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Closing the Circle: Automated Authority Control and the Multiscript YIVO Catalog

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Abstract:
The author/title card catalog and the authority file of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research are used to illustrate multilingual and multiscript issues in automated authority control

This paper is called "closing the circle" because the ability to handle multiple languages and scripts in authority records is the last open issue in automated cataloging systems. To illustrate the issue, we use the multilingual, multiscript card catalog of the library of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York, U.S.A.). YIVO is the world center for Yiddish, a European language normally written in Hebrew script. Dr. Weinberg enhanced the catalog which we describe and designed the multiscript authority file.
Structure of YIVO's author/title catalog

YIVO's catalog is divided into author/title and subject. The author/title catalog is not in a single A-Z sequence (the usual practice in the U.S.), but is subdivided by script and language: Yiddish, Hebrew, Latin script, and Cyrillic script. The location in the author/title catalog of a particular bibliographic record

depends on the language and script of the publication. For example, works written in Yiddish and translations into Yiddish are in the Yiddish section.

When works by an author appear in more than one language/script section, all the authorized forms for the author used in the catalog are shown on a special cross-reference card (which was designed by Dr. Weinberg). In each section where the author's works appear, the cross-reference card is filed immediately before the entries under the author's name. These cross-reference cards are included in YIVO's published Yiddish catalog.[1]

Sources of authority for YIVO cataloging

Entries for the Latin-script section are created according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules.[2] Entries for the Yiddish, Hebrew, and Cyrillic-script sections are created according to AACR principles as well, primarily, the best-known form of the best-known name. For its Hebrew headings, YIVO does not follow the Israeli use of classic Hebrew spelling, but does unify the orthography of surnames in selected cases.

The YIVO authority file

A name heading in a particular language/script is established only as needed; that is, the principle of literary warrant is applied. An author who uses multiple languages, or who is widely translated, may appear in all four sections of the author/title catalog under four different established forms, each subject to authority control. The linkages between the established forms on the cross-reference cards are traced in the YIVO authority file.

YIVO's multilingual, multiscript catalog is a useful model when we consider questions about the structure and content of automated multiscript authority files.

Language or script?

Preferred name headings are established in the context of a particular language. The set of rules, the "source of authority," which determines the content of an authority file, has an implied language. AACR specifies a preference for English under certain circumstances. When AACR is used in the context of another language (either directly or as an authorized translation), the "working language" is preferred to English (AACR2 Rule 0.12). We see this in the YIVO catalog: the entries in the Yiddish, Hebrew, and pan-Cyrillic sections are based on AACR principles.

The YIVO catalog, with Yiddish and Hebrew sections, each with authorized forms, demonstrates that authority files cannot be script-based. Most scripts are used to write more than one language. When a particular entity has different names written in various languages which use the same script, we must choose among the various forms of name. For example, English is the predominant Latin-script language for YIVO's clientele; the English form is preferred for the Latin-script catalog when AACR mandates a language preference.

Single or multiple records?

Should preferred forms in different languages be in a single record? The MARC 21 Authority Format allows for only one source of authority for a name or subject per record. Furthermore, a record containing multiple syndetic structures would be more complicated to implement and use. Multilingual authority control should be supported by multiple authority files, each one oriented to a specific source of authority.

To allow retrieval, despite different names imposed by various sources of authority, we must connect preferred forms to each other. In other words, relate all the authorized forms for the entity that is being named.

Should data elements within an authority record be cross-linked?

Many-to-one data relationships can occur in authority records. For this reason, both authors have independently argued against parallel 1:1 linkage in multiscript authority records.[3][4]
Multiple authorized forms in a single language?

For a language written with ideographs, an alternative writing system exists to show the pronunciation.

Language	Ideographic form	Pronunciation
Chinese	In *hanzi*	In *pinyin*
Japanese	In *kanji*	In *katakana*
Korean	In *hanja*	In *hangul*

So there may be two authorized alternatives for an East Asian name: the ideographic form, and the "pronunciation" form.

Names that are different when written in ideographs may have the same pronunciation. So identical "pronunciation" forms could appear in different records in the authority file. Should these be qualified to ensure their uniqueness? Or should they be differentiated through explicit reference to the ideographic form (e.g., treat the ideographic form as primary, and identify the "pronunciation" form by a distinctive tag)?

In conclusion

The YIVO catalog has met the needs of users who require coherent access in the languages and scripts of the collection. The challenge facing the developers of library systems is to provide similar services in an automated environment, including other language needs which are not seen in the YIVO catalog.

References

[1] Yivo Institute for Jewish Research. Library. *Der Yidisher katalog un oytoritetn-kartotek fun der Yivo-bibliotek* / redaktirt un mit araynfirn fun Mosheh-Zekharyah Beker un Belah Has Vaynberg. Boston: G.K. Hal, 1990. [The Yiddish catalog and authority file of the YIVO Library was edited by Zachary M. Baker and Bella Hass Weinberg, and published by G.K. Hall. Vol. 5 is the Yiddish authority file.]

[2] *Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules*, prepared under the direction of the Joint Steering Committee for Revision of AACR2 … 2nd ed., 1998 revision. (Ottawa, Canadian Library Association; Chicago: American Library Association, 1998).

[3] Aliprand, Joan. "Linking of Alternate Graphic Representation in USMARC Authority Records" in *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, vol. 18 (1993), pp. 27-62.

[4] Weinberg, Bella Hass. "Hebraic Authorities: A Historical Theoretical Perspective" in Judaica Librarianship, vol. 8, nos. 1-2 (Spring 1993 – Winter 1994), pp. 45-55.