

BALEAP Conference, University of Warwick, UK, 19-21 April 2023

Deconstructing grant proposal summaries written by exiled Syrian academics

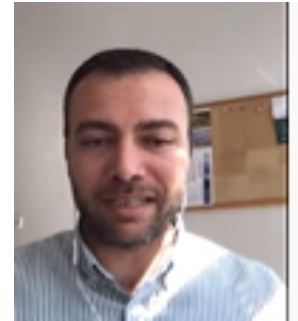
Genre analysis and pedagogical materials for
inexperienced researchers

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Michael Jenkins, independent researcher

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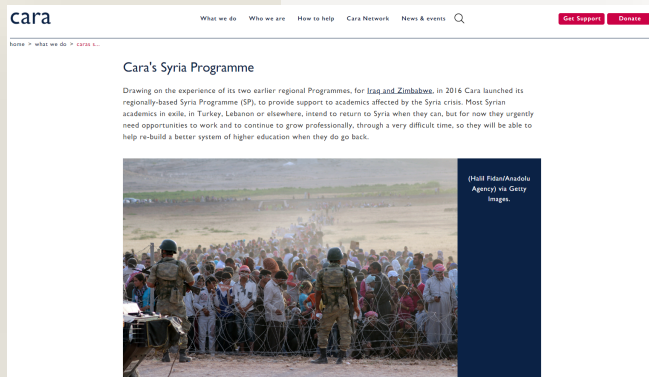
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The Cara Syria Programme

'To strengthen and connect Syrian academics in exile and open up new opportunities to ensure that this major part of Syria's intellectual and cultural capital will be able to play its vital role in the future of Syria.'

- English for Academic Purposes (EAP)
- Academic Development
- Research Incubation Visits
- Cara-Commissioned Research
- The Syrian Research Fellowship Scheme

Syria Programme Research Grants

Aim: Rigorous quality research outputs including publication in peer-reviewed journals & international conference presentations

- Competitive grants up to £7K for research projects conducted by Syrian participants
- 9 grant rounds since April 2018, calls go out approx. every 6 months
- 90+ grants awarded to date
- Average 30 applications submitted per grant round
- Average 30%+ success rate

Proposals consist of

- a proposal **summary** of 500 words maximum
- a **detailed proposal** about 2,000 - 3,000 words
- other **documents**

Learners: exiled Syrian academics on the Cara Syria Programme. Most based in Turkey.

English level: B2 to C1

Projects: wide range of disciplines (e.g. agriculture, engineering, sociology, archaeology, education)

Syrian participants'
lack of experience
in applying for
research grants

Many
unsatisfactory
proposals

*Need to
Teach
Proposal
Writing*

PROBLEMS

- Proposals are an occluded genre (Swales, 1996)
- Lack of available teaching materials
- Lack of examples for self-made teaching materials
- Texts in other genres not appropriate or relevant

**Build a corpus of
participants' proposals**

Corpora: 32 proposals: 12 Funded; 20 Unfunded

Corpus of **summaries:** 12,292 tokens

2 sub-corpora: funded (4,857 tokens); unfunded (7,435 tokens)

Software: AntConc (Anthony, 2020); AntFileConverter (Anthony, 2021)

Research Questions

RQ1 What is the **generic structure** of inexperienced learners' summaries?

RQ2 What are the **differences**, if any, between the summaries of **funded** and **unfunded proposals**?

Moves and Steps for Genre Analysis of Summaries

Adapted from: Feng, H., & Shi, L. (2004). Genre analysis of research grant proposals. *LSP and Professional Communication*, 4, 8–32.

