

STANDARDISATION IN CHINESE LANGUAGE COLLECTIONS

Introduction

In this article I wish to summarise the findings of a research project which I did as a student at Charles Sturt University in 1989 (1). This research was concerned with the level of standardisation in Chinese language collections and the effect of non-standardisation. I was mainly interested in the areas of automation, classification, romanisation, use of Chinese characters, filing rules and libraries' perceptions of standardisation problems. This article concentrates on the survey findings of that project. A more detailed discussion of the findings can be found in my project.

Previous surveys

To my knowledge there have been two previous surveys of Chinese collections in Australia.

Wang's 1983 survey (2) covered 32 libraries with East Asian (Chinese, Japanese, Korean and other languages) collections. His survey recorded holding sizes, cataloguing activity, reader services, staffing and publications. Wang's survey did not specifically address the issue of standardisation but did record aspects of it.

MacDougall's 1988 survey (3) used the same 32 libraries. She obtained holdings figures, details of romanisation used, the views of librarians, use of Chinese characters and factors affecting automation.

In the American context a study by Anderson incorporates some older surveys of classification, romanisation, etc. (4). A survey of library preferences in regard to romanisation was conducted in 1980 by the Library of Congress (5).

For my study I have surveyed the libraries used in Wang's study (less those which are not relevant, such as Japanese libraries) as well as three others known to have holdings and one cataloguing agency. In May 1989 I distributed a questionnaire to 32 institutions. Two of these did not respond and five returned their questionnaires, stating that

they had no holdings of Chinese language materials. Accordingly, information from 25 institutions was used. My questionnaire did not address all the aspects in Wang's survey but did cover some of the aspects of MacDougall's survey.

I have discussed the survey findings under the following headings.

Size of collections

I ranked the surveyed institutions in descending order of size of holdings (see Appendix I). This was done with two reservations. Firstly, holdings figures for smaller institutions were approximate. Secondly, the chronological equivalence of the other holdings figures was not clear. One library noted that its figures were only good for December 1983, while another's figures were good for January 1989.

The cataloguing agency did not have holdings as such, but was ranked according to the number of items catalogued (minus those catalogued for one institution, which was surveyed separately).

From the resulting list, it became apparent that a few institutions were predominant. Two institutions between them represent 63% of all holdings surveyed.

Integration into main catalogue

The survey revealed that all but two institutions (i.e., 88% of respondents) incorporated their catalogue entries of Chinese language items into their general library catalogue.

One library controlled its Chinese language serials under a separate catalogue, while another did not incorporate any entries into the main catalogue. A third library's return contained the remark that the introduction of an automated system in 1989 would end such catalogue integration but did not give the reason for this.

Integration was common and did not appear to be affected by non-standardisation.

Extent of automation

The survey showed that the holdings of the four largest institutions were only partially recorded in automated systems. This also suggested that a great number of Chinese language items did not appear on the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN). One response indicated that cataloguing on ABN was only done as staff resources permitted. My experience during fieldwork at the University of Melbourne was that there were many items which had neither been recorded in the local LIBS-100 system nor in ABN.

Four institutions were not automated and the remainder used one of seven different systems. Altogether, five used ABN for cataloguing.

The situation appeared to be one in which the various Chinese collections were automated under several different systems. This impression was also confirmed by Wang (6). There was also some cataloguing on ABN.

More exact findings could have been obtained if the questionnaire had sought percentages of the collections covered by ABN or the local automated system.

Classification systems

The Harvard-Yenching system was used by the four largest institutions but by none of the others. Other institutions used either Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) or Library of Congress Classification (LCC).

Those libraries using Harvard-Yenching classification supplement their classification manuals with annotations. The Harvard-Yenching system was described by one library as a "dead" system. Thus it can be assumed that the four largest institutions follow this system in a different manner. Some uniformity in approach may be achieved according to the extent to which they refer to the published catalogues of large US libraries using the Harvard-Yenching system.

One library stated that it needed to have "local enhancements" to DDC for Chinese literature.

Only two libraries took diacritics into account for filing. It should be noted that diacritics are ignored by ABN search software.

