

## A GUIDE TO THE TERMINOLOGY OF SCIENTIFIC PAPERS

In each couplet, the first is the phrase as it appears in the scientific literature; the second is the translation as to what it really means:

It has long been known that...

*I haven't bothered to look up the original reference.*

It is believed that...

*I think...*

It is generally believed that...

*A couple of other guys think so, too.*

It is not unreasonable to assume...

*If you don't believe this, you might as well stop reading here.*

A preliminary examination revealed...

*One of my grad students pointed this out to me.*

Four samples were chosen for further study.

*The others didn't make sense, so we ignored them.*

Results from the third sample may be of somewhat lower confidence...

*I dropped it on the floor.*

...but are consistent with the data obtained from the other samples.

*...but scooped up most of it.*

Handled with extreme care during the entire procedure...

*NOT dropped on the floor...*

Typical results are shown.

*The best results are shown.*

Correct within an order of magnitude...

*Mostly wrong.*

Not inconsistent with other determinations, given our current limited understanding of this field...

*Meaningless.*

The significance of these results is unclear.

*Look at the pretty artifact.*

It might be argued that...the significance of these results is unclear.

*Look at the pretty artifact.*

It might be argued that...

*I have such a devastating rebuttal to this argument that I shall now deliberately raise it.*

We are unable to reconcile our results with those of Hackenbush, but...

*Here comes some richly deserved character assassination.*

While it has not been possible to provide definitive answers to these questions...

*The experiment didn't prove anything, but at least I can publish the data somewhere.*

Much additional work will be required.

*The paper isn't very good, but neither is anyone else's.*

Of great theoretical importance...

*I got a paper out of it.*

Of great practical importance as well...

*I got a grant out of it, too.*

These investigations proved highly rewarding...

*My grant is going to be renewed.*

Thanks are due to Joe Blow for laboratory assistance and to Jane Doe for many valuable discussions...

*Joe did all the work, and Jane explained it to me.*

—Author unknown, but I'd like to meet her.