

Section 4. Results as an IMRD component

Unit 3. Results: Vocabulary features

Today we are going to talk about Vocabulary features of the Results section. We will learn how writers revisit the research aim/existing research, provide general overview of results, invite readers to view results, describe specific/key results in detail, compare with results in other research, state problems with results and provide possible implications of their results.

Revisiting the research aim or existing research includes ways to remind the reader of what was said earlier. There should be a signal “As mentioned earlier”, and then there should be the same words or phrases that were used originally, probably in the Introduction to create an “echo” for us, readers.

Providing **a general overview of results** includes ways to introduce the general pattern or trend of the results so that the reader knows what to expect. Phrases like “In most cases are common here.

Inviting readers to view the results is normally done by means of phrases like: “Figure one shows”. But figures and tables don’t only show things; sometimes they present or demonstrate, or even summarise things.

Specific results can be communicated through objective descriptions of the results “lower”. And subjective, evaluative language “Significantly lower”.

To compare results with those of other researchers, to use their results to confirm/support the writer’s own findings and to compare the obtained results with predictions, models or simulations writers use such phrases as: “...is in line with...” and “correlates well with”.

Remember, that it is considered professional to mention **the problems occurred** in the research. Writers may do this by means of phrases such as: “Minor deficit” or “Not within the scope of this study”.

It is extremely important for writers to suggest **possible implications** of their results in a paper, and signal the move towards the Discussion/Conclusion. Phrases such as: “This indicated/suggested/implied that...” and “It seems therefore that...” can help them with this.

We have identified vocabulary for the seven areas of the Results section. Now I would like you to find the words and phrases in the model that you think could be used in each area. Back to me? Let’s check what you have found.

Highlighted are the instances of how the writer revisits the research aims: “...as discussed previously”, “...as mentioned earlier/before...”, “...as outlined in the introduction...”, “...as reported...”, “in order to...”, “...we examined...” and other phrases on your screen help writers to revisit the research aim. Here you can see more examples of how to revise research aims.

Now you can see how the highlighted phrases help the writer provide a general overview of his results. This can be done with the use of various lexical units: “in general”, “in most/all cases”, “in this section”, “we compare/evaluate/present...”, “it is apparent that in all/most/the majority of cases...”, “on the whole”, “the overall response was...” etc. This slide shows the examples of such lexical units and see how they integrate into the text. Take your time to read them.

I am sure you have correctly located the instances that invite the reader to see the results in the visuals included in the research paper.

This invitation can be done as part of a sentence, or it can be given in brackets: “Figure 1 shows...” or in brackets – (Fig. 1). Various examples on this slide will give you a true feel of the ways how your attention is drawn to visuals while you are reading a research paper.

If you have read research papers extensively, you could have noticed that there are few instances – if any – in them that contain objective descriptions of the results. However, most – if not all – descriptions are likely to contain the language used to provide subjective descriptions of the results. Even if the results are described objectively, this objective language is more likely to be changed by subjective “additions”.

For example, phrases like “A little deeper” or “Slightly deeper” are more common than just “Deeper”. This is because, as I said earlier, an objective description of the results cannot tell the reader what they cannot yet see from looking at the figure. To distinguish between objective and subjective language, remember that describing one level or magnitude as **higher** than another – is objective truth. Evaluating a level or quantity as **how high** it is - is a **subjective evaluation**. And of course all figures, numbers and percentages are examples of objective language. Objective language may include such words as: accelerate(d), all change(d), decline(d), decrease(d), delay(ed), drop(ped); is/are/was/were constant, is/are/was/were different, is/are/was/were equal, is/are/was/were higher; remained the same, rise/rose, vary/varied, exist(ed), etc.

Subjective/Evaluative Language is mostly represented by adjectives or adverbs that define the degree of a quality or state: almost, clear(ly), considerable(ably), consistent(ly), dramatic(ally), drastic(ally), marked(ly), mild(ly), minimal(ly), most(ly), negligible(ibly) noticeable(ably), obvious(ly), only, somewhat, steep(ly), striking(ly), strong(ly), substantial(ly), and many more.

Let’s practice a bit. Read the sample sentences with both subjective and objective language use. Can you find the sentence at which the language changes? Yes, you are right.

The first group of sentences include objective language to describe the results and the second group describes the results subjectively. Writers of real research papers compare their results with the ones in previous studies using specific vocabulary and phrases that indicate a comparison or reference to prior work.

