HOW TO WRITE A STRUCTURED ABSTRACT FOR RESEARCH ARTICLES

WiennyArdriyati
Agnes Widyaningrum
Universitas Stikubank Semarang
wien_ardri@yahoo.com
agnes.maryanto@yahoo.com

Abstract

In every research article there is always presented an abstract of scientific paper. It is sometimes poorly written, often lack significant information. This article provides detailed suggestions with examples for writing the background, purposes, methods, result findings, and conclusions sections of a structured abstract. The purpose of this paper is to find out whether the writers can make a structured abstract and apply the five-move model.The method is toanalyze10 research articles of appliedlinguistics articles and 10 social articles.Each participant is analyzed whetherhe / she has the structured based on a five-move model of each discipline.It is qualitative and descriptive in nature. The result from applied linguistics corpusshows that only 2 out of ten participants apply the complete five-move model. From the social corpusonly one of the total participants applies the model. The rest of the participants from both disciplines cannot make a structured abstract, since they do not follow the model. It is expected that the writers can write a structured abstract in their research articles with the proper five-move structure.

Key words: abstract, significant, structured, move

INTRODUCTION

The development of the era, scholars, especially the research article writers involve in the use of any languages, especially in writing. By using the written texts, they can express their ideas in written articles. Writing provides the ability to express ideas or opinion. Light (2001) states that for professionals, writing skills are essential for their day-to-day work and critical for entry and promotion in their disciplines. Writing an applicable paper is not easy, since it will be read by people who knows about the field in generalbut has not already known what the writer has written. Writing skills can be the way to better and greater achievement. By making a good writing a writer should also have the ability to make a good abstract in order that the reader will understand what the writer expresses his/her ideas, opinion, or argument in a manuscript.

The real processes of writing an abstract will push anyone to explain clearly the purpose, to show the methodology that fits the purpose, to focus the main results and to decide the importance of the manuscript. Writing a really good abstract has been more important than it was a decade ago, as Koopman (1997) stated that it has served the function "selling "of the work. But recently instead of only ensuring the reader to keep reading the rest of the manuscript, an abstract must convince the reader first to understand the whole content

This article presents how a writer writes a good and structured abstract when preparing a manuscript for a research article or conference presentation. Though, the main purpose of this article is for the novice writer, it is possiblethat writers with all levels of experience and discipline will at least obtain some ideas that may be useful in their future attempts.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The word abstract comes from the Latin abstractum which means a condensed form of a longer piece of writing.(http://www.uq.edu.au/studentservices/phdwriting/phlink08.html) Abstracts areessential parts of reports and sometimes

academic assignments. They are the first thing people read when they want to have a quick overview of the whole paper. Those abstracts depend on each discipline of each writer writes. Based on Wikipedia, abstract is a brief summary of research article, thesis, review, conference proceeding or any in-depth analysis of a particular subject or discipline, and is often used to help the reader quickly ascertain the paper's purpose. Abstract must contain proper information about the nature and importance of the topic, the competence of the research, the description of the results, and the conclusions. It should summarize the essential results of the work. Also an abstract is a brief, self-contained, and powerful statement that describes larger work.

Components of making abstract vary according to a certain field of discipline.
In social science or scientific work, an abstract may contain five-move structures

(http://courseworks.unimelb.edu.au/research_and_writing/abstracts
1. Purpose
2. Central argument
3. Methodology
4. Result
5. Implications of the paper's findings.

