

Unit

10

Discussion Sessions (I): Asking Questions

Asking and answering questions play a dominant role in academic speeches, specialized discussions, and dissertation defenses. In this unit we will discuss issues of asking questions, specifically the features of question-raisers, the features of questions, and the classification of questions.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- 1** Understand the functions of asking questions in Q & A sessions
- 2** Become familiar with the features of question-raisers
- 3** Learn about the features of on-the-spot questions
- 4** Classify on-the-spot questions

Functions of Asking Questions in Q & A Sessions

Asking questions can serve a lot of functions. For example, you may raise questions to:

- Obtain an answer; gain an insight or increase your knowledge; gather relevant information
- Gain possible solutions to a problem
- Open a dialog; engage in a conversation
- Show interest
- Signal your presence; gain exposure in the event; demonstrate knowledge
- Encourage someone else to express themselves; verify others' capabilities; check each other's work
- Make someone think or respond in a particular way; guide audience's attention in a preferred direction
- Obtain the corresponding action implied
- Trigger a debate; challenge your peers; confirm what you know or challenge what you suspect

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1) What other functions do you think asking questions would fulfill?
- 2) Do you like raising questions at a meeting? Why or why not?

2 Suppose you were chairing a meeting, how would you encourage the listeners to raise questions? Pay attention to the functions of asking questions you have learned in this section.

Features of Question-raisers

Insiders of the Profession / Field

Question-raisers in a discussion session (sometimes called a Q & A session) are often experts of a particular field with great attainments and rich experience. Even the undergraduate or graduate students in an ordinary lecture are of a certain specialty and have had careful thinking and preparation before raising their questions. In this sense, question-raisers can be considered as insiders in the particular field.

Familiarity with the Presentation Content

Since questioners are usually those who have attended the speech session of a speaker, they are usually familiar with the presentation content of the speaker. In other words, the questioners have obtained a rather comprehensive understanding of the content, major concepts, basic ideas, specific description, and key conclusions. Therefore, questions raised by such questioners are usually in-depth, of wide range, and difficult.

Intention of Fault-finding

Experience of many conference-goers shows that question-raisers usually tend to find the mistakes made by the presenter either in his / her manuscript or in his / her speech. This feature of question-raisers may be due to the formality of oral defense (particularly of heated discussions). In other words, questioners may specially mention the existing weak points, errors, omissions, or controversies, for example, unclear ideas, insufficient supporting materials, the confusing logic, inappropriate wording, obscure descriptions, etc.

These features give the reason why most people feel it difficult to conduct an oral defense. Answering questions, especially responding to objections before professionals can be a frightening experience. Many conference-goers feel threatened when they are made to do so.

Features of On-the-spot Questions

Extensiveness

When a presenter delivers a speech, he / she will definitely have a theme. However, when a presenter answers questions from a listener, he / she will find the “theme” of the questions quite extensive and diverse. Since the audience is interested in different aspects, the questions raised may cover a wide range, for example, from general scientific deliberations to the precision of a parameter, from the background of a research study to its actual applications in a specific field, etc. Obviously, questions in a discussion session are characterized by extensiveness.

Unpredictability

Not only are questions raised by the audience extensive, but also unpredictable. Questions raised by different listeners, in most cases, are not directly related to one another. The first question asked by one person in the audience may be entirely different from or even have nothing to do with the second question raised by another person. And questions posed by different people are usually not arranged in a systematic and logical way. Therefore, the train of thought of the presenter has to follow that of the audience. This, apparently, adds difficulties to answering questions.

Timeliness

Unlike giving a memorized speech that can be repeatedly prepared beforehand, a presenter will have to answer questions raised by the audience on the spot. In this case, there will be no time to think it over and over again, and high pressure could be felt at any moment during an oral defense. That is why the very “moments” are usually considered rather pressing and not easy to deal with.

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1) Are questions for a presentation predictable? Why or why not?
- 2) Apart from fault-finding questions, are there other kinds of questions that would give challenges to the presenter?

2 Work in groups and share your experience in raising or answering a question in an academic conference.

Types of Questions in Q & A Sessions

During the process of a discussion session (or an oral defense), the audience may raise various kinds of questions, which, according to their motivation, purposes, and requirements, could be classified into the following types.

Questions for Clarifying Problems

The discussion session provides the audience with an opportunity to clarify the points that they have not quite understood or that have not been fully demonstrated, to ask for some statistical information, etc. For example,

Ex. 10-1

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask Mr. ... what he refers to by getting a peak value.

Ex. 10-2

I don't quite understand what you really mean by saying "all these phenomena are interrelated". Can you explain it again?

Ex. 10-3

I would like to ask you a question, or rather, make a request. Is it possible for you to show me again your last slide?

Ex. 10-4

Could you please tell me how many research projects in your institute are financially supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China?

These questions, as listed above, could be labeled as "ordinary questions". In the discussion session at a conference, these ordinary questions usually make up the greatest proportion.

Questions for Showing Special Interest

The listeners also ask questions in order to learn more details about a particular aspect, or to have a deeper understanding of a project close to their own research. This type of question requires a more detailed answer. For example,

Clarifying problems

- Mr. Chairman, I'd like to ask Mr. ... what...?
- I don't quite understand what you really mean by saying... Can you explain it again?
- I would like to ask you a question, or rather, make a request. Is it possible...?
- Could you please tell me how many...?

Showing special interest

- I'm very keen on...
- I'm very much interested in... Would you please say a few more words about...?

Ex. 10-5

I'm **very keen on** what you say about the distance from the highest to the lowest place on the earth. **How is it** being carried out in your laboratory?

Ex. 10-6

I'm **very much interested in** hearing your presentation today on the Scientific Assumptions since the work we're going to start has some connections with yours. Now, **would you please say a few more words** about the tentative assumption? Particularly at its preliminary stage?

Ex. 10-7

We have learned from your presentation that you're going to use paraffin coatings in your newly manufactured maser. Personally, I do believe the experimental deliberation is well grounded theoretically. But **I am interested in** knowing how you have dealt with the short-term stability.

Ex. 10-8

It is said that your company has got in touch with the Oriental Paper Mill. Did you go to the mill first, or vice versa? **And considering** the delivery date of the said instrument, which do you prefer, September or October?

Questions of this type differ from the first category in that the purpose of the first category of question-raisers is mainly to have a few points clarified, whereas the second category is to satisfy certain special interest.

Questions for Raising Different Opinions

Scientific research tends to lead to different conclusions, opinions or viewpoints. Therefore, it is quite natural to find different opinions in professional discussion sessions.

Ex. 10-9

The last point you mentioned is something related to the subject we've been studying. I'd say **I've got some insights from your views**. **But as to your saying about...** I'm **afraid that at least** the following case seems to have been overlooked. The first point... The second point... And the last point... **Can I have your comments on that?**

Ex. 10-10

Perhaps we're looking at the problem from different viewpoints. **To the best of my knowledge, what you say seems to be** theoretically unclear in... For example, ... **Could you give us further explanation on that aspect?**

Ex. 10-11

I'm of the opinion that the subject is well set forth, and the approaches to solving the problem are also reasonable. **But so far as... is concerned, I'm afraid I can't say that I go along with you on that. And I would like to hear your explanation about that. I'm all ears.**

Ex. 10-12

If I am not mistaken, you said the higher the compression ratio was, the higher the video quality would be. **As far as I know, however,** generally the video quality should be in inverse proportion to the compression ratio. **Would you please give us some explanation about this?**

Ex. 10-13

... I don't pretend to know much about the subject. **But I'm afraid there are other problems connected with the subject,** which have not been mentioned in your presentation. Here are some relevant examples... **And I don't know if you think so?**

Ex. 10-14

Mr. ... I'm very interested in hearing your presentation on the positive analysis of efficient market hypothesis. **But to the best of my knowledge, your viewpoint** that different benchmarks (标准) will lead to different conclusions **seems to be unreasonable. I'm afraid that** the benchmark ought to be consistent in the whole studying horizon. **Could you give us your further explanation on that aspect?**

The above questions are raised when someone in the audience disagrees with the opinions, ideas, description, and explanation made by the presenters. These questions are normally raised in a polite and roundabout way. The questioners adopt appropriate tone and words so as to avoid unpleasant feelings.

