



INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

ACADEMIC WRITING COURSE SPRING 2013

SESSION 5

(selected activities)

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1. ABSTRACTS WRITING
2. ORAL SUMMARY – MY ACADEMIC POSITION
3. ERROR CORRECTION/STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

Aims:

- to extend the discussion and practical tasks around abstract writing
- to listen to and give feedback to presentations
- to analyze some frequently occurring mistakes in student writing

1. Discussing reading

After you have read Peter Antes' *Scientific Writing: English, French and German Compared*, answer the questions below:

- a) When he was a child, how did he think foreign people communicated with each other?
- b) What is the author's language background?
- c) When writing a paper in a foreign language, you have to
 - Repeat what you would say in your language
 - Translate everything linguistically
 - Change the frame of the paper according to the culture of the foreign language

d) Fill in the missing words:

The differences between the papers are not due to your _____ knowledge in terms of _____, words and _____ expressions but in terms of _____. To make the choice of a language is to _____.

2. How to write an abstract

I. Introduction:

Work in pairs. Answer the following questions.

- a. What is an abstract?
- b. Why are abstracts so important?
- c. What types of abstracts do you know?
- d. How do the specific types of abstracts differ?
- e. Who reads abstracts and why?

II. Listening:

Watch the following extract of *An Introduction to Writing (Good) Abstracts*. (06.28 – 11.06)

<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/2010/how-to/research-documentation/an-introduction-to-writing-good-abstracts/>. As you listen, answer these questions (make notes if convenient):

- a. Which three major types of abstracts did the speaker describe?
- b. What are the main differences between these types of abstracts?
- c. Which of the types of abstracts tends to be the longest?
- d. What does the abbreviation IMRaD stand for?

III. Reading:

Look at the abstract samples below and answer the following questions.

- a. Which one is a descriptive (indicative) abstract?
- b. Which one is an informative (summary) abstract?
- c. Which one is a conference abstract?
- d. Which one is a research abstract?
- e. Which one is a dissertation abstract?

Discuss what features differentiate them.

1. Economies with Interacting Agents

Alan P. Kirman

This paper discusses economic models in which agents interact directly with each other rather than through the price system as in the standard general equilibrium model. It is suggested that the relationship between micro and macro behavior is very different than that in the standard model and that the aggregate phenomena that can arise are rich. The models considered include ones with global interaction in which all agents can interact with each other and ones in which agents can only interact with their immediate neighbors. Both static and dynamic models are considered and the latter includes the class of evolutionary economic models.

2. Economics of Organizing Product Development in the Extended Enterprise

Paulo Gomes

Firms are increasingly facing the challenge of organizing product development effort in extended settings, i.e., across the boundaries of several firms. This dissertation looks at the implications of this trend to the development cost structure, in particular to the coordination cost.

The theoretical framework is based on transaction cost economics, design theory and organizational learning. Building on this literature, the dissertation addresses the following questions: what are the indicators of coordination costs for different types of development tasks? Do these help explain the task sourcing decision? And, do firms learn how to coordinate development tasks?

Three empirical models were developed to address these questions. The first model proposes that a set of task attributes derived from transaction cost economics, including a proxy for asset specificity, affect both the task sourcing decision and its coordination cost. Then, I test for differences in the coordination cost of 'generation' and 'test' types of tasks, a classic distinction in design theory. Finally, the dissertation tests a 'learning model' for development task coordination effort. The data was collected from 11 software development projects conducted at a global firm in the medical device industry. The total sample size consists of 71 system development tasks.

The main findings were as follows. The proxy for asset specificity, internal problem solving, is a significant predictor of both the likelihood of outsourcing a development task and the associated coordination cost. Moreover, the impact of internal problem solving on the coordination cost is significantly larger for outsourced tasks. The results also reveal asymmetries in the coordination cost for generation and test tasks. Finally, I find evidence that projects were able to reduce coordination effort over time.

The findings of the dissertation should be useful in several ways. Recognizing indicators of coordination cost and the asymmetric nature of coordination costs for different types of tasks may provide a more principled approach for organizing extended product development. By systematically exploring the ability to reduce coordination effort through competence development and management of the task dependence structure, we may be able to discover more efficient ways for engaging external partners in development efforts.

3. Hurricane Katrina - Storm Stretches Refiners Past a Perilous Point

Jad Mouawad, *New York Times*, September 11, 2005, Page A27

This article discusses the impact of the storm on the country's oil refining capacity. At one point the article notes that the storm idled 5 percent of the refining capacity in the United States. It then quotes an analyst who comments that this is just 1 percent of world production, and that there is a world market.

Actually, for refined products, like gasoline and home heating oil, to a large extent the market is national or even regional. Many states have very specific rules on emissions of various pollutants. Refineries have to be set up to produce fuel that meets these requirements. In many cases, few, if any, foreign refiners will be set up to meet these standards. While they can change over time, at the moment foreign refiners may have little ability to meet U.S. demand for gasoline or other refined products.

