

Assessing Indian ESL Teachers' Research Literacy: Perspectives from ELTAI 2023 Conference Abstract Reviewers

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ABSTRACT:

Presenting research papers at conferences significantly contributes to the professional development of ESL teachers. However, there is a notable deficiency in research literacy among Indian ESL teachers, as evidenced by the abstracts submitted for the ELTAI Annual Conference 2023. Out of over 480 abstracts received and evaluated by 12 experts, only 52 were accepted without modifications. A total of 43 abstracts were outright rejected, 98 required resubmissions after substantial revisions, and 287 were slightly amended by reviewers. This study documents the reviewers' perceptions regarding the research literacy of the submitters and identifies key areas for improvement in abstract writing. It reports on a survey conducted with the reviewers, focusing on their views on ESL teachers' research literacy, common abstract errors, and the essential skills for effective abstract writing. The findings of this study are expected to inform faculty development programmes and curriculum design, highlighting the increasing necessity for practice-based research in the current academic climate.

Keywords: Research Literacy, Abstract Review, Conference Abstract Writing

1. Introduction

Teachers' research literacy encompasses both conducting research and utilising existing findings to inform teaching practices, and it is increasingly recognised as a vital component of professional development for English language teachers (Borg, 2007, 2010). Engaging in research offers numerous benefits, such as enhanced professional growth, improved teaching strategies, and better student learning outcomes. Furthermore, it promotes a reflective and inquiry-based approach to teaching (Banegas & Consoli, 2021; Calvert & Sheen, 2015; Gwee & Toh-Heng, 2022; Irby et al., 2020; McDonough & McDonough, 1997).

English language teachers engage with research through various activities, including reading and reviewing literature, attending workshops and seminars, reflecting on their teaching, conducting classroom-based research, participating in

collaborative projects, presenting at conferences, and publishing in journals. Of these activities, conference presentations are particularly popular, as they facilitate knowledge exchange, sharing of best practices, networking, and learning from peers (Rimmer & Floyd, 2020). However, effective engagement in these activities necessitates a strong foundation in research literacy.

A significant concern emerged from the abstracts submitted by Indian ESL teachers for the ELTAI Annual Conference 2023, which revealed a concerning level of research literacy. Out of over 480 abstracts received, only 52 were accepted without revision. In contrast, 43 abstracts were outright rejected, 98 required major revisions, and 287 needed minor revisions. This high proportion of revised abstracts underscores a critical deficiency in research literacy among the submitters. This study aims to evaluate the

research literacy of ESL teachers and identify areas for improvement in abstract writing for conferences, thus addressing an important gap in professional development.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Definitions of Research Literacy

Research literacy is a multifaceted concept with various definitions, focusing on teachers as both consumers and producers of research (Waring & Evans, 2014). It often includes both the ability to critically engage with existing research and the capacity to conduct original research (Williams & Coles, 2007; Borg, 2010). The British Educational Research Association (BERA) defines research literacy as familiarity with a range of research methods and findings, as well as their implications for practice and policy (2014). GroßOphoff et al. (2015) describe it as the ability to purposefully access, understand, and apply scientific information. Beaudry & Miller (2016) highlight the skills needed to locate, comprehend, discuss, and evaluate different types of research. Brown & Coombe (2015) identify specific competencies, such as understanding data-gathering strategies and recognising sound research interpretations. Evans et al. (2017) emphasise the integration of research into teaching practice as a key aspect of research literacy.

2.2. Teachers as Consumers of Research

Research on teachers as consumers of research examines their understanding of research, attitudes towards it, and their ability to apply it in practice (Yusof, 2019). Williams & Coles (2007) explored UK teachers' information literacy regarding research, revealing that while most teachers had positive or neutral attitudes, they encountered barriers such as limited time and difficulty accessing sources. Similarly, Evans (2017) found that early career teachers

developed a greater understanding of research and applied it more effectively in their practice through resources, collaboration, and reflective practices. These studies highlight the importance of providing support to enhance teachers' engagement with and application of research.

