

Later Printings of Library Science Textbooks from the Republican Era

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Textbooks on library science from the Republic of China period serve as important carriers of the disciplinary knowledge system of library science and also as significant witnesses to the developmental history of the library science discipline. Research on the construction of library science textbooks during the Republic of China period contributes to deepening the study of the history of library science education and holds reference value for disciplinary development and the construction of a knowledge system with local characteristics. [Method/Process] Employing historical research methods and relevant theories of philology, this study conducts a holistic investigation of library science textbooks from the Republic of China period from the perspectives of document formation methods and knowledge composition. [Results/Conclusion] Library science textbooks from the Republic of China period can be divided into three major categories: translation-type, compilation-type, and original-authorship-type. The chronological emergence of these three types of textbooks generally followed the sequence of translation, compilation, and original authorship. The relationship between old and new knowledge evolved from “parallel” to “intersecting,” with the autonomy and localization degree of library science knowledge production continuously increasing. The overall pragmatic characteristics demonstrated the important position of Western, particularly American, library science knowledge in the intellectual landscape of Republic of China library science. Based on these findings, recommendations are proposed to avoid path dependence in learning and borrowing, to promote the integration of local “new knowledge” into textbooks from two dimensions—Chinese classical culture and library practice—and to re-examine the appropriateness of Sino-Western knowledge integration.

Full Text

The Construction of Library Science Textbooks in the Republic of China Period

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] Library science textbooks from the Republic of China period are important carriers of the disciplinary knowledge system of library science and also significant witnesses to the developmental history of the discipline. Research on the construction of library science textbooks during this period helps deepen studies on the history of library science education and holds reference value for disciplinary development and the construction of a knowledge system with local characteristics.

[Method/Process] Using historical research methods and relevant theories of philology, this paper conducts a holistic investigation of Republic of China period library science textbooks from the perspectives of document formation methods and knowledge composition.

[Result/Conclusion] Republic of China period library science textbooks can be divided into three major categories: translation-style, compilation-style, and original-writing-style. The chronological appearance of these three types roughly follows the sequence of translation, compilation, and original writing. The relationship between old and new knowledge evolved from “parallel” to “intersecting,” with the autonomy and localization of library science knowledge production continuously increasing. The overall practical orientation of these textbooks demonstrates the important position of Western, particularly American, library science knowledge in the knowledge landscape of Republic of China library science. Based on this analysis, suggestions are proposed to avoid path dependence in learning and borrowing, to promote the incorporation of local “new knowledge” into textbooks from both Chinese classical book culture and library practice perspectives, and to re-examine the appropriateness of integrating Chinese and Western knowledge.

Keywords: library science textbooks; Republic of China period; document formation methods; library history

Classification Number: G250

1.1 Research Background

China’s library science education has traversed a century-long journey. Summarizing and reviewing the history of disciplinary education development holds profound academic and practical significance for contemporary library science education and research, as well as for advancing the construction of “Chinese

library science.”During the Republic of China period, a diverse library science education system emerged, encompassing overseas education, higher professional education, secondary professional education, and amateur education [1]. Within this diversified system, textbook construction constituted a core element of disciplinary development.

As China’s first formal library science specialized education institution, the Boone Library School (hereinafter referred to as “Boone”) prioritized textbook construction as a key school matter. Beyond compiling its own lecture notes and translating published textbooks, Boone also actively collected cultural institution publications from various regions and mobilized students to collect architectural plans, interior and exterior photographs, and various regulations and forms from major libraries in Shanghai, Beijing, and other cities during vacations for use as teaching reference materials [2]. Jinling University library scholars, in addition to selecting works by American or domestic scholars as course textbooks, consciously engaged in localized exploration by compiling their own teaching materials, such as Li Xiaoyuan’s *Library Science*, which featured distinctive Chinese-Western integration characteristics [3]. Beyond formal institutions like Boone and Jinling University, normal schools, secondary vocational schools, correspondence classes, and other levels of library science education institutions also engaged in textbook compilation practices. For instance, the Shanghai Library Association’s Correspondence School, established in 1930, employed library science experts to edit dozens of pamphlet-style lecture notes, each with exercises. The school not only “sought lecture notes from library science experts in foreign countries and various domestic locations” but also “ordered the latest published library science books from Eastern and Western countries, translating them into Chinese and incorporating them into lecture notes” [4], demonstrating remarkable dedication to textbook construction. Additionally, numerous training materials for in-service librarians were published during this period, such as Liang Ge’s *Methods of Classification, Cataloging, and Subject Headings* for the National Sun Yat-sen University Library Staff Training Institute, Zhao Boyin’s *Methods for Establishing Popular Libraries* compiled as director of the Shandong Provincial Mass Education Hall’s Extension Department, and *Circulation of Books* compiled by the Zhejiang Provincial Library. These formed a diverse and multi-level system of Republic of China library science textbooks.

