Improving Formality in Writing

Academic Writing – Academic Voice

Just as humans can be described by their personalities, writing or literary genres can be identified by their tone or style. It is of great help for individuals interested in presenting research ideas and reports to learn about some of the language features that make a paper sound academic. The subsequent lines describe ideas by Bailey (2006) regarding the use of verbs to write statements with a more academic tone.

Formal Verbs

The chart below was adapted from Bailey (2006) and presents a list of verbs that are generally used in research reports to express ideas more accurately.

to adapt	to identify
to arise	to imply
to carry out	to indicate
to characterize	to interact
to clarify	to interpret
to concentrate on	to manifest
to be concerned with	to overcome
to demonstrate	to predict
to determine	to propose
to discriminate	to prove
to emphasize	to recognize
to establish	to relate to
to exhibit	to supplement
to focus on	to undergo

References:
Bailey, S. (2006). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students Second Edition*. London, UK: Routledge.

to generate	to yield
to hold	

Examples

Using these verbs can help writers give their research reports and papers a sense of formality. The following examples reflect how formal verbs can be used to rewrite ideas in a more academic style:

*This study aims to **show** that…*

can be restated as:

*This study aims to **demonstrate** that…*

*The author **says** that results are still vague.*

can be restated as:

*The author **indicates** that results are still vague.*

*A previous study **that was about** young learners….*

can be restated as:

*A previous study **focused on** young learners….*

References:
Bailey, S. (2006). *Academic Writing: A Handbook for International Students Second Edition*. London, UK: Routledge.