2.3. Teachers as Producers of Research

Studies focusing on teachers as producers of research reveal both motivations and barriers. Borg (2009) found that practical concerns often motivate teachers to engage in research, but obstacles such as time constraints, lack of knowledge, and limited access to materials impede their efforts. GroßOphoff et al. (2015) observed positive development in educational research literacy through introductory courses, especially in information literacy. Heikkilä & Eriksen (2023) examined the relationship between teachers' agency and research literacy development, highlighting the importance of autonomy and stakeholder support in adapting research practices. These findings suggest that addressing barriers and enhancing autonomy are crucial for promoting effective research engagement among teachers.

2.4. Gaps and Future Directions

Despite extensive research on various facets of research literacy, the perspectives of abstract reviewers at conferences remain underexplored. This study aims to address this gap by evaluating the research literacy of ESL teachers from the viewpoint of abstract reviewers of the ELTAI Annual Conference 2023. By examining the skills required for effective abstract writing and identifying common errors, the study aims to provide valuable insights for teachers, institutions, and course developers. These insights are expected to inform strategies for improving research literacy and developing targeted

professional development programmes.

3. Research Questions

The study attempts to answer the following three research questions: (1) What is the current state of ESL teachers' research literacy, as observed by the abstract reviewers? (2) What common mistakes do ESL teachers commit while writing abstracts for conferences? Why so? and (3) What specific skills in research literacy contribute to effective abstract writing?

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional survey method to investigate the perspectives of abstract reviewers regarding the research literacy of ESL teachers who submitted abstracts for presentation at the ELTAI International Conference 2023. This research is descriptive and non-experimental in nature. A quantitative questionnaire was specifically developed for this study, consisting of five items in addition to demographic questions. The first item asked respondents to rate various aspects of teachers' research literacy necessary for writing abstracts on a five-point Likert scale. The second item required an overall rating of the research literacy of the abstract submitters. The third item involved selecting from a list of common mistakes identified in the reviewed abstracts. The fourth item required choosing from a list of reasons behind these mistakes. The fifth item asked respondents to rate the importance of various skills required for writing abstracts, again using a five-point Likert scale.

4.2. Participants

The study stemmed from an observation made by the authors who were part of the organising

committee of an annual international conference organised by the English Language Teachers Association of India (ELTAI) in October 2023. ELTAI has been conducting annual conferences for more than 50 years and 2023 marked the rendition of its 53rd Annual and 17th International Conference in Dehradun. As a conventional practice in conferences, interested participants were required to submit abstract proposals for presentation at the conference. Abstracts were collected using Google Forms. It should be noted that the organising team employed an online expert review process to accept abstract proposals for presentation. Reviewers for the conference were chosen based on peer reference and the convenience of the organising team. 12 reviewers consented to review abstracts for the conference. The review process used a detailed set of questions and guidelines. An orientation on the abstract review process was provided to the selected reviewers. After orientation, reviewers started the review of abstracts. During the review process, authors observed a need for research literacy in the abstracts submitted for the conference. Most of the abstracts required minor or major revisions. Minor corrections such as grammatical corrections or reframing sentences were carried out by the reviewers. Major corrections such as absences of research objectives or methods were sent back to the abstract submitters for correction. This observation prompted the authors to study the research literacy of abstract submitters from the perspective of the conference reviewers.

A total of 10 reviewers from the ELTAI Annual Conference 2023 participated in this survey, comprising 8 females and 2 males. The age distribution was varied, ranging from 30 to 60. Educational qualifications were predominantly advanced: 8 participants held PhDs and 2 held Masters in English. The teaching experience

among participants was extensive, with 7 individuals having more than 10 years of experience. Specifically, 3 participants had less than 5 years of experience, 4 participants had 11-15 years, 1 participant had 16-20 years, and 2 participants had more than 20 years of teaching experience. Regarding their experience as reviewers, 4 were new to reviewing, 1 had reviewed for 1 conference previously, 2 had reviewed for 2 conferences, and 3 had reviewed for more than 5 conferences. 10 participants who responded to the questionnaire reviewed a total of 438 abstracts, each participant reviewing 43 abstracts on average.