Questions for Comprehensive Examinations

Sometimes in the discussion sessions, several questions are raised by one person that move step by step for further investigation and have internal relationships. Such questions could usually be seen in the oral defense of theses or interviews.

Ex. 10-15

Professor: In which year did Lenin write his *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*? And what was the main idea?

Student: (Omitted)

Professor: In which year was Einstein's special theory of relativity proposed? And what

Raising different opinions

- I've got some insights from your views. But as to your saying about... I'm afraid that at least... Can I have your comments on that?
- Perhaps we're looking at the problem from different viewpoints. To the best of my knowledge, what you say seems to be... Could you give us further explanation on that aspect?
- I'm of the opinion that... But so far as... is concerned, I'm afraid I can't say that I go along with you on that. And I would like to hear your explanation about that.
- If I am not mistaken, you said... As far as I know, however,... Would you please give us some explanation about this?
- ... I don't pretend to know much about the subject. But I'm afraid there are other problems connected with the subject, ... I don't know if you think so?
- I'm very interested in... But to the best of my knowledge, your viewpoint... seems to be unreasonable. I'm afraid that... Could you give us your further explanation on that aspect?

was the basic concept?

Student: (Omitted)

Professor: The special theory of relativity came earlier than *Materialism and Empirio-criticism* by Lenin. The findings of the former had verified one concept that was originally unscientific, and Lenin adopted more than once Einstein's idea in his *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*. Why?

Ex. 10-16

A: In your experiment, what is the most important factor; the temperature, the pressure, the frequency or other factors?

B: (Omitted)

A: If the temperature is the most important factor; what measures will you adopt to better your system?

B: (Omitted)

A: If you are given another year to perform your experiment, which measures that you mentioned can be materialized? And which cannot? Please give us your estimation and reasons.

B: (Omitted)

Ex. 10-17

Thank you very much for your detailed explanation. But I still have a few more questions. Do you think this process can be industrialized? If so, when will it be industrialized? Do you think this method can completely take the place of other pollutant treatment methods?

Ex. 10-18

Why did you put forward that plan? How did you think of the idea? Were there any difficulties in performing the resolution? And how did you overcome the difficulties, if any?

A series of questions are raised in order to make a full investigation of all the aspects, to obtain a systematic description of the topic, and to lead the speaker to the desired answer step by step. By way of asking a series of questions related to the subject, the presenter's comprehension and ability can be comprehensively examined. That's why such questions are often heard in the oral defense of theses, dissertations or interviews.

Questions for Information-hunting

As is known to all, an international academic conference serves both as a place for displaying research accomplishments, and as a place for exchanging information. Therefore, at a professional meeting, especially at a scientific and technological conference, there naturally exists the problem of how to completely lay bare the latest knowledge on the one hand and appropriately avoid disclosing the sensitive information on the other hand. Therefore, some of the audience might raise questions with the purpose of collecting information about detailed data, specimens, examples, specific technologies, etc.

Ex. 10-19

Thank you very much for your patient explanation in response to my question. But I have one more question, or rather a request—**can I have a copy of your report on the gyroscope (陀螺仪)?** I'm interested in its industrial applications.

Ex. 10-20

I have heard about your study on atmospheric propagation. **I'd like to know how many** ground stations there are in your country and in your city as well.

Ex. 10-21

As you mentioned in your talk, you're conducting the experiments on... I'm not specialized in the subject, but I'm sure it will involve a rather complicated technological process. **Would you mind telling us more about that?**

Ex. 10-22

We have been talking about the quality of the auto-control meters. **Well, shall we move on to** the date of the delivery?

Ex. 10-23

By the way, do you happen to know about the controversial subject of genetics, which was presented at the previous session?

Questions for information-hunting

- Can I have a copy of your report on...?
- I'd like to know how many...
- Would you mind telling us more about that?
- Well, shall we move on to...?
- By the way, do you happen to know about...?

Questions Raised Due to Other Reasons

In addition, there might be other types of questions that are not as frequently asked. For example, questions are raised to express the hope that the speaker will say something about his / her personal information; to ask for the differences between the presented paper and someone else's paper (indicating the possibility of plagiarism); to require testimony; to attract the attention of the audience to some other topics with questions; and even to nit-pick (挑剔), or to satirize, etc. These questions might be for various purposes, such as attracting attention, misleading the audience, depreciating the speaker, complicating issues, raising obstacles, etc. Obviously, the speakers should be very careful in answering this type of questions. For example,

Ex. 10-24

You did give us a good presentation. But can you tell us the differences between the paper published in *Journal of Catalyst*, Vol. 157, pp. 87-96, 1995 and yours?

Ex. 10-25

You have pointed out that English pervaded through the Internet. Did you think that because of the Chinese language, China could not play an important role in the network?

Ex. 10-26

Since many companies including IBM and Microsoft are developing new versions of Data Conference tools, do you think what you do is completely useless?

Sometimes, when answering such questions, it is best to avoid answering very directly. The following are some possible answers to the questions above:

(Ex. 10-24) “I am not familiar with the paper you have mentioned. Thank you for giving me the reference. I would be happy to read it and get back to you later.”

(Ex. 10-25) “That is a good question. However, the topic of the Chinese language is very vast. I’m afraid that it is outside the limited scope of my presentation.”

(Ex. 10-26) “Thank you for your question. Certainly IBM and Microsoft are our strongest competitors. But competition is a good thing, don’t you think so?”

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and answer the following questions.

- 1) What kinds of questions are usually raised?
- 2) What kinds of questions are easy to answer? What questions are difficult to answer?
- 3) What will you do if you cannot answer the questions raised?

2 Work in pairs. List the questions you were asked during your presentations in the past, categorize them according to the types listed in this section and share you experience with your partner.

Unit Summary

[讨论环节 (1): 提问]

国际学术会议中宣读专业论文和学术讨论中的提问，与日常社交或一般交谈中的提问有所不同。这里的提问具有即席答辩的性质，因为提问者具有“内行”、“知情”、“吹毛求疵”的特征。提问者的目的和动机往往因人因时而异，或为澄清问题，或因特殊兴趣，或为表示异议，或旨在综合考察，亦或为获取资料等。不同的发问目的和动机，形成了不同类型的提问；而不同类型的提问又具有不同的交际功能。

提问在学术演讲、专题讨论和即席答辩的交流互动中起着主导作用。提问又与讨论交流的场景、对象、内容等因素密切相关。因此，了解和熟悉专业演讲和学术讨论中提问者的基本特征，判断和区别不同类型的相关提问，把握和应用提问的语言策略和技巧，对于主动的专业交流和成功的学术答辩来说，无疑是十分重要的。

More About Conferences

A Closing Speech (1)

President Marion Boers, Madame Tang Wensheng, Mr. Zhu Yinghuang, Professor Martin Montgomery, distinguished guests, friends from the media, ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

On behalf of the Federation of Translators and Interpreters of Macao (FTIM) I am honored and privileged to make the concluding speech. I have but only seven letters to share with you.

M

“M” stands for Macao, which has been a multilingual and multicultural space, a fabulous bridge between the East and the West.

“M” also stands for “messenger”: Translators and

interpreters are linguistic and cultural messengers.

Last night, we crossed the new Sai Wan Bridge on our way to the banquet inside the Macao Tower, and we saw the twin MM arch. In my idiosyncratic interpretation of the arch, “MM” stands for Professor Martin Montgomery and Meifang in Macao. And this convinces me that “M” also stands for the marvelous team of the FIT Six ATF organizing committee, which has done a magnificent job, with great support from the FIT Council led by Marion but little help from Mao of FTIM.

E

“E” stands for “expertise” and “experience” of translation scholars and interpreters.

“E” also means exchange of views and ideas on

translation and intercultural communication. We have had an energizing forum with two exciting salons. I particularly enjoyed the interesting stories and narratives by Madame Tang and Mr. Zhu.

We also had an extremely entertaining banquet: wonderful food, wonderful wine, wonderful singing, and wonderful dancing led by Professor Martin Montgomery. Now we know the secret why professors at UMAC are such FIT people. Peter, you are still as FIT as ever.

I

"I" stands for informative keynote speeches and parallel sessions with insightful, interesting, and even inspiring notions, ideas, and arguments that we can all take home with us.

F

"F" means "fun": We are here for serious academic exchange but also for fun. I hope you have had fun both in and outside the conference rooms.

