

The Ultimate NLP Research Makeup Tutorial: How to Polish your Posters, Slides and Presentations Skills

Gustavo Henrique Paetzold and Lucia Specia

Department of Computer Science

University of Sheffield, UK

{g.h.paetzold, l.specia}@sheffield.ac.uk

1 Tutorial Description

There is no question that our research community have, and still has been producing an insurmountable amount of interesting strategies, models and tools to a wide array of problems and challenges in diverse areas of knowledge. But for as long as interesting work has existed, we've been plagued by a great unsolved mystery: how come there is so much interesting work being published in conferences, but not as many interesting and engaging posters and presentations being featured in them? After extensive research and investigation, we think we have finally found cause.

We believe this problem is not being caused directly by our undoubtedly competent researchers themselves, but rather by three organisms which have seemingly infected a great deal of our community:

- **The Style-Eating Bacteria:** Have you ever gotten put off after seeing a large poster made with a basic standard template containing no images, graphs or diagrams illustrating it? It might have been made by a researcher carrying these bacteria.
- **The Character-Replicating Virus:** Every time you've watched an oral presentation featuring slides full of text and formulae which are read in their integrity by the presenter, you met a victim of this virus.
- **The Speech-Jamming Parasite:** The unluckiest among us will have to watch this silent killer ruin our presentations in front of the biggest names in our field. Non-native English speakers and introspective presenters are the most vulnerable targets.

In this tutorial, we present practical and straightforward solutions to researchers who feel

like they have been infected by one or more of these ruthless guests. Our tutorial will cover the two main ways through which we present our work to the community: posters and oral presentations.

When it comes to posters, we will introduce various ways through which authors can change the style and content of their posters in order to allow them to draw more attention in those crowded poster sessions. We will use step-by-step examples of poster overhauling to teach attendants how to properly address various issues that are unfortunately commonly found in conference posters in our field, such as bland styling, verbose sections, insufficient illustrating and others.

For oral presentations, we will teach attendants to create slide presentations that not only make it easier to keep the attention of attendants from beginning to end, but also facilitate the life of the presenter in case they do not feel like they have good English proficiency. We will also present some simple techniques that presenters can use to feel more confident during their oral presentations, as well as during the sometimes dreaded "question and answer" session afterwards. A lot of our focus will be turned to non-native English speakers with low speaking proficiency, since we believe those researchers are the ones who have the hardest time during oral presentations.

2 Tutorial Outline

1. Posters

- **Problems:**
 - Unnecessary information
 - Poor section structuring
 - Not enough visuals
 - Too much text
 - Bland styling
- **Solutions:**

- What to remove and what to keep
- Poster sectioning made simple
- How to make things visual:
 - * Equations
 - * Languages and locations
 - * Models and methods
 - * Results and findings
 - * Other concepts
- Where to find cool poster templates
- Step-by-step poster overhaul

2. Slide presentations:

- **Problems:**

- Unessential content
- Verbose sections
- Poor fluidity
- Bland styling

- **Solutions:**

- What content to exclude
- Making things more visual
- Making more dynamic slides
- Where to find cool slide templates
- Step-by-step slides overhaul

3. Oral presentations:

- **Problems:**

- Slide reading
- Stage fright
- Lack of confidence
- Low English proficiency

- **Solutions:**

- How to prepare beforehand
- Summarising your presentation
- Making and using cue cards
- Finding a “presentation buddy”

3 Instructors

- **Gustavo Henrique Paetzold:** A Research Associate at the University of Sheffield, UK, who has recently written a Ph.D. thesis on Lexical Simplification for Non-Native English Speakers. His main areas of expertise are Text Simplification and Quality Estimation. Gustavo is currently one of the lead researchers in the SIMPATICO project, which aims to provide novel solutions for Text Simplification, and has received the award for “Best Computer Science Undergraduate Student of 2013” from the State University of

Western Paran, as well as the award for “Featured Computer Science Student of 2013” from the Brazilian Society for Computing. Throughout the years of 2013 and 2016, Gustavo has published over 23 papers in conferences and journals, and has already received prizes for some of his presentations.

- **Lucia Specia:** A Professor of Language Engineering and a member of the Natural Language Processing group at the University of Sheffield, UK. Her main areas of research are Machine Translation, Text Adaptation, and Quality Evaluation and Estimation of language output applications. Prof. Specia is the recipient of an ERC Starting Grant on Multimodal Machine Translation (2016-2021) and is currently involved in various other funded research projects, including the European initiatives QT21 (Quality Translation 21), Cracker (Cracking the Language Barrier) and EXPERT (Empirical Methods for Machine Translation). Before joining the University of Sheffield in 2012, she was Senior Lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton, UK (2010- 2011), and research engineer at the Xerox Research Centre, France (2008-2009). She received a PhD in Computer Science from the University of So Paulo, Brazil, in 2008. She has published over 100 research papers in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings and organised a number of workshops in the area of Natural Language Processing.