

Factive and non-factive verbs

When writing an academic text, especially when reporting the ideas of others, it is vital that you select the correct verb to describe what you have understood about the message in the original text. One consideration you should make when selecting verbs is to be aware of the underlying factivity of the verb you want to use. Verbs can be divided into two categories: factive and non-factive. When you use a factive verb you are committed to the truth of the proposition expressed in the *that*-clause which follows.

*The data **reveal that** people living in the UK have poor foreign language skills.*

With non-factive verbs the speaker/writer is not committed to the truth of the proposition expressed in the *that*-clause. Non-factive predicates indicate that the speaker/writer does not grant factual status to the proposition in the *that*-clause, not that s/he considers the proposition to be false.

*The study **suggests that** multilingualism is more common in landlocked countries.*

Below are some verbs that you can use in your writing.

Factive verbs

accept	establish	note	reveal
acknowledge	explain	observe	see
confirm	know	prove	show
demonstrate	learn	recognise	understand

Non-factive verbs

argue	doubt	hypothesise	recommend
assume	estimate	imply	suggest
believe	expect	predict	suspect
claim	foresee	presume	think