

Classification and Indexing of Philippine Indigenous Materials with Emphasis on the Cordillera

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Abstract:

This paper looks into the limitations of the Library of Congress Subject Headings in assigning subject access terms for indigenous Cordillera materials acquired by the University of the Philippines Baguio Cordillera Studies Collection Library. Likewise, problems in using the Library of Congress Classification scheme in assigning classification numbers are briefly discussed. As cases in point, a number of indigenous Cordillera terms that have no equivalent in the LCSH are described. Aside from terms with no American or English language equivalent, issues on spelling variations and varying forms of names are examined. These problems result to low findability and use of Cordillera materials. To solve the problem, a few measures using the iLib online cataloging system are presented. Finally, the paper enumerates recommendations that should be pursued to improve assignment of subject access terms for indigenous Cordillera materials.

Keywords: Cordillera indigenous materials, classification, indexing, Library of Congress Subject Headings, Library of Congress Classification, subject access terms.

Background

The Cordillera Region is located in the northern part of Luzon Island, home to the largest concentration of indigenous groups in the Philippines. The region is made up of six provinces and two cities namely: Abra, Apayao, Benguet, Ifugao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Baguio City, and Tabuk City. Its name comes from the *Gran Cordillera*, from the Spanish meaning mountain, that traverses the Region and that has served as protection for the Igorot people from Spanish aggression (Scott 1975).

The Region is home to 7 major ethnolinguistic groups: the Tinggian of Abra, Isneg of Apayao, Kalinga, Kankana-ey of southern Mountain Province, Ibaloy of Benguet, Ifugao, and Bontok of northern Mountain Province. Under these major groups are several sub-ethnolinguistic groupings. The geographic terrain of the region earned the inhabitants the collective albeit derogatory name *Igorots* (Scott 1993). *Igolot* comes from the Tagalog word *golot* or *golod* which means “mountain chain,” and the prefix *i* meaning “people of.” Thus, *igolot* means “of the hill or mountain.”

For three hundred years, the Spaniards were not able to subjugate the Igorots. Their resistance and independence from foreign invasion was responsible for the persistence of indigenous traditions and practices at least up to the early 1900s. The Igorots still observe some of their indigenous practices although not as frequent and in the manner that these were originally conducted. Modernization has caused a number of their indigenous rituals, traditions and customs to be forgotten and abandoned. There is, however, a growing interest among the youth to learn, understand, and to reconnect with their indigenous communities and their culture.

The University of the Philippines Baguio Cordillera Studies Collection Library

The University of the Philippines Baguio (UPB) was established in 1961 as a degree granting college of the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. Initially an arts and science college, it was granted autonomous status in 1999 and finally became the 7th constituent university of the UP system in 2002. One component of UP Baguio's aim is to have a strong Cordillera studies and research. Research conducted over the years focused on ethnic studies, regional communities, policy planning, natural resource management, indigenous mathematical and biological knowledge, traditional health knowledge, material culture, political systems and institutions to name a few.

The Cordillera Studies Collection (CSC) Library, is a section of the UP Baguio Main Library that provides materials on the Cordillera Region to students, faculty, staff and researchers. With this fundamental objective, the Library's acquisition policy has been geared towards the acquisition of materials that support the continuing mission of the University in sustaining its niche in Cordillera studies. The Library endeavors to aggressively collect all materials on the Cordillera and in whatever format these are presented.

With the growing acquisition of Cordillera materials, the CSC Library endeavors to have these materials accessed by students, faculty, staff, and researchers. Use of the Library and its collection has steadily increased over the years. Researchers from both the University and the community have recognized the importance and value of the collection. It was during my stint as sole staff of the CSC Library that I came to realize the extensive and enormous problem brought about by the seemingly inappropriate subject heading terms given by catalogers to information sources and the search terms often used by readers and users based on their search requests. This disparate assigned terms and search terms is especially evident for indigenous materials. Readers would normally search for materials using local or vernacular terms or the so called natural language rather than their American or English language equivalence. Frequently asked are sources on the *dap-ay*, *ulog*, *bodong*, *pagta*, *tengao*, *bulol*, *cañao*, *Hudhud*. Likewise sought after are direct or specific terms in the natural language like headhunting, agricultural rituals, ancestral domain, legal pluralism, small scale mining, terms that are not represented in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). These encounters with readers and researchers, I would say, are opportunities which manifest the need to look at the cataloging and indexing policies of the Library. It is a choice between using a foreign developed LCSH against listening to and satisfying the need of users. The Library should see these experiences as prospects for collaboration with users for more appropriate, specific and relevant subject access terms.