It is also worth noting that major U.S. oil companies may benefit by deliberately keeping capacity off line. The loss of capacity will push up prices and possibly raise profits.

4. Disciplinary Writing for Publication in English: Empowering and Equipping EFL Doctoral Students with Writing Tools and Skills

Katherine Jenkins and Paul Sonders

The proposed presentation will draw on and contribute to the research in genre-based pedagogies with a focus on teaching of disciplinary writing in English for publication. Although the concept of genre has been utilized as a research and teaching tool in many different fields of inquiry, attempts at establishing effective EFL writing pedagogies have not completely succeeded in achieving their didactic goals as explicit genre teaching raises many unanswered questions such as: How can a specific genre be taught outside the context of its use? In particular, how can EFL students acquire such a complex and intricate genre as the research article in classroom environments? What tools, skills and knowledge are necessary for these students to apply in order to be adequately equipped for disciplinary writing?

Several solutions to these questions will be offered stemming from the experience of the authors with teaching an EFL doctoral writing course focused on publishing in geographical and medical journals. Particularly, two specific approaches to teaching disciplinary writing will be put forward, namely a corpus-based and process-based approach.

The last decade has seen a gradual shift from the passive use of large general English corpora (e.g., British National Corpus) to the exploration and application of quite small genre- and journal-specific corpora collected by students themselves (e.g., a corpus of 40 medical case reports from a specific medical journal). This shift has been conducive to greater autonomy of EFL students and their increased self-confidence in learning to write in the disciplines. The authors will offer suggestions how such a corpus-based approach can be applied to teaching writing for publication. In addition, important questions will be tackled regarding the nuts and bolts of creating small disciplinary corpora and ways students can avail themselves of using simple text analysis tools (e.g., TextSTAT).

Regarding the latter approach, we will argue for a process-based writing instruction including pre-writing strategies such as 'free writing', 'mind mapping', and 'patch writing'. Various revision techniques and strategies will be discussed such as frontal 'group editing', organizing and delivering 'writers' retreats' and designing 'one-to-one writing conferences'.

The overall aim of the presentation is to stress the importance of raising students' awareness of the many complex but often implicit linguistic, disciplinary and cultural aspects of writing in English for publication. Specific examples and illustrations of both the approaches will be included in the presentation to attain the stated aim.

IV. Some general hints:

Here are some other points to keep in mind when writing abstracts. In pairs, discuss whether they are true or false.

• Summarize your conclusions as well as your purpose, methods, and main findings. Emphasize the different points in proportion to the emphasis they receive in the document.

• Do not refer in the abstract to information that is not in the document.

• First person style (“I” or “We”) is always more preferable than third person style (“*This dissertation shows...*”).

• Use the passives as much as possible so that the abstract sounds objective: e.g. “*It was tested by the study*”.

• If possible avoid trade names, acronyms, abbreviations, or symbols. You would need to explain them, and that takes too much room.

• Use keywords from the document. For published work, the abstract is “mined” for the words used to index the material--thus making it more likely someone will cite your article.

V. Structure of research abstracts

Abstract Worksheet Form

Adapted from *How to Write an Abstract*, online at
<http://www.okstate.edu/education/jshs/abstract.htm>

Project/Study Title - Keep it concise, but descriptive.

Body

1. *Topic sentence - Introduction* (optional)
Introduces the topic of the study and the reasons for its investigation.
2. *Subject/Purpose*
What is this project about? Why is this project interesting or important?
3. *Hypothesis/Prediction*
What did you think you would find? Why?
4. *Approach/Methodology*
Briefly explain the approach/methodology you followed in order to test your prediction.
5. *Findings/Discussion*
What did you find when you performed your test? And are your results consistent with your initial hypothesis and prediction? Why or why not?
6. *Conclusion*
What do these results mean? Why should anyone become excited or interested in your findings?

VI. Analyzing an abstract

(from *Writing up Research - The Abstract*, online at <http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/el21abst.htm>)

Here is an abstract from a published paper. It is 220 words long. Read it through looking for the main purpose of each sentence (for example, introduction, hypothesis/prediction, methodology, main findings, or conclusion).

1 Helwa, N. H. and Abdel Rehim, Z. S. (1997). Experimental Study of the
2 Performance of Solar Dryers with Pebble Beds. *Energy Sources*, 19, 579-591.

