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Organization and Access to the Chinese Books/CDs/DVDs Donated by Hanban to the Confucius Institutes in the United States

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Organization and Access to the Chinese Books/CDs/DVDs Donated by Hanban to the Confucius Institutes in the United States

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ABSTRACT: Confucius Institutes in the United States and in the world have been established since 2004. There are over 96 Confucius Institutes in the US and over 480 in 6 continents in the world as of 2015. One of the programs for each Confucius Institute is the donation of books/CDs/DVDs from Hanban, i.e., the Confucius Institute Headquarters. Organization and access to these donated resources in each Confucius Institute has become either a natural addition to the institutional library or presented a professional challenge. This research explores the practices of organization and access to these resources in each Confucius Institute and its relationship with the institutional library in the United States.

I. Introduction

With the ever increasing economic development in China, the rapid trade, economic, and cultural exchanges between China and the rest of the world has been becoming more and more visible on the world stage and has impacted the world economy. The Chinese language is becoming more and more used in the world and it is becoming the second most spoken language next to English. Learning Chinese is a heated subject in the United States and in other countries in the world. The demand for the Chinese language and culture training is from governments and communities as well. According to the Chinese Language Teachers Association in 2006, there are over 700 universities and colleges and 200 primary and middle schools offering Chinese language courses. Another 600 Chinese schools are operated by Chinese American organizations with a total number of over 150,000 students. Because of this demand, more and more schools in the United States want to offer Chinese language courses. The first AP Chinese Language and Culture test was administered in May 2007. The number of students took AP Chinese Language and Culture test increased from 6,388 in 2010 to 10,121 in 2013. Ninety-six institutions in the United States have established Confucius Institutes to provide Chinese language teaching programs in collaboration with Hanban since 2004. One of the programs of the Confucius Institute in collaboration with Hanban is donation of books, CDs, and DVDs to the Confucius Institutes. Confucius Institutes can choose any number of these resources or none from the book donation program. The initial donation is usually 3,000 items, including printed book, CDs, and DVDs of Chinese language/culture materials with an annual renewable selection determined by each Confucius Institute.

II. Problem Statement

With such donations of Chinese resources to each Confucius Institute each year, how these resources are organized/cataloged for access at each Confucius Institute presents a professional challenge for each institution.

Research survey questions included:

1. Has the donated collection been cataloged by the institutional library?
2. How do these institutions handle Chinese language searching capability in their catalogs?
3. How are the donated items/collections housed in these institutions for access and retrieval?

III. Literature Review

The author carried out a literature review on the organization of resources donated by Hanban to the Confucius Institutes in the United States and found no scholarly communications on this subject. It is simple because the research subject is new and it has no established scholarly communications yet. This pioneering research on Confucius Institute book donation is a contribution of empirical and original research to the literature of the concerned subject.

IV. Research Methodology

For this initial research, the author applied a social science survey method to query the directors of all the Confucius Institutes in the United States who were present at the National Confucius Institutes Annual Conference in April 2010. Among forty Confucius Institute directors, twenty-five completed the survey questionnaire, with a response rate of 63%.

V. Data Collection and Analysis

The first question on the survey is about the number of donated books/CDs/DVDs that each Confucius Institute received from Hanban. Sixty-three percent of the responses were collected for analysis. The responded Confucius Institutes received between 1,100 and 8,000 books/CDs/DVDs from Hanban from 2004 to 2010. If the average item is worth \$20, the monetary value of the donation is between \$22,000 and \$160,000 in US dollars.

The 2nd question on the survey is about the cataloging status of these donated items. Among all the Confucius Institutes that responded to the survey, fourteen out of 25 (56% of the responses) stated that their donated collections were cataloged. Three Confucius Institutes (12%) responded that they had not cataloged the resources. One Confucius Institute responded that the cataloging was in progress.

The 3rd survey question on the survey is about the accessibility of the cataloged items in Chinese. It called for the local library system's capability to support catalog searching in Chinese. Of the twenty-five Confucius Institutes that responded, twelve (48%) indicated that the Chinese language searching capability was available. Eight Confucius Institutes (32%) responded that the Chinese language searching capability was not available. Some of them simply use Pinyin for

title search in the catalog. Two Confucius Institutes responded that partial searching capability of the Chinese language or part of the collection can be searched in Chinese while the rest of the collection can be searched in English only. Three Confucius Institutes did not respond to this question.

