Example Phrases for Research Proposals

### Research Problem

* Effective coordination between local and central governments is **a key factor in the success of** decentralization initiatives. **According to Smith (1999),** a lack of coordination may cancel out most of the benefits of decentralization. **This is because** various problems, such as duplication of efforts, delays in processing, and mistakes made due to improperly communicated instructions, waste the time and resources saved by decentralizing.
* Customs unions **are defined as** “arrangements among countries in which the parties do two things: (1) agree to allow free trade on products within the customs union, and (2) agree to a common external tariff (CET) with respect to imports from the rest of the world” (OECD, n.d., Definition).  Customs unions **are important components of** trade facilitation efforts between trading partners **as** they streamline the importing and exporting processes. **In recent years, research on** the effects that customs unions have on their members and other players in the trading environment **has intensified**. **This is due to the fact that** more and more countries are entering these agreements as free trade agreements become more common around the world (Jones, 2007).
* Asset price bubbles **represent a significant threat to** macroeconomic performance and financial market stability, **yet** their nature and policy implications are not fully understood. **In a recent analysis of** the Chinese real estate market**, Smith (2011) argued that . . .**
* Innovation **has been recognized as the driving force behind** economic growth in modern market economies. To enhance their innovation competitiveness, a number of countries have followed the US by strengthening their intellectual property rights protection. **For example, . . .**
* Intellectual assets **play an important role in fostering** innovation and economic growth in a knowledge-based economy.

### Knowledge Gap

* **Although there has been significant attention paid to the issue of** helping developing countries to progress beyond low-income status, **there has been very little research on** the appropriate macroeconomic policies to complement this growth.
* **Existing literature on the topic of** administrative reform **has often focused on** the restructuring of individual government ministries in efforts to improve efficiency(Smith, 1999; Wilson, 2001; Zane, 2000)**; however, there is a dearth of research dealing with** the possibility of restructuring the government structure as a whole.
* **The issue of** aging population **has been well-researched for** many developed economies (Barry, 1997; Crow, 1992; Tanner, 2004)**; however, few researchers** **have explored this phenomenon in** transition economies.
* **There are a number of existing studies that have looked at** the impact of free trade agreements on SMEs**; however, there is little consensus in the findings**. **Therefore, in this paper, the issue will be revisited using a more up-to-date dataset and a new methodological approach.**

### Describing the Purpose

* **This paper complements existing literature on** decentralization by comparing and analyzing the decentralizing processes involved in two case studies . . .
* This study **contributes to the literature on** forest management **by examining** the community participation in . . .
* This **is a replication of an earlier study conducted by** Smith (1999) **to extend** the general theoretical models of technology adoption, such as TAM, **to different contexts.**
* **In this study, I will attempt to extend what is known about** customs unions **by** applying the methodology used by Henry (2009) to predict the impact on trade of unions that have yet to be made.

**This paper/study . . .**

**deals with** the obstacles to trade facilitation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

**demonstrates** that current thinking on the real estate market’s reaction to sudden dips may be inappropriate for transition economies.

**focuses** **on** the relationship between corruption and efficiency in a mix of developing and developed countries.

**highlights** some of the issues that hamper efforts at decentralization in Cambodia.

**identifies** three alternatives to the current policy regarding settlement of disputes between ASEAN members.

**uses** the latest data to test if what was found to be true in previous research is still the case today.

**In this paper, I . . .**

**aim** to answer the question of whether or not membership of ASEAN has contributed to the economic growth of the member countries equally, or whether membership is particularly beneficial to only a few countries.

**argue** that in order for a low-income country to graduate to middle-income status, its primary area for investment must be human resource capacity building.

**ask** what the relationship is between FDI and ODA in newly graduated middle-income countries.

**attempt** to discover the root causes of the persistent corruption in customs.

**describe** the processes involved in transferring powers from the central government to local governments and some of the challenges involved.

**discuss** the current thinking on free-trade agreements in order to ascertain their impact on domestic production.

**examine** the strengths and weaknesses of the recruiting processes.

**explore** the impact of trade embargoes on domestic demand . . .