

## Whose Argument?

The following revision is taken from a dissertation by a Korean-speaking student of Business Studies:

Original	Revisions
It is argued that eclectic and transaction costs theories are the dominant theories of FDI.	A <b>It has been argued</b> that eclectic and transaction costs theories are the dominant theories of FDI.
	B <b>It could be argued</b> that eclectic and transactions costs theories are the dominant theories of FDI.

The problem with the original draft was that (as the student recognised) it was not clear whether the argument referred to was **someone else's** or **the writer's**. We looked at some citations for **argue** used in the Passive, and found that:

- The form most frequently used in the data to introduce **someone else's** argument was the Present Perfect - **It has been argued that** ...
- We found that the Present could be used with this meaning when modified by an Adverb of Frequency - e.g. **It is often argued that** or **It is sometimes said that**.
- A form that shows the argument is **the writer's** uses the modal **can** or **could** - e.g. **It can be argued that** or **It could be argued that**
- The argument is also shown clearly to be the writer's where reference is made to the text e.g. **It is here argued that** or **In what follows it is argued that**

These possibilities are illustrated by the following citations:

1. **It has been argued that** the neutron branch of the d-d reaction might be completely suppressed in favour of the (t+p) branch and **it has been further argued** (Pons, personal communication) **that** the tritium produced as a result of a nuclear process inside the electrode need not necess
2. **It is often argued that** the money and interest such drugs attract could provide an important incentive for the conservation of biodiversity.
3. **It is sometimes argued that** the main reason for allowing such matters as provocation to reduce murder to manslaughter is to avoid the mandatory penalty for murder.
4. **It can be argued that** the committee has failed to deal adequately with issues of particular concern to the public.
5. It was the 1960s before the bishops began to distance themselves from direct relationships with the government of the day. **It could be argued that** such a strategy was in any case unnecessary.
6. **In the remaining chapters, it is argued that** religion in Ireland basically solidifies the opposing alliances in an exclusive way and precludes a common state form, thus providing the structure of violence which such divisions entail.

Examples such as these led us towards two alternative redraftings: **A** (others' arguments) and **B** (the writer's arguments). The student said that his intention had been **A**.

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