Here are some examples of **vocabulary commonly used in such comparisons**:

1. The phrase “Consistent with” is used to indicate that the results align with or support previous findings.
2. “In line with” is used to express that the results are in agreement or accordance with previous research.
3. The phrase “Contrary to” is used to highlight a deviation or contradiction from previous findings.
4. We use “Similar to” to indicate a resemblance or similarity between the current results and those of previous studies.
5. “Building upon” is used to communicate that the current study expands on or extends the findings of previous research.
6. The phrase “In agreement with” is used to express that the current results support or corroborate the conclusions of previous studies.

Have a look at how these words may **function in the text**:

1. “Consistent with”
“Our findings are consistent with those of Smith et al. (2018) who reported similar trends in their study.”
2. “In line with”
“Our results are in line with previous studies that have shown a positive correlation between X and Y.”
3. The phrase “Contrary to” is used to highlight a deviation or contradiction from previous findings.

4. “Similar to”

“Our findings are similar to those reported by Brown and colleagues (2017), who also observed a decrease in A when B increased.”

5. “Building upon”

“Our study builds upon the work of Johnson et al. (2020) by examining the long-term effects of treatment X on outcome Y.”

6. “In agreement with”

“Our results are in agreement with the findings of Smith et al. (2016), who also reported a significant association between A and B.”

By utilizing such vocabulary and phrases, researchers can effectively compare their results with those of previous studies and establish a connection to the existing body of knowledge in their field.

Highlighted here are the words that indicate to us, readers, that the writer here mentions some problems. **Problems** with the results do not make the work seem bad. They confirm the **professionalism** of a writer. Writers of real research papers state the problems with their results using specific vocabulary and phrases that indicate limitations or shortcomings.

Here are some examples of **vocabulary** commonly used **to address problems with research results**:

1. Limitation – this term is used to acknowledge a specific constraint or drawback in the study design, methodology, or data.
2. Challenge – this word is used to highlight a difficulty or obstacle encountered during the research process that may have impacted the results.
3. Issue – this is used to address a specific concern or problem that may affect the interpretation or validity of the results.

4. Drawback – this word is used to indicate a disadvantage or negative aspect of the research approach or methodology.
5. Uncertainty – this term is used to express a lack of precision or confidence in the results due to certain factors or limitations.

Look at the examples utilizing these words:

1. “One limitation of our study is the small sample size, which may limit the generalizability of our findings.”
2. “A challenge we encountered in this study was the inability to control for confounding variables, which may have influenced the observed outcomes.”
3. “An issue that needs to be considered is the potential measurement error in our data, which could introduce bias into our findings.”
4. “A drawback of our study is the reliance on self-reported data, which may introduce recall bias and affect the accuracy of our results.”
5. “There is some uncertainty in our findings due to the use of a novel measurement technique that has not been widely validated.”

By employing such vocabulary and phrases, researchers can effectively communicate the problems or limitations associated with their results in a clear and concise manner. This helps to maintain transparency and ensures that readers are aware of the potential weaknesses in the study. Writers are likely to minimize the effect of the problem or problems and they can do this by means of some words that diplomatically make the problem look big or less significant. To do so, they use the phrases like despite this, however only and so on. They may include the reasons for the problems by distancing the problem from the research aim. Using the words not the focus of the paper, not within the scope of and so on. Take some time to read more examples of the ways writers address the problems in their papers.

So, we are moving on. Possible implications of the results are normally discussed in the Discussion or Conclusion sections of a research paper. But in the Results sections writers also **provide briefly what the results might mean**. You can see how this is done in our sample Results section.

Apart from the language used to communicate implications writers may choose between the **Present Simple** or the Past Simple. Because the Present Simple is the tense used *to express permanent truths and facts*, using the Present Simple will turn their sentence into a fact. Using the Present Simple increases the truth-value of a research. For example: “We found that x occurs, which indicates/suggests that y causes z.” **Past Simple** is typically used when writers are **not** very **confident in their findings**. For example: “We found that x occurred, which indicated/ suggested that y caused z”. Here are possible phrases for implications of results. For instance: be seen as, evidently imply that, is likely, is associated with and so on. The examples of the word choices are presented here. You may pause the video to read it.

To sum up, you have learnt how writers can: revisit the research aim; provide general overview of their results; invite readers to view the visuals; describe specific/key results; compare their results with other researchers; mention problems with results; briefly describe possible implication(s) of their findings. That’s all for today. Do some practice after the video and see you in our next section on Data Commentary.