



Verb Tenses in Academic Writing

Present

Used for...

- Introducing a topic with a general statement
- Making statements about what is currently true

Past

Used for...

- Reporting another's completed research
- Describing completed methods and data

Present Perfect

Used for...

- Describing a past situation in your area of inquiry
- Bridging previous related research to yours

Example from musicology

This article takes Wagner's Judaism in Music as a case study to reflect on the complex issues surrounding the translation of composers' theoretical writings. Wagner's famous pamphlet was translated several times into French; the first translation appeared in 1850, and the newest is still to be published. This latest retranslation (which was carried out by the author of this article) is justified in part by the intricate publication history of Wagner's text, whose two different versions (1850 and 1869) have been repeatedly confused and/or separated in previous French translations. It also attempts to find a new solution to the problem posed by the last word of the 1850 text, "Untergang", which until now was consistently translated as "anéantissement" ("annihilation, destruction"), an error that contributed to exaggerate Wagner's anti-Semitism.

(M. Benoit-Otis, personal communication, July 4, 2013).

For a fuller explanation, see <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/verb-tenses/>

