Full Length Research Article

BUILDING STANDARDIZED TOOLS FOR SUBJECT CATALOGING WORK AT THE VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY HOCHIMINH CITY LIBRARY SYSTEM

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Purpose – To share the experiences and challenges faced by the researchers in building standardized tools for subject cataloging work. **Design/methodology/approach** – This research used analyzing literature, observation, statistics methods to figure out the cataloging principles and methods and settings as well as integrating subject headings. Besides, personal interviews method is also help to find out the advantages and disadvantages of building subject cataloging tools. **Findings** – Presenting methods and steps carried out to build the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools. At the same time, given the results achieved as well as provides solutions to improve the quality of this tool. **Originality/value** – This is the first research which implement building adequately subject cataloging tools for the Vietnam National University Hochiminh City library system. These includes Vietnamese subject headings and subject cataloging manual.

INTRODUCTION

In the globalization period, the Vietnamese libraries is looking to standardize technical service activity and sharing information resource with the different countries around the world. Therefore, using the common tools system based on international standards of in technical service operation is really vital. In particular, subject cataloging standardization is one of the important tasks of the library in order to improve the quality of information resources as well as cooperates and shares data together to meet the increasingly diverse needs of users. Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) was built hundreds of years ago and always be constantly adjusted, corrected, supplemented and updated to suit the development of library materials. This tool is also used by many countries around the world today because of its superiority. At present, many Vietnamese libraries are using LCSH for subject cataloging, includes many university libraries in the Vietnam National University Hochiminh City (VNU-HCM) library system. The member libraries in the VNU-HCM library system is standardizing data sources to meet the resource sharing needs in the information system. However, using LCSH of member libraries in the VNU-HCM still have many shortcomings in applying subject cataloging principles and methods and translating subject headings into Vietnamese language. Thus, building the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools to meet the practical needs at VNU-HCM library system is essential. The Central Library - VNU-HCM plays an important role in coordinating, networking and sharing information resource between member libraries in this system. So, this library is the place carrying out constructing standardized tools for subject cataloging for whole system based on availability subject headings throughout subject cataloging process at the library for over 10 years as well as applies the principles and methods of the authors as Haykin, Cutter, IFLA and Library of Congress(Nguyen, Hong Sinh, 2012).

Scopes and limitation of study:

- This study only surveyed and researched at the Vietnam National University Hochiminh City library system.
- With the limitations in terms of time and number of researchers, the number of the Vietnamese subject headings were built based on the bibliographic records at the Central Library – Vietnam National University Hochiminh City.

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Significance of the study

The results of this study have significance in terms of:

- Helping librarians to master the methods and steps used to build the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools;
- Figuring out the cons and pros in the process of building Vietnamese subject cataloging tools;
- Proposing appropriate solutions to enhance efficiency in the implementation process.

METHODS

Some methods are used to conduct this paper:

- Analyzing literature aimed to find the rules and methods of subject cataloging.
- Surveying and statistics methods used to search, select and integrate the subject headings in bibliographic records at The Central Library – Vietnam National University Hochiminh City.
- Individual interview method is conducted with cataloging librarians with the aim of investigating the advantages and disavantages of building subject cataloging tools and putting forward some feasible proposals to improve the quality of this activity.

RESULTS

Methods and results of building the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools

To erect the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools for VNU-HCM library system, the research team has built Vietnamese subject cataloging tools as the subject cataloging manual and subject headings. Some specific methods to be drawn during the study:

Vietnamese subject cataloging manual

This is the essential tool for librarians in the cataloging process to master subject cataloging methods. Hence, building the Vietnamese subject cataloging manual scientifically, adequately and legibly is critical and determines the success of subject cataloging. The primary methods for building subject cataloging manual are analyzing literature. This method is done on the basis of research, review and summarize the subject cataloging rules, principles and methods at the advanced libraries in the world. The most common tools are the subject cataloging tools of the Library of Congress as the Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings, 2002), Library of Congress (2002) Subject Headings: Principles and application (Chan, Lois Mai, 2005). Via studying of these documents, they will help librarians to understand the principles, how to build, maintain and update the subject cataloging tools that Library of Congress has done.

In addition, the guiding materials on the subject cataloging work of many different authors have been published also were used as references for the subject cataloging manual construction process. Specially, some typical documents such as: *Subject Headings: A practical guide* (Haykin, 1951),

Subject catalog heading and structure (Coates, 1988), *Rules for a Dictionary Catalog* (Cutter, 1904), *Turning practice into principles: Comparison of the IFLA Principles Underlying Subject Heading Languages (SHLs) and the Principles Underlying the Library of Congress Subject Headings System"* (Hoerman và Furniss,2000), *Subject cataloging* (Nguyen, Hong Sinh, 2009), and *Subject cataloging methods* (Nguyen, Hong Sinh) (2011). Moreover, studying published articles on academic journals about subject cataloging and referencing subject cataloging methods of Vietnamese libraries are also essential factors to review and summarize the subject cataloging process of the libraries.