4.3. Data Collection Procedure

Data collection took place in October 2023, immediately after the participants completed reviewing the assigned abstracts. The questionnaire was sent to them via Google Forms to facilitate ease of response. Researchers provided their contact details for clarification or queries from participants.

4.4. Ethical Concerns

The following important ethical issues were considered and addressed appropriately while conducting the survey. Before data collection, all participants were fully informed about the objectives, procedures, and potential implications of the study. Written consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring they were aware that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without

any consequences. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were strictly maintained throughout the study. Personal identifiers were removed from the dataset to ensure that individual responses could not be traced back to specific participants. The collected data was stored securely and was only accessible to the researchers involved in the study.

5. Analysis and Discussion

5.1. ESL Teachers' Research Literacy

The primary aim of this research is to understand the research literacy of ESL abstract submitters from the perspectives of the conference abstract reviewers. To achieve this, the researchers asked the reviewers to rate the abstract submitters' research literacy using various statements. These statements collected overall ratings and individual ratings on vital research elements in the submitted abstracts.

The overall rating of research literacy (Table 1) ranged between Good and Poor, with 3 participants rating it as 'Good', 5 rating it as 'Fair', and 2 rating it as 'Poor'. Most of the respondents rated the overall research literacy as 'Fair'. The alignment of mode and median values corroborates the overall rating as 'Fair'. This average rating indicates that while the abstract submitters possess a basic level of research literacy, it is not exceptionally high, and there is considerable room for improvement. This confirms the researchers' observation that there is a need for enhancing research literacy among the abstract submitters.

Table 1: Overall Rating of Research Literacy

| Overall Rating | Excellent (5) | Good (4) | Fair (3) | Poor (2) | Very Poor (1) | Median | Mode |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|--------|------|
| Research Literacy | 0 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 3 |

In addition to the overall rating, individual ratings on ten specific research elements were collected, as shown in Table 2. Five of these elements focused on core research elements, while the other five focused on academic writing elements.

Table 2: Reviewers' Perception of ESL Teachers' Research Literacy

| | Research Elements | Excellent (5) | Good (4) | Fair (3) | Poor (2) | Very Poor (1) | Median | Mode |
|---------------------------|--|---------------|----------|----------|----------|---------------|--------|------|
| Core Research Elements | Well stated research question/hypothesis | 0 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | Use of suitable research methods | 0 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| | Clarity in research objectives | 0 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| | Use of accurate information | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| | Originality & novelty of research idea | 0 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 3.5 | 4 |
| Academic Writing Elements | Logical flow of ideas | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | The organisation of the abstract | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 3 |
| | Professional tone and academic writing conventions | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 3.5 | 4 |
| | Relevance to conference theme | 0 | 7 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| | Use of clear and concise language | 0 | 7 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 |

The analysis of the data (Table 2) reveals a disparity in ratings between core research elements and academic writing elements. The ratings for core research elements were generally lower compared to those for academic writing elements. The ratings for core research skills such as the ability to state a clear research question/hypothesis, use suitable research methodologies, and present accurate information were generally lower compared to ratings for academic writing skills. This indicates a significant need for improvement in fundamental research skills. Specifically, the lowest ratings were given to the ability to state a well-defined research question/hypothesis. This skill is crucial as it

forms the basis of any research study, and deficiencies in this area can undermine the entire research process.

Ratings for academic writing skills, including the use of clear and concise language, organisation of the abstract, and adherence to professional tone and academic conventions, were relatively higher. This suggests that ESL teachers are more competent in these areas, which are essential for effectively communicating their research. The highest ratings were given to the use of clear and concise language, indicating that ESL teachers are generally able to express their ideas clearly and succinctly. The item on the relevance of the abstracts to the conference

theme received relatively high ratings. This shows that ESL teachers are capable of aligning their research topics with the themes of academic conferences, which is a positive sign of their engagement with current academic discourse.

5.2. Common Mistakes in the Abstracts

The second research question aimed to identify prevalent mistakes in abstract submissions, as observed by the reviewers. The data, summarised in Table 3, highlights several key areas where Indian ESL teachers need to improve their abstract writing skills.