- **Move 1 Justifying a research need (violet)**
 - Step 1 Establishes a real-world or research territory, gives background (pink)
 - Step 2 Reports on previous research (orange)
 - Step 3 Indicates a niche, a real-world problem, a gap in research, a potential area for further research (turquoise)
- **Move 2 Describing how to meet the research need (blue-grey)**
 - Step 4 Presents the current research and/or gives research objectives and/or research questions (blue)
 - Step 5 Describes research methods and materials (green)
- **Move 3 Indicating the value of the research (light brown)**
 - Step 6 Indicates importance of the research (dark blue)
 - Step 7 Describes future research outcomes and outputs (grey)
 - Step 8 Describes future real-world benefits (purple)
 - Step 9 Establishes team competence (red)
 - Step 10 Indicates alignment with Cara aims (dark brown)



Specific to Cara Syria Grants

Summary 1 All 3 Moves and Steps

Quantifying groundwater level and identifying vulnerable areas in the Azez region (North Syria) using satellite-derived data and smart ground water detection devices

Water is important as the main reason for the existence of life. The decade-long war in Syria led to the destruction of water sources, the displacement of millions of Syrians from their homes, and their regrouping in places that are not eligible for these gatherings, which led to the emergence of a need for securing water for drinking and agriculture that meets the needs of these communities.

This research will answer the following main question:

At what depth and how much groundwater is available in the Azez area?

The second question: are there differences between the data of groundwater collected by devices and Satellites?

We will divide the research into two parts:

The first part is collecting data for the groundwater from satellites.

The second part: We will survey the area with devices, then compare between them.

The importance of this research is due to the fact that it benefits mainly to the landowners within the studied area, so as to reduce the waste that occurs as a result of random drilling of wells, and save time as well.

It also benefits for all living organisms, including humans, animals and plants within this region, as the water needed to sustain life is secured.