After analyzing literature review, the research team will compare, collate and summarize the results of research. Then researchers will build up Vietnamese subject cataloging manual for the VNU-HCM library system. This tool was built to guide for Vietnamese librarians about different subject cataloging methods. The Vietnamese manual structure based on the guidelines and subject cataloging manual of the Library of Congress. In particular, the manual provides subject cataloging procedures and forms for implementing, setting, approving and updating the new subject headings. There out, the indispensable content of manual presented guidelines in the document content analysis; general and specific rules in the subject cataloging. The detail rules include subject cataloging guidelines for documents on various fields of knowledge; subject cataloging methods for different material types and forms in the library. This process based on the forms to control the consistency and update subject headings of the libraries. Therefore, we can see that this is an important and essential tool to guide librarians in the subject cataloging because there are few librarians able to read and understand all the rules in English.

Vietnamese subject headings

Subject headings play an important role for subject cataloging work at library. The buliding process of Vietnamese subject headings is done through the following steps:

- *Surveying, editing and integrating existing subject headings* in the bibliographic records of the Central Library – VNU-HCM to develop a list of subject headings: This is the first step in subject headings building process. Librarians will regroup a list of the subject headings and subdivisions and then review and check duplication of the available subject headings and subdivisions.

Integrating a list of English and Vietnamese subject headings have to ensure uniformity of the subject headings with the LCSH. Besides, this category will be the means to limit duplication and facilitate for translation process later.

- ***Constructing and adding cross-references, subdivisions and geographical indications based on LCSH:*** Based on the list of headings and subdivisions have been established, the research team conducted to compare and collate with the LCSH to supplement geographical indications, subdivisions and cross-references.

- This process carried out for the English subject headings to cater to translated into Vietnamese language.

- *Translation*: This is very difficult and time-consuming period of the research team, because the translation from English to Vietnamese language requires various knowledge as well as an understanding of language. Based on the subject headings, cross-reference and subdivisions has been incorporated into the list, the research team began translating into Vietnamese language. Translated from English to Vietnamese language require translators have to knowledge in particular fields, language skills and also understand the methods and principles in the translation process (Bui, Ha Phuong (2014). To ensure consistency and accuracy in the translation process, the research team used abundant support tools such as specialized dictionaries, specialized materials, information sources on the internet and consult experts in various fields.

- *Control and edit the translation:* After completing the translation of subject headings, cross-reference and geographical indications into the Vietnamese language, the researchers carried out controlling and checking the subject headings translation. For duplicate terms in Vietnamese language, they will review context, cross-reference system, relevant guidelines and material content to select appropriate and accurate term; in some cases research team will be thanks to the experts in that field to be helped.

- *Editing, adjusting and designing Vietnamese subject headings:* This is the last stage before publishing this tool. This stage requires creator to be very careful and meticulous to check for grammar mistakes, check consistency, structure and ensure the accuracy of the terms before printing.

The Vietnamese subject heading has been completed with approximately 9,500 headings and cross-references. These subject headings integrated and edited during cataloging process from 2004 to present at the Central Library –VNU-HCM based on using the LCSH. The structure of the Vietnamese subject headings based on the LCSH structure and cataloging guidelines of the Library of Congress. However, subject headings and cross-references in Vietnamese subject headings only integrated from the practical cataloging process at the Central Library, so the term is not adequate and abundant as the LCSH. The Vietnamese subject cataloging will be frequently updated, adjusted at the VNU-HCM library system to suit the material processing reality at the member libraries. Thus, this tool perfectly suit and easy to use for cataloging librarians. In addition, this tool is also contributing to gradually standardize subject cataloging for the VNU-HCM library system.

The advantages and disadvantages in the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools building process

Erecting the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools is time-consuming work, therefore, the research team also encountered some advantages and disadvantages in this process as follows:

- ❖ **Advantages**

The Vietnamese subject cataloging tools building process achieved the expected results by the following factors:

- *Subject headings is refined and integrated from the bibliographic records* of the Central Library - VNU-HCM, so research team do not spend more time in the subject headings selection and update process. Additionally, most of the integrated subject headings translated into Vietnamese language by librarians during the cataloging process and forming bibliographic records in the library catalog. So, this is also great advantage for researchers because they do not need to spend lots of time and force to translate.

- *The library have more tools and guideline materials* for the subject cataloging process of the Library of Congress as Subject headings; subject cataloging manual and a number of materials on subject cataloging of different authors. This has created the conditions for the research team to be able to compare, collate and supplement the necessary issues during building Vietnamese subject heading tools.

- *Supporting tools for the translation process*: In the subject headings building process, the Central Library – VNU-HCM has equipped the tools which serves to translate subject headings as language dictionaries, specialized dictionaries; encyclopedias; manuals; handbooks; guideline documents; useful information sources on the internet, etc.