The University of the Philippines Library system, composed of 7 campuses located in different parts of the Philippines, adopts a uniform cataloging policy and uses the Library of

Congress Classification (LCC) scheme in assigning call numbers and the LCSH in assigning subject access terms. UP Diliman Main Library, often seen as the lead library, lays down the cataloging policies seen as a means of achieving uniformity and consistency in cataloging and classification of materials.

The Function of Subject Analysis

Subject analysis is a library function responsible for determining and assigning of subject headings which aids in locating materials or books, journal articles, audiovisual materials on the shelves. The ‘aboutness’ of materials is determined and conveyed through what we call subject headings. Library materials regularly talk or discuss a particular topic, the cataloger or indexer then translates the topic to authorized or ‘established’ terms. These ‘established’ terms are what readers should use when searching under subject headings in catalogs. This task of preferring terms over other terms eliminates numerous synonymous terms for one term and allows for one and only one term to be used. This in cataloging is called vocabulary control. The principle of controlled vocabulary likewise aims to maintain uniformity in assigning subject access terms that is—using a single heading for a term that has variations in spelling; synonymous terms; English terms that has foreign language counterparts; or popular terms as against scientific terms.

A primary consideration in subject analysis is the reader, the user, or the researcher. The principle of the reader as the focus in assigning subject headings was well elucidated by Cutter’s Rules for a Dictionary Catalog (Chan 1978). Cutter emphasized that the reader or the end-user’s convenience should be first and foremost in the catalogers mind when assigning subject access terms. The ease of users should primarily take precedence over the cataloger’s or indexer’s convenience by ensuring that materials are easily found by users or readers when searching the Library catalog.

Limitations of the LCSH and the LCC Scheme in Classifying and Indexing Cordillera Materials

The LCSH and LCC scheme developed in response to the need for class or call numbers and subject headings of the growing collection of the Library of Congress, the biggest library in the world. As materials were accumulated, subject headings were added to the LCSH list. Subject headings were created and thought of based on materials acquired and not based on some theoretical concepts (Broughton 2012; Chan 1978; Smiraglia 1990). If a newly acquired material cannot be assigned a subject heading because existing topics are not appropriate, a term is created to accommodate the material. Terms are added as the need arises. This LC policy called literary warrant partly explains the lack of subject headings for unique local Cordillera materials. Since the Library of Congress does not attempt to collect all materials published, some Cordillera materials cannot be assigned subject headings from the LCSH.

Classifying and indexing Cordillera literature presents challenges especially for someone who has no knowledge of the Region’s unique culture, peoples, society and history. Taylor (2004) affirms the value of knowing the culture of a particular place before one can designate subject access terms. Familiarity with Cordillera indigenous culture is critical if one expects to properly assign subject headings. The difficulty in assigning subject access terms basically lies in translating and finding words that fully capture the essence and meaning of what materials want to convey. Subject headings for materials on traditional customs,

practices, indigenous knowledge, and beliefs among others cannot be assigned direct or specific access terms as there are no English or American counterparts available from the LCSH. Materials are thus, not accurately and exhaustively described. The present cataloging rule being observed by UP Libraries is to designate general or broader terms for terms that are not represented in LCSH.

A potential problem in searching for materials lies in the inability of readers to locate local terms in catalogs. Readers are presented terms that may be too broad and general. Oftentimes, readers may not even be aware of the authorized terms used by catalogers for specific topics. Due to these difficulties, it has been said that LCSH does not improve subject heading searches (Byrne 1988; O'Neill 2012). For lack of an option and despite its being Americo-centric, libraries, including the UP Baguio CSC Library, continue to use the LCSH. The following examples of political, ethnographic, religious, historical terms are just a few of the several terms that clearly illustrate the limitations and bias of the LCSH.

A considerable number of materials written, issued, and published on the Cordillera Region are ethnographic in nature largely due to the persistence of indigenous traditions and practices. One topic that has been well documented is headhunting. Headhunting was carried out by the Kalingas, the Bontoks, and the Ifugaos before the coming of the Americans. Although headhunting was outlawed during the American colonial period, anthropologists are still intrigued by this phenomenon and the underlying reasons behind the observance of this practice enough to write about it. Headhunting was undertaken by the male members of the community to revenge the death of a member, to test the bravery and courage of men, and for religious purposes (de Raedt 1996). Warrior men who have taken heads were recognized village heroes and were accorded respect. Their decisions were revered given that they were looked up to and were chosen to hold the highest position in the village because of their bravery. Assigning subject headings for works on headhunting can be a dilemma since 'headhunting' is not an authorized term. Headhunting in LCSH directs the cataloger to the more accepted word, 'employee recruitment.' Obviously, 'headhunting' in LCSH refers to labor recruitment and not a term for the method of literally chopping off human heads. To solve the problem, headhunting is given the subject heading 'headhunters.'

