplement extra information, such as “regardless of their genetic makeup,



infants have to..." in text D and "and the personality traits these individuals possess or lack can often make..." in text A.

#### 4.3.2 Tenses and Modes

Tense and modes are the two prominent components in stylistic analysis. The alteration and shift of tense and mode would have an effect on the choices and thinking patterns students make during reading and testing. The

tense and mode of the specific sentence may suggest the information hidden from its surface meaning and they are facilitative to enlighten the beneficial presumptions of students. These are all the functions brought by tense and mode that are conducive to the conformation of a detailed reading process. The statistics of the tenses and modes in the four reading texts are as follows.

**Table 6.** The distribution of sentences in mode and tense

Text	Passive Sentences (%)	Simple present (%)	Simple past (%)	Present perfect (%)	Future (%)
Text A	6.6%	73.3%	13.3%	13.3%	0.0%
Text B	8.3%	65%	33.3%	1.6%	1.6%
Text C	25.0%	61.1%	0.0%	5.5%	33.3%
Text D	0.0%	85.0%	5.0%	10.0%	0.0%

From the table above, it is distinct of the distributions of the various tenses and modes accounting for in the four reading texts. Overall, no matter which text and its genre, active voice dominates with respect to the modes overwhelmingly. Text C has employed the most passive sentences compared to the other texts, this may contribute to its concern about the specific condition that "employees are properly compensated". Text D, on the contrary, has not drawn upon a passive sentence at all. This discrepancy between the two texts contributes to two opposite styles of writing and, thus, two thinking patterns and feelings for readers. Text C leaves an impression of detachment and fairness, proving the author standing outside the matter and so that her opinion is supposed to be reliable and trustworthy. On the other side, text D sensed more warmth and passionateness, as a warmhearted person informing the readers of the known knowledge. With regard to the tenses, a similar preponderance of active sense is granted to the simple present tense, which is not intricate to figure out. These four texts are directed at the recent general issues, text A at the relationship; text B the pressure; text C at remote working, and text D at curiosity. Thereupon, there is no necessity for them to bother employing other tenses extensively. Amid the four reading texts, text C's broad utilization of future tense appears exceptional under the circumstance that there is no such use in text A and text D. This may be rationalized by the fact

that the author of text C spent an extended length of a passage discussing the possible things happening in the future to prove the justification of her opinion. Simple past tense owns an important place in text B, exploited to state the examples of specific women's experience of suffering from extra pressure than men. The employ of present perfect in the four reading texts is primarily for citation of the previous studies, such as in text D, "given curiosity's complexity, scientists have found it hard to define".

In summary, this part is concerned with the grammatical features of the four reading texts in CET-4 in Dec 2021. The statistics and tables have illustrated that the average number of sentences of traditional reading texts in CET-4 is roughly 18; simple sentences dominate among the various types of sentences; simple present tense is applied in most conditions, while simple past and future tense have been used for special circumstances; still, a number of passive sentences exist in the texts for the purpose of being objective and persuasive.

#### 5. Conclusion and Limitations

This paper has combined the approach of Black's signposts and Read's stylistic methods, analyzing and discussing the reading texts in CET-4 at the level of structure and genre, vocabulary, and grammar. It is concluded that the choice of genre is balanced, and argumentative essays are structured on the

author's opinion while expository essays are on the knowledge; at the vocabulary level, expository essays prefer to employ more diversity while argumentative essays tend to be more balanced in difficulty; at the grammatical level, the average number of sentences in traditional reading texts is approximately 18; simple sentences predominate among the various types of sentences; simple present tense is used in the majority of conditions, while simple past and future tense are only occasionally used; and a number of passive sentences present in the texts for the purpose of objectivity and persuasiveness.

Inevitably, there are some deficiencies in this paper. Due to inexperience and the constraints of time, the three vocabulary base lists attached to Range32 are directly employed to estimate the difficulty of vocabulary. A more precise result would be gained if substituting those lists with the college English vocabulary list. Additionally, on account of the limitation of words and the insufficient preparation, the analysis and discussion of the grammatical features are relatively rough and inadequate, consequently tilting the focus of this paper to the level of structure and vocabulary.

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