3 Major problems of the arid region are transportation of agricultural products
4 and losses due to spoilage of the products, especially in summer. This work
5 presents the performance of a solar drying system consisting of an air heater
6 and a dryer chamber connected to a greenhouse. The drying system is
7 designed to dry a variety of agricultural products. The effect of air mass flow
8 rate on the drying process is studied. Composite pebbles, which are
9 constructed from cement and sand, are used to store energy for night
10 operation. The pebbles are placed at the bottom of the drying chamber and
11 are charged during the drying process itself. A separate test is done using a
12 simulator, a packed bed storage unit, to find the thermal characteristics of
13 the pebbles during charging and discharging modes with time. Accordingly,
14 the packed bed is analysed using a heat transfer model with finite difference
15 technique described before and during the charging and discharging
16 processes. Graphs are presented that depict the thermal characteristics and
17 performance of the pebble beds and the drying patterns of different
18 agricultural products. The results show that the amount of energy stored in
19 the pebbles depends on the air mass flow rate, the inlet air temperature, and
20 the properties of the storage materials. The composite pebbles can be used
21 efficiently as storing media.

Language of abstract introductions

- Third person style:

The / This	paper article thesis dissertation	analyzes, investigates, explores, examines, re-examines, outlines, describes, shows, introduces, evaluates, considers ...
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- First person style:

In this	paper article theses dissertation	I / we *	analyse, investigate, explore, examine, re-examine, outline, describe, show, introduce, evaluate, consider...
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VII. Gapfill.

Read the sentences below and fill in the gaps with one of the following verbs:

develops - calls - argues - provides - looks - consider

1. This paper _____ an axiomatic basis for a representation of personal preferences in which the utility of an act can be expressed as an expected value of conditional utilities of the act given any set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive scenarios, under a unique subjective probability.
2. The authors _____ a broad class of situations where a society must choose from a finite set of alternatives.
3. This paper _____ that the analysis of these games involves a key technical issue.
4. This paper _____ at the effectiveness of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in reducing the time that manufacturing plants spend in a state of non-compliance.
5. This study _____ into question the established view that lack of information on clean-up cost functions represents a serious problem in designing an optimal charge on polluting waste discharged by N point sources.

* Only in case the authors are more than one.

6. This paper _____ a model of corporate hierarchy in which workers accumulate heterogeneous human capital suitable for different positions within the hierarchy.

VIII. Online exercise.

Use the Web and a major search engine to look for what verbs and/or what adjectives collocate with the terms *hypothesis*, *theory*, *model*, *principle*, *framework* (and their respective plurals).

IX. Passive voice 1.

Sometimes, the Approach/Methodology sentences are expressed in passive form. Read the excerpts below and underline all the passive verb forms.

1. The single tax proposal is looked at from the point of view of constitutional economics, and the wider applicability of Henry George's basic notions is emphasized
2. Analysis of data on incorporation and investment decisions, the relative sensitivity of the stock prices of firms with different asset mobility to political events, and the market for office space most strongly support hypotheses about credibility, adaption, and demand augmentation.
3. A model of farm marketing is developed for the period 1913-28 and is embedded in a general equilibrium model for the Soviet economy.
4. We test whether patterns of income inequality were consistent with the predictions of a market-clearing, neoclassical model linking land and labor endowment through factor markets to household income.
5. Building on the work of P. N. Courant (1978), the paper develops a housing search model and measures the cost of discrimination by its impact on the gain a household can achieve through housing search. The cost of discrimination is then calculated for a representative sample of households.
6. A discussion of changes in the organizational structure and legal environment surrounding gold production is followed by a description of state gold purchasing and storage activities.
7. In an application to US GDP, it is found that inferences about the nature of the trend in output are not robust to changes in the specification for short-run fluctuations.

X. Passive voice 2.

Complete each sentence below with the present tense, passive voice, of the verb in parentheses.

1. The Malmquist productivity index, constructed using nonparametric linear programming methods, _____ (to employ) for the relevant comparisons.

2. Characteristics of the incidence of employee and foreign ownership and associated firm performance _____ (to examine).
3. Respondents' stated preferences for attributes related to various electricity-generation scenarios _____ (to analyse) using a series of pairwise ratings.
4. In the standard case of "adverse-selection," a firm _____ (to show) to have an unbounded incentive to under-report marginal clean-up costs.
5. First the employment expectations of companies for 1997 and in the medium term _____ (to describe) for eastern and western Germany. This _____ (to follow) by analyses of the personnel inflows and outflows in the first half of 1996, in which the evaluation differentiates between enterprises with expanding employment, declining enterprises and stagnating enterprises.

XI. Passive voice 3. Transform the following sentences from passive into active starting with the phrase given.

1. The notion of civil society is initially considered in the light of intellectual history and differentiated into a number of constitutive concepts such as trust, commercial society, and a civil network of interpersonal relationships.

This article

2. A simple game-theoretic framework is applied to analyse international cooperation by focusing on the prisoner's dilemma on the one hand and bargaining in the Coasian sense on the other.