There appears to be some confusion with those respondents who said "yes" in response to "syllables joined into words?" Given that they cited their authority for romanisation as LC Cataloging Bulletin No. 118, their responses ("yes with hyphens" and "yes one word") do not appear to make sense, and could depend on their definition of "word".

Other respondents were consistent in the use of capitals in names.

The ten libraries with the largest Chinese holdings used diacritics, the others did not.

2. P'in yin users

There was a lack of standardisation evident among P'in yin users in regard to joining syllables and the use of diacritics. However, they were all consistent in their approach to the use of capitals in names ("yes") and the use of diacritics in filing ("no").

No users of either category used tone marks. It would appear that only the National Library of China uses tone marks.

Use of Chinese characters

The five largest institutions maintained separate card catalogues annotated with Chinese characters. Three of the institutions include characters in the main library (presumably card) catalogue.

Of the thirteen libraries using Chinese characters, nine used both simplified and full-form characters to reflect the system used in the item being catalogued. Two libraries used only simplified characters, only one used full-form characters and one was not sure.

The choice of either form of character is only significant when a library has a catalogue arranged by Chinese characters. One group of libraries arranged catalogue entries by full-form characters so that there should be no

problems. However, one library had a catalogue arranged by Chinese characters using both simplified and full-form characters. I do not see how they could do this effectively, as the two systems rely on different stroke counts and sometimes different radicals. This is the only instance where I see this type of non-standardisation as having an adverse effect.

Filing of homophones

In the absence of Chinese characters and/or tone marks with romanisation, ambiguous words become a problem. Nevertheless, most libraries (23 out of 25) reported that they ignored the distinction or did not comment. One library was particularly precise, arranging homophones according to the number of strokes in their characters, while another library used "the order they have in a Chinese dictionary."

If confusion arose in the mind of the user, he would need to consult a Chinese character catalogue, should one exist.

Personal names

I included a question on the romanisation of personal names, as many Chinese authors do not use a standard system to romanise their names. Joseph Lin has provided an interesting discussion of the problems caused in English language cataloguing by the licence with which Chinese authors romanise their names, combined with the different approaches of Anglo-American Cataloging Rules First Edition (AACR1) and AACR2 (10). Nevertheless, there appears to be almost no problem when cataloguing Chinese language materials.

All institutions except three smaller ones use their system of romanisation for personal name entries. One group of libraries maintained name entries in characters, and therefore did not need to consider the question. Another library cited AACR2 rule 22.3C1. Only one library used the form preferred by the person.

Local procedures

I was interested to find out whether non-standard or different procedures had been documented in the authorised procedures of libraries.

Only three libraries reported that they had local written procedures for handling Chinese language materials. One library provided a copy of its procedures but they did not reveal anything that was unusual. Another library also had written procedures which I obtained; the latter were in accordance with AACR. They also specified that diacritics were to be distinguished in filing.

The conclusion I drew is that non-standard procedures (apart from the use of different romanisations) have probably not been enshrined in written procedures in different libraries.

Perceived difficulties arising from non-standardisation

Fifteen out of twenty-five libraries saw co-operative cataloguing as the area being affected by the lack of standardisation. This really relates to romanisation and perhaps to classification. The second greatest problem area was inter-library loans (five libraries). This probably relates to garbled and indistinct romanisation on inter-library loan requests.

No libraries saw acquisitions and provision of user services as being affected.

Chinese script automation and bibliographic co-operation and interchange

This issue could not be covered in the survey but will become more important as the issue of international information exchange in Chinese is considered.

The ABN Network Committee has announced that it is not possible to introduce a Chinese script capability in the next five to ten years. Currently, Chinese script is stripped from LC records before downloading (11).

A conference in Tokyo in 1988 (12) on this subject set forth the concerns of participants which, in summary, relate to:

1. The need for co-ordination of East Asian character code standards at national and international level by authorised agencies

2. A tendency towards non-standardisation of character sets within some countries using them
3. The existence of two International Standards Organisation (ISO) technical committees working on character set standardisation and two different character coding schemes
4. Competing romanisation schemes
5. Non-uniformity of MARC formats
6. Different cataloguing standards.