These textbooks served as crucial carriers for the production, evolution, and transmission of disciplinary knowledge systems, becoming important witnesses to the history of library science development in the Republic of China. During this period, library scientists including Liu Guojun, Du Dingyou, Hong Youfeng, Li Xiaoyuan, Ma Zongrong, and others dedicated themselves to textbook compilation and construction. Many Republic of China textbooks had blurred boundaries with monographs, with numerous library science works originally intended as textbooks or as popular readers for disseminating library science knowledge to students, librarians, and the public, such as Du Dingyou’s *Introduction to Libraries* (1925), Hong Youfeng’s *Library Organization and Management* (1926),

and Liu Guojun's *Essentials of Library Science* (1934). These works ultimately became classic literature in library science, leaving a rich academic heritage for the history of Chinese library science that warrants in-depth research.

1.2 Research Approach, Methods, and Value

Recent research on the history of library science education has examined various aspects. Ren Jiale noted that beyond adopting overseas library science works or original textbooks, Boone also emphasized works by renowned domestic library scientists, reflecting an inclusive spirit [5]. Liu Yi and Xiao Ximing reviewed the textbook construction explorations of Jinling University library scholars like Li Xiaoyuan [6]. Zhang Kang and Li Zhuozhuo, using content analysis, viewed 1920-1949 as the embryonic and first prosperous period of library science textbooks, listing representative textbooks by thematic category and educational institution. They identified characteristics including “localized exploration of textbook systems,” “practical orientation of textbook content,” and “exploration of multi-level textbook systems” [7]. Additionally, studies on library scientists like Liu Guojun and Du Dingyou frequently addressed their textbooks. However, these studies focused primarily on the academic thought of library scientists rather than textbook construction itself, with few examining the overall condition of Republic of China library science textbook construction.

Based on this context, this paper employs historical research methods and philological theories to conduct a holistic investigation of Republic of China library science textbooks from the perspectives of document formation methods and knowledge composition. The research approach is as follows: First, classify Republic of China library science textbooks holistically according to document formation methods. The textbooks examined include those used in formal institutions like Boone and Jinling University, as well as 辅导读物 and training materials for in-service librarians and self-learners from organizations like the Beijing Normal School Summer Lecture Series and Zhejiang Provincial Library. Second, from the perspective of knowledge composition, further subdivide the textbook types according to whether their content belongs primarily to “old learning” (the classical library science knowledge system centered on traditional bibliography and textual criticism) or “new knowledge” (the modern Western library science knowledge system), and discuss representative textbooks. Third, based on the above research, summarize and analyze the evolutionary direction and overall characteristics of Republic of China library science textbook construction, addressing two major questions: How did the relationship between old and new knowledge change in the development of different textbook types? What overall characteristics did Republic of China library science textbooks present, and what kind of knowledge landscape did they shape? Fourth, based on historical research, propose suggestions for contemporary library science textbook construction and disciplinary development.

In terms of research significance, this study helps deepen research on the history of Republic of China library science education, revealing the evolution of modern

Chinese library science knowledge systems at the textbook level, while holding practical value for contemporary library science education development and the construction of a knowledge system with Chinese local characteristics.

1.3 Holistic Classification of Republic of China Library Science Textbooks

Philologist Zhang Shunhui argued that based on content sources, ancient documents can be divided into three major categories: original writing, compilation, and excerpting. Du Zesun further classified documents by formation method into writing, compilation, excerpting, and translation types. “Writing” (also called “creating” or “original writing”) emphasizes unprecedented, pioneering work and creative theory, such as many works from before the Han Dynasty. “Compilation” refers to works that build upon existing knowledge, emphasizing inheritance and enhancement of predecessors’ work, such as Zheng Xuan’s commentary on the *Three Rites*, Li Daoyuan’s commentary on the *Water Classic*, and Sima Zhen’s *Shiji Suoyin*, also called “编述”. “Excerpting” (also called “editing” or “compiling”) involves arranging old texts according to certain formats, with original passages taken directly from other sources without alteration, such as the encyclopedias *Gujin Tushu Jicheng* and *Yongle Dadian*, as well as collected works and document compilations. “Translation” involves translating works, such as Buddhist scripture translation or literary translation [8-9]. It should be noted that different document formation methods have no absolute hierarchy in academic value.

