

To: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA (RDA JSC) and ISBD Review Group (ISBD RG)

From: Françoise Pellé, Director, ISSN International Centre

Subject: Major title changes for serials in Chinese, Japanese and Korean (RDA 2.3.2.13.1, ISBD A.2.6.1 and ISSN 2.3.1), discussion paper about the “first five words” rule

Background

The rule for changes affecting the first five words of serial titles was incorporated in the ISBD (CR) and the revision of AACR 2 both published in 2002, and in the 2003 edition of the ISSN Manual in the framework of the harmonization process among the three standards. “The intention [...] was to reduce the number of occasions where title changes occur and new bibliographic records need to be created”¹ and to provide publishers with easily understandable rules. Although this rule was established “by considering titles in languages other than English [in order] that the new ISBD make[s] sense to all users”², questions have been raised regarding its universal applicability, in particular to languages that do not divide text into words, and presented during the 4th IFLA Meeting of Experts of an International Cataloguing Code that took place in Korea in 2006. See for example the contribution of Haruki NAGATA, chair of the Committee of Cataloging of the Japanese Library Association: “Some rules of ISBD (CR) concerning the title, however, are linguistically incompatible (e.g. spacing and position of key words)³”. For this reason there are some additional rules for Japanese titles.” The rule has been questioned again during ISSN directors meetings in 2008 and 2009, during the World Review of the Consolidated edition of the ISBD in 2010, and during the harmonization discussions between RDA, ISBD and ISSN held at the end of 2011. No concrete solution has been found so far but a new wording of the rule in the Consolidated edition of the ISBD (addition of “for languages and scripts that divide text into words, the addition, deletion...”) states clearly that the latter does not apply to all languages and that further investigations and thoughts are thus needed. The ISSN Network has been requested by the ISBD RG and the RDA JSC to continue their reflections on this topic.

¹ Ingrid Parent. *From ISBD(S) to ISBD(CR) : A Voyage of Discovery and Alignment*. The Serials Librarian, Volume 43, issue 4 (2003)

² idem

³ Haruki Nagata. [Nippon \(Japanese\) Cataloging Rules and International Cataloging Principles: Similarities and Differences](#). IMEICC4, Seoul, 2006.

The purpose of this paper is to prepare further discussions for the next ISSN Directors meeting, to be held in Lisbon in October 2012, and further discussions with ISBD and RDA representatives.

After several exchanges with the Chinese, Korean and Japanese ISSN Centres, it appears that they do not share common concerns regarding the applicability of the rule of the “first five words” and that each of these ISSN Centres has established local rules for handling title changes in their language. As a matter of fact, Chinese, Korean and Japanese languages have, of course, their own style of writing and grammar and the designation “CJK languages” (that stands for Chinese, Japanese and Korean languages) widely used in the bibliographic community is an oversimplification. For instance, the Korean Hangul can use spaces between words (the corresponding rules depend, among others, upon the grammatical categories of the words).

Nonetheless, three important features have been drawn from these exchanges that could help us to move forward on this topic.

- a) Neither the Chinese, Japanese nor Korean local rules refer to any position within the title proper: our colleagues apply their rules for title changes to the whole title. Wherever the change occurs, at the beginning of the title or not, it is assessed in the same manner and following the same criteria;
- b) Our colleagues feel also that the difference between components that have little lexical meaning (“function words” or “ancillary elements”) and components that have a significant lexical meaning (“content words” or “content elements”) is meaningful but that the difference is not correctly expressed in the current rules for minor changes (ISBD A.2.7.1.d, ISSN 2.4.1.d and RDA 2.3.2.13.2.ii) which uses grammatical concepts from Indo-European languages such as “articles, prepositions and conjunctions” that are not relevant in their own grammar in some cases ;
- c) The transliteration process creates “artificial” segmentations in words.