"F" refers to "fantastic venues and facilities".

"F" surely means "friendship": We have met our old friends and made new ones. Hope you have not only collected a big pile of papers and name cards but also a huge suitcase of friendship to take home, but please make sure you take your heart with you. I don't want you to go home heartless.

Needless to say that we have had great food: tea breaks, lunches, and banquet. It is once again proved that in Macao you may lose money but Macao is no place to lose weight.

A

"A" is for Asia: This Asian Translators' Forum has attracted over three hundred participants. I would like to once again thank all our guests, speakers, and participants from Asia, America, Africa, and other parts of the globe.

It also stands for "amazement": Over the last two days, we've had an amazing variety of topics on and approaches to translation and intercultural communication as well as agreements and differences on many of these issues.

N

"N" means "new": new friends, new ideas for a

new start.

It also stands for "next": At the forum, we have been talking about the past, present and future of intercultural communication. We came with ideas and expectations, we saw friendly and professional debates, and we conquered our fear of being inadequate as a translator and interpreter. Indeed, we came, we saw, we conquered. Now we need to think about "What's next?" "Where do we go from here?" "What do we expect to achieve in the coming three years before our next conference in Malaysia?" And "What specific measures do we need to take in order to reach our objectives?" To act or not to act, that's not the question.

G

"G" implies "graft": Macao is a hybrid space in terms of language, culture, and identity. The metaphor of hybridity originates from gardening. A skillful gardener can graft one part of a plant onto another plant, creating new varieties, such as a differently-colored rose, or a fruit that has the characteristics of both an apple and a pear. Macao is like such a rose or an apple-pear. All the parts of its make-up, which have been grafted into its cultural blend, become embraced as integral parts of a new whole which we call "Macao". Macao's core identity is like the seed from which the whole flower blooms or the whole new fruit grows. It is the product of hybridity which is the most significant part of the whole because it contains the potential for future growth.

Finally "G" stands for "gratitude", gratitude to you all: (1) gratitude to guests of honor, keynote speakers, presenters, participants, for a job well done; (2) gratitude to Macao Foundation for its much needed financial support; (3) gratitude to the University of Macau, teachers and students; and (4) gratitude to fellows of FTIM.

M-E-I-F-A-N-G means MEIFANG ("美芳")

Therefore my special thanks go to (Prof. Zhang) Meifang and her colleagues. "Mei" means "beautiful", and "fang" means "fragrant". I hope you have had a beautiful forum and a nice dose of fragrant Macao.

Ladies and gentlemen, have a memorable cultural tour this afternoon, and see you in Malaysia in 2013.

Reflections and Further Study

- 1** Work in groups of four or five. First, each of you chooses one topic and spends a few minutes thinking about it. Then, suppose all of you have just finished a presentation on the chosen topic and now are expecting questions. Student A tells the group about his / her topic and the rest of the group may ask questions regarding the topic. When Student A finishes answering the questions, Student B does the same. So do the rest of the group. Try to raise questions for different purposes discussed in this unit.
- 2** Interview a veteran participant of international conferences or press conferences or other formal professional discussions. Find whether he / she has been asked any rebuking questions or sensitive questions. And if the answer is yes, how did he / she deal with them?

Simulated Conference Preparation

Q & A Contest (1)

Work in groups. Read the following speech.

... In fact, men are the weaker sex. The female of almost any species is stronger than the male. Dr. James Hamilton, a physician, shows that from worms to humans the male is less able to tolerate life's everyday stresses. "There can be little doubt that the male had a higher death rate in almost all forms of animal life studied." Even during the first week of life, the death rate for infant males is 32 percent greater than that of females. Later on in life the society puts strain on the man to compete, produce, and succeed; this also affects the survival rate. True, many women do experience some discomfort each month during menstruation; some even are quite ill for a day or two. But most women do not suffer with any reactions. Federal surveys in every job category show that women take off the same amount of time from work as men. Although crying is often another "proof" of a woman's difference from man, United States Public Health data show that females have a much lower suicide rate—less than half that of males. Isn't it better to cry? And there are no sex differences in regard to IQ (intelligence quotient). On all forms of intelligence tests the female's IQ is not significantly different from the male's. Women are, in my opinion, biologically superior to men.

Women are actually superior in the most fundamental qualities. Of course, men are more muscular, but both the actuarial statistics and the accounts of extended hardship show that women have more physical endurance. Pictures of women runners at the end of marathons show them still in a good shape while the men are collapsing, though both have given their best. The men have run faster, but the women have outlasted the men just as they will in the race of life. Women are also immune to a number of sex-linked diseases, which, like hemophilia (血友病), they carry while the men succumb. Women have achieved less in the arts and sciences, but actually their brains are bigger in proportion to their weight. Clearly, they have had less time and motivation to compete.

Try to raise at least five questions with different purposes or reasons and give your possible answers. Your group leader will chair the meeting. Student A raises his / her first question (now he / she is supposed to be a listener of the speech) to Student B in your group, Student B (now he / she is supposed to be a speaker of the speech) gives his / her answer to Student A's question. After Student B finishes answering the question, it is Student B's turn to raise his / her question to Student C. So do the rest of the group. Choose at least five more professional and tactful questions and answers for the contest. Use the questioning techniques you have learned in this unit.

Unit

1

Academic Paper Writing: General Description

In the academic world, there is a popular phrase: “publish or perish.” Academics, therefore, always work hard to keep themselves academically alive through publications, especially through their academic paper publication. As a general description of academic paper writing, this unit will deal with the types of academic papers, the ways of preparing academic papers, the style of academic writing, the general structure of an academic paper, etc.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- 1 Understand different types of academic papers
- 2 Obtain ways of preparing academic papers
- 3 Identify the style of academic writing
- 4 Understand the general structure of an academic paper

Types of Academic Papers

Generally speaking, an academic paper is a formal piece of writing in which academics present their views and research findings on a chosen topic. It is also known as an “academic report,” “research paper,” “course paper,” “thesis,” “dissertation,” etc. in different settings. Whatever a paper may be categorized or labeled, the task of the writer may, in most cases, be the same: to do research on a particular topic, gather information on it, critically examine the issue(s), and report the findings of the research.

The following are four types of academic papers: academic report, research paper, course paper, and thesis / dissertation.

Academic Report

An academic report is an academic work made with the specific intention of relaying information or recounting certain events in a widely presentable form. It is often used to display the result of an experiment, investigation, or inquiry. The writer may not give his or her own opinion on the issue, nor evaluate the findings, but merely presents them in a sensible sequence. One of the most common structures for presenting academic reports is IMRAD: Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. This structure is standard for the genre because it mirrors the principle of scientific research.

Research Paper

A research paper (also called “scholarly paper”), which reports empirical or theoretical work within an academic field, is usually published in academic journals and contains original research results or reviews existing studies.

A research paper can be intelligent, well-informed, and original in its conclusions. For example, a theoretical study draws its material from many sources. Its aim is to assemble facts and ideas and by studying them to draw new conclusions or interpretations, or to present the material in light of a new interest.

A complete research paper is usually composed of the following parts: Title, Author, Affiliation (所属机构), Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, Theoretical Analysis and / or Experimental Description, Results and Discussion, Conclusion, Acknowledgments, References, etc. A research paper usually deals with a relatively specific topic and a comparatively narrow subject.

Course Paper

Different from the academic report and research paper, a course paper is usually written by undergraduate or postgraduate students. A course paper mainly refers to the paper written either during a specific course, or at the end of a semester. Therefore, the contents of the paper usually should be in line with the course requirements and be decided under the instruction of the course instructor.

Thesis / Dissertation

A thesis / dissertation is usually a paper submitted in support of a candidate for a degree or academic qualification, presenting the writer's research and findings.

A thesis / dissertation takes a definite stand on an issue. It usually presents a proposition or point of view that the writer is willing to argue against or defend. Writing a thesis / dissertation requires the writer to exercise judgment, evaluate evidence, and construct a logical argument.

In general, included in a thesis / dissertation are such sections as Acknowledgments, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Data Collection and Data Analysis, Findings and Conclusions, Suggestions for Future Work, etc. As is often required, a thesis for the master's degree should contain something new, while a dissertation for the doctoral degree should be something original and creative, and should substantially contribute to the existing knowledge in the field. After the thesis / dissertation is defended, the abstract and / or full text is often included in research databases and can be accessed by other researchers.

