

Some information on academic use of language

Problem: an academic paper is a specialised type of writing, quite unlike normal writing style.

*Papers in good journals are more formal, more academic.
Papers in conferences can be less formal, more 'chatty'.*

Some examples:

normal written language

We investigated several choices of parameter...

Our system uses...

We think that...

in a paper

Several parameter choices were investigated...

The proposed system uses...

It is generally thought that...

Blanket statements

These are written claims about the work, the world or the universe. In a paper (or thesis), you need to make sure that you justify or substantiate all claims, or give a reference.

Some phrases you should be careful of:

This proves that... / We have proven that...
It is known that...
It is a better system
...is preferred...

is this a mathematical proof?
does everyone really know this?
Better in what ways? All ways?
Preferred by whom, for what?

Some blanket claims

It outperforms the state-of-the-art system.

This is the best performance.

This is the first

The optimal configuration.

What you should write

...for the current tests

...to the authors knowledge

to the authors knowledge...

...among tested configurations

More examples:

normal written language

Everyone knows that...

You can see from the graph that...

in a paper

It is commonly known that...

It is evident from the graph that...

An examination of the graph will reveal that...

Referring to other people's work. You can name them, or just cite their paper (your choice):

Jones [23] derived the closed form solution...

The closed form solution has been derived previously [23] ...

If there is **one author** you write it like this:

Jones [23] reported...

For **two authors**:

Jones and Smith [23] developed...

For **three or more authors**:

Jones et. al. [23] previously reported...

Some other things to avoid:

1. Don't use contractions (do not use contractions).

2. Don't personalise: My idea / my method / our idea / our method

3. In general use third person passive descriptions:

First person active:	I am doing work	/	we are eating it
Second person active:	you are doing work	/	you are eating it
Third person active:	he is doing work	/	they are eating it

Third person passive:	work is being done (by him)	/	it is being eaten (by her)
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4. Avoid giving a subjective bias:

Performance is good	→	Performance is improved
The method is nice	→	The method has certain advantages
Easier to derive	→	Reduced complexity derivation/computation

5. Try not to criticise other authors:

Results are better than [32]	→	Some improvement over [32]
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