The peace pact process called *bodong* and its underlying provisions called *pagta* is an offshoot of the headhunting practice of the Kalingas. *Bodong*, a binding agreement between two warring villages ensures peace and order (Lawless 1981). The *pagta* enumerates the different rules and regulations the members of the village should uphold and respect. This indigenous political system unique to the people of the Cordillera cannot thoroughly be given an American translation under the LCSH thus, the terms 'peace treaties', 'customary law', or 'dispute resolution' are used. The substitute terms are in fact too broad that the true essence of the *bodong* and *pagta* are lost in translation.

The retention of indigenous political institutions and systems among Cordillera indigenous groups is still carried out. The *dap-ay* for instance is very much alive in some parts of the Mountain Province. The Kankana-ey *dap-ay* which is similar to the Bontok *ator*, is a decision-making institution composed of old men from the village (Brett 1987). This term has no American or English counterpart, thus is only given the subject heading 'dispute settlement' which limits the role and function of the *dap-ay* to justice administration and without regard to the decisions of the village elders on community environmental and societal concerns.

Ancestral domain has been a contentious topic brought about by the shrinking land resources available for economic opportunities. Ancestral domain refers to land or territory owned by the indigenous groups of the Cordillera long before the coming of the Spanish and American colonizers. Brett (2001) further expounds that ownership comes with the group's right to benefit from the use of the natural resources and decide how to manage said resources. The LCSH does not list 'ancestral domain' as authorized heading. The Library has resorted to using 'land tenure' and 'right to property' as subject headings for materials on ancestral domain. 'Land tenure' as the term implies is limited to land resource use. 'Right to property' neither captures the essence entirely because of the broad definition of property.

The Cordillera is basically an agricultural region and as such the indigenous groups observe certain rituals in their agricultural system. Rituals have played an important role in the people's life particularly in their agricultural life. These rites and ceremonies are cultural practices unique to the Region. The rituals and agricultural processes highlight the deep association between religion and agriculture. A particular ritual accompanies every agricultural procedure. Scott writes (1969) that every step of the agricultural process from planting to harvesting is accompanied by religious rites. The LCSH provides no direct subject and specific heading for this unique Cordillera culture. Materials are thus given the subject heading 'agriculture,' or subdivision 'rites and ceremonies' under ethnic groups. This removes the religious and the essence of the rituals away from the agricultural process.

Legal pluralism is another case in point. Loosely put, legal pluralism refers to an indigenous group's adherence to distinct bodies of laws. Brett (1994, 687) defines legal pluralism as the "existence of different systems of law in a particular place." These legal systems can be customary laws, national or government laws, international laws or the principles of human rights. Majority of the indigenous groups of the Cordillera maintain legal pluralism as seen in the settlement of disputes within and among community or village members. Legal pluralism has been assigned the controlled heading 'legal polycentricity' under the LCSH list. The UP Baguio Library has used 'customary law' or 'politics and government' as preferred terms. 'Legal polycentricity' is confusing because authors have always used the term 'legal pluralism' when referring to the term. Readers who are not experts on legal matters may find 'legal polycentricity' far too complicated.

The unavailability of equivalent American or English terms for local Cordillera terms has forced catalogers to use broader or the more general subject access terms like 'rites and ceremonies,' 'social life and customs,' 'manners and customs,' 'politics and government,' 'religious life and customs.' Alternatively, the use of the names of the indigenous groups that practice particular customs and traditions have been resorted to as the main subject heading.

One can therefore imagine the sources that are left out in the conduct of research as users may not be aware of these broader terms unless of course a librarian is always available to mediate when readers search the library catalogs.

Variations and lack of preferred spelling for local terms present another difficulty in classifying and indexing indigenous materials. Local terms are spelled in various ways and there is no accepted single uniform spelling for several words. Oftentimes, readers have to switch or use varying spellings when searching for local terms. The names of languages and names of indigenous groups are common examples of this problem. Ibaloy, the indigenous group occupying southern Benguet and Baguio City, is often spelled Ibaloi. This term can also refer to the language spoken by the group. Nabaloi is another name variant of the

language. The authority name listed under LCSH is Ibaloi, both for the language and the people while employing the qualifier ‘Philippine people’ to disambiguate one from the other.