Move 1 Step 1
Territory/
Background

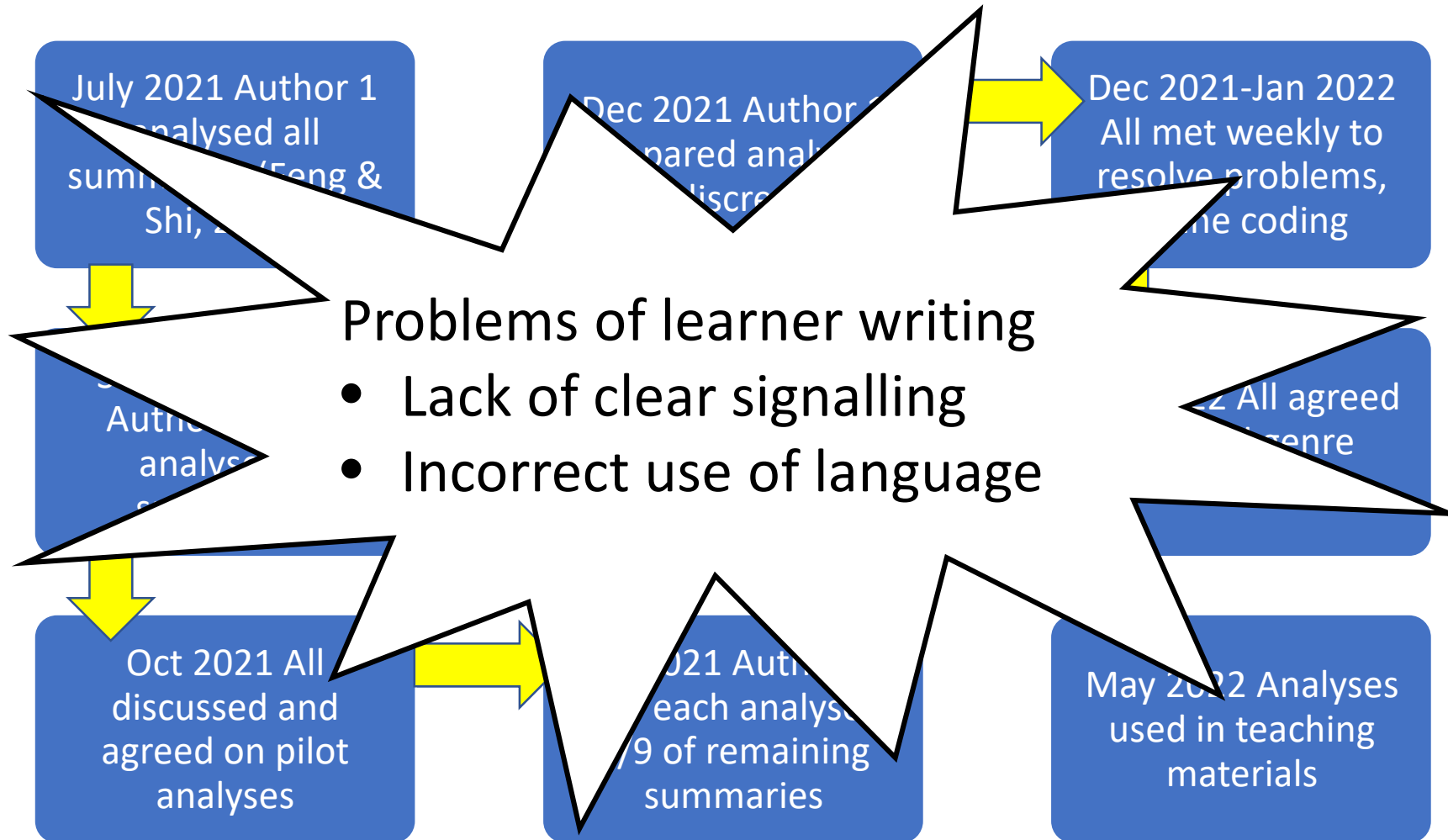
Move 1 Step 3
Niche

Move 2 Step 4
Research
Questions

Move 2 Step 5
Method

Move 3 Step 8
Real-world
Benefits

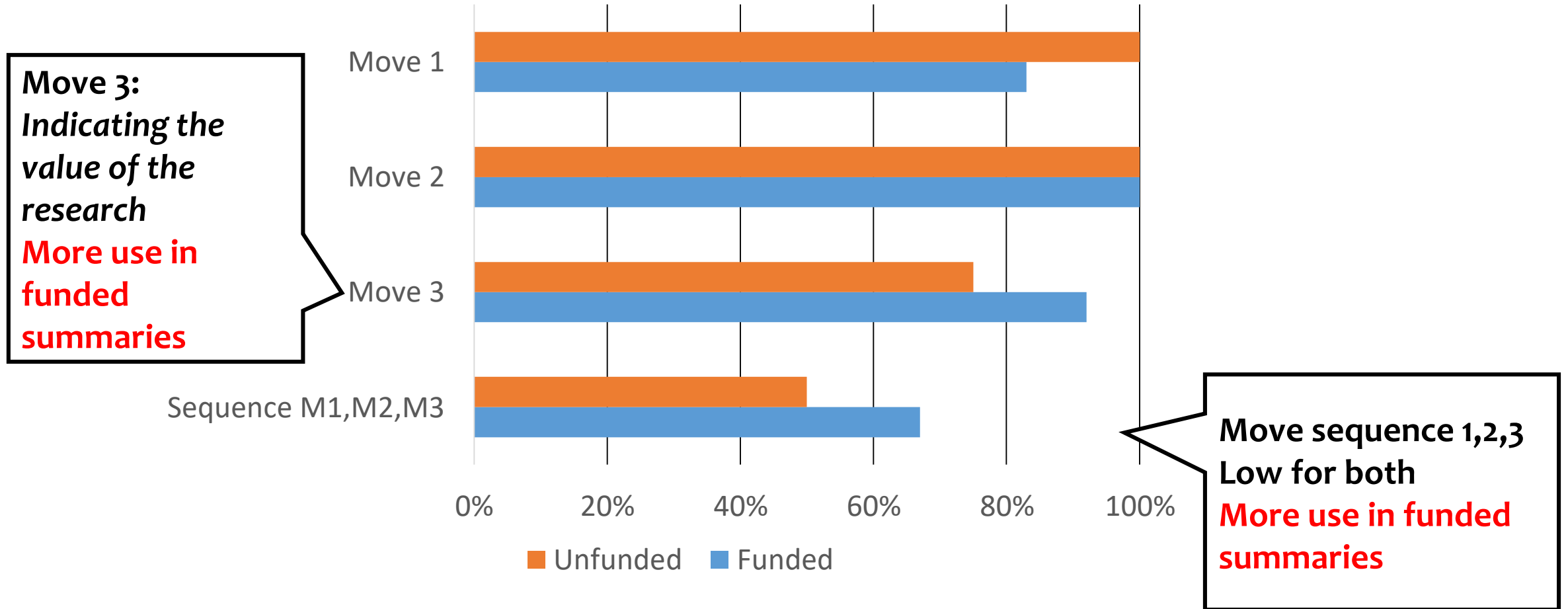
Genre Analysis Procedure (1)



