Dos and Don'ts in Computational Linguistics Conference Papers

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http://schwicky.net/projects/2004/lsp/

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Generic structure

1. Abstract
2. Introduction
3. State of the art
4. Main part
5. Conclusion and future work
6. References

How to decide about it?

To find out the best way to organize a paper, one can:

- Use guidelines for reviewers,
- See what the market has to offer: Look at existing papers and extract information.

Evaluation points (ACL)

- **well-structured**: clearly organized, has an initial overview, a final summary, structure is logical.
- **well-written**: good prose, reasonable sentence length, grammar at native-speaker level.
- **well-motivated**: identifies important problem(s) to tackle, other analytical options are discussed/rejected.
- **focused**: clear statement of goals, goals carried out, results evaluated in terms of goals.

Evaluation points (ACL) (2)

- **situated**: notes relevant earlier work, relates own proposals to that work.
- **exemplified**: formalism given detailed applications, applications are intuitive and well-explained.
- **accessible**: technical terminology explained on first use, self-contained, careful development of new concepts.
- **evaluated**: evaluation methodology is explained clearly, novel techniques are adequately explained and justified, results are described in sufficient detail.

Tenor: from expert to expert

- An expert writing for less experts — conference paper,
- An expert writing to a more expert — paper at university.
- Be precise and clear! Don’t loose yourself in complex elaborations.
- Don’t be too vague. Be sure to be original enough.
- It’s a scientific paper: expressions from spoken language and novel prose should be avoided.
- The reader doesn’t want to taught by “know-it-alls”.

Advice for initial submission

- Abstracts: In engineering longer than in linguistics.
- Take care of the correct content: what, why, how.
- ACL says: “Maximum length of full papers: 7 pages.”
- Blind review: No name and no self references in the paper.

Structure in detail

- **Introduction**: Why was this paper written? Short intro into the topic. What is the problem and the goal? Structure of the paper: 1–2 sentences per chapter.
- **State of the art**: what are others doing? Context and boundary conditions.
- **Main part**: Recursive structure on chapter level: Introduction — Main Part — Conclusion.
  - Research papers: presentation of new results, possible applications, evaluation.
  - Comparison of literature: presentation of the known work and comparing evaluation.

Advice for the content

- Headings need to characterize content in a few words.
- A central theme needs to be discernible (roter Faden). Cross references should be avoided.
- Related ideas belong in a paragraph.
- One cannot say it often enough: be precise! Complex descriptions and relativizing adjectives should be avoided.
- Don't write about stuff which is irrelevant for your paper.
- Avoid too long sentences, they're hard to understand.

Advice for the content (2)

- Every statement must be proved.
- When using a new term, you have to introduce it first.
- Same things should always be called the same.
- Usage of abbreviations can be useful.
- Examples can help understanding.
- Long text passages are hard to read: use figures, lists, tables. . .

Figures

- Figures need to be explained in the text.
- When talking about a figure it should be included in the paper.
- If a figure contains a line with arrows at both ends but the text only explains one direction then:
  - the text is incomplete,
  - or the figure is wrong.
- Watch copyright and reference the source of the figure.

References

- Be sure to include every reference you used.
- In the text, use names of the authors and year of publication. Optionally: pages. E.g. (Teich and Bartsch, 2004)
- In linguistics, the list is usually not numbered.
- Include enough information to allow the reader to find the documents.
    - Include: Authors, year, title of publications. Pages and publisher.
    - Journal: number and volume.

Thank you for your attention!

References

[1] ACL Guidelines for Reviewers

[2] Style template for ACL papers

[3] Various papers presented at ACL conferences
`www.aclweb.org`

[4] Various IEEE papers `www.ieee.org`

[5] Baumgart *et al.*, Hinweise zur Erstellung schriftlicher Arbeiten und deren Präsentation