The thesis / dissertation should be independently completed, under the supervisor's guidance, reflecting the candidate's own research work.

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1) What are the similarities and differences between the different types of academic papers?
- 2) What do you find most challenging when you write academic papers?

2 Find an example for each type of academic papers and check if there are any features that are not covered in this section.

General Ways of Preparing Academic Papers

In order to write and publish an academic paper, the writer has to spend months or even years working on it. And in terms of preparation for an academic paper, there are usually seven steps to be taken for its final completion and submission.

Step One: Searching for Good and Original Ideas

Academic papers are different from ordinary compositions in that they have to be highly specific in their topics and have practical, scientific, or economic value. Therefore, the whole process of academic paper writing should follow the general rule: coming from practice and going back to practice. For this purpose, investigations should be carried out based on laboratory or library research at the cutting edge (前沿) of the field. According to some experienced writers, one-third or even half of their time would be spent on searching for good ideas in order to make the research really valuable and original.

Step Two: Finding the Topic

Once ideas are formulated, they should be analyzed, replenished (补充), and finally sorted out after a long process of critical reading and thorough reconsideration. Usually, a suitable topic can be formulated and finally decided on by following five general rules: (a) It should be a topic within the reach of the writer and can possibly be finished within the assigned time. Ambitious topics can go beyond the writer's ability and be difficult to be handled; (b) it should be a topic of practical value for the development of the economy or the society in general; (c) it should be a topic for which sufficient materials and documents can be found available either through reading or through investigations; (d) it should bear being tested theoretically and experimentally as academic study demands accuracy and objectivity; (e) it should be free from the writer's personal bias or preference even when it is a humanistic topic. For instance, a topic like "Albert Einstein—My Favorite Scientist" can be a good topic for a general composition but not for an academic paper. For the above and many other reasons, it is worth making a careful choice of topics before starting a long research process.

Step Three: Researching the Topic

Researching the topic can be a daunting task. The writer has to gather materials, take notes, cite sources related to the topic, create a bibliography, and so on. The research will have to be justified by linking its importance to existing knowledge about the topic.

Step Four: Considering Readers and Purposes

By considering readers and purposes we mean analyzing “Information for Contributors” (稿约) or “Call for Papers” (征稿启事), and the possible readers of the journal to which your paper is to be submitted. For example, if you are going to prepare a paper for a conference, you will have to consider the possible participants of the conference. In general, factors that the writer has to take into account may include: levels of the readers; the purposes and intentions you are aiming at through your paper; the suggested uses and / or the potential applications your research may bring about, etc. These factors should be considered at the starting point of paper preparation in many cases.

Step Five: Brainstorming

“Brainstorming” has become one of the popular terms in research circles. It may refer to a meeting of a group of academics to develop new and original ideas. And to this end, a writer can ask a group of friends to have a gathering to help him or her out with their suggestions or comments on his or her ideas.

Step Six: Drafting

A good draft organizes all the facts and ideas in a logical and systematic way, that is, all the details and related facts of the paper appear in the draft as a whole. A good research paper has to be finished through more than one draft.

Step Seven: Editing and Refining

When the writing of a research paper is completed, the writer has to bear in mind that even if he or she is an exceptionally skillful writer, he or she also has to make considerable revisions. In most cases, revision work would continue until the last minute for the submission of the paper. It is advisable to revise the paper from its general layout to slight omissions (疏漏) in language use. It is necessary to stress that the final manuscript is to be checked and proofread (校对) from the beginning to the end to make sure that the changes you have made do not result in inconsistency. Improvement at one point may make it necessary to change something elsewhere. Also, one final task is always to be performed: the close examination of the whole paper for errors in spelling, in form, in the truthfulness of quotations, and even in such simple matters as the order of pages. Errors in figures are especially likely to escape detection, so scrutiny (认真检查) is especially necessary.

The Style of Academic Writing

The word “style” has several senses: It may refer to a writer’s particular way of using language, for example, the lean and economical style of Ernest Hemingway (1899—1961), a famous American writer; or the prevalent features of the language of a certain period, say, the features of English in the age of Shakespeare. In this sense, the word “style” can be translated into Chinese as “风格.”

The word “style” may also refer to the style guide in writing that is recommended by associations or publications. For example, social sciences journals tend to follow the APA style (American Psychological Association); the Chicago Manual of Style is used in some social sciences publications and most historical journals; and the MLA style (Modern Language Association of America)—an academic style guide widely used in the United States, Canada, and other countries, provides guidelines for writing and documentation of research in humanities, such as English literature and the study of other modern languages and literatures, comparative literature, literary criticism, media studies, cultural studies, etc. The word “style” in this sense can be rendered as “格式.”

But the word “style” discussed in this section belongs to academic writing as a genre. The word “style” here, then, can be translated as “语体.” And our discussion of style will be confined to the characteristic aspects of the language of formal writing, especially academic paper writing. We agree to the saying by Jonathan Swift (1667—1745) that “proper words in proper places make the true definition of style.”

In general, all writings can be categorized into two main groups: informal and formal. The informal writing will utilize an informal tone and colloquial language, and the writer will often speak in the first person, as in letters, diaries, etc. Formal writing, on the contrary, is a more serious approach to a subject of great importance, and the writer will employ a formal tone and avoid using colloquial expressions. Academic paper writing is actually a kind of formal writing. The typical features can be detailed as follows.

More Formal Expressions

Academic papers are aimed at displaying the writer’s research results, or rather, reporting findings. The desired effect of publishing a research paper is secured, however, not so much by aiming at formality (正式性) as by avoiding noticeable informality. To achieve this effect, the writer has to relate everything to his or her readers in a clear-cut manner objectively and systematically by ruling out slang, colloquialisms, and informal contractions like “I’d,”

“gonna,” etc.

Read the following two versions of an abstract to see which version is more academic.

Ex. 1-1 (1)

In this paper, **we've given a reason why** the competitive ability of the national firms is weak. Because the non-national firms can **get** very cheap labor, under the same technical and economic conditions and the same cost, a non-national firm can produce more output than a national firm does. So it can **get** much more profit. **In this way**, the competitive ability of the non-national firms is stronger than that of the national firms.

Ex. 1-1 (2)

The paper **indicates the reason for the weakness of** the competitive ability of the national firms. Since the non-national firms can **obtain** very cheap labor, under the same technical and economic conditions and the same cost, a non-national firm can produce more output than a national firm does. Therefore it can **achieve** much more profit, and the competitive ability of the non-national firms is stronger than that of the national firms.

The second version sounds more academic because of the employment of formal expressions, e.g. “obtain” and “achieve” instead of “get.”

The following are some tips for formal writing.

- Avoid informal words and expressions, e.g. “get,” “go on,” “look into,” “turn out,” etc.
- Avoid abbreviated words used in informal writing, e.g. “ad” (advertisement), “gym” (gymnasium), “pop” (popular), “vet” (veteran), etc.
- Avoid contracted structures, e.g. “we’ve,” “you’re,” “don’t,” “can’t,” etc.
- Avoid using the second-person pronoun (you) in addressing readers.
- Avoid imperative sentences such as “please...,” “let’s,” etc.
- Avoid too many short sentences and simple sentences.
- Avoid conversational structures, e.g. “I think,” “you will,” etc.

More Objective Expressions

The formality and impersonality prevail to such an extent in an academic paper that the first- and second-person pronouns (“I” and “you”) are less often used. But “we” is usually used when both the reader and the writer are included.

In spite of the strong objection to using colloquialisms, it is also necessary to point out that the readers would also feel bored to see too many “the writers,” “we,” etc. as the subject of the sentences. This is one of the reasons that there are many sentences in passive voice in academic papers. Besides, the passive voice also gives the paper a sense of impartiality and objectivity.

For example, instead of writing “We carried out an experiment to investigate the effect of light on plant growth,” it would be more conventional to say, “An experiment was carried out to investigate the effect of light on plant growth.”

Formal writing sets an unusually high value on objectivity and accuracy. Therefore, nominal structures (名词性结构) are often seen in academic writing to serve this purpose. We may paraphrase the following sentence using nominal phrases:

Ex. 1-2

We analyzed the experiment and what we found made us realize that the technique is quite complex.
→ The experimental analysis showed technical complexity.