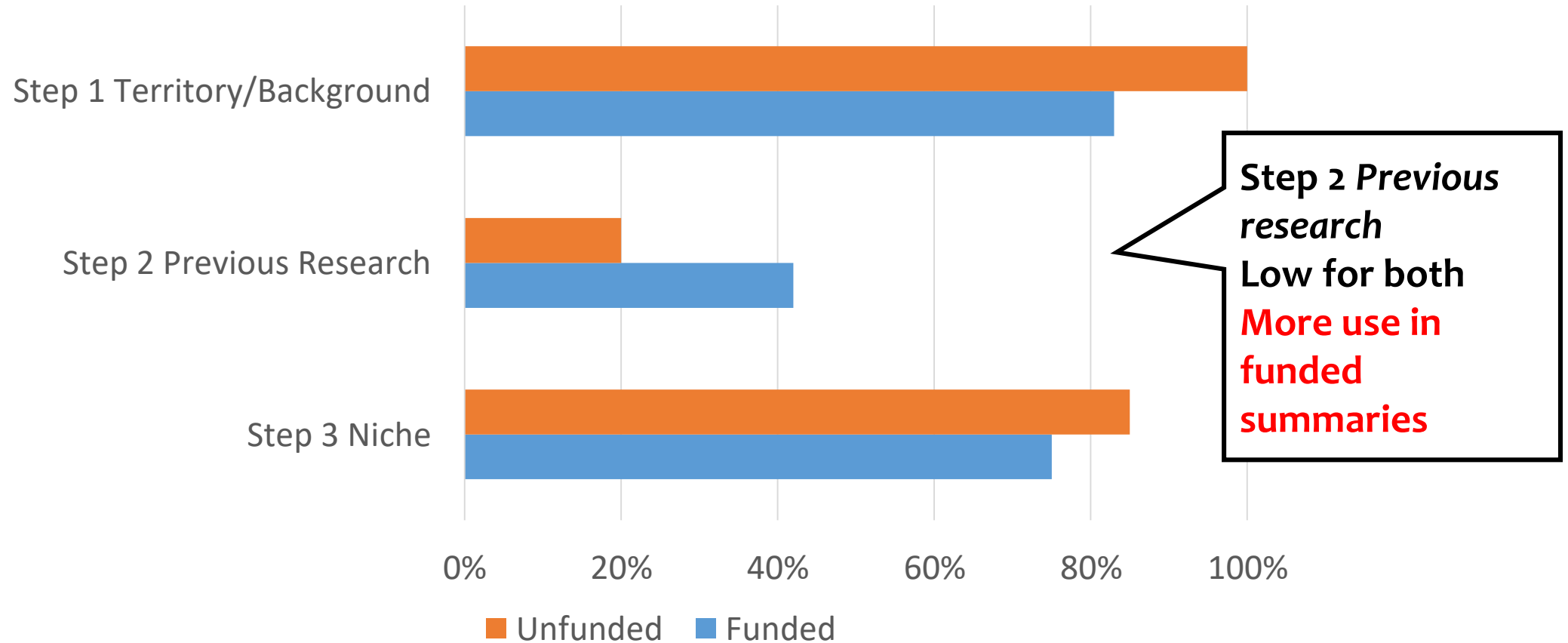
Results



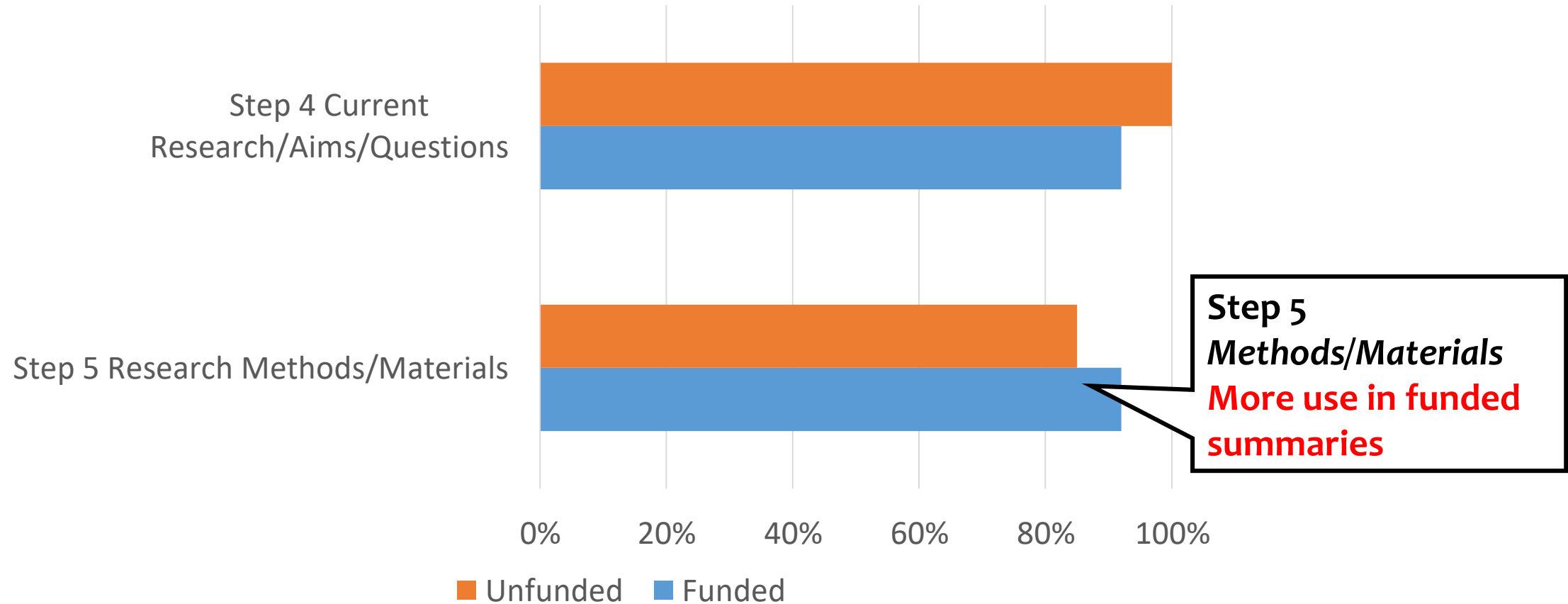
Funded and Unfunded Summaries: Move Use



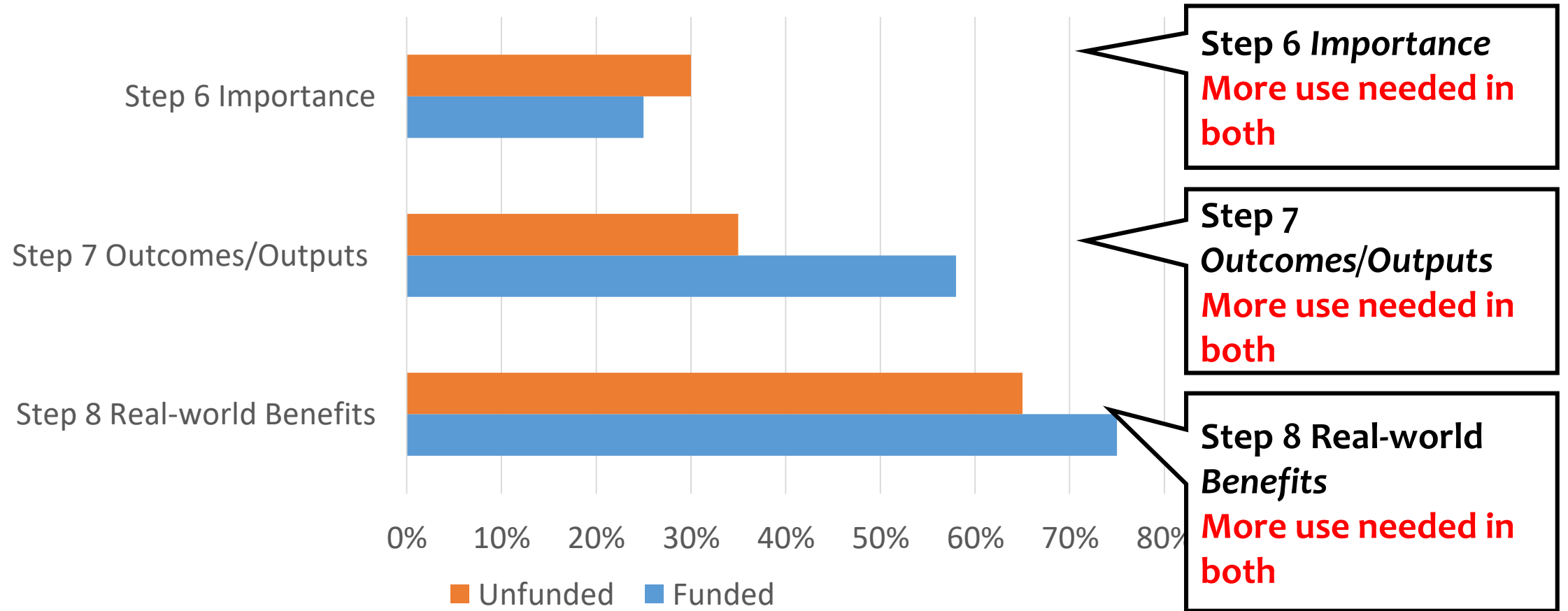
Funded and Unfunded Summaries: Move 1 Step Use



Funded and Unfunded Summaries: Move 2 Step Use



Funded and Unfunded Summaries: Move 3 Step Use



So far...

Differences between funded and unfunded summaries

Funded summaries

- ❑ use all 3 moves in the sequence: Move 1, Move 2, Move 3
- ❑ include Move 3 Indicating the value of the research