- *Researchers:* the research team carried out building this tool are those who are trained in the library and information field, so they knew the methods and how to proceed in the subject cataloging tools construction and implementation process. Besides, the research team leader have long experience in the teaching process, publishing textbooks and participating in research projects on subject cataloging.

- *Establishing implementation procedures:* Prior to constructing the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools, the research team has developed clearly and fully implementation plans and roadmap to ensure the schedule lay out.

- *Equipments:* Library has equipped computer system with configuration strong connected to the Internet to serve for searching information and building subject headings.

Disadvantages

Along with the advantages mentioned above, constructing the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools still facing a lot of difficulties such as:

- *Translation problem:* This is the most difficult issues in the Vietnamese subject headings building process. The translation from English to Vietnamese language spent a lot of time and force of the research team. A number of subject headings are very abundant in more different specialized, so research team faced with much difficulties because they do not have expertise knowledge deeply about many fields. Besides, the limited language skills are also important factors

affecting the quality of the Vietnamese subject headings.

- ***The quantity of Vietnamese subject headings are limited***: because most of the Vietnamese subject headings are taken from the bibliographic records of the Central Library – VNU-HCM. Meanwhile, the material sources of the member libraries will occupy the large number and depth of different knowledge fields. Therefore, the construction based on existing subject heading at the Central Library – VNU-HCM is incomplete and cannot cover a large number and wide scope of subjects for library materials. Hence, when applying the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools at the member libraries requires libraries to regularly supplement, update and refer the subject heading of LCSH.

- ***The subdivisions, cross-reference and scope notes system:*** were not built fully for each subject headings like the LCSH because subdivisions, cross-reference is based on the number of library materials. Moreover, the construction of scope notes systems based on the LCSH will take more time and force of the research team in the translation process.

- ***The limited quantity of the researchers:*** Although research team are highly qualified professionals and master the subject cataloging methods and principles. However, the limited quantity of the researchers has affected the completed schedule of this study, while the workload is too large. Moreover, researchers in this study do not have expertise knowledge in the various fields and limitations in the identifying and translating process with specialized terminology.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The Vietnamese subject cataloging tools building process had faced many difficulties and problems in reality. So, to overcome these limitations and improve the efficiency of products produced, there are some solutions synchronized as follows:

- ***Researching and ensuring uniformity rules in the translation process***: This is an important step in the subject headings building process, because the translation from English into Vietnamese language requires translators have to understand the principles of English language to translate correctly. Besides, building the translation principles into Vietnamese language will ensure systematic and consistency for subject cataloging. Moreover, this will ensure consistency in the translation between the old and new headings, as well as between the different librarians. In addition, during the translation process, librarians need to consult the translation of other libraries to provide a basis for comparing, adjusting and selecting translation methods accordingly.

- ***Using a team of collaborators:*** To get over these limitations and improve the efficiency of the Vietnam subject cataloging tools, research team should invite collaborators are experts in various fields to participate in the consultation and support process for translating. This is an essential element in order to improve the quality of the terminology along with

helps library to select, propose and agree during the translation process.

- ***Diversification of the terms in the Vietnamese subject headings:*** With the integration of subject headings in the bibliographic records at the Central Library – VNU-HCM also limited the number of subject headings. Thus, in order to strengthen and diversify the number of subject headings, in addition to integrated subject headings at the Central Library, the librarians should collect and share with the members libraries in the VNU-HCM library system to enrich the subject headings. When the number of the subject headings increase, the subdivisions, cross-reference and scope notes will also grow up.

- ***Improving foreign language skills for librarians:*** The translation requires librarians who have knowledge of grammatical structures as well as the translation principles and methods. Therefore, improving foreign language skills for librarians is essential. Librarians must be understood more than anyone else about the need to improve their English proficiency to ensure the quality of work in the cataloging process. So, self-taught and self-improve foreign language skills in the working process is an urgent request such as participate in English courses or translation courses for specialized librarians. Besides, the library managers can support finance or time for librarians to participate in these courses. Furthermore, the translation requires the translator must have knowledge and skills in other professional fields, so librarians have to be active in their own learning, self-accumulation and improve the level of various fields such as politics, economy, culture, society, natural sciences, engineering sciences, etc.

To sum up, as it can be seen that subject cataloging tools are the key factor deciding success of subject cataloging for library materials and aims to share information resources within the VNU-HCM library system. Establishing the Vietnamese subject cataloging tools initially gained achievements. The reseach team will continue to maintain, update and adjust the subject headings which are not appropriate in the cataloging process at the library in the future. Therefore, to improve the efficiency of building standardized tools for subject cataloging work for this library system, the research team perform synchronous solutions to overcome these limitations and further promote the advantages of the implementation process.

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