More Academic Expressions

In some cases, the subject matter of an academic paper restricts the language used so that it becomes fully comprehensible only to people familiar with that particular topic or specialty. Sometimes, it is rather difficult for readers to get a full understanding of all the points in a paper because it involves a highly specialized vocabulary and rigorous (严密的) sentence structures.

To some extent, we would say that academic English has its own vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Just as J. R. Firth (1890—1960), a famous British linguist, put it, “A restricted language serves a circumscribed field of experience or action and can be said to have its own grammar and dictionary.”

Needless to say, to write more effective academic papers, it is very important to have an overview of their linguistic features. The arguments will be more convincing if they are presented concisely, concretely, and objectively, and the thoughts and ideas will be acceptable if arranged logically and coherently. (Detailed description and actual examples of this kind of language use will be specifically given in Units 6, 7, and 8.)

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1) What is your own way of preparing an academic paper?
- 2) Who are the readers of a thesis / dissertation?

2 Find a major journal in your field and search for the requirements and specifications for papers laid down by the Editorial Board of the journal.

3 Read the following two passages and try to find out the stylistic features of each.

Passage 1

The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.

“I’m going down and get that kitty,” the American wife said.

“I’ll do it,” her husband offered from the bed.

“No, I’ll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table.”

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.

“Don’t get wet,” he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall...

—from “Cat in the Rain” by Ernest Hemingway

Passage 2

Evaluations of oral English abilities have become more important in China. Almost all such evaluations of spoken English are done by English teaching specialists, which is very time-consuming. As the number of examinees rapidly increases, the need to evaluate their oral English ability also increases. In this context, the automatic pronunciation evaluation (APE) algorithm is critical.

To improve the APE performance, many studies have focused on how to calculate the final APE score based on statistical data. The research focuses on applying a canonical model to the APE. The model includes two stages. In the first stage, adaptive training is used to eliminate the influence of speaker variations. In the second stage, speaker accent adaption is used to compensate for the mismatch between native and non-native speakers.

General Structure of an Academic Paper

Although different languages and cultures have different “rules” for organizing ideas in writing, it is necessary to follow the general structure in order to meet the requirements of international publications. A publishable academic paper in English is supposed to include

Title, Abstract, Keywords or Indexing Terms, Introduction, Literature Review, Research Methodologies and Procedures, Results and Findings, Discussion, Conclusion, References, and Appendices (if any).

Writing for academic purpose in English concerns how writers meet the requirements of international academic communities. Presented below are the major parts of an academic paper and their respective functions.

Items	Main Functions
Title	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizing the main text of the paper Attracting readers
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explaining the background, topic, approach, conclusion, and significance Summarizing the paper Orienting readers to the paper
Keywords or Indexing Terms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighting the focus using noun terms
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introducing the research background Making a research orientation Stating the research purpose
Literature Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing the previous research
Research Methodologies and Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specifying the methods and procedures used in the study Explaining the theoretical framework or models and the research design Clarifying data collection and treatment, and experimental apparatus and procedures
Results and Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizing the main results and findings Interpreting or commenting on the most important results with important figures (shown in graphs, tables, and diagrams)
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expounding the interrelations between the observed facts and their underlying causes Analyzing the data Comparing the results with previous studies and the original hypothesis Developing the hypothesis and speculations Highlighting the viewpoints Mentioning the limitations of the study
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarizing the main points of the study Presenting the conclusion Providing implications and suggestions for future work
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showing respect for previous work Facilitating the literature search

The above items of an academic paper will be specifically dealt with in the following units.

Exercises and Practice

1 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1) Do you think the general structure of writing is culturally different? Why or why not?
- 2) What are the main parts of an academic paper and the functions of each part?

2 Find a paper from a major journal in your field and analyze the major parts of the paper and their functions.

Unit Summary

[学术论文写作：概述]

在国际性学术刊物上发表文章的质量和数量是衡量一个国家、一个机构或一个专业人员学术水平和学术地位的重要标志。国际学术界因此流行这样一句英文：publish or perish（要么发表，要么出局）。

学术论文包括专业报告、研究论文、课程论文、学位论文等。

学术论文是专业人员的研究结果和学术总结。写作一篇学术论文大体上要经历：寻找有价值的思想、确定话题、展开研究、明确写作对象和目的、讨论并完成初稿以及修改与润色等过程。

在具体写作之前，有必要先见“林”后见“树”，弄清楚英语学术论文的主要结构和语体特征。

学术论文采用学术语体，是专业人员用来记录学术积累，展示科研成果，使之得到社会承认并广为传播的有效手段。这种以学术交流为目的的语言是“一种限定的语言，服务于限定领域的经验和行为，这种语言有其自身的语法和词汇特征”。因此，其特点是多用正式语体，包括正式的词汇和短语、客观描写的句型和人称及逻辑严密的语篇结构等。这些语言特点构成了学术语体的基本特征。

学术语体是说理性语言，是严谨推理和复杂思维活动的文字体现。从宏观上把握学术语体的语言风格，熟悉学术语体在遣词、造句、语篇等方面的基本特点，对于提高学术论文的写作质量和提高国际发表的成功率，无疑具有重要的意义。

More About R-W-C

“R-W-C” is made by the first letters of Research, Writing, and Communication. “More About R-W-C” is a supplementary section of each unit to further enrich your knowledge of academic research, academic writing, and academic communication. The section does not necessarily correspond to the theme of each unit, but systematically explains academic research, writing, and communication.

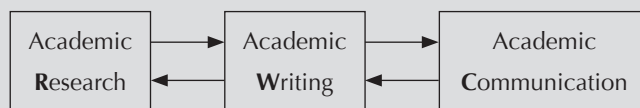
Section Objectives: This supplementary section aims to further broaden students’ knowledge of academic research, writing, and communication, and enrich students’ competence of international communication through academic writing and publication.

Main Contents: Academic communication is primarily based on academic writing; and academic writing, on academic research. These three processes are interdependent and mutually influencing, forming an integrated whole. Therefore, all of these aspects

will be discussed in this section in the following units. The general definitions, functions, language features, principles, and the like will be discussed or illustrated.

Academic writing records, reflects, and summarizes academic research, and is also the means, basis, and preparation for academic communication. Being an essential link between academic research and communication, academic writing is closely associated with both academic research and international communication (see the figure below). The discussion of academic writing therefore should not go without the discussion of academic research and goals of international communication.

In this supplementary section, we will first examine the main features of academic research, academic writing, and academic communication, and, on the basis of the examination, the basic characteristics of academic writing are summarized.



Interplay Between Academic Research, Writing, and Communication

Table of Contents: This supplementary section consists of 14 sub-topics based on the “three-in-one” process.

- Unit 1 Introduction of the Section
- Unit 2 Academic Research (1): Basic Process
- Unit 3 Academic Research (2): Data-driven Approach
- Unit 4 Academic Research (3): Hypothesis-driven Approach
- Unit 5 Academic Research (4): Integrated Approach
- Unit 6 Academic Writing (1): General Features
- Unit 7 Academic Writing (2): Humanities Papers
- Unit 8 Academic Writing (3): Science Papers
- Unit 9 Academic Writing (4): Differences Between Humanities and Science Papers

- Unit 10 Academic Communication (1): General Features
- Unit 11 Academic Communication (2): Professional Exchange (To be continued in Unit 12)
- Unit 12 Academic Communication (3): Professional Exchange (Continued)
- Unit 13 Academic Communication (4): “CODES” of Competences
- Unit 14 From the “Three-in-one” Combination to the “Language + Communication” Teaching and Learning Approach

All the above features of the “three-in-one” process will be specifically discussed in the following units.

Reflections and Further Study

- 1 Find a paper in a major international journal in your field and analyze its vocabulary, sentence structures as well as its writing style.**
- 2 Brainstorm ideas on one of the topics below. Then write down an outline for an academic paper on the topic.**
 - 1) Fighting air pollution in some cities of China
 - 2) The difficulty of translating Chinese humor
 - 3) Maintaining academic standards in the age of consumerism in China
- 3 Work in groups and discuss which of the seven steps of preparing academic papers you find most difficult and in what way you can deal with it.**

Simulated Paper Publication Preparation

- Simulated Paper Publication Preparation is a kind of weekly-performed exercise, which will start from the first day of the course. It will prepare you for the course project at the end of the semester: Simulated International Paper Writing and Publication on Interdisciplinary Sciences.
- Find a writing peer according to your majors for future peer evaluation and cooperation.
- Start thinking about how to write an academic paper of your own. You may review your master's thesis / doctoral dissertation, a published academic paper, or any other scholarly writing to see whether there is anything that needs to be improved.