Recommendations for all writers

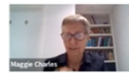
It is important to include

- ❑ Move 3 Step 6 *Importance of your research*
- ❑ Move 3 Step 7 *Research Outcomes and Outputs*
- ❑ Move 3 Step 8 *Real-world benefits*

Application - 'Writing a Successful Proposal' sessions

1. May 12 Proposal overview and writing a summary (Maggie Charles)
2. May 26 Claiming importance, achievements and benefits of the research (Karin Whiteside)

Cara May 12, 2022
كارا أيار 12، 2022



Writing a successful proposal 1: Proposal overview and writing a summary

نُتْرَح بَحْثِي نَاجِح 1: لَمَحَة عَنِ الْمَقْتَرَح وَكُتَابَة الْمَلْخَص

Dr Maggie Charles, University of Oxford

مَجي تشارلز، جَامِعَة أوكسفورد

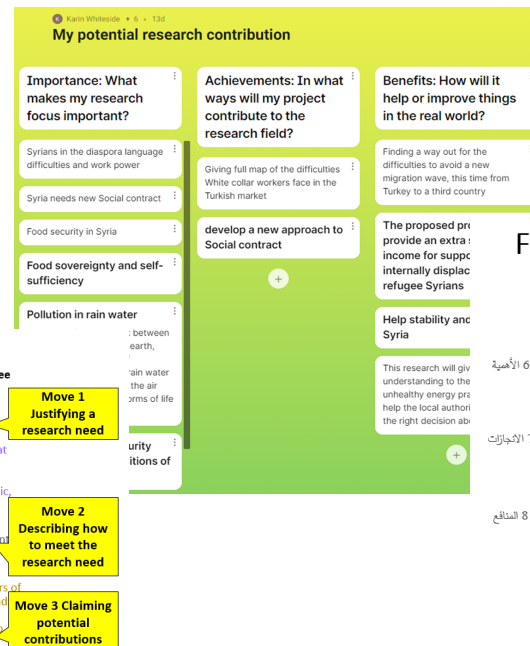
Task 1 Summary Example 2: Original moves (Answer)

Title: The factors mitigating the impact of detention and/or imprisonment on women refugee survivors, on their social integration, economic success, and emotional wellbeing in their country of safety.