Combining the classifications of Zhang and Du, this paper divides Republic of China library science textbooks into three major types from the perspective of document formation methods: translation-style textbooks, compilation-style textbooks, and original-writing-style textbooks, which will be discussed separately below.

2 Translation-Style Textbooks

Translation was one of the primary formation methods for Republic of China library science textbooks, involving either complete, unaltered translation or compilation that excerpted multiple sources and synthesized various strengths. In terms of knowledge composition, the knowledge content of Republic of China translation-style textbooks primarily consisted of the modern Western library science knowledge system, particularly from the United States, featuring distinct pragmatist characteristics.

2.1 Two Representative Types of Translation-Style Textbooks

The first type is complete book translation. For example, translation work by Boone teachers and students. Among the Boone Library Science Series, many were translated textbooks. In 1927, Susan G. Akers (1889-1984), then assistant

professor at the University of Wisconsin Library School and later dean of the University of North Carolina Library School, published *Simple Library Cataloging*. Originally a concise manual for library staff without professional training, the book emphasized directional and necessary rules, omitted numerous trivial business details, strove for simplicity and practicality, and included definitions of terms, abbreviations, and cataloging reference bibliographies [10]. After reading it, Shen Zurong considered the book “extremely concise,” “quite practical,” and “its methods the most up-to-date” [11], and subsequently translated it, publishing it through Boone Library in 1929 with the hope that it could serve as a general library science textbook benefiting numerous beginners. The book later became a classic American library science textbook, with multiple revised editions in 1933, 1954, and other years. Besides Shen’s translation, there was also Lan Qianzhang’s 1960 selective translation, *Simple Western Book Cataloging Method*. In addition to translation, original English works by Melvil Dewey (1851-1931), Ernest C. Richardson (1860-1939), William I. Fletcher (1844-1917), and the American Library Association’s *Manuals of Library Economy* were frequently listed as reference books for various courses [12].

The second type is compilation that excerpts multiple sources and synthesizes various strengths, such as Dai Zhixian’s *Lecture Notes on Library Science*. In 1920, when the Beijing Higher Normal School opened its summer library science lecture series, invited speaker Dai Zhixian, finding “no quality Chinese books on library science for reference” and facing “several hours of lectures daily,” had “no choice but to select the essentials of Western library science and temporarily translate them into Chinese as lecture materials,” resulting in *Lecture Notes on Library Science* [13]. Jin Minfu later commented that Dai’s lecture notes “were mostly translated from Western works...with detailed discussion on classification and cataloging. Since then, Western-style libraries have spread throughout China, surpassing Japanese-style libraries” [14]. Unlike Shen Zurong’s translation of *Simple Library Cataloging*, Dai’s *Lecture Notes on Library Science* was not a verbatim translation of a single book but a compilation that drew on various American and British library science theories, including works by John C. Dana (1856-1929) (*A Library Primer*), John W. Clarks (1833-1910) (*Care of Books*), and Arthur E. Bostwick (1860-1942) (*American Public Library*). Dai also recommended numerous Western bibliographies in his lecture notes for those interested in in-depth study, which were widely used as textbooks by American and European library science education institutions like the New York State Library School.

2.2 Knowledge Composition: Western Modern Library Science “New Knowledge”

The knowledge composition of translation-style textbooks primarily focused on Western modern library science concerning library organization and management, emphasizing the efficiency of library work methods and management, with strong pragmatist coloring that differed significantly from the

humanities-oriented Chinese traditional bibliography, cataloging, and textual criticism-centered classical library science knowledge system.

Since Republic of China library science education institutions took the New York State Library School and New York Public Library School as models, the selection of translation textbooks was profoundly influenced by the American pragmatist education framework. The textbook authors—represented by Melvil Dewey (1851-1931), Charles A. Cutter (1837-1903), John C. Dana (1856-1929), William I. Fletcher (1844-1917), Arthur E. Bostwick (1860-1942), John W. Clarks (1833-1910), James D. Brown (1862-1914), and W.C. Berwick Sayers (1881-1960), among other American and British, especially American, library scientists—often simultaneously held identities as library science educators and library managers. For example, Dewey served as both principal of the New York State Library School and director of the New York State Library; Bostwick served as both principal of the St. Louis Public Library School and director of the St. Louis Public Library; Dana served as director of the Newark Public Library while also chairing the American Library Association's Library School Committee; Fletcher managed the Amherst College Library's summer school for library science for many years while serving as library director. This multiple identity as both library managers and library science educators led these library scientists to focus on the practical value of their textbooks for library work, thus creating the pragmatist style of translation-style textbooks.

