IFLA Metadata Newsletter

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Yet cataloguing, classifying and subject cataloguing continue to be among the most expensive work operations for libraries, thus raising the question of how to achieve the desired result with the lowest possible costs. A way out might be an application enabling to automatise the work to a maximum extent.

Notes:

As of February 2016, after a long and thorough consideration, the National Library of Estonia began to use *UDC Summary* for classifying, being the second major library in the country to adopt *UDC Summary* after the University of Tartu Library. Unlike the University of Tartu Library, the National Library took the *UDC Summary* into use without localising its currently valid table according to the local circumstances and needs.

UDC AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

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Are current classification schemes well suited to represent a reality like the one in Latin America, with all its different sides, specially the indigenous ones? No, they are not. For decades, Latin American librarians have used classifications and other indexing languages as Procrustean beds: they forced their documents' contents into the limited, and sometimes biased, classification structures. Indigenous concepts and facts were always cut out; hence, a significant amount of knowledge —and an immense heritage, a part of the Latin American identity— was set aside.

In the last years, the main bibliographic classifications' editorial boards started tackling that issue. Most noteworthy is the effort made by UDC to include a large number of American indigenous languages in its schedules. This allowed the expression of languages and literatures as well as ethnic groups, their geography and history, as facets or as main subjects. At the same time, a huge and long-neglected vocabulary was incorporated into its databases. But that was just a first step: a sort of *acknowledgment of the Other's existence*. There's still much to be done.

Six years ago I embarked in a personal project: the translation of the UDC Summary —about 2000 classes on a free, online, multilingual database— into three indigenous languages: Quechua (Runasimi), Guaraní (Ava-Ñe'é) and Mapuche (Mapudungu). My initial goal was to furnish the (still few) library services for indigenous peoples in the southern half of South America with the first classification written in native languages — an idea I've been cherishing since I started working on this kind of library services back in the 2000's. However, what started as a "simple" translation project ended showing up a set of issues, a number of challenges and a couple of surprises. The outcome was not as expected —I haven't achieved what I'd consider a "complete" translation of UDC schedules in these languages—, but a handful of questions were obtained that may guide further research and provide ideas for future guidelines. Guidelines that could be used to build improved, inclusive, diverse, culturally-respectful indexing languages: from classification schemes to thesauri and keyword lists.

The first problem I faced was a lack of vocabulary in the target native languages. Most of them, at least in Latin America, haven't developed words to designate modern elements or phenomena: they just acquire what is needed from the official/prestige languages (Spanish or Portuguese). A number of initiatives on this topic have been developed since the late nineties, in order to create new terminology; however, the results are still poor, and speakers barely know/use them. On a day-to-day basis, people build neologisms based on Spanish/Portuguese words: if written, they are usually adapted to the indigenous phonological and orthographic rules.

Using the elements at hand, a translation of the UDC Summary was attempted. Unsuccessfully: most of the words in the final result turned out to be neologisms, and most of them just echoed Spanish words. Anyway, even if that outcome could be considered a decent, fully-operative UDC translation actually usable in a library, a question arose: would be such a classification really useful for an indigenous user?

The answer was negative. Even if written in native languages, the classification kept the vocabulary, the structure, the mechanisms and the instructions of the original, biased scheme — a scheme that overlooks many aspects of the life, culture and reality of these peoples and that, until 2010, overlooked the very existence of the peoples themselves. A second stage in this project was needed, in order to make the classification more relevant for an indigenous user *from an indigenous point of view*.

Hence, I collected, organized and placed in the already translated scheme a good deal of Quechua, Guaraní and Mapuche cultural elements. The idea was to expand the structure, maintaining its internal rules to keep it operative and solid, while at the same time enriching the classes with vocabulary and with notes: instructions, explanations, definitions, observations, etc. When the process was complete —and it took some time—, many aspects of the three indigenous societies' life could be classified. At that moment I realized that all that information, so carefully organized, would be useful not only to "indigenous libraries", but to all libraries in Argentina and neighboring countries: most of them have to deal with contents having native backgrounds, or with documents about aboriginal issues. Therefore, the Spanish UDC Summary was expanded, following the same methodology used for the indigenous translations.

However, the main problem still persisted: the structure of UDC had been kept. And that structure was built from a European point of view — which is not intrinsically bad or wrong, but leave outside other possible perspectives or world views. While it's evident that any classification should be built from a particular position —and that position will pervade the entire framework, the rules and criteria, the vocabulary itself—, it's also true that any indexing language can be thought from a more inclusive point of view.

Even if it's true that current classification schemes cannot be drastically re-structured, they should at least deal in a clear, open way with their limitations, providing as much alternatives as possible for users coming from different cultural frames. The third and final stage of this project, then, included the analysis of the main differences between the world view behind UDC and the general indigenous world views, and the creation of a set of instructions providing such necessary alternatives — specially instructions about what to do when classifying a document or a piece of knowledge that, from the user's perspective, does not fit in a Western structure. Though "Western" may not be a proper term: many European traditional groups share many socio-cultural traits and patterns with Latin

American indigenous societies (and have their same problems when working with indexing languages).

Now it's time to systematize the work, to discuss the outcomes with researchers and users from other areas of the world —Africa, south-eastern Asia, India—, and to compare results with those obtained during similar experiences in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Some principles may be extracted, guidelines can be built, and hopefully, practical tools may be developed to improve existing indexing languages and to build culturally-inclusive new ones.

NEWS FROM LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Susan R. Morris, Special Assistant to the Director, Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access, Library of Congress

Susan Morris.

The following is a summary of news from the Library of Congress since our previous report in the June 2016 issue of the *IFLA Metadata Newsletter* (vol. 2, no. 1).

Staffing

The Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate (ABA) in fiscal 2016 was very fortunate to receive approval to hire nearly 45 staff members, including supervisors for the CIP Technical Team (US Programs, Law, and Literature Division), Science, Medicine, and Agriculture Section (US Arts, Sciences, and Humanities Division), Law Section (USPRLL), and U.S. Monographs Section (US/Anglo Division). The directorate also hired 13 librarians, two office staff, and technicians, instructors, program coordinators, and digital project coordinators. Many of the positions were filled from within the Library and therefore resulted in new vacancies, leaving the ABA Directorate with only six more total staff than it had a year ago. However, ABA did gain a number of librarians from other institutions who bring fresh skills and perspectives to the directorate. The ABA Directorate currently has 422 employees and about 65 contractors and volunteers, many of whom are retired employees who wish to contribute to librarianship on a part-time basis.

BIBFRAME

The Library's Network Development and MARC Standards Office (NDMSO) and the Cooperative and Instructional Programs Division (COIN) completed and evaluated a successful pilot for BIBFRAME, the Bibliographic Framework Initiative to redevelop the bibliographic data exchange environment in order to reap the benefits of newer technology, particularly data linking. The Pilot was groundbreaking, being the Library's first attempt to have production catalogers use a linked data oriented system to create bibliographic descriptions. The Pilot continued officially for six months and the results were summarized in a document posted on the BIBFRAME website.[6]

The following tools and components contributed to the Pilot and to the encouragement of experimentation with BIBFRAME by the community,

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[6] *BIBFRAME Pilot (Phase One—Sept. 8, 2015 – March 31, 2016): Report and Assessment* http://www.loc.gov/bibframe/docs/pdf/bibframe-pilot-phase1-analysis.pdf>.