Unit

1

Literature Reading and Translation: General Description

Professional literature, generally speaking, refers to a set of works, or printed materials, or a body of writings on a particular subject, which may be classified as periodicals, monographs, textbooks, papers, encyclopedias, special documentation, mass media, audio-visual materials, etc. All professional literature is stylistically featured to be a kind of formal writing, with rigorous and unitary grammatical structure, and highly specialized and unambiguous wording for semantic accuracy. The ways to search for relevant literature include global search, specific search, processed search, etc. Translating professional literature needs special translation skills; and sufficient attention should also be paid to cross-cultural factors in translating.

Unit Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- 1 Define literature
- 2 Understand general linguistic features of professional literature
- 3 Search for relevant literature
- 4 Observe general requirements for translating various kinds of literature
- 5 Translate professionally and cross-culturally

Definition of Literature

What is literature? According to *Macmillan English-Chinese Dictionary*, it refers to “books or other printed information about a subject.”

The word “literature” used in this textbook does not mean “文学,” but “文献” or “文献资料,” specifically referring to various (academic, professional, scientific) documents or texts in different fields.

When we talk about literature, one of the things we must look at is bibliography.

Bibliography (Greek *bibliographia*, the writing of books) originally meant the writing or copying of books; later the word has come to mean a list of books or other forms of written material, or the technique of compiling such a list. Certain kinds of information are supplied in a bibliography: author(s), title, edition, and date and place of publication; type of style, book size, and other physical characteristics may also be included. Frequently, bibliographies are annotated, that is, brief notes indicating the subject treated or commenting on the usefulness of a book are appended. Bibliographies, essential to scholars and those involved professionally with books, collectors, librarians, and dealers, can be useful sources of information for all serious readers.

Bibliographies may be divided into two broad types: analytic (sometimes called critical) and descriptive. The analytic bibliography is concerned with books as objects; it uses the evidence of physical features (for example, the kind of paper and printing idiosyncrasies) to establish authorship or judge the reliability of variant texts. The descriptive bibliography is the systematic enumeration of publications; it is, in turn, divided into universal, or general, bibliography and selective bibliography. General bibliographies may list works on several subjects, published in various countries and at different times. Selective bibliographies are limited, perhaps, to a particular subject, to the country of origin, to works of one author, or to books for a particular purpose or audience.

As an important means of knowledge reserve, literature has become a kind of precious resources or treasures for mankind and has greatly contributed to the social progress of the human race.

Classification of Literature

As is known to all, we are now in an information era characterized by rapid development of science and technology. According to statistics, within the last decade alone, the achievements in science and technology have amounted to the totality of inventions and discoveries of mankind since ancient times.

According to the differences of knowledge transfer, quality and quantity of information, and the levels of information processing of literature, literature can be classified into the following four main categories: zero literature (original sources without processing); primary literature (e.g. research papers, reports); secondary literature (e.g. various forms of abstracting); and tertiary literature (e.g. various kinds of reviews).

Facing such a vast ocean of professional literature, how should we conduct our literature search, reading and translation? Here, we just put different kinds of literature under the following headings:

Periodicals

A periodical is a series of publications that appear at regular intervals. Periodicals are of various categories. From the perspective of names, for example, they are journals, magazines, bulletins, rapid communications, letters, proceedings, records, abstracting services, reviews, indexes, etc., which constitute the main body of literature.

Periodicals are characterized by being large in number and in variety, extensive in content and in circulation, diverse in language and in form, etc.

Along with the rapid development of science and technology, academic periodicals have been rapidly increasing and have been gradually professionalized, integrated and computerized.

The subject of periodical literature will be specifically dealt with in Unit 2.

Monographs

A monograph is a book on one particular subject or branch of a subject that the author has studied deeply. The contents of a monograph usually include the history and the present status of a particular subject, observed data, experimental methods and results, existing problems and the developing trend, various viewpoints and discussions of different schools of thought, research achievements, further exploration, etc. A monograph usually functions as an important guide for the reader to understand the particular subject comprehensively and deeply.

The subject of academic books will be specifically dealt with in Unit 3.

Textbooks

In general, a textbook is a kind of professional writing specially designed for the students in a given branch of learning. Textbooks are compiled in a rigidly scientific, systematic and logical way. Comparatively, the content of a textbook is mature and well-established, because it has been compiled through the author's careful selection, verification, discrimination, integration and comprehensive study of the subject. If one intends to acquire a general knowledge of a certain subject, or if one wants to have a preliminary understanding of a certain issue, he / she should go over relevant textbooks, which proves to be the best policy.

Papers

Papers are the most important and reliable sources for textbooks, monographs, and all the other documentary works. A complete paper is usually composed of the following elements: title, author(s), affiliation, abstract, keywords, introduction, theoretical analysis and / or experimental description, result and discussion or conclusion, acknowledgments, references, etc. (Detailed description and exemplification of these elements in a professional paper are given in a separate textbook entitled *Paper Writing and International Publication*, by Hu Gengshen, et al., Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2014.) A paper usually deals with a relatively specific topic, with a comparatively narrow subject.

The subject of academic papers will be specifically dealt with in Unit 4.

Encyclopedias

An encyclopedia is a book or a set of books dealing with every branch of knowledge, or with one particular branch, in alphabetical order. The difference between a dictionary and an encyclopedia is that a dictionary explains words and an encyclopedia explains facts. As a basic reference book of generalized and summarized knowledge, an encyclopedia is usually compiled by many experts of many branches through many years. The contents of an encyclopedia, therefore, are comparatively mature and correct. It always serves as an important information retriever, providing comprehensive and systematic information about almost everything.

The information retriever as such also includes yearbooks, dictionaries, guides, handbooks, and the like.

The subject of encyclopedias will be specifically dealt with in Unit 5.

Special Documentation

Special documentation refers to all the printed materials that are non-books or non-

periodicals. Special documentation mainly includes standards, patent documents, trademarks, copyrights, contracts, agreements, reports, conference papers, dissertations (or theses), product specifications, government publications, proposals, technical archives, electronic hypertexts, etc. Though being neither like books nor periodicals, which are published regularly or publicly, special documentation proves to be an effective resource for information retrieval. Insofar as literature search and reading are concerned, this kind of documentation should not be overlooked. On the contrary, it calls for our attention – that is why we also place emphasis on documentation in this textbook.

► Mass Media and Audio-visual Materials

Mass media are diversified media technologies that are intended to reach a large audience by mass communication. The technologies through which this communication takes place vary. The broadcast media such as radio, recorded music, film and television transmit their information electronically or audio-visually. The print media use a physical object such as a newspaper, book, pamphlet or comic, to distribute their information. Meanwhile, the audio-visual arts are also different art forms that create works that are primarily visual in nature, such as print-making, design, crafts, photography, video, film-making and architecture. With the rapid development of science and technology, there are also a lot of other multimedia representations of learning materials, films, sound recordings, CD-ROMs, DVDs, Internet broadcast, mp4, A/V archives, audio books, and digital collections.

General Linguistic Features of Professional Literature

Stylistically, literature is a kind of formal writing. Compared with informal writing which usually utilizes an informal tone and colloquial language, where the author usually speaks in the first person, as in letters, diaries, stories and novels, etc., formal writing is a more serious approach to a subject of great importance and therefore avoids all colloquial expressions. Since the functions of professional literature are to reveal creative research achievements, facilitate professional information retrieval, and help improve the development of science and technology, it deals with the study of objective facts or problems, and analyses are based on relevant data, not on personal likes or dislikes, and discussions or conclusions are made following specific experiments or investigations.

Syntactically, professional literature has rigorous grammatical structure, and in most cases is rather unitary. Frequently used are indicative sentences, imperative sentences, complex sentences,

passive voice constructions, and the sentence pattern “It be + adj. / participle + that...,” etc.

Morphologically, professional literature is characterized by high specialization, unambiguous implication and exact wording. There are more compound words, Latin and Greek words, contracted words, noun clusters and so on in professional literature than in informal writing.