Table 3: Common Mistakes Found in Abstracts

| Common Mistakes Found in Abstracts | Number of Responses (out of 10) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Omitting key information (such as research objectives and methods) | 8 | 80% |
| Replicating or duplicating what is already known in the field | 7 | 70% |
| Writing lengthy abstracts without adhering to the conference's specified word limit | 7 | 70% |
| Failing to explain the broader implications or relevance of the study | 6 | 60% |
| Not explaining the research method to be used in the study | 6 | 60% |
| Not clearly stating the objectives of the research | 6 | 60% |
| Including unnecessary details and lengthy descriptions in the abstract | 6 | 60% |
| Summarising known facts or information as new research | 5 | 50% |
| Writing abstracts on broad topics that cannot be covered in a single research paper | 5 | 50% |
| Neglecting to review and edit the abstract for errors, clarity, and coherence | 5 | 50% |
| Writing lengthy, wordy titles for abstracts | 4 | 40% |
| Ignoring conference guidelines when crafting abstracts | 4 | 40% |
| A mismatch between objectives and research methods | 3 | 30% |
| Not proofreading abstracts to eliminate grammar and spelling mistakes | 3 | 30% |
| Addressing multiple research questions, objectives, or topics within a single abstract | 2 | 20% |
| Not using academic English in abstracts | 2 | 20% |
| Using vague statements that make the abstract unclear | 2 | 20% |
| Not ensuring that the abstract aligns appropriately with the conference theme | 2 | 20% |
| Copying and pasting text from the full paper or other sources directly into the abstract | 1 | 10% |
| Lack of understanding of what research is and lack of know-how in the field of ELT, as reflected in many papers submitted | 1 | 10% |

The analysis of these common mistakes highlights several areas where ESL teachers could improve their abstract writing skills. The most frequent error, noted by 80% of respondents, is the omission of key information such as research objectives and methods. This indicates a significant issue with understanding the essential elements required in an abstract and suggests a need for clearer guidance on structuring abstracts effectively. The high incidence of replicating or duplicating known information (70%) highlights a lack of originality in submissions. It suggests a need for greater emphasis on contributing novel insights or perspectives to the field. The prevalence of writing lengthy abstracts that do not adhere to the specified word limits (70%)

reveals difficulties with conciseness and compliance with conference guidelines. This issue underscores the need for training in summarising research effectively within set constraints. Failures to explain the broader implications of the study and not detailing the research method (60%) point to deficiencies in communicating the significance and approach of the research. Enhancing these aspects will improve the clarity and impact of abstracts. The inclusion of unnecessary details (60%) and failure to review and edit for clarity (50%) suggest issues with maintaining focus and ensuring that abstracts are coherent and polished. This highlights the importance of thorough editing and attention to detail.

Table 4: Causes of Mistakes Found in the Abstracts

| Causes of Mistakes Found in Abstracts | Number of Responses (out of 10) | Percentage (%) |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Unawareness of existing literature, leading to duplication | 9 | 90% |
| Lack of formal training in abstract preparation and academic writing | 8 | 80% |
| Trying to include too much information due to unfocused objectives | 7 | 70% |
| Time constraints and busy schedules, leading to rushed abstract writing | 7 | 70% |
| Lack of clarity regarding research methods to be used in the study | 7 | 70% |
| Lack of focus or clarity in the objectives of their research | 6 | 60% |
| Lack of sufficient academic writing skills in English | 6 | 60% |
| ESL teacher-researchers' limited experience in research and presenting findings | 5 | 50% |
| Time constraints or lack of editing skills prevent thorough review and refinement | 5 | 50% |
| Lack of awareness about the need for a unique abstract, leading to copying and pasting inappropriately | 4 | 40% |
| Lack of constructive feedback on abstracts, leading to repeated mistakes | 4 | 40% |