The same is true for the word Kankana-ey. The language and the indigenous group who occupy northern Benguet and southern Mountain Province are both referred to as Kankana-ey, Kankanaey, Kankanai or Kankanay. The LCSH lists the authorized term for both the language and the group as Kankanay. The Tinguians of Abra as well as their language are acceptably referred to as Tingguians or Tingguians as no one accepted or preferred spelling is recommended. The LCSH lists Tinggian as the authorized heading for both the language and the indigenous group. Contemporary Cordillera writers, however, would prefer to use the hyphenated Kankana-ey and the word Tinguian for these indigenous groups and languages.

Spelling variations are not limited to languages or indigenous groups. Local topical terms have spelling variations as well. The *cañao*, a feast that accompanies religious rituals and offerings is also spelled *kanyaw* or *kaniaw*. The Hispanized term *cañao* with the ñ appeared in nineteenth century Spanish accounts (Afable 1999). Another example is the term *bul-ul* which refers to the wood carved anthropomorphic figure mostly representing the Ifugao rice god, *Kinnabigat* and which is used in religious rituals (Tolentino 2004). One frequently encounters the variant name *bulol*, or *bulul*.

Variations in spellings of Cordillera subject terms oftentimes result to low use of sources. It oftentimes renders sources inaccessible as researchers are not aware of variations in spelling and of terms used by catalogers or indexers.

Another deterrent to access to materials is the geographical variations in names or terms. Rituals, ceremonies, material culture, political institutions, and social activities that are similar across different Cordillera cultures are called differently. The names or terms differ depending on the locality or geographical area. Shown here are a few examples of these so called similar practices although differences would lie in their names. The Kankana-ey *dap-ay* is called *ator* by the Bontok. The peace pact system is variedly called *pechen* in Bontok and *bodong* in Kalinga. The Kankana-ey *cañao* is similar to the Ibaloy *peshit*. The Ifugaos call their human form woodcarving *bul-ul* while the Kankana-eyes call them *tinagtaggu* and the Tinguians name this *lablabbon*.

Limitations in assigning class numbers to Cordillera materials

Effective access to information sources on the Cordillera is not only hampered by the assignment of too broad or inappropriate subject headings, spelling variations, and varied name forms. The LC classification numbers have limitations as well. This is particularly true for materials in anthropology that are classed under GN, the broad classification for works on anthropology. Ethnographic works on the different indigenous groups of the Cordillera are normally classed under GN 671 P5 or at times are assigned the class number DS 666, D being the broad classification number for works in history. DS 666 is the number assigned for Philippine groups.

Confusion on the part of the cataloger is brought about by contrasting view and interpretation of the scope notes on ethnic groups by region and country under social and cultural anthropology in GN (Library of Congress Classification G 2005, 481) which states:

“Class here comprehensive works on the preliterate or folk societies of particular regions or countries even in the case of works limited to special topics or aspects. For works on particular societies or groups, including works on specific topics pertaining to those groups, see the society or group in D-F.”

Divergent interpretation has resulted in some materials classed under History or D and Anthropology or G. It is not unusual therefore to find materials both in these classification numbers. Sometimes readers may wonder what differentiates one from the other. There is thus, a need to define what materials or how should one distinguish a material that would discuss a preliterate society or group from a contemporary group when most of the materials would discuss both. These scope notes oftentimes create confusion if one does not have background on the culture and history of the Cordillera Region. Lack of uniform interpretation and a clear definition of these scope notes have oftentimes resulted to materials being classed either under DS 666 or GN 671 P5. As a result, classes GN 671 P5 and DS 666 have become overcrowded. Confusion arises as a result of classifying materials under two different numbers. Materials on general as well as specific topics on indigenous materials are all lumped under these two classes.

Local solutions to local problems

The advent of the computer has made searching for materials easier and faster compared to the tedious manner of manually going over through hundreds of typographically produced catalog cards. The necessity for prerequisite knowledge of subject heading syntax has been eliminated as researchers have only to key-in subject headings or keywords in the search box. The information retrieval system takes care of going over the database and search results are displayed in a matter of seconds.

Difficulties in accessing Cordillera materials have been minimized with the aid of the Library's integrated library system called iLib. Local terms that are included in titles can easily be searched using the title field search. Authors would normally include a local term in the title especially if the local term is the main topic of the written work and this practice can be advantageous when searching. Automated search allows readers to easily switch from one spelling to another.

Keyword searching is a better option when searching for local terms in the vernacular. As readers may not be aware of controlled and authorized terms assigned by catalogers and indexers for Cordillera materials, this can be the first step in searching online catalogs. For the UP iLib, the keyword search is equivalent to 'any field' search field. Using the keyword search field enables readers to use natural language, local name forms, and variations in spellings. Keyword searching would search titles, subject headings, some note fields and added entry fields.

