Get Abstracts Accepted:  
*Demystifying Conference Abstract Writing*

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New Café – Session 37
What is Conference Abstract like?

- Title (10-20 words)
- Keywords (if necessary)
- Summary (50 words)
- Abstract (250-300 words; excluding references)
- Two readers:
  - Reviewers: Main text
  - Audience: Title & Summary
- Example abstract:
  https://www.dropbox.com/s/wkbfzxf1kfkk2jz/PLL3_abstract_Shungo_Final.docx?dl=0
5 Steps to Abstract Writing

1. Know about reviewer’s expectation
2. Know about your study
3. Write up 1st draft
4. Revise the draft
5. Ask peers/supervisor for proofreading
1. Know about reviewer’s expectation

Reviewer’s decision is made in terms of...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness and Importance of the Topic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Orientation</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Design / Conceptual Framework</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization and Clarity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comments to the Author</td>
<td>Not required</td>
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**AAAL**
American Association for Applied Linguistics

**EuroSLA**
European Second Language Association

**Reviewer's Scores**

- Theoretical underpinning: 6
- Originality: 6
- Methodological rigour: 6
- Clarity: 6
- Significance: 6
- Overall impression: 6
- Reviewer confidence: 6

Probably, 7-point scale...?
1. Know about reviewer’s expectation

**Topic**
- How much your research topic matches the conference theme (audience)?

**Research** judged through **Abstract**
- How much your study / RQ is oriented toward theory and/or real-world problems?
- How rigor the design of the study is?
- How significant the results of the study is?

**Clarity**
- How clearly the abstract tells these to the reviewers?
Components of Conference Abstract

**Background of Study**

- Introduction (Topic)
- Literature Review
  - What has been already known?
- Statement of Problems
  - Any gaps or inconsistency?
  - Any methodological shortcomings?
- Research Question

Let reviewers easily understand (a) **what your study addresses** & (b) **how important your RQ is**.
Trigger Qs for Literature Review

- What do we already know in the research area?
- What are the characteristics of the key concepts/factors/variables?
- What are the relationships between the key concepts/factors/variables?
- What are the existing theories?
- Where are the gaps and inconsistencies in our knowledge and understanding?
- What views need to be further tested?
- What current research designs or methods seem unsatisfactory?
- What evidence is lacking/inconclusive/contradictory/too limited?
- What contribution is your research expected to make?
Components of Conference Abstract (Cont’d)

Methods

• Participants
• Materials
• Procedure
• Analysis ...etc.

You might have written these in somewhere else.

Let reviewers make sure (a) **how your study addresses your RQ** & (b) **that you actually DID it** (even if you WILL do later).

→ Reviewer’s concern: Will presenters surely give their talks?
Findings

- Results with concrete information (e.g., Statistics, Coding scheme, etc.)
- Theoretical interpretation of the results
- Contribution(s) the results would make

Consistency with “Background”

Let reviewers make sure (a) **that your study addressED RQs** & (b) **how important your findings are.**

→ Reviewer’s concern: Will the audience appreciate their talks?
2. Know about your study

**Starting point of your research**
- Can be personal experience, BUT useful for Introduction

**Key findings**
- Must correspond to the Results as well as RQs

**Strengths**
- Theoretical contributions? (Discussion & SoP)
- Methodological advances? (Discussion & SoP)
- What problems these strengths can address? (SoP)

**Weaknesses**
- Should be neutrally mentioned in the talk, but NOT in the abstract due to the wordcount.
Paper Specification Sheet (Conference Abstract)

Project:

Venue:

What was the starting point of the study? (Anecdotes; Motivation)
  
What findings do you want to tell the audience? (RQs)
  
Strengths of the study

1) *Theoretical contributions?*
  
2) *Methodological advance?*
  
3) *What problems can these strengths address?*
  
Weaker (to be neutrally mentioned)?
  
Paper specification template:
https://www.dropbox.com/s/0fowrq89rjchsys/ConferenceAbstract.docx?dl=0
3. Write up 1st draft

• Brainstorming: Just list information as much as possible
  – *Without what to write, you CAN’T write.*
• Write each information in one or two sentences
• Put them in the **EXPECTED** order (cf. Components of Abstract)
• Wordcount estimates
  – Background: 100 words
  – Methods: 100 words
  – Findings: 100 words
  – BUT...it depends on the strengths/highlights of your study.
4. Revise the draft

Goal: to Let reviewers understand by reading ONCE

- **Density**...Reduce the redundant information
- **Consistency**...Iteratively edit across Components
- BUT ... save the first draft separately for your presentation.
  - Overly informative for abstract, but very useful for talk/paper when drafting the slides

**Priority**

- The highlights of your study
- Info. to understand the highlights & its theoretical importance
- Info. to understand the design of your study
  - Refer only to major references which reviewers should know.
5. Ask peers/supervisor for proofreading

- Person who knows much about your area and your study
  - Supervisor

- Person who knows about your area but NOT about your study
  - Colleagues
  - Reviewers should be those kind of people.

- If necessary (highly possible), ask them again after the revision.

- If you’re asked to proofread your colleague’s abstract, focus on...
  - Where your reading stops
  - How clearly information is expressed (cf. Components of Abstract)
Take-home message

1. Know about reviewer’s expectation
2. Know about your study
3. Write up 1st draft
4. Revise the draft
5. Ask peer/supervisor for proofreading
One more thing...

- Science is one particular kind of communication of knowledge only done by **DISSEMINATION**.
- Conference presentation is the starting point for early researchers and also even top researchers.
- Giving presentation can be tough, but ...

*It is always YOU who can share your research with our field.*
Thank you for your attention!

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