Besides, captioned words are also very popular in various kinds of literature such as signs, formulas, charts, tables, photos, etc. for the sake of accuracy, brevity, and clarity.

Different kinds of literature may have different linguistic features although they do share similar characteristics. The feature of an individual piece of literature will be discussed together with the specific category of documentation in the corresponding unit of this textbook. Learning to understand the general features of various kinds of literature will be beneficial not only to documentation reading but also to the translation and writing of such documentary works.

Search for Relevant Literature

Search for relevant literature needed for professional study and research is a practical skill for professionals. This is important because an effective way of literature searching and reading will facilitate our information retrieval within a shorter period of time. In fact, everyone may have his / her own way of literature searching and reading. And the following are some common approaches:

Global Search

By “global search” we mean searching for materials around the subject in a larger dimension or within a wider range, i.e. conducting extensive reading. For example:

- (1) Search for relevant books through the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC).
- (2) Search for relevant books through the *LC Catalog*.
- (3) Search for relevant books through the *National Library of China Catalog*.
- (4) Search for relevant books through the federated searching resources aggregation.
- (5) Search for relevant books through Muse.
- (6) Search for relevant books through Google.
- (7) Search for relevant books through the classified and specified catalogs.

(8) Search for periodicals through *Quan Guo Bao Kan Suo Yin* (《全国报刊索引》).

(9) Search for current foreign literature through the *Sci-Tech Translations Bulletin*.

(10) Search for literature at home and abroad through Internet, WWW (World Wide Web), databanks, e-libraries, and other electronic retrieval sources, which will be specifically dealt with in respective units in this textbook.

Specific Search

By “specific search” we mean searching for literature about the topic within a specific area or in a narrower scope. For example:

(1) Select some most-related papers for intensive reading.

(2) Expand the scope of reading on the basis of the references of the selected papers.

(3) Try to find out relevant reviews on the topic so as to know the authoritative comments, the experts’ views, the global trend and the general development, etc.

Processed Search

By “processed search” we mean accumulating and absorbing essential information in the course of literature searching and reading. For example:

(1) Store the searched literature by meticulous note-taking and self-abstracting.

(2) Sort out the searched documentation by putting it into different categories.

(3) Digest and absorb the searched information by creatively analyzing and synthesizing it.

Specifically, to digest and absorb useful information is the ultimate purpose of literature searching, reading and translating. This is a process of discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the easy to the difficult and from the outer to the inner. It is also a process of information reading, selecting, sorting, synthesizing, commenting, rationalizing, systematizing, reprocessing, etc.

One thing that needs to be mentioned is that, in an information era, the awareness of information discrimination is highly necessary since the collection and absorption of erroneous knowledge and information is harmful. Just as a saying goes: “The fool collects data and the wise man selects them,” which, though drastic, is philosophical indeed.

Exercises and Practice

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is literature?

- 2 How is literature classified?
- 3 Can you briefly state the general linguistic features of professional literature?
- 4 What are the key points for information retrieval?

2 Work in pairs and discuss the following questions.

- 1 If you were to give a brief talk about information retrieval on literature, what would you say? Offer your ideas and suggestions.
- 2 Tell how you have benefited from this unit for your own research project.

More About the Subject

Information Retrieval (IR)

Information retrieval is the activity of obtaining relevant information resources from a collection of information resources. Searches can be based on metadata or on full-text (or other content-based) indexing.

Automated IR systems are used to reduce what has been called “information overload.” Many universities and public libraries use IR systems to provide access to books, journals and other documents. Web search engines are the most visible IR application.

Every year, an enormous volume of new information is published from various fields, making it impossible for people to maintain complete collections of reference material. For this reason, individuals, businesses, educational institutions, and government agencies use IR systems to find information.

Retrieval systems provide ways both to store and to find such information. As each new source is added to the library, an indexer assigns it a set of descriptive words. These words, called descriptors, index terms, or keywords, indicate the main information in the source. A complete entry for each source lists the descriptive words, the storage location, and information identifying the source.

When a person wants a list of all documents that deal with a particular subject, he / she makes a list of words that describe the subject area. The computer searches its databases for all sources that include the information described in the person’s list. Then it prints a list showing the title of each source.

One retrieval system that uses descriptors to gather information is ERIC. It is a US

nationwide information storage and retrieval system for published educational material.

Kinds of Retrieval Systems

Retrieval systems include (1) reference retrieval systems; (2) document retrieval systems; (3) fact or database systems; (4) text processing systems.

Reference retrieval systems provide a reference – such as author(s), title, and location – to all documents in a file on a certain topic. The card catalog in a library is a type of simple reference retrieval system.

Document retrieval systems provide a complete copy of a document. These systems use micro-photographic methods, such as microfilm and microfiche, to produce miniature copies of documents.

Fact or database systems answer specific questions about matters such as inventory and payroll. A fact retrieval system could quickly provide the total earnings of a certain employee for any year.

Text processing systems are the most complex retrieval systems. A few have become successful. For example, computer software designers have developed programs that translate documents from one language to another with accuracy.

Database

Database is a body of information made up of individual items that are organized so that they can be reviewed in a variety of ways. Many databases are stored on computers. Using a computerized database management system, a person enters information into the database according to various fields (categories). With a database program, a person can call up narrowly defined groups of data from storage. The computer displays the data on its screen. Some databases can perform mathematical and desktop publishing tasks.

Major users of databases include libraries in which online catalogs have replaced card catalogs. To determine whether a library has a copy of a certain book, an individual can select a field called title, then type all or part of the book's title. The person can also call up a list of all the library's books written by a certain author. The individual can select a field called author, then type the author's name. Other fields in this program might be subject, publisher, catalog number, and publication date.

Schools may use databases to maintain student records. Other bodies of information managed by database programs include expense records, mailing lists, certain medical records, recipe files, and tax records.

A computer user creates a database by entering information into one or more files. Each file consists of many records. Each record, in turn, contains pieces of information concerning one item.

In a library's online catalog, the items are the books. The individual pieces of information are organized into fields. In many database displays, a record runs horizontally across the screen, and fields appear as columns.

A flat-file database, such as an online catalog, enables a user to call up data from only one file at a time. A relational database can draw data from more than one file. A librarian might use a relational database to search for information on a particular area of study. The database might list agencies doing research in the field and periodicals that cover the subject area. Some relational databases can also identify which of the periodicals cited are owned by the library. The database program might also produce information on people working in the particular field of study or information on books written about the subject.

Thematic Translation Skills: Translation of Literature

Preliminaries

Translation can be differently defined. Linguistically, translation is a rendering of a text from one language into another, i.e. the faithful representation in one language of what is written or said in another language. Culturally, translation is the representation of ideas, values and ways of life across different communities. Communicatively, translation is a means of communication, which plays an important role in human civilization.

In the West, literary translation can be traced back to about 300 BC; while in China, recorded translation activities were even earlier, dating from the Zhou Dynasty. However, not until the recent centuries, especially by the end of the 20th century did systematic study of translation get under way. The recent decades have seen rapid development in translation theory and translation activities both at home and abroad.

A modern society sees an extensive use of translation on various occasions. If a foreign language is generally accepted as a tool of human life, translation then obviously serves as a dynamic means of employing this tool. A proper and dexterous translation helps promote mutual understanding between peoples of different cultural and social backgrounds, whereas an improper rendering of words or expressions may lead to confusion.

Some people believe it is a science, others see it as an art, and yet many consider it a craft, or rather, a skill. Actually, the very word "translation" is ambiguous. And the Chinese equivalent *fanyi* sounds even fuzzier. *Fanyi*, in Chinese, may stand for a subject in the curriculum, a job

people engage in, a piece of literary work, the translating or interpreting work itself, or a person who engages in such an activity.

If the word “translation” refers to a subject, namely, the study of translation theory and skills, there is no doubt that it is a science, just as any subject is, with its own rules, laws and principles for the translators to observe; however, if it refers to some specific pieces of translation, then it is more like an art, with each piece manifesting its own charm and style in the creative hands of the translator; whereas, if it refers to a process, in which something is translated, then we may regard it as a craft or skill. For unlike any branch of natural science, the process of translation has its own nature, and none of its rules and principles is universally applicable. Therefore, it entails a lot of practice, and particular craftsmanship and skills are reflected by the touches of different translators.