We _____

Language of abstract findings

Research findings can be communicated in a series of different ways. However, they are often introduced by the terms *result/results* or *findings*. See below how they collocate with verbs and adjectives.

1. With verbs

The results show, state, suggest, uncover,
findings indicate, imply, provide...

2. With adjectives

Main / partial / empirical RESULTS (are) striking, contradictory
different, consistent with

Some final suggestions

- Write the abstract only when the document is finished. Abstracts written before then are just previews.
- If you are forced to write an abstract before the document is completed, think about its purpose and write a topic sentence. Keep in mind that you'll need to rewrite the abstract when the document is finished because it will no longer accurately reflect the contents of the document.
- Before starting the abstract, list your thoughts on the document. Group related items together. Prioritise the list and put the most important group first. The first few groups form the core of the topic sentence. The rest lead to supporting sentences.
- If you can't create a topic sentence (i.e. the introductory statement), write the supporting sentences first. The topic sentence may then become obvious.
- Write for an audience not necessarily up to speed in your subject area. This is important because you never know who will read your abstract.
- Choose acronyms, abbreviations, and technical terms carefully as they may confuse many readers.
- Define the scope of the project in the abstract.
- Reread your abstract after several days have passed. Remove all superfluous information.

References

Writing up Research - The Abstract, online at
<http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/el21abst.htm>.

How to Write an Abstract, online at
<http://www.okstate.edu/education/jshs/abstract.htm>.

LEO - Literary Education Online: Transition Cues, online at
<http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/style/transitioncues.html>.

Notes from the video on abstracts

A concise description of a longer document, which ...

- highlights the major points
- describes the content and scope of the document
- reviews the contents of the document in a restricted form.

Primary authors should consider the process of writing abstracts to be an all-out effort in INFORMATION REDUCTIONISM or condensation, no matter what style, content, or form is required for the abstract.

AUDIENCE:

- **researchers** (use databases of abstracts to decide which documents they should read more closely)
- **journal editors** (decide what should be published)
- **conference organizers** (decide who should be on the conference program) & **attendees** (read abstracts on a program to decide what to attend)
- **foundations**
- **readers of articles, posters, grant applications, or formal reports** (decide whether to grant money or continue reading an article, poster, or report)

MOST COMMON ABSTRACT STYLES:

- indicative or descriptive (topical)
- informative or summary
- hybrid

DESCRIPTIVE OR INDICATIVE ABSTRACTS

- introduce the subject in 70-200 words (rather short)
- include the purpose, methods, and scope of the work
- omit results, conclusions, recommendations (no evaluations)
- contain purpose, scope of methodology
- key phrases: *"this paper reports"*, *"it includes"*, *"it summarizes"*

INFORMATIVE OR SUMMARY ABSTRACTS

- introduce the subject in 200-700 words
- mirrors the original in its emphasis and ratios
- IMRAD-appropriate (Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion)
- contain purpose, scope of methodology, results, conclusions and recommendations
- length: from a paragraph to a page or two, depending upon the length of the original work being abstracted

HYBRID ABSTRACTS

- arise from style requirements (publisher's preferences, grant-specific instructions, conference/organization's guidelines, professor's instructions)
- check if your targeted audience has specifications for abstracts. If so, follow those guidelines exactly!

KEY WORDS

- abstracts must contain key words about what is essential in the main document. Key words are used to search databases. These are the terms the databases uses to file and retrieve the abstract. Review your abstract for potential key words that someone researching the topic can use.

WRITING THE ABSTRACT

1. Be thoroughly familiar with the document you are abstracting. Reread the work.
2. In each major section of the document you are abstracting, highlight key information. In many disciplines, this means introduction, methods, results, and discussion.
3. Compile the highlighted information into a single paragraph.
4. Write a rough draft without looking back at the original. Be sure to paraphrase.
5. Check to be sure you did not leave out anything important or add anything not included in the document.
6. Delete extraneous words or phrases.
7. Rephrase the first sentence. Begin with the new information contained in the document rather than the general topic, i.e. "This paper" or "This study"
8. Correct weaknesses in organization and improve transitions.
9. Count the number of words.

Do you have a killer abstract, or are you an abstract killer? Time to evaluate...

CHECKLIST – Have you included the following?

- subject
- scope
- purpose
- methods
- results
- recommendations, implications, or significance
- key words

SPEAKING – A TIMED TALK ON A GIVEN TOPIC

SITUATION 1: You are attending an international conference. For the day the sessions are over and now you are at an *informal* networking dinner with the other participants, sitting at a table. Introduce yourself, your current academic position and explain your research and institutional background in 2 minutes.

SITUATION 2: You are strongly interested in receiving funding for your current research. Explain why you should be given the funding. Mention theoretical and conceptual framework of your research, methods used in your study and expected results (possibly including your research questions and hypotheses).

There are 10 minutes for your preparation and 3 minutes for your mini-speech.