In one of the conference papers, Timlake suggests that East Asian standards agencies must issue explicit notifications of modifications to their codes, and argues for the coordination of East Asian character code standards at a national and international level. He says that coding requires not only the assignment of byte values to characters but also requires that the codes for character graphics be maintained by authorised agencies (13).

Conclusion

Non-standardisation has caused problems in some areas, notably:

1. *Classification.* There is no official policy on the use of Harvard-Yenching classification scheme in Australia. This fact and the fact the classification scheme is not updated means that the Australian institutions with the largest Chinese language collections have made additions and amendments to the scheme on an individual basis. The lack of co-operative cataloguing perpetuates the non-standard approach towards the scheme. The users of the Harvard-Yenching classification system could initiate some sort of interchange of cataloguing information, especially for classification numbers.
2. *Romanisation.* The predominant use of Wade-Giles is perceived as a problem by libraries using P'in yin. Their persistence in using P'in yin cuts them off from using ABN fully. As both P'in yin and Wade-Giles are used by large overseas library systems, the facility to accept both is needed. As mentioned, both the RLIN and OCLC systems can handle both, as well as both forms of characters and this could be a solution to the problem.

If diacritics were always distinguished in filing entries, user access would be made easier.

3. *Character codes and sets.* Internationally, impediments can arise to bibliographic interchange if character sets and codes in automated systems are not standardised.

Dennis Kishere
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- (4) Anderson, James. "Cataloguing and classification of Chinese language library materials." In *Cataloging and classification of non-Western material: concerns, issues and practices*. Edited by Aman, Mohammed. Phoenix, AZ : Oryx Press, 1980.
- (5) The Library of Congress reaffirmed its use of Wade-Giles rather than P'in yin in: "Library to continue Wade-giles romanization." *Library of Congress Information Bulletin* 39(19) May 2, 1980: 149. The decision was made after surveying American libraries for their preferences. The anticipated confusion that would arise if they converted was also considered.
- (6) Wang, S. *Op.cit.*
- (7) Anderson, James. *Op.cit.*
- (8) MacDougall, S. "Pinyin romanisation: the options." *East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia Newsletter* No. 15 (May 1989): 9-18.

- (9) *CJK user guide for creating/editing OCLC CJK bibliographic records Part 2.* Dublin, Oh : Online Computer Library Center, 1988. p.3.
- (10) Lin, Joseph C. "Chinese names containing a non-Chinese given name." *Cataloguing and Classification Quarterly* 9(1) 1988: 69-81.
- (11) "Chinese-Japanese-Korean automation news." *East Asian Library Resources Group of Australia Newsletter* No. 14 (December 1988): 19.
- (12) Inose, Hiroshi, ed. *First international scholarly information network: international exchange and East Asian applications. Proceedings, December 8-11, 1987.* Tokyo : Kinokuniya, 1988.
- (13) Timlake, William; Haeger, John & Karen Smith-Yoshimura. "East Asian character coding and administration: an RLG review of basic issues." In Inose, Hiroshi, *op.cit.*



SURVEYED INSTITUTIONS

Institution	Holdings
National Library of Australia	210,111
Australian University Library	160,000
University of Sydney Library	88,486
University of Melbourne Library	55,140
University of Queensland Library	35,215
Griffith University Library	13,306
City of Sydney Library	7,022
Murdoch University Library	4,070
Melbourne City Libraries	2,812
Macquarie University Library	2,500
State Library of New South Wales	2,000
University of New South Wales Library	2,000
State Library of Victoria	2,000
RAAF School of Languages Library	1,500
Technilib	1,355
Canberra College of Advanced Education Library	853
Victoria College Library	700
State Library of Tasmania	428
La Trobe University Library	400
Monash University Library	257
University of Newcastle Library	100
Darwin Institute of Technology	100
University of Tasmania Library	" a few"
University of Adelaide Library	figures not given
University of Western Australia	"not available"
State Library of South Australia	no response
CSIRO Central Library	no response
Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education Library	no holdings
Chinese Museum, Melbourne	no holdings yet
Capricornia Institute of Advanced Education	no holdings
Western Australian Institute of Technology Library	no holdings
Library Board of Western Australia	no holdings