For instance, our Korean colleagues pointed out the fact that most of the serial titles in Korean do not have more than five words, so the difference between the first five words and the subsequent ones is not relevant and they prefer to assess whether or not the changes affect the meaning of the title as a whole. Our Chinese colleagues underlined on their side that articles are not a category (part of the speech) of Chinese grammar, and that function words

which could be disregarded following ISSN 2.4.1.d comprise not only prepositions and conjunctions but particles, interjections, onomatopoeia... So, it is difficult to apply ISSN 2.4.1.d as it is currently worded. The Japanese Centre noted also that the transliteration process can create "artificial words" which don't fall into any of the categories listed in ISSN 2.4.1.d but whose changes should be considered as minor even if they occur at the beginning of the title.

職員の給与に関する報告及び勧告 → 職員の給与等に関する報告及び勧告

Shokuin no kyuuuyo ni kansuru houkoku oyobi kankoku -> Shokuin no kyuuuyo **to**u ni kansuru houkoku oyobi kankoku

In the above example, "to" looks like a separate word further to the Romanization, but in Japanese it cannot appear on its own as an independent word, and is considered to be a suffix. The addition of such a suffix is considered as a minor change according to the Japanese rules.

As a consequence of the observations listed above, the following modifications of the rules for major/minor changes in title proper are proposed for future study:

a) To use "generic" grammatical concepts, applicable to more languages than the concepts currently used in ISBD, ISSN and RDA. Such concepts would distinguish "content words" or "content elements" from "function words" or "ancillary elements" (to be validated of course by further deeper linguistic analysis) rather than, for instance, "prepositions", "conjunctions" which are applicable to some language families only, to Indo-European languages in particular. These concepts would be used in ISBD A.2.6.1.a, ISSN 2.3.1.a, and RDA 2.3.2.13.1.i (major changes) on one hand and in ISBD A.2.7.1.d, ISSN 2.4.1.d and RDA 2.3.2.13.2.ii (minor changes) on the other hand and would enable a more diverse group of bibliographic institutions to refer to the same rules. Further explanations and examples regarding the "content elements" and the "function elements" could be provided in the three cataloguing codes.

If this change is accepted by the bibliographic community, two different possibilities could be then envisaged and tested:

- 1) To keep the principle of counting ("first five...") that would apply not to "words" but to "content elements" in a common rule to be used by all bibliographic institutions regardless their language.

OR

- 2) To remove any reference to counting and to remove rule ISSN 2.3.1.b and its equivalents in the other two standards (“when the addition, deletion or change of any word occurs after the first five words... and changes the meaning of the title proper or indicates a different subject matter”). As a matter of fact, we feel that such modifications might achieve the same results as the existing pair of rules for changes occurring in the first five words and for changes occurring after the first five words that affect the meaning of the title proper.

The wording could be as follows:

“A new ISSN and a new key title are required in cases of major changes in the title proper. The following are to be considered major changes:

(xxx) when the addition, deletion, change or reordering of any content word/ content element occurs anywhere in the title proper....”.

and

“A new ISSN and a key title are not assigned in cases of minor changes in the title proper... The following are to be considered minor changes:

(xxx) The change is the addition, deletion, or change of any function word/ ancillary element anywhere in the title.

Our Chinese, Japanese and Korean colleagues are in favor of using “generic” grammatical concepts and have also expressed their preference for removing any reference to the counting of words/elements. Nevertheless, the two options presented above should be tested in various situations and input should be sought within the three standards communities. One test criterion suggested during our discussions in Glasgow was that reworded rules should achieve the same results when applied to the original form and to the Romanized form of the same title. That may be possible, provided of course that librarians who catalogue Chinese, Korean or Japanese publications out of China, Korea and Japan, have sufficient knowledge of these

languages to distinguish between “content” and “function” elements in Romanized titles. Besides, we think that this discussion is a good opportunity to encourage bibliographic institutions, at least ISSN National Centres, to record both forms as much as possible.

It would be also necessary to confirm that the second option (“to remove any reference to counting”) does not increase the number of occasions where new descriptions are created. And a closer look at the parts of speech that should be considered as “content element”/“function elements” in the main grammatical systems would be probably useful.

The ISSN Network is going to run such tests, investigate further regarding the parts of speech to be considered as “content elements” or “function elements” and will communicate their results to both the RDA JSC and the ISBD RG.