| | | |
|--|---|-----|
| Assuming the relevance of research without providing adequate context | 3 | 30% |
| Difficulty in clearly expressing research objectives | 3 | 30% |
| Inability to align objectives with appropriate research methods | 3 | 30% |
| Inadequate knowledge of citation and referencing | 3 | 30% |
| Inexperience in abstract writing, leading to excessive details and lack of focus | 3 | 30% |
| Limited understanding of the significance of research in a broader context | 3 | 30% |
| Lack of attention to proofreading, leading to grammar and spelling mistakes | 3 | 30% |
| Overuse of technical terms without considering the diverse audience | 3 | 30% |
| Lack of awareness about conference audience expectations and preferences | 3 | 30% |
| Limited exposure to academic writing conventions results in informal language | 2 | 20% |
| Not prioritising reading or understanding conference guidelines | 2 | 20% |
| ESL teacher-researchers' lack of confidence in their research abilities | 1 | 10% |
| Oversight leading to missing essential components in the abstract | 1 | 10% |
| Assuming common knowledge of abbreviations, leading to overuse of abbreviations | 1 | 10% |
| Limited language proficiency leading to vague and unclear statements | 1 | 10% |
| Limited understanding of conference theme | 1 | 10% |

In addition to identifying common mistakes in abstracts, it is crucial to explore the underlying causes to develop effective strategies for improving research literacy. The data collected, as summarised in Table 4, reveals several key reasons behind these mistakes:

1. Unawareness of Existing Literature: A significant cause, cited by 90% of respondents, is the lack of awareness of existing literature, leading to duplication. This

indicates that many ESL teachers may not be adequately familiar with the current research landscape, resulting in redundant or repeated content in their abstracts.

2. Lack of Formal Training: The absence of formal training in abstract preparation and academic writing (80%) is a major factor. This underscores the need for more structured training programmes to enhance teachers' skills in crafting effective abstracts.

3. Challenges with Focus and Content:

Trying to include too much information due to unfocused objectives and time constraints, coupled with busy schedules (both 70%), results in rushed and often unfocused abstracts. These issues suggest that clearer objectives and better time management are essential for improving the quality of abstracts.

4. Methodological Clarity: A lack of clarity regarding the research methods to be used in the study (70%) is another prevalent issue. This indicates that ESL teachers may struggle with articulating their research methods clearly within the constraints of an abstract.

5. Editing and Proofreading: Time constraints and inadequate editing skills (50%) point to the importance of thorough review and refinement. These factors suggest that improved editing

practices are necessary to enhance the coherence and quality of abstracts.

6. Additional Contributing Factors: Other causes include insufficient academic writing skills in English (60%), lack of constructive feedback (40%), and limited experience in research (50%). These issues highlight the need for better support systems and feedback mechanisms to aid ESL teachers in producing high-quality abstracts.

5.3. Skills Required for Writing Abstracts

The third research question aims to ascertain the significance of various research and academic skills in the context of abstract writing, according to participant opinions. Participants were requested to rate these skills based on their importance. The summarised responses are displayed in the following table 5.

Table 5: Skills Required for Writing Abstracts

| Skills | Extremely Important | Very Important | Moderately Important | Slightly Important | Not Important at All | Mode | Median |
|--|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|--------|
| | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) | | |
| Ability to search and access relevant academic literature and resources | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Skill in interpreting research findings | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Capacity to critically assess the quality and relevance of research articles | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |

| Skills | Extremely Important | Very Important | Moderately Important | Slightly Important | Not Important at All | Mode | Median |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|--------|
| | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) | | |
| Knowledge of various research methodologies and the ability to choose an appropriate methodology | 6 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Awareness of ethical considerations in research, including obtaining informed consent and protecting participants' rights | 5 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 |
| Competence in analysing research data using appropriate statistical tools and techniques | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Competence in collecting data using appropriate tools and techniques | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Skill in drawing valid conclusions based on data analysis | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Skill in formulating clear and research-worthy research questions or objectives | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |

| Skills | Extremely Important | Very Important | Moderately Important | Slightly Important | Not Important at All | Mode | Median |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|--------|
| | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) | | |
| Ability to cite credible sources | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Ability to synthesise and integrate findings from the existing literature | 4 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Proficiency in conducting a thorough literature review to provide context and background | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Properly citing sources following the specified citation style (e.g., APA, MLA) | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 4 |
| Ability to convey the relevance and significance of the research to the field | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Proficiency in crafting a concise and clear abstract that summarises the research's objectives, methodology, findings, and implications effectively | 4 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Aligning the abstract with the conference theme appropriately | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |

