RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Lecture4: Abstract and Conclusions

Define an Abstract

It is a **summary** of the research **paper**.

It is often found at the beginning of a research work so that readers will immediately have an **overview** of the entire research.

It **quickly gives** the reader the essence of the **report**

Contents of an Abstract

You **MUST** include the following:

1. The research question.
2. The scope of the investigation(An outline of the parameters).
3. A summary of the conclusions you reached
4. To be very clear, make each of these points a separate paragraph.

What else should be on the page?

- The word ABSTRACT, but NOT the title of the essay.
- The word count, which MUST be MAX 300 words.
- 12 pt., same font as the essay (Arial or Times new roman)

Where does it go?

AFTER the title page.
BEFORE the Table of Contents.
i.e. page 2.

Language

The Abstract must be written in THIRD person.

- E.g. “This extended essay deals with…..”
- “The results of the experiments showed that…”

NOT “In my essay I wrote about…..”

“ I did experiments to find out…”

“I found out that…”

You get marks for your Abstract:

- 0 = the abstract is over 300 words,

OR ONE (or more) of the three elements is missing.

(research question, scope of the investigation, conclusion reached.)

- 1 = Within the abstract all three elements are present, but not clearly stated.
- 2 = All three elements are included AND are clearly stated.

TYPES OF ABSTRACT

1. **Unstructured abstract** – contain 100 to 250 words in a paragraph with brief summary of each main sections
2. **Structured abstract** - the same as (1) but divided into several short sections
3. **Extended abstract** - A mini paper organized in the same way as a full paper (e.g. Introduction, Methods, Discussion…), but substantially shorter (two to four pages)
4. **Conference abstract** - standalone abstract (sometimes up to 500 words), designed to help conference organizers to decide whether they would like you to make an oral presentation

DESCRIPTIVE VERSUS INFORMATIVE ABSTRACT

DESCRIPTIVE ABSTRACT	INFORMATIVE ABSTRACT
-Describes major points of the project to the reader	Informs the audience of all the essential points of the paper
Includes background purpose and focus of the paper or article but never the methods, results and conclusions if it is a research paper	-Briefly summarizes the background, purpose, focus, methods, results, findings, and conclusions of the full length paper
-It is most likely used for humanities and social sciences papers or psychology essays	-is concise usually 10% of the original paper length, often just one paragraph -most likely used for sciences, engineering or psychology report

Abstract Structure

- Begin the abstract with one or two sentences saying what you did plus one key result, i.e. begin with information that the reader does NOT already know
- Introduce the background by connecting in some way to what you said in your introductory sentence.
- Use the background information (which the reader may or not already know) to justify what you did, and outline your methodology (and materials where appropriate)
- Provide some more information on your results
- Tell the reader the implications of your results

What should author avoid

1. You should try to **avoid**:
2. background information that is too generalist for your readers
3. claims that are not supported in the paper
4. definitions of key terms
5. mathematical equations
6. unnecessary details that would be better located in your Introduction, such as the name of your institute, place names that readers will not have heard of
7. references to other papers. However, if your whole paper is based on an extending or refuting a finding given by one specific author, then you will need to mention this author's name.

Poor Abstract

- If it is not self sufficient
- If the abstract are more likely to be an Introduction of the paper
- If it contains a reference to another authors work
- If it mentions irrelevant details
- If the reader has no idea of what results were obtained

Findings/Conclusions

From the analysis of data:

- Conclusion is typically created at the end of the writing process.
- The conclusion of a research statement, discusses the issues, and reaches a final judgment.
- The conclusion is not a summary; it is a belief based on your reasoning and on the evidence you have accumulated.
- This is the place to share with readers the conclusions you have reached because of your research."
- You should certainly mention the limitations of your research at some point in the paper.

CONCLUSION CHARACTERISTICS

- It doesn't contain numerals.
- It focus on the meaning/ essence of the study.
- It is explicit and definite, leaving merely giving implied giving the researcher a bit of doubt (qualifiers such as probably, may be, perhaps should be avoided).

Recommendation	*Limitation*	*Implications*