

MUNI
ECON

Referring verbs

Academic writing
Seminar 5

Using referring verbs

Referring verbs are used to summarise another writer's ideas:

*Previn **argued** that interest rates were too low.*

*Bakewell (1992) **found** that most managers tended to use traditional terms . . .*

They may also be used to introduce a quotation:

*As Scott **observed**: 'Comment is free but facts are sacred.'*

Most of these verbs are followed by a noun clause beginning with 'that'.

Using referring verbs

The following mean that the writer is presenting a case:

• **argue** • **claim** • **consider** • **hypothesise** • **suggest** • **believe** • **think** • **state**.

Melville (2007) suggested that tax rates should be harmonised.

A second group describe a reaction to a previously stated position:

• **accept** • **admit** • **agree with** • **deny** • **doubt**.

Handsmith doubts Melville's suggestion that tax rates should be harmonised.

Others include:

• **assume** • **conclude** • **discover** • **explain** • **imply** • **indicate** • **maintain** • **presume** • **reveal** • **show**.

Patel (2003) assumes that inflation will remain low.

- Write a sentence referring to what the following writers said. (More than one verb may be suitable. Use the past tense.)

Example: Z: 'My research shows that biofuels are environmentally neutral'.
Z **claimed/argued** that biofuels were environmentally neutral.

- (a) A: 'I may have made a mistake in my calculations of the cost of living'.
(b) B: 'I did not say that women make better economists than men'.
(c) C: 'Small firms are more dynamic than large ones'.
(d) D: 'I support C's views on small firms'.
(e) E: 'I'm not sure, but most people probably work to earn money'.
(f) F: 'After much research, I've found that growing wheat is more profitable than growing potatoes'.
(g) G: 'I think it unlikely that electric cars will replace conventional ones'.
(h) H: 'There may be a link between age and entrepreneurial ability'.

• argue • claim • consider • hypothesise • suggest • believe • think • state
• accept • admit • agree with • deny • doubt
• assume • conclude • discover • explain • imply • indicate • presume • reveal • show.

Further referring verbs

A small group of verbs is followed by the pattern (somebody/thing + for + noun/gerund):

• **blame** • **censure** • **commend** • **condemn** • **criticise**.

"Lee (1998) blamed the media for creating uncertainty."

Another group is followed by (somebody/thing + as + noun/gerund):

• **assess** • **characterise** • **classify** • **define** • **describe** • **evaluate** • **identify** • **interpret** • **portray** • **present**.

"Terry interprets rising oil prices as a result of the Asian recovery."

■ Rewrite the following statements using verbs from the lists in section 4.

Example: K: 'Guttman's work is responsible for many of the current social problems'.
K **blamed** Guttman's work for many of the current social problems.

- (a) L: 'She was very careless about her research methods'.
- (b) M: 'There are four main types of government bonds'.
- (c) N: 'That company has an excellent record for workplace safety'.
- (d) O: 'Falling unemployment must be a sign of economic recovery'.
- (e) P: 'Wind power and biomass will be the leading green energy sources'.
- (f) Q: 'Adam Smith was the most influential economist of the eighteenth century'.

• blame • censure • commend • condemn • criticise.

• assess • characterise • classify • define • describe • evaluate • identify • interpret • portray • present.

Reporting Verbs

- Hard sciences have a more detached reporting style

The relevant theory was developed by Bruno.

Stein et al. reported that a typical force..

Paiva and Venturinit presented an alternative formulation...

- Contrasted with soft sciences:

Baumgartner and Bagozzi (1995) strongly recommend the use of...

Law and Whitley (1989) argued, for instance, that.....

- Plus use of evaluative adverbial comment

He argues, correctly to my mind, that...

Churchland justifiably rejects this notion....

As Stern and Terrell, correctly assert...

Hedges

- Reduce the force of statements
- Reinforce tentativeness of proposition or an appropriate degree of prudence

...it could plausibly be reported that what seems attractive about it are just...

This suggests that a competition exists...which might account for...

In all probability, the sub-routines would require further development...

Boosters

- Increase the force of statements
- Allow writers to express certainty (or strong probability), mark solidarity with a source or audience, show conviction in argument

The essential role of interference between coherent wave functions is further strengthened by...

This clearly indicates that attractive interactions alone cannot explain...

Dimensions of Praise and Criticism

- Critique specific issues, praise more global features:

Klein's work is significant, not only for the detailed careful study she presents, but also for the myriad issues she raises....

In section IV, however, it is not made clear why the competitive inhibition of....

But this claim turns out to be misleading.

It does not give much of an explanation why neural networks are useful, and does not derive any of the equations

I found the model quite robust at the simplest level of explaining how the banking sector operated, but less convincing in explaining why the sector collapsed in the face of....

Using adverbs

Adverbs are used in academic writing in a variety of ways.

(a) to provide more detail, with verbs and adjectives:

Reasonably good data are available for only . . .

*Economists **traditionally** argued for import controls.*

(b) individually, often at the beginning of sentences, to introduce new points or link sentences together:

***Currently**, the Earth's atmosphere appears to be warming up.*

***Alternatively**, the use of non-conventional renewable energies . . .*

Note: Adverbs used individually need to be employed with care. It is dangerous to overuse them. Adverbs such as 'fortunately' or 'remarkably' may be unsuitable

Using adverbs

Adverbs linked to verbs and adjectives usually fall into three groups:

(a) time (when?)

previously published

retrospectively examined

(b) degree (how much?)

declined considerably

contribute substantially

(c) manner (in what way?)

financially complicated

remotely located

■ Insert a suitable adverb from the table above into the gaps in the sentences.

- (a) The new, low-cost mobile phone was popular, _____ with the young.
- (b) _____, the internet was mainly used for academic purposes.
- (c) Some courses are assessed purely by exams. _____, coursework may be employed.
- (d) _____, there has been growing concern about financing the health service.
- (e) There was strong opposition _____ to the proposal to build the dam.
- (f) _____, the development should be acceptable environmentally.

Time: recently increasingly originally presently currently traditionally continuously

Degree: clearly particularly broadly highly wholly crucially emphatically

Manner: (un)surprisingly factually politically locally alternatively similarly psychologically