Translation covers a very broad range. In terms of language, it can be divided into two categories: from native language into foreign language and vice versa; in terms of the mode, it can be divided into oral interpretation and written translation; in terms of materials to be translated, there are translation of scientific materials, translation of literary works such as novels, stories, prose, poetry, drama, etc., translation of political essays such as treatises on social problems, reports, speeches, etc., and translation of practical writing such as official documents, contracts and agreements, notices, receipts, etc.; in terms of disposal, it can be either full-text translation, abridged translation or adapted translation.

Despite a variety of opinions, two criteria should be generally accepted by all, namely, accuracy and lucidity. We may also take these two criteria as the principles of professional literature translation. By accuracy, we mean being faithful not only to the original contents, to the original meaning and views, but also to the original form and style. By lucidity, we mean not only easy and readable rendering, but also idiomatic expression in the target language, free from any stiff formula and mechanical copying from dictionaries.

Translation Techniques

Speaking of translation techniques, we differ from those who tend to ignore them, or dismiss them lightly as something inconsequential. On the other hand, we also differ from those who tend to exaggerate the importance of translation techniques, or look upon them as panaceas.

Different kinds of materials to be translated require different points of emphasis in their rendering. Professional materials stress their preciseness; novels and stories, their plots and characters; poetry, the emotion. And in document and professional literature translation, we should take into consideration various aspects: the contents, the form, the style, the wording, and so on, trying our best to be faithful to the original.

Generally speaking, the basic translation techniques that merit our attention and are to be applied in English-Chinese translation include: (a) diction – choosing the right words and phrases; (b) amplification – adding or supplying necessary words; (c) omission – a technique opposite to amplification; (d) repetition – using the same word or pattern more than one time; (e) conversion – changing parts of speech; (f) rearrangement – changing the word order; (g) negation – saying the opposite of an expression; (h) division – breaking up longer sentences, etc. Of course, different opinions are expressed about these labels of translation techniques. For example, some consider subordination a technique, referring to it as an inseparable link in the process of comprehension; and some do not consider repetition itself as a technique, putting it into the category of amplification; and quite a few people add the disposal of the passive voice, the rendering of technical terms, the rendering of long sentences, etc. to translation techniques, which, however, in the eyes of others, are not techniques at all but methods or approaches in tackling specific problems.

Translation of Literature

As we mentioned earlier, different kinds of literature may have different linguistic features although documentary works of various kinds do have similar characteristics. Therefore, we should treat the translation of each of the individual documentary works discriminately. For example, when we translate monographs we should pay more attention to the strict wording and stylistic formality; while academic papers require specialized expressions and formal patterns. When translating special documents such as standards, their novelty and uniqueness should be kept so as to maintain their original styles.

Besides, general knowledge and knowledge of the subject matter are also of vital importance. For there is always the problem of the subject matter involved in translation. If we are called upon to translate documents on a specific question, even if we have a fairly good command of the languages involved we can hardly do the work well unless we have acquired sufficient knowledge of the subject matter, the relevant aspect of science and technology. As far as the required language proficiency is concerned, the greater the translator's knowledge of the subject matter, the more accurate his / her representation in the target language.

In order to expand his / her scope of knowledge, a conscientious translator should always do two things: (a) constantly exposing himself / herself to various materials on all subjects relevant to his / her work; (b) conscientiously consulting the relevant background materials or referential materials on the subject dealt with so as to keep up with the latest development of science and technology.

It goes without saying that cross-cultural awareness should be another important aspect in any kind of translation. We will, therefore, specially deal with the subject in a separate section.

Cross-cultural Translation (1): Introduction

Cross-cultural translation is one of the two sections of literature translation. The materials included in this section of this textbook are about perspectives of literature translation from different perspectives of cross-cultural communication.

As an introduction to this special section, we would like to make it clear first that this section will be logically and longitudinally interconnected, but the topic in a unit does not necessarily correspond to the latitudinal main text of that unit.

Section Objectives

This section aims to broaden students' knowledge of different perspectives of cross-cultural translation, let students become aware of different cross-cultural factors and involvements in translation, and further enhance students' ability to translate various kinds of literature for international communication.

Main Topics

The topics in this section include: considering religious factors, retrieving historical factors, identifying societal factors, locating geographical factors, understanding communicative factors, differentiating linguistic factors, etc. Various other factors also have to be considered in exploring the Internet, reading public signs, visiting cultural sights, etc. And to retrieve information from different mass media, we will have to be skillful in analyzing headlines, examining subtitles, navigating e-channels, etc.

Points for Attention

Cross-cultural studies and translation studies are two separate branches of learning. Cross-cultural translation, which is of interdisciplinary nature, should be a gigantic topic for discussion and illustration. Many subjects will be involved in the studies, for example, linguistics, cultural studies, aesthetics, history, anthropology, fine art, psychology, communication studies, media studies, science of thinking, etc.

But within the limited space here in this textbook, the Main Topics mentioned above are the only focus.

Exercises and Practice

1 Answer the following questions.

- 1 What is your opinion on the importance of translation? Can you give some examples to support your idea?
- 2 What is translation? Do you agree with the author's point of view? Why or why not?
- 3 What general principles should a translator abide by in translation?
- 4 What do you know about translation techniques in general, and literature translation in particular?
- 5 What is your understanding of cross-cultural translation?

2 Translate the following passage into Chinese.

To digest and absorb useful information is the ultimate purpose of literature searching, reading and translating. This is a process of discarding the dross and selecting the essential, eliminating the false and retaining the true, proceeding from the easy to the difficult and from the outer to the inner. It is also a process of information reading, selecting, sorting, synthesizing, commenting, rationalizing, systematizing, reprocessing, etc.

One thing that needs to be mentioned is that, in an information era, the awareness of information discrimination is highly necessary since the collection and absorption of erroneous knowledge and information is harmful. Just as a saying goes: "The fool collects data and the wise man selects them," which, though drastic, is philosophical indeed.

3 Translate the following passage into English.

翻译有两种要素：准确性与表达性。准确性是翻译的首要条件。译者必须谨慎地遵循原作者的意思。字词的选择与句式结构必须如实传达原作的思想。表达性是使译文易于理解。换言之，译者必须用自己的文字尽可能将原作思想清楚而有力地表达出来。准确性使译文的意义确切无误，而表达性则使译文生动、引人入胜。

Unit Summary

文献是将知识和信息用文字、符号、图像、音频等记录在一定的物质载体的结合体。本书所涉及的文献是指某一学科或某一专业的或有历史价值的有关学科专业的图书、报刊、音像数据的总称。

本单元所涉及的文献包括：期刊、专著、教材、论文、百科全书、特种专业文献，以及多媒体电子和视听文本等。

这些文献属于正式文体，有其特殊的语言特点。它们的词汇专业化程度高，含义确切，词义固定。从句法上看，它们有严谨的语法结构；而在表达上，严肃的态度和严谨的措辞也要得到充分体现。

检索这类文献可以通过总体性检索、具体性检索、积累性检索等方法进行。随着网络的发展，各种信息检索变得越来越方便、快捷，能够通过不同渠道的文献准确地识别和阅读自己所需要的信息也变得越来越重要。

翻译作为跨文化交流的媒介，既是识别和阅读文献信息的一个有效途径，也是利用文献信息进行国际交流的一种重要手段。各种不同文献的翻译有其不同的要求，但其共同的要求是：准确与顺达。“准确”表现为原文的信息全部传达，语气和文体风格与原文相一致。“顺达”表现为译文的句式正确，选词妥帖。英译汉时要求段落之间、句子之间呼应自然；汉译英时要求句式处理恰当，选词妥帖，语言地道。

文献翻译中的跨文化问题及其处理策略和技巧不容忽视。本书对跨文化翻译中涉及的宗教、历史、社会、地理、交际、语言等相关因素，以及对互联网、公示语、文化景点的翻译问题等都有系列性的专题讨论和例述。

Simulation and Further Study

1 Work out a literature review on the course of International Literature Reading and Translation.

First of all, further understand the objectives, contents, and teaching arrangements of this textbook, and summarize the features of the course design.

Secondly, search for other courses of a similar nature, make a comparative study between the present course and other courses, paying attention to their similarities and differences.

Thirdly, on the basis of your work above, prepare a short literature review of about 500–800 words in English and translate it into Chinese.

2 Determine and prepare your own research topic, which will be used for course simulation and course project in the following weeks.