The issue of detention affects all aspects of the detainee, especially if they live in adverse circumstances and suffer continued negative treatment that affects their human dignity. The issue is more sensitive and more difficult if the detainee is a woman. Given the conditions that Syria has endured over the past ten years, there are many Syrian female detainees who have been released from detention. We believe that after their release from prison, these women survivors of detention experience many difficulties in all aspects of their lives, social, economic and psychological.

This research will study the impact of detention and/or imprisonment on women refugee survivors, on their social integration, economic success, and emotional wellbeing in their country of safety.

Our exploration of their experiences and needs will allow us to provide data to NGOs, governments, interest groups and associations on how they can help women refugee survivors of imprisonment to improve their outcomes in terms of social integration, economic success, and emotional wellbeing. Our findings will contribute to supporting these women through their period of adjustment as refugees. Eventually we hope this research will help Syrian women to become economically successful and to take an active and leading role in society.

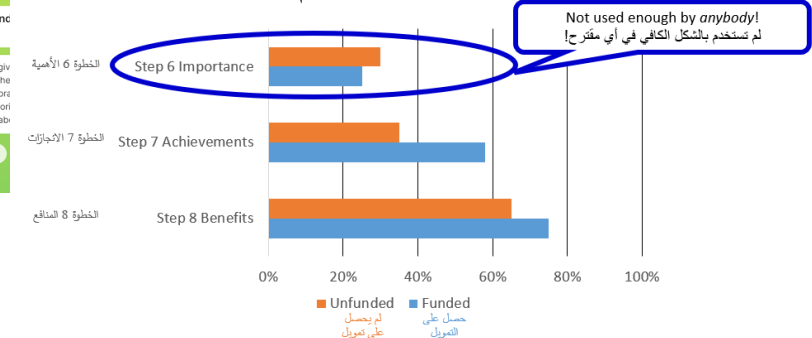


important as + role or tool (noun phrase)

- ... important as a key medium of the political...
- ... important as communication waterways
- ... important as a means of [+ verb-ing e.g. deterring predators ...]
- ... important as a base from which to [+ verb e.g. promote ...]
- ... important as a source of [+ noun phrase e.g. food ...]
- ... important as a safeguard from [+ noun phrase e.g. the suspicion that ...]

Funded and Unfunded Sur... Step 6

المُلْخَصَات المُمَوَّلَة وَغَيْر المُمَوَّلَة: اسْتِخْدَام خُطَوَات الحَرَكَة 3





Our Genre Analysis (2)

Top-down approach

1. 32 summaries segmented into communicative/functional units, as seen earlier
2. Definitions of functional units refined
3. 64 additional summaries functionally analysed (total = 96)
4. Linguistic analysis of each functional unit, which may be a sentence, clause or phrase
5. Primary and secondary functions distinguished
6. Tagging of each functional/linguistic unit

(Biber, Connor & Upton, 2007; Cotos, 2019)

Summary 1 Tagged by Functional/Linguistic Unit

<title> Quantifying groundwater level and identifying vulnerable areas in the Azez region (North Syria) using satellite-derived data and smart ground water detection devices </title>

<pm1s1> Water is important as the main reason for the existence of life. </pm1s1> <pm1s1> The civil war in Syria has caused the destruction of water sources, the displacement of millions of Syrians from their homes, and they regrouping in places that are not eligible for these gatherings, </pm1s1> <sm1s3> which has led to the emergence of a real crisis in securing water for drinking and agriculture that meets the needs of the communities. </sm1s3>

<pm2s4> This research will answer the following main question:

At what depth and how much groundwater is available in the Azez area? </pm2s4>

<pm2s4> The second question: are there different between the data of groundwater collected by devices and Satellites? </pm2s4>