3 Compilation-Style Textbooks

Compilation involves development based on predecessors' work, not unchanging inheritance but creative development with contributions. Since textbooks involve absorbing and organizing existing knowledge rather than emphasizing absolute originality, numerous Republic of China library science textbooks fall into the "compilation" category. Based on their knowledge composition, they can be further divided into two major types: compilation-style textbooks primarily based on foreign modern library science "new knowledge," and those primarily based on Chinese ancient textual criticism and bibliography "old learning."

3.1 Primarily Foreign Modern Library Science "New Knowledge"

Yang Zhaoyi's *Library Science* is a typical representative. Yang initially advocated translation but later realized its limitations and turned to compilation. In 1923, as part of the "Shangzhi Society Series," Yang's *Library Science* was published by the Commercial Press. Yang stated that "eight or nine tenths of the book references various renowned scholars' writings, with one or two tenths being my own opinions, comparing their theories and connecting their doctrines" [15], referencing works in Chinese, Japanese, and English, including the Japanese Library Association's *Library Knowledge*, Tanaka Kei's *Library Education*, and English works by James D. Brown (1862-1914), Arthur E. Bostwick (1860-1942), Charles A. Cutter (1837-1903), and John C. Dana (1856-1929). The book

featured detailed structure and rich materials, aiming “to promote library science knowledge in China so that anyone can understand library principles and applications upon reading” [15], making it highly suitable as a library science textbook. The book was reprinted multiple times and contributed significantly to disseminating library science knowledge.

Ma Zongrong also devoted considerable attention to textbook compilation. In 1921, after returning from studying in Japan and investigating library education, Ma was deeply aware of the scarcity of library science books suitable for self-study and reference. He developed a desire to compile “popular library science.” In 1923, Ma “re-examined existing books on library science, translated their essence, and added his own survey findings and ideas” [16], producing five volumes: *Introduction to Modern Libraries*, *Management of Modern Libraries*, *Operations of Modern Libraries*, *Education in Modern Libraries*, and *Development of Modern Libraries*, published between 1928 and 1934 by the Chinese Arts and Sciences Society, Commercial Press, and World Book Company. When teaching library management courses at Daxia University and Jinan University, Ma used *Operations of Modern Libraries* (1934) as his textbook. Additionally, *Management of Modern Libraries* (1928) was used as a textbook at the Qingxin Middle School Library Science Department [17]. While serving as Daxia University Library director, Ma specially compiled *Practical University Library Management* for staff without library science training, providing detailed records of “administrative organization, committee organization, and methods for book selection, ordering, registration, classification, cataloging, arrangement, organization, lending, and inventory” [18], becoming a reference book for in-service librarians and beginners.

Whether Yang Zhaoyi’s *Library Science* or Ma Zongrong’s *Management of Modern Libraries* and other textbooks, their primary knowledge composition was foreign library science “new knowledge,” but with integration and processing on that foundation, representing preliminary attempts at textbook sinicization.

3.2 Primarily Chinese Ancient Textual Criticism and Bibliography “Old Learning”

Under the influence of the Republic of China’s “Organizing National Heritage” movement, scholars including Yao Mingda, Zheng Hesheng, Wang Bijiang, Hu Pu’ an, and Qian Jibo devoted themselves to summarizing traditional Chinese textual criticism and bibliography achievements and methods, producing academic classics such as *Outline of Chinese Documentation* (1930), *Bibliography* (1933), *General Meaning of Editions* (1933), and *History of Chinese Bibliography* (1936), many of which resulted from long-term teaching. For example, when teaching bibliography at Central University, Wang Bijiang, dissatisfied with the lack of specialized books for teaching and the practice of “using *Hanshu Yiwenzhi* or *Siku Quanshu Zongmu Tiyao* as textbooks,” wrote *Bibliography Studies* (1934) for teaching purposes [19]. Similarly, Hu Pu’ an, who taught ancient book collation methods at Shanghai National University, co-authored

Textual Criticism (1943) with his nephew Hu Daojing based on his teaching in Shanghai, noting that “beginners obtaining this can grasp the general outline of textual criticism” [20]. By today’s general standards, these academic classics should be classified as original creative works. However, from the perspective of document formation methods, summarizing ancient document organization methods clearly involves inheriting and enhancing existing knowledge. Classifying them as compilation in no way diminishes their academic value. These modernized textual criticism and bibliography works provided textbooks or reference books for library science and related courses. For example, Qian Jibo’s *General Meaning of Editions* was listed as a reference for the bibliography course at Boone, making traditional bibliography and textual criticism knowledge important components of modern library science knowledge systems.

