

The Introduction section aims at achieving three main communicative goals:

- 1) to gain and maintain readers' attention
- 2) to demonstrate knowledge on the chosen topic and to claim relevance in the field,
- 3) to identify an area that needs to be addressed by research, and
- 4) to introduce present research including its purpose, value, structure, and outcomes.

The following list provides an overview of the communicative goals that can occur in Introduction sections of research articles in various disciplines.

Communicative Goal 1 (Move 1): Establishing a Territory

Steps to achieve goal:

- Claiming centrality and/or
- Providing general background and/or
- Reviewing previous research

Communicative Goal 2 (Move 2): Identifying a niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Indicating a gap and/or
- Highlighting a problem and/or
- Raising general questions and/or
- Proposing general hypotheses and/or
- Presenting justification

Communicative Goal 3 (Move 3): Addressing the niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Introducing present research descriptively and/or
- Announcing present research purposefully and/or
- Presenting research questions and/or
- Presenting research hypotheses and/or
- Clarifying definitions and/or
- Summarizing methods and/or
- Announcing principal outcomes and/or
- Stating the value of present research and/or
- Outlining the structure of the paper

Language Use Overview:

One key feature of the Introduction section is its use of citations. Citations may be information prominent (i.e., information + reference) or author prominent (i.e., author's name + date + information) in style. Different disciplines use different citation styles such as APA, MLA, and Chicago style. The use of a particular citation style is generally determined by the particular journal one is submitting the paper to, as each journal may have a slightly modified style.

About 90% of all citation statements in the Introduction section use verbs in the Past Simple, the Present Simple, or the Present Perfect tense (Swales, 1990). Although there are not strict rules on which tense to use, the Past Simple tense is typically used in author-prominent citations, whereas Present Simple and Present Perfect are used in the information-prominent citations.

If the findings are presented as facts, verbs like find, discover, prove, demonstrate, etc. are used in Present or Past. If the findings are presented as tentative, it is common to use verbs like suggest, indicate, imply or modal verbs like may, might, can, etc. in the Present or Past tense to show that findings are incomplete or difficult to generalize from.

The Methods section aims at achieving three main communicative goals:

- 1) describing how data were obtained,
- 2) explaining how the concepts and variables were employed, and
- 3) informing of the techniques utilized to gain the results.

The following list provides an overview of the communicative goals that can occur in Methods sections of research articles in various disciplines.

Communicative Goal 1 (Move 1): Contextualizing the study methods

Steps to achieve goal:

- Referencing previous works and/or
- Providing general information and/or
- Identifying the methodological approach and/or
- Describing the setting and/or
- Introducing the subjects/participants and/or
- Rationalizing pre-experiment decisions

Communicative Goal 2 (Move 2): Describing the study

Steps to achieve goal:

- Acquiring the data and/or
- Describing the data and/or
- Identifying variables and/or
- Describing experimental/study procedures and/or
- Describing tools/instruments/materials/equipment and/or
- Rationalizing experiment decisions and/or
- Reporting incrementals

Communicative Goal 3 (Move 3): Analyzing the data

Steps to achieve goal:

- Preparing the data and/or
- Describing the data analysis and/or
- Establishing credibility

Language Use Overview:

Previous research on language structure and use in Methods sections of RAs has shown common trends in the forms and structure of the section across disciplines. There is a predominant use of the Present and Present Perfect tenses, verbs in the past passive and past active voice, modifiers, expressions of declaration, and fewer hedging-associated phrases. These common characteristics may work together to strengthen the author's claims by calling attention to the contributions the current work and downplaying uncertainty perhaps arising in attainment and analysis of data.

Writers also may choose how to represent themselves in their writing. The personification of the authors is sometimes seen by use of the pronoun "we," though the context and rationale for its use seem inconsistent among the disciplines. In some disciplines, action taken by the author(s) is realized in passive voice with an unspecified agent.

The Results section aims at achieving three main communicative goals:

- 1) To show valid progression to specific findings
- 2) To communicate the findings
- 3) To establish the meaning of results

The following list provides an overview of the communicative goals that can occur in Results sections of research articles in various disciplines.

Communicative Goal 1 (Move 1): Approaching the niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Providing general orientation and/or
- Restating study specifics and/or
- Justifying study specifics

Communicative Goal 2 (Move 2): Occupying the niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Reporting specific results and/or
- Indicating alternative presentation of results

Communicative Goal 3 (Move 3): Construing the niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Comparing results with lit-re and/or
- Accounting for results and/or
- Explicating results and/or
- Relating to expectations and/or
- Acknowledging limitations

Communicative Goal 4 (Move 4): Expanding the niche

Steps to achieve goal:

- Generalizing results and/or
- Stating the value and/or
- Noting implications and/or
- Proposing directions

Language Use Overview:

For the Results section, the Present Tense is typically used to locate or refer to data in a figure or a table. In addition, the Present Tense and modal verbs are used to comment on the findings. Tentative verbs and verb phrases (e.g., suggest, seem, appear, tend, to be possible, to be likely, etc.) either in the Present or Past Tense can also be used to provide comments on the obtained results. The Past Tense is also used to report the findings of the study. Verbs of variation (e.g., rise, fall, increase, decrease, remain constant, etc.) are used to show how a variable(s) fluctuates over time. Verbs of correlation (e.g., correlate with, associate with, related to, etc.) are used to show the relationship between two or more variables. To compare the findings, adjectives in the comparative or superlative degrees are used.

The Discussion/Conclusion section aims at achieving five main communicative goals:

- 1) To provide an extended analysis through an evaluative and interpretive angle
- 2) To expand the meaning of results outside of the reported study
- 3) To indicate how the results add/relate to knowledge in the field
- 4) To show the value of new findings
- 5) To set up a convincing climax for the scientific argument developed throughout the paper

The following list provides an overview of the communicative goals that can occur in Discussion/Conclusion sections of research articles in various disciplines.

Communicative Goal 1 (Move 1): Re--establishing the territory [i.e., Grounding the discussion]

Steps to achieve goal:

- Drawing on general background and/or
- Drawing on study--specific background and/or
- Announcing principal findings and/or
- Previewing content

Communicative Goal 2 (Move 2): Framing principal findings [i.e., Commenting on results]

Steps to achieve goal:

- Accounting for results and/or
- Explicating results and/or
- Relating to expectations and/or
- Addressing limitations

Communicative Goal 3 (Move 3): Reshaping the territory [i.e., Referencing literature]

Steps to achieve goal:

- Supporting with evidence and/or
- Countering with evidence

Communicative Goal 4 (Move 4): Establishing additional territory [i.e., Expanding on comments]

Steps to achieve goal:

- Generalizing results and/or
- Stating the value and/or
- Noting implications and/or
- Proposing directions

Language Use Overview:

The language used in the Discussion and Conclusion sections of research articles is relatively more general than the specific language used in the Methods and Results (i.e. the use of phrases of generality are common, such as overall, in general, on the whole, with... exceptions, etc.). Changes in Moves in Discussion and Conclusion sections are often signaled by explicit expressions, as in “Our major aim has been attained” to highlighting overall research outcomes, or “Some limitations of this study include...” to state a limitation. Authors usually avoid using the negative language. The use of the present tense in the Discussion and Conclusion sections indicates that authors are confident of what they say and strongly believe in the veracity and strength of their arguments and claims. Authors use the past simple tense to reiterate relevant study-specific background information such as the study purpose, procedures, methodology, hypotheses and/or research questions.