<pm2s5> We will divide the research into two parts:

The first part is collecting data for the groundwater from satellites. </pm2s5>

<pm2s5> The second part: We will survey the area with devices, then compare between them. </pm2s5>

<pm3s6> The importance of this research is due to the fact </pm3s6> <sm3s8> that it is benefits many landowners within the studied area, so as to reduce the waste that occurs as a result of random drill and save them time as well. </sm3s8>

<pm3s8> It is also benefits for all living organisms, including humans, animals and plants within this region as the water needed to sustain life is secured. </pm3s8>

**Move 1 Step 1
Territory/
Background**

**Move 1 Step 3
Niche**

**Move 2 Step 4
Research
Questions**

**Move 2 Step 5
Method**

**Move 3 Step 8
Real-world
Benefits**

Issue 1: Signalling

<title> Use of Some Species of Microalgae in Purifying Water from Heavy Metals in Northern Syria </title>

<pm3s6> The importance of the study lies in </pm3s6> <sm1s1> the ability of some types of micro-algae in fresh water to bioaccumulate and remove heavy metals from polluted industrial wastewater allowing for the purpose of using this water in irrigation operations. </sm1s1> <pm2s4> This project will study...

‘The importance of the study’ signals Importance (Move 3 step 6), but
‘the ability of some types of micro-algae...’,
is factual so belongs to the Background (Move 1 Step 1)

**How to analyse?
By the text?
By the assumed
intention of the
writer?**

Issue 2: Misleading Signals

<title> Capacity building strategy for local administrative councils in northern Syria </title>

<pm1s1> Local administrative councils (LACs) play important roles in delivering services to citizens in Syrian society, especially in areas beyond the control of the Syrian regime after 2011.

</pm1s1>... <pm1s1> ... some LACs in the area under control of the opposition no longer receives any support or funding from the Syrian regime government and in the areas of the north devoid of government services. </pm1s1>

<pm1s1> **However**, in conflict areas, the external environment surrounding the LACs imposes provide the main services such as education, health, water, electricity, sanitation, and security. </pm1s1> <pm1s3> **In addition**, Lack of strategy contributes to increasing conflict impacts. </pm1s3>

‘**However**’ signals a **contrast** and is usually used for the *Niche (Move 1 step 3)*.

‘**In addition**’ signals **further information of the same type**, but here there is a contrast.

How to analyse?

By the signal?

By the sense?

Issue 3: Confusion of Functions: Method and Outcome/Output

<title> Islamic political Parties in Syria between 1979-2018. Its origin, development and current role in Syria and its future </title>

<pm2s5> C - Methodology: We will follow the approach of criticism and analysis in the study through: 1- Reading the sources, documents, studies, researches and personal memos of members of political Islamic groups...

</pm2s5> <pm3s7> 7. Writing research and scientific article. </pm3s7>

‘Writing research and scientific article.’ is signalled as *Method* (Move 2 step 5), but is a *Research Output* (Move 3 Step 7) not a method

How to analyse?
By the stated
function?
By the actual
function?

Issue 4: Vague Language

<title> The effect of electricity shortage on social well-being in people living in north and northwest Syria </title>

... <pm2s5> The study will be conducted in the same targeted area (northern and northwest Syria), which were greatly affected by the Syrian crisis. </pm2s5> Based on the results from the previous study, social impact will be measured by:

1) Displacement. </pm2s5>

<pm2s5> 2) Access to education. </pm2s5>

<pm2s5> 3) General health, social and psychological well-being. </pm2s5>

<pm2s5> **The study will also take into consideration the comparison between** the social impact of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the host communities... </pm2s5> <pm2s5> **We will also take into consideration the difference in social impact** on male and female and age groups such as the disabled and pregnant women. </pm2s5>

‘The study will also **take into consideration** the comparison...’ and
‘We will also **take into consideration** the difference...’. **Unclear** what the writer means.

How to analyse?
Method and Materials
(Move 2 step 5)?
or Presents Current
Research (Move 2 step 4)?



Next steps



Thank you for listening! Any questions?

References

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