Combined with compilation-style textbooks, Boone also emphasized inheriting ancient book culture and textual criticism academic traditions while studying original works. For instance, in the Chinese bibliography course, besides using and expanding upon lecture notes compiled by Mr. Li Zhexian for the Hubei Cungu School in the Qing Dynasty, ancient official and private bibliographies including *Chongwen Zongmu*, *Jingji Kao*, *Siku Quanshu Tiyaoyao*, *Zhizhai Shulu Jieti*, and *Shumu Dawen* were listed as teaching references. To familiarize students with the origins of Chinese dynastic printing and characteristics of different editions, the bibliography course listed Ye Dehui’s *Shulin Qinghua Yuhua*, Jiang Biao’s *Song Yuan Ben Xingge Biao*, Huang Pilie’s *Shili Ju Cangshu Tiba Ji*, and Shao Yichen’s *Siku Jianmu Biaozhu* as references. The Chinese library history course reference list included dynastic treatises on literature and official histories, as well as *Wenxian Tongkao* and *Yuhai* [12]. Combining course lectures with ancient official and private bibliographies and classic bibliography works enabled students to understand both bibliography theory and gain direct experience with the compilation systems of Chinese classical bibliographies, ancient book culture, and textual criticism academic traditions, facilitating the writing of bibliographic notes and colophons and learning empirical methods for edition identification.

4 Original-Writing-Style Textbooks

Original-writing-style textbooks, also called monograph-style textbooks, emphasize unprecedented achievements. Based on knowledge composition, they can be divided into three major categories: first, localized transformation of Western library science knowledge; second, theoretical and methodological summaries based on Chinese library practice, where local practice generates local new knowledge; third, works that integrate Western library science “new knowledge” with Chinese traditional textual criticism “old learning.” In summary, their knowledge composition does not exceed the framework of “new knowledge + old learning + local practice.”

4.1 Localized Transformation of Western Library Science Knowledge

Course lecture notes compiled by Boone teachers including Shen Zurong, Mao Kun, Xu Jialin, and Wang Changbing promoted the sinicization of Western library science and the modernization of Chinese traditional bibliography and textual criticism. In 1916, Shen Zurong published an article in *Library Journal* titled “Can the American Library System be Adapted to China?” [21], reflecting on whether American library models could be directly copied. During the Republic of China period, adapting the Dewey Decimal Classification became a popular research topic among library professionals, proving that Western-style library science was not entirely applicable in China. In 1917, Shen Zurong and Hu Qingsheng co-authored *Imitation of Dewey’s Ten Classification System*, published by the Holy Bible Bookstore, and later made further improvements to adapt Western “new knowledge” to Chinese practice. The “Imitation Dewey Method” subsequently became Boone’s textbook.

Not only Boone but also informal library science education institutions produced some original-writing-style textbooks. In January 1925, Hong Youfeng wrote in the preface to *Library Organization and Management*: “However, observing the translations and writings on library science in our country, they are as sparse as morning stars, so what can serve as reference materials? Seeking career development and remarkable results is like going south by driving north” [22]. With the goal of promoting library career development and responding to repeated requests from relatives and scholar friends, Hong published his lecture notes from the Southeast University Summer Library Lecture Series through the Commercial Press in 1926. The book particularly emphasized starting from the actual conditions of Chinese libraries rather than simply applying European, American, or Japanese methods. For example, regarding book storage methods, “this compilation corrects the fault of abandoning fundamentals for minor details, with particularly detailed narration of Chinese book processing methods, aiming for practical application” [22]. After publication, the book had significant impact and was highly praised by the academic community. Jin Minfu stated in 1928 that “recently, Mr. Hong Youfeng, based on his experience managing Chinese libraries for several years and his teaching insights, wrote *Library Organization and Management* (1926), marking the founding of Chinese library science” [14].