| Skills | Extremely Important | Very Important | Moderately Important | Slightly Important | Not Important at All | Mode | Median |
|--|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|------|--------|
| | (5) | (4) | (3) | (2) | (1) | | |
| Preparedness to engage in peer review of abstracts, providing constructive feedback to peers | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Capability to communicate complex ideas in a clear and concise manner | 3 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 4 |
| Adhering to the abstract's word limit | 3 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 4 |

The above table provides several key insights into the skills necessary for effective abstract writing:

- 1. Critical Skills Emphasised:** ‘Ability to search and access relevant literature’ and ‘Skills in interpreting research findings’ are considered the most critical skills. Both skills received the highest ratings (5) from the majority of respondents, indicating that effective abstract writing relies heavily on the ability to locate and understand relevant research. ‘Capacity to critically assess research quality’ and ‘Knowledge of research methodologies’ are also highly rated. These skills are crucial for ensuring that abstracts are based on robust and relevant research and that appropriate methodologies are employed.
- 2. Essential Methodological and Analytical Skills:** ‘Data analysis skills’ and ‘Formulating clear research questions’ are rated highly. The median and mode for these skills (4) suggest that being able to analyse data effectively and

formulate precise research questions are fundamental to writing an impactful abstract. ‘Competence in data collection’ and ‘Drawing valid conclusions’ are similarly rated (4), reflecting their importance in ensuring that the research presented in the abstract is sound and credible.

- 3. Significance of Crafting and Summarising:** ‘The proficiency in crafting a concise and clear abstract’ is rated highly, with a mode and a median of 4. This indicates that respondents believe the ability to summarise research succinctly and effectively is vital for creating a successful abstract.
- 4. Moderate Importance of Citation and Ethical Considerations:** Awareness of ‘Ethical considerations’ and ‘Proper citation practices’ are considered important but slightly less so compared to other skills. The median rating for these skills is 4, suggesting they are crucial but not as central as the skills related

to research interpretation and summarisation. Overall, the results highlight those skills directly related to accessing, interpreting, and analysing research are deemed most important for effective abstract writing. Skills involving the summarisation and alignment of the research with conference themes also hold significant value. However, while citation practices and ethical considerations are acknowledged, they are slightly less critical compared to the core research skills. The variability in ratings for some skills suggests a need for targeted training to address different aspects of abstract writing.

6. Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive evaluation of ESL teachers' research literacy from the perspective of conference abstract reviewers. The findings reveal that while ESL teachers demonstrate a foundational level of research literacy, there is significant scope for improvement. Reviewers rated the overall research literacy of abstract submitters as 'Fair', indicating that while basic competencies are present, more advanced skills are necessary for higher-quality submissions. This study underscores a clear distinction between core research elements and academic writing elements. Core research skills, such as formulating well-defined research questions and using suitable research methods, received lower ratings compared to academic writing skills like clarity and organisation. This disparity suggests a critical need to bolster fundamental research capabilities among ESL teachers.

Furthermore, the study identifies prevalent issues in abstract submissions, including the omission of key information, lack of originality, and failure to adhere to word limits. These common mistakes reflect underlying challenges such as inadequate

formal training, time constraints, and limited familiarity with current literature. Addressing these issues through targeted training and support could significantly enhance the quality of abstracts.

The research also highlights that essential skills for effective abstract writing include the ability to access and interpret relevant literature, critically assess research quality, and summarise findings concisely. While skills related to ethical considerations and citation practices are recognised as important, they are deemed slightly less critical compared to core research and summarisation skills.

To improve research literacy and abstract quality, it is recommended that ESL teachers receive more structured training in both core research skills and academic writing practices. Developing clearer guidance on abstract structure and providing more opportunities for feedback could also contribute to better outcomes. The findings of this study offer valuable insights for enhancing research literacy programmes and highlight the need for ongoing support and development in academic writing for ESL teachers.

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