

Get Abstracts Accepted:

Demystifying Conference Abstract Writing

Shungo SUZUKI

PhD student / J-SLARF student chair

Email: s.suzuki@lancaster.ac.uk

Website: <https://shungosuzuki.wordpress.com/>

Twitter: @shungosuzuki

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New Café – Session 37

What is Conference Abstract like?

Abstract (298/300 words)

In the context of L2 speaking research, listeners' perception toward L2 speech has been extensively examined to capture meaningful constructs for oral proficiency. Motivated by this line of research, scholars have paid increasing attention to comprehensibility and perceived fluency, as both constructs are crucial in L2 communication and also attainable learning goals even for late learners (De Jong et al., 2012; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2016). The investigation into complex interplays of linguistic features behind listeners' perceptions can offer insights into which aspects of speech should be prioritized to make L2 speech perceived to be more comprehensible and/or fluent. However, the relationship between comprehensibility and perceived fluency has been surprisingly underresearched (for a rare exception see Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, & Thomson, 2004). The current study, therefore, investigates how listeners perceive comprehensibility and fluency in relation to linguistic features of speech.

The speech data were elicited from a total of 40 Japanese learners of English via an argumentative task, and then rated by 10 untrained native speakers of English in terms of comprehensibility and fluency. Due to the exploratory nature of the study, a comprehensive set of objective linguistic measures was selected based on psycholinguistic model of speech production (Kormos, 2006; Segalowitz, 2010).

The results showed that whereas comprehensibility and perceived fluency scores were highly correlated ($r = .95, p < .001$), raters provided significantly lower scores on fluency compared to comprehensibility. Furthermore, according to the multiple regression analyses, both comprehensibility and fluency were commonly associated with mean pause duration and morphological accuracy. However, comprehensibility was uniquely related to articulation rate and syntactic accuracy, while perceived fluency was connected with pause frequency and lexical appropriateness. The presentation will also discuss how native listeners perceive comprehensibility and fluency distinctively with reference to psycholinguistic processing of speech.

- 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/wkbfx1kfkk2jz/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...



Criteria

Appropriateness and Importance of the Topic
Theoretical Orientation
Research Design / Conceptual Framework
Organization and Clarity

Comments to the Author

Not required

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

Abstract (298/300 words)

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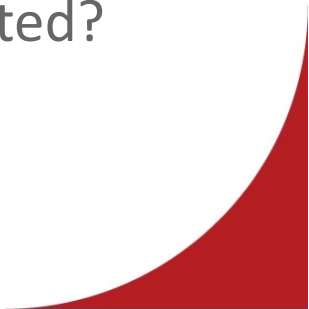
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Background of Study

- 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)

Abstract (298/300 words)

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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?*

Components of Conference Abstract (Cont'd)

Abstract (298/300 words)

In the context of L2 speaking research, listeners' perception toward L2 speech has been extensively examined to capture meaningful constructs for oral proficiency. Motivated by this line of research, scholars have paid increasing attention to comprehensibility and perceived fluency, as both constructs are crucial in L2 communication and also attainable learning goals even for late learners (De Jong et al., 2012; Derwing & Munro, 2009; Saito, Trofimovich, & Isaacs, 2016). The investigation into complex interplays of linguistic features behind listeners' perceptions can offer insights into which aspects of speech should be prioritized to make L2 speech perceived to be more comprehensible and/or fluent. However, the relationship between comprehensibility and perceived fluency has been surprisingly underresearched (for a rare exception see Derwing, Rossiter, Munro, & Thomson, 2004). The current study, therefore, investigates how listeners perceive comprehensibility and fluency in relation to linguistic features of speech.

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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?

- |

Weaknesses (to be neutrally mentioned)?

-

Paper specification template:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/0fowrq89rjchsys/ConferenceAbstract.docx?dl=0>

3. Write up 1st draft

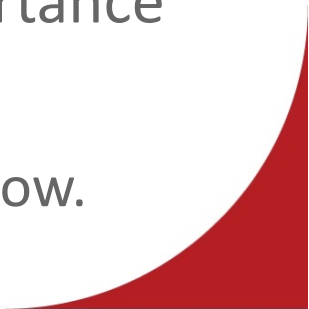
- Brainstorming: Just list information as much as possible
 - ***Without what to write, you CAN'T write.***
- Write each information in one or two sentences
- Put them in the **EXPECTED** order (cf. Components of Abstract)
- Wordcount estimates
 - Background: 100 words
 - Methods: 100 words
 - Findings: 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

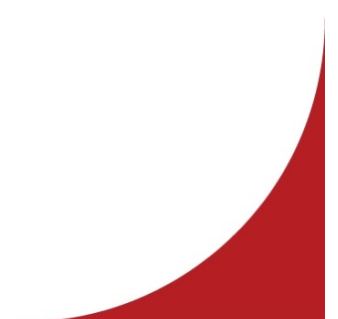
5

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!

Website: <https://shungosuzuki.wordpress.com/>

E-mail: s.suzuki@lancaster.ac.uk

Twitter: @shungosuzuki