Besides title or MARC field 245, tag 505 where formatted contents note are encoded can conveniently aid readers in searching local terms. Encoded local terms in 505 can be searched using keyword searching. The endless possibilities of searching individual works in compilations, anthologies, or collections have been conveniently made possible by encoding titles of each article in the formatted contents field. Like the main title, individual titles in compilations have a big possibility that local terms are included.

Along with 505 in the note field, tag 520 is yet another field where local terms can be encoded and searched. Like 505, encoded contents in 520 or summary, etc. field can be

searched using keyword searching. Summaries, abstracts, reviews, scope and content, annotation or a short note describing the content of the material is useful in bringing out the topic and local subject headings content of works on Cordillera ethnography. Still, tag 590 which is local note field can be utilized to contain notes on local topics.

In as much as LC cataloging policy prohibits the use of foreign words as subject headings if American or English words are available, tag 650 cannot be used for local terms. The UP iLib accommodates the assignment and designation of local terms or terms in the local language under 653 and 696. The encoding and subsequent searching for vernacular names and terms will conveniently make Cordillera indigenous sources accessible. Tag 653 is reserved for local index term while 696 is for local subject headings.

Linking abstracts or entire thesis documents or scanned parts of works like theses can be of tremendous help in the findability of Cordillera works although this MARC field tag 846 is not an indexed field. MARC field 846 is for URL links which accommodates electronic versions of materials. Preliminary pages, like title page, table of contents, or abstracts may be viewed and this allows readers extended views of theses or papers. Undergraduate student theses are valuable resources on Cordillera culture, history, politics, and society as students are now opting to research on these topics.

Conclusion

Renewed interest especially by the youth in their culture and communities in the Cordillera Region, a region inhabited by the country's second largest concentration of indigenous peoples, has generated demand for information sources. Aware of this shift, the University of the Philippines Baguio Library has endeavored to possibly collect all written, published, and issued materials on the Cordillera. Making these acquired materials accessible and usable is next on the agenda. This objective, however, cannot be realized to the fullest due to limitations in classification and indexing policies and procedures. Accessibility and use of materials depends on the manner by which local materials are catalogued and indexed. The UP Baguio library's compliance to the certain cataloging policies of the UP Diliman Library, Library of Congress classification policies, and use of the Library of Congress Subject Headings affects how readers and researchers locate and access Cordillera materials that discuss indigenous traditional practices, political institutions, material culture, and history among others.

Readers normally use direct and specific local terms in the natural language when searching for materials. Experiences show that users use direct and specific terms, an opportunity for the Library to look into the prospect of assigning terms searched by users for more appropriate, specific and relevant subject access terms. Oftentimes, however, terms used by readers in searching for materials do not correspond to terms used by catalogers and indexers in assigning subject access terms or subject headings. Catalogers and indexers because of observance to cataloging policies, use general or broad terms in assigning subject headings. Foreign words are assigned broader terms if no counterpart is listed in LCSH. Spelling variations and variations in name formats are other hindrances to effective search. Classification numbers of materials on specific topics which are generally classed under DS 666 or GN 671 P5 does not offer efficient findability and discovery as well.

Solutions to these problems include searching for local terms in the title field in online catalogs which the Library has. Moreover, encoding local notes in 596; formatted contents

notes using MARC tag 505; and summaries, abstracts and reviews in MARC 520 which are searchable using keyword or 'any field' search. Local subject headings in the vernacular or natural language which are to be encoded in 653 or 696 and which should be searchable using the subject field search can be of tremendously assistance. These fields, however, are not just yet available in UP iLib. Marc tag 846 whose function is to link scanned pages or electronic copies of selected materials, can likewise aid in the discovery of Cordillera materials.

Added efforts are needed in efficiently making Cordillera materials accessible. There is a need to formulate a comprehensive and exhaustive local subject authority list on the Cordillera but this should be worked out with subject field specialists. An authority list which UP Diliman Libraries has compiled is available, but this emphasizes geographical places and there are only a few topical terms. It is, I think, high time to update the list. An updated authority list can resolve confusion in spelling variations and forms and will likewise improve precision and recall. To improve classification and indexing of materials it is also important for the cataloger to be in touch with the readers as they provide insights on how materials are searched. It is not enough that catalogers and indexers are ensconced in their little corner detached from the real world of the reader. A cataloger who has a good grasp of the culture and who doubles as reference librarian can aid in informing readers the appropriate subject headings to look up for. A survey on the effectiveness of the LCSH in locating Cordillera materials can likewise determine specific problem areas and propose viable and immediate solutions to problems encountered by readers.

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