In Applied Linguistics, an abstract contains five-move structuresas Santo (1996) proposes:
1. Situating the research
2. Presenting the research
3. Describing the methodology
4. Summarizing the result
5. Discussing the result

Swales and Feak (2004) , in their Handbook, suggested that structured abstracts should have five elements as a paper would have:
1. Background
2. Aim
3. Method
4. Results
5. Conclusion

From these suggestions, it is shown that a five-move model is a suggested structure of an abstract although in different books it is entitled differently.In other words, abstract should contain five elements that it can be said "five -move structures

Sections of Abstract

All research articles published require abstracts to conform a formal structure within a word count, usually 200-250 words. The usual sections explained in a structured abstract are the Background, Purpose, Methods, Results, and Conclusions. However other headings with similar meanings may be used such as Introduction in place of Background and Findings in place of Results. Thus, based on (Swales and Feak, 2004); (Hyland,2000) ;(Santos,1996) the sections of abstract consist of Background, Purpose, Methods, Result and conclusions, when sometimes titles of those sections appear with different headings

1. **Background**
   This part should be the shortest part of the abstract and contain the subject that relates to the paper questions and what is not known and intended to be examined in the paper. In most cases, the background is expressed in 2-3 sentences, but sometimes a single sentence may be enough. The purpose of the background, as the word itself indicates, is to provide the reader with a background to the study, therefore smoothly lead into a description of the methods employed in the investigation.(see example 1 lines 1-3)

2. **Purpose / Aim**
   This section contains the intended of the research articles, about the goal the target of the research itself. It may be 1-2 sentences

3. Methods

The methods section is usually the second-longest part in the abstract. It contains sufficient information to assist the reader to understand what has been done and how the writer conduct the research

4. Results / Findings

The result section is of the most important part of the abstract.This is because readers who read an abstract do so to learn about the findings of the study. The result sections, therefore is the longest part of an abstract. It should contain as much detail about the findings.The findings focused here relates to the primary outcome. Besides, the writer should also mention unexpected findings, an opinion about theoretical or practical implications of the findings of the field

CONCLUSION

This part contains the important message of the research expressed in some sentences. It summarizes the findings and presents suggestions.

Below is the example of an abstract that has a structured based on a move-structure

Example 1. Applied Linguistics Field
(https://www.adelaide.edu.au/writingcentre/learning_guides/learningGuide_writingAnAbstract.pdf)

(1) Metalinguistic awareness contributes to effective writing at university. Writing is a meaning-making process where linguistic, cognitive, social and creative factors are at play. University students need to master the skills of academic writing not only for getting their degree but also for their future career. It is also significant for lecturers to know who our students are, how they think and how we can best assist them.
(2) This study examines first-year undergraduate Australian and international engineering students as writers of academic texts in a multicultural setting at the University of Adelaide.
(3) A questionnaire and interviews were used to collect data about students' level of metalinguistic awareness, their attitudes toward, expectations for, assumptions about and motivation for writing.
(4) The preliminary results of the research show that students from different cultures initially have different concepts about the academic genres and handle writing with different learning and writing styles, but those with a more developed metalanguage are more confident and motivated.
(5) The conclusion can also be drawn that students' level of motivation for academic writing positively correlates with their opinion about themselves as writers. Following an in-depth multi-dimensional analysis of preliminary research results, some recommendations for writing

The example shows (1) refers to background; (2) explains about the purpose; (3) describes about the methods; (4) refers findings and (5) the conclusion.

Example2. Social Field(http://www.sccur.uci.edu/sampleabstracts.html)

1. In this essay the forms of agricultural assistance will be discussed in terms of the type of assistance, the rates of assistance to agriculture in comparison with those of other industries, the effects of assistance, and finally, whether assistance can be justified.
2. Focus group interviews were carried out with Somalian women, analyzed by means of the Grounded theory method.
3. The results show that factors both in the family and in the outside world influenced their food choice and traditions, both in their home country of Somalia and in their new country, Sweden, after migration.
4. The categories generated in the analysis were brought together in a model showing the women 'struggling for their own cultural identity' and oscillating between 'remaining Somalian' and 'becoming part of Swedish society', food being an important instrument in maintaining the cultural identity of their families. Cultural identity in this respect is a matter of the wishes of the husband, followed by those of the women and children and, at the same time, the strong pressure of the Swedish host country.
5. This indicates how important it is for professionals to be aware of the trust people have in their own cultural food and therefore also how necessary it is to give culturally adapted food advice through public health work, in this case to Somalian families.

