

## Cross-cultural analysis of conference abstracts

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Writing an abstract, including an abstract for a linguistics conference presentation, has become an essential skill for scholars who intend to present their research to an international academic audience. Now that English has become the lingua franca of all international communication, researchers from different cultural backgrounds have to master the writing of this research-progress genre (Swales, 1990) since otherwise they may risk being refused participation at conferences and publication of their articles in conference proceedings. However, to write a self-contained abstract in English can be difficult and demanding for non-native speakers of English. The construction of this essential form of writing (Swales and Feak, 2009), which is expected to summarize scholarly work in clear and compelling ways, has to meet certain requirements (e.g. relevant topic, number of words, keywords) and comprise statements about motivation, problems, approaches, results and conclusions. The goal is to entice readers and 'sell' one's research results, i.e. to persuade reviewers to accept one's paper and motivate conference participants to attend one's presentation.

This paper analyses the generic structure of conference abstracts accepted between 2008 and 2014 at the international *Brno Conference on Linguistics Studies*, which is held every other year at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. The aim is to reveal whether there is any cross-cultural variation between abstracts written by Anglophone writers and non-native speakers of English. The latter are represented by authors from the Czech Republic and other countries where Slavonic languages are spoken (e.g. Slovakia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine) and writers from some other European countries (e.g. Germany, Austria, Spain). Finally, the author attempts to draw pedagogical implications for the designing of academic writing courses.

Swales, J. (1990). *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Swales, J., & Feak, C. B. (2009). *Abstracts and the writing of abstracts*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

### Biodata

Renata Povolná is Associate Professor of English Linguistics at Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. Her research interests lie in the area of discourse analysis, pragmatics and conversation analysis, concentrating mainly on academic discourse. She has published the books *Spatial and Temporal Adverbials in English Authentic Face-to-Face Conversation* (2003) and *Interactive Discourse Markers in Spoken English* (2010) and co-authored *Cohesion and Coherence in English Discourse* (2012). She is co-editor of *Coherence and Cohesion in Spoken and Written Discourse* (2009) and *Discourse Interpretations: Approaches and Applications* (2012) published by CSP. She is co-editor of the linguistics journal *Discourse and Interaction*.