

How to Write Your Chinese Language Citations Correctly

Two Main Issues with Chinese-Language Citations

It is common knowledge that there is no consensus on citing Chinese-Language citations—but how can this be? After all, the scientific community is producing more research (and in turn, publishing increasingly more research papers), much of it in Chinese. Therefore, is it not of utmost importance to be able to access non-English-language sources as easily as possible, and ensure greater cohesion between all these sources in order to strengthen our own knowledge and research?

Another, more pertinent issue that affects Taiwanese researchers directly is the fact that because straightforward guidelines for presenting Chinese-language citations are unavailable, it becomes a waste of time and a guessing game for the researcher. On the editor's end, once they receive your paper, there's a strong possibility that they will be unable to check your references, or may be confused by them because of the manner in which they are presented.

How to Express Chinese-Language Citations

NOTE: This is by no means the official way to do it. In fact, as mentioned, there is no official approach. Therefore, this is based on TopEdit.tw research and heuristics analysis, and what we've found to be most effective after a group discussion.

We chose to apply the APA style for all Chinese-language sources, but this is because it is cleaner, and because the other main styles we study (AMA, IEEE, and CSE) offer even fewer guidelines, whereas non-Chinese-language references are discussed from time to time on the APA blog (found here: <http://blog.apastyle.org>).

So according to the library of Hong Kong Baptist University (2016), for sources that are in the Chinese language, the text must be transliterated into English. This not only eliminates Chinese characters from your study (illegible to your English-language readers, and most important, to your journal editor), but enables you to organize all of your references in alphabetical order.

Pinyin is recommended; after all, it is the official Romanization system for Standard Chinese in Taiwan as well as in other countries. However, please ensure that you do not include tones. It is rare to see tones, but because these tones would be meaningless for a journal editor and/or many of your readers, it would only serve to do nothing at best, and at worst, distract and confuse (*ibid.*).

Let's take a look at an example provided by Yale University Library (2016):

Hua, L.F. (1999). Qingdai yilai Sanxia diqu shuihan zaihai de chubu yanjiu [A preliminary study of floods and droughts in the Three Gorges region since the Qing dynasty]. *Zhongguo shehui kexue*, 1, 168–79.

As shown in the example, you should provide a translation of the title in brackets, so that the editor understands what it is you're citing, and why. Only the translation of the article's title is necessary, not that of the journal name itself (*ibid.*), although the journal name must still be romanized.

Here's another example, this one provided by the HKBU library (2016):

So let's say you have 譚建光 as the author. The title of the article is 中國社工與志願者合作的模式, and the journal name is as follows: 廣東青年幹部學院學報.

The reference would then be presented as follows:

Tan, J. G. (2011). Zhongguo she gong yu zhi yuan zhe he zuo de mo shi [Partnership model between Chinese social workers and volunteers]. *Guangdong qing nian gan bu xue yuan xue bao*, 25(26), 12-18.

As mentioned, in this article we covered the APA style. Of course, you may choose to reformat according to the main style used in your own domain, which is a topic we'll cover more in depth in the future, with many more examples to come, so make sure you stay updated!

[INCLUDE BLOG SUBSCRIPTION LEADBOX]

I Leave You with This Quote to Reflect Upon

Why are journal editors so discouraged whenever they see a non-English reference? Certainly, not being able to check the primary source is frustrating. After all, simply because

your sources are in the Chinese language does not mean that the scientific quality of the research is of any less value. Therefore, perhaps it is in our best interest to present Chinese-language research in the most interpretable way possible, so that journal editors recognize and learn to value Chinese-language research as well.

A few years ago, scholar Isaac Fung reviewed research articles in non-English languages and provided an example discussed by Liu et al. in another study regarding artemisinin and its antimalarial properties. After its discovery by Chinese scientists, their findings were published in Chinese journals sometime in the 1970s, only to be learned by the international scientific community after it was reviewed in 1985 in a top U.S. journal. Since then, the English-language article has garnered hundreds of citations.

In Fung's words, "This observation on one hand acknowledged the status of English as the medium of communication of the international scientific community, while on the other hand suggests that important scientific discoveries have been published in non-English languages. The *a priori* [sic] assumption that scientific papers written in non-English languages are by default of a lower standard is unsound."

References

Fung, I. (2010, Sept. 30). *Citation of non-English peer review publications – some Chinese examples*.

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Hong Kong Baptist University Library. (2016, Sept. 22). *Citing Chinese-languages sources when you are*

writing in English using a standard citation style. Retrieved from <http://hkbu.libguides.com/c.php?g=200507&p=1318566>