The 4th question on the survey is focused on where these donated items are housed, in libraries or other places on campuses? Six Confucius Institutes (24%) responded that these donated items were housed in special areas in their libraries for special use. Fourteen Confucius Institutes (56%) responded that these donated items were housed in the Confucius Institutes' office space separated from their libraries. One Confucius Institute indicated that it needed professional assistance to organize this donated collection. Ten Confucius Institutes (40%) responded that they either totally or partially integrated the donated items to the general library collections. For those libraries that the CJK (Chinese Japanese and Korean languages) integrated system is not available to support Chinese character display in their online catalog systems, the default input language for access is Pinyin.

The donation of books/CDs/DVDS from Hanban is an ongoing project for each Confucius Institute in the United States. Local Confucius Institutes choose to receive these items from lists of titles from Hanban for teaching Chinese language and Chinese culture. These resources are in Chinese or Chinese/English or English. They are mainly published in China and many of them are only available from China-based publishers. Institutional libraries tend to select and integrate research oriented items from the donated items to their main collections. However, many donated resources from Hanban are textbooks, teaching materials, and Chinese language dictionaries. The Confucius Institutes indicated that they circulate or distribute these teaching resources to teachers or local schools for language teaching purposes.

Each Confucius Institute has the right and challenge to select resources from these lists provided by Hanban to develop a collection for their local use. Some Confucius Institutes depend on this donation to start a Chinese collection to support new Chinese teaching curriculum as their institutions do not have Chinese materials in libraries. These donated materials become useful in their start-up Chinese language programs. Some universities have already established fine collections of Chinese resources so these donated items are additional selective items for their libraries. To provide professionally support in organizing these resources for access depends also on the existing collection development policies of each institutional library. The role of each institutional library in developing this collection is not clearly defined in almost all Confucius Institutes in the United States.

In the case of the University of Rhode Island University Libraries, the Dean of Libraries clearly provides the policy to collect and add research-based Chinese resources to its main collections. There were no Chinese courses offered in the past. The Chinese resources in the Libraries were limited. To add this research-based collection to the main collections is to support the Chinese curriculum, a newly established major. Due to the high costs to add the CJK components to the existing integrated system, it is decided to use Pinyin to add these resources to the library catalog. Lack of professional staff members who are capable of cataloging Chinese materials sets another limit in providing access to these resources. Professional and language expertise in organizing this collection was needed to complete this project. A visiting scholar in library and

information science field happened to be available at that time to organize the collection for the Libraries. There has been no consistent practice once the Confucius Institute director changes. At this time, the Confucius Institute at the University of Rhode Island organizes its donated books from Hanban by itself.