The example2 above shows No 1 refers to Purpose; No 2 refers Central Arguments; No 3 describe Methodology; No 4 refers to Results and No 5 refers to Implications of the Findings

Methods
The corpus of this study consists of twenty research article abstracts which are divided into 2 parts: applied linguistics and social sections. Those were taken randomly by browsing. The twenty corpuses were analyzed differently. The applied linguistics data wereanalyzed by five-move structures; Background, Aim, Method, Results, Conclusion(Swales and Freak, 2004)
In social section the data were an analyzed by five-move structures with different headings; Purpose, Central argument, Methodology, Result, Implications of the paper's findings

(based on Writing Article taken from http://courseworks.unimelb.edu.au/research_and_writing/abstracts)
The procedure for the construction of corpus is as follows. First all the abstracts were analyzed based on each field. (See Table 1 for the abstracts of Applied Linguistics). Then analyzing the abstracts of Social Field (See Table 2)
Each abstract in the corpus was coded and analyzed using each five-move model. After each abstract was coded into different moves, then was examined and put into table. The last is making percentage so that it can show whether the five-move model is applied completely or not.

Findings and Discussion
The results of the five-move structure are shown in the table below:

Participant	Five-	move	model		
	1	2	3	4	5
1	v	v	v	v	v
2		v	v	v	
3		v	v	v	
4	v	v	v	v	
5		v	v	v	
6	v	v	v	v	
7	v	v	v	v	v
8		v	v	v	
9		v	v	v	
10		v	v	v	v

The result of the five-move model of abstracts in the table above presents that each move appears to be various in these applied linguistics corpus. There are two participants who apply the five-movemodels; it was about 20 % of the total abstract. There are three - move model namely Purpose, Method, and Results, each of which occurs in about 50 % of the abstracts. There are four-move model which occur about 20 % of the abstracts, namely participants number 4 and 6. Participant number 10 applies four-move model, namely Purpose, Method, Result, Implication. From the analysis it shows that the move model of each abstract in the corpus revealed that there are many different movestructures among the abstracts. The results in general are in accordance with Swales and Feak (2004), in that move two,three, and four are obligatory, while move 1 and 5 are optional.

The following is the results of the five-move model that is applied in Social field. The results of Social data shown in the table below

Participants			Five -move	model	
	1	2	3	4	5
1	v	v	v	v	v
2	v		v	v	
3		v	v	v	v
4	v		v	v	
5	v	v	v	v	
6	v		v	v	
7	v		v	v	v
8		v	v	v	v
9	v		v	v	
10		v	v	v	v

The move-structure of the Social field is almost the same with the applied linguistics, there are five-move model. Each field has some different content and headings. They are Purpose, Central Argument, Method, Results and Implication of the findings in Social field.

From the table, it shows that there is one abstract that applies the complete five-move model. It was about 10% of the total abstracts. There are about 30 % of the four-move structure of the total abstracts in the corpus, namely Central argument, Methodology, Results, and Implications of the Findings. The three-move structure applied is more predominant compared with others; there are 40 % of the total abstracts. Those are moves of Purpose, Methodology, and Results.The other two participants apply four-move structure with each different heading. Participant number 7 applies four-move structure, namely Purpose, Method, Result, and Implication, whereas participant number 5 applies Central argument and eliminates Implication of the findings. It shows that Methodand Result are obligatory in the abstract.

Conclusion

The principles of writing and publishing scientific papers are outlined, before writing a word, the writer should identify the main message, audience, target journal, resource materials, type of manuscript, and results. The abstract is the part of the paper that readers see when they search through internet, since it should summarize the essential results of the work. Thus, abstract is part of the whole content of the research article.

This study analyzed 20 research article abstracts from applied linguistics and social fields from the five-move model. The major findings are summarized as follows.

1. The abstracts in the corpus tended not to follow the five-move model completely instead various moves are applied.
2. The different disciplines show some similarities in applying the five-move model that Methodand Results are obligatory.
3. There are differences in applying the five-move model that the five-move model number 1 in applied linguistics is

Background but in Social Field is Purpose.

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