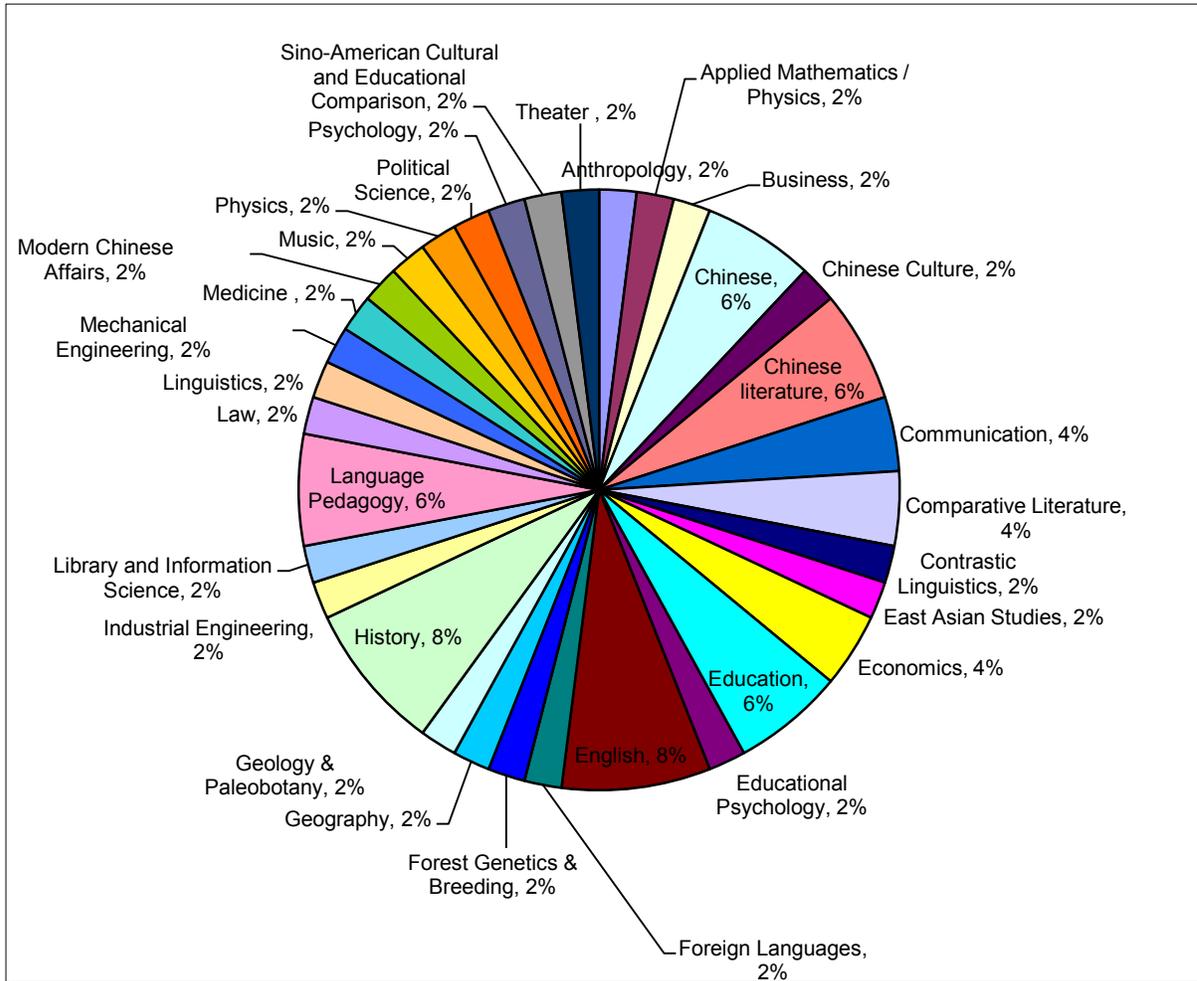
The personnel responsible for selecting the resources, making policies or decisions to organize these collections, and providing access have become a challenge in these institutions. The survey included the coverage of the academic background of Confucius Institute directors. Among 60 Confucius Institutes directors in the United States in 2010, their academic backgrounds indicated 33 disciplines, ranging from anthropology, Chinese language, Chinese culture, history, education, law, music, physics, medicine, theatre, and others. See *Table 1* and *Figure 1* (Confucius Institute Director’s Academic Background).

Table 1. Confucius Institute Director’s Academic Background

Number of CI Direcotrs	Studies	Ratio
1	Anthropology	2%
1	Applied Mathematics / Physics	2%
1	Business	2%
3	Chinese	6%
1	Chinese Culture	2%
3	Chinese literature	6%
2	Communication	4%
2	Comparative Literature	4%
1	Contrastic Linguistics	2%
1	East Asian Studies	2%
2	Economics	4%
3	Education	6%
1	Educational Psychology	2%
4	English	8%
1	Foreign Languages	2%
1	Forest Genetics & Breeding	2%
1	Geography	2%
1	Geology & Paleobotany	2%
4	History	8%
1	Industrial Engineering	2%
1	Library and Information Science	2%
3	Language Pedagogy	6%
1	Law	2%
1	Linguistics	2%
1	Mechanical Engineering	2%
1	Medicine	2%
1	Modern Chinese Affairs	2%

1	Music	2%
1	Physics	2%
1	Political Science	2%
1	Psychology	2%
1	Sino-American Cultural and Educational Comparison	2%
1	Theater	2%

Figure 1. Confucius Institute Director's Academic Background



(Based on a survey of 50 US Confucius Institute directors and Confucius Institute websites in 2010)

Selection of books were based on recommendations from Chinese language teachers, Confucius Institute office staff, and librarians in institutional libraries.

VI. Conclusions

Based on this research analysis and findings, it is apparent that the donated resources from Hanban will continue to arrive to support Confucius Institutes' language teaching program. These resources are managed by the Confucius Institutes themselves or some of these donated resources will continue to be added to institutional libraries. The selection of these materials is either done by the Confucius Institute director or staff or a collaborative effort between the Confucius Institutes and their institutional libraries. As such collections grow larger, the cataloging process, professional staffing, and online Chinese language searching capability present challenges to the profession. Access to these collections varies and changes as each Confucius Institute develops. In addition, space to house these resources will become a new topic of study.

Further research on this subject is needed. Our professional response to this new challenge requires more attention on providing guidelines, policies, and advice to a new territory for the Chinese librarianship.

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