4.2 Local “New Knowledge” Generated from Indigenous Practice

At the founding conference of the Chinese Library Association in 1925, Mr. Liang Qichao issued the influential call to build “Chinese library science.” To achieve this, Republic of China library scientists rooted themselves in Chinese practice, attempting to cultivate local “new knowledge” different from Western library science. Among these, Xu Xu’s series of works on popular library science represent significant indigenous library science textbooks. In 1929, the *Chinese Library Association Bulletin* reported on the library science courses and textbooks at the Jiangsu Provincial Mass Education Institute in Wuxi: “Starting

this semester, library science has been added as a course...taught by the library director and practical instructor Xu Xu, using lecture notes compiled by Mr. Xu himself, with special emphasis on discussing practical problems and specialized work practice" [23]. Xu Xu strongly opposed "so-called completely Westernized methods." With a "trial attitude and research spirit," he "compiled the results obtained from popular libraries in administration, management, equipment, readers, and extension work into small pamphlets" [24], producing a series of works including *Popular Library Book Classification* (1931), *Popular Library Science* (1935), *Practical Problems of Popular Libraries* (1935), and *Libraries and Mass Education* (1941), forming a relatively complete theoretical and methodological system for popular library science.

Xu Xu's textbooks primarily derived from Chinese local library practice experience, experimentation, and survey research, constituting a unique "school of thought." The renowned educator Zhuang Zexuan, who advocated for the sinicization of education, highly praised Xu Xu: "Today's library science discussions often copy foreign countries. I have long advocated for the sinicization of education, and library science is no exception. I am delighted to promote its publication. Running libraries in China is already different from foreign countries, and running popular libraries is even more so...I firmly believe that future Chinese education will be dominated by mass education, and popular libraries will be the center of mass education" [25]. Although Xu Xu himself admitted in *Popular Library Science* (1935) that he had not undergone systematic Western library science training, "having neither school nor tradition," and that his content was unavoidably "bits and pieces, patchwork," and that "from the perspective of general library science research, some are theoretically unfounded and some are methodologically unconventional" [25], the content derived from actual "experimentation" in popular libraries was particularly original. In *Libraries and Mass Education*, Xu Xu appended his survey findings from Shanghai—*Survey of Shanghai Book Stalls* and *Survey of Shanghai News Stands*—as teaching references [26].

This method of producing textbooks through actual surveys, experimentation, and other methods, thereby generating local knowledge from indigenous practice, enriched the pathways for producing library science "new knowledge." Such "new knowledge" differed from Western library science "new knowledge" introduced through translation, representing genuine local "new knowledge" cultivated in indigenous practice, summarized, refined, and elevated by Chinese scholars. This holds extraordinary significance for constructing a library science knowledge system with local characteristics and building "Chinese library science."

4.3 Works Integrating Western "New Knowledge" and Chinese "Old Learning"

Du Dingyou vigorously called upon library colleagues to "on the one hand import Western emerging sciences, on the other hand transform our country's inherent methods, making them magnificent and creating a new Chinese library

science” [27]. Du’s concept of “creation” was built upon integrating Western “new knowledge” with Chinese “old learning.” Many Republic of China library scientists made arduous efforts in this regard, such as Cheng Boqun and Mao Kun. In 1935, Cheng Boqun published *Comparative Library Science* (1935) at World Book Company, which “adopted the strengths of Eastern and Western library science” and “present an outline for comprehensive comparison” [28], introducing Western library science methods such as cataloging, classification, indexing, preservation, binding, and subject headings while affirming the value of traditional Chinese bibliography, collation, and edition studies. Mao Kun was one of the representative scholars actively dedicated to library science textbook construction during the Republic of China period. His lecture notes included *Bibliography* (1936), *Chinese Bibliography* (1936), *Outline of Chinese Historical Bibliography* (1936), and *Chinese Historical Bibliography* (1948), attempting to integrate Chinese and Western bibliography essence and construct a distinctive bibliography system. His ideas “largely reflected Western viewpoints of the time, but their origin remained Chinese traditional bibliography thought” [29].

However, integrating “new knowledge” and “old learning” was not easy. As Chen Xunci noted: “The four-part classification and the decimal classification each have their problems: those attached to the old despise the decimal system as imitating Western theory, while those favoring the new completely abandon the essence of old methods, or compromise between them without truly reconciling their meanings” [30]. Western, especially American, library science emphasizes efficiency, methodology, and practicality, while Chinese classical library science possesses strong humanities characteristics and Chinese cultural spirit. When the two met, inevitable incompatibilities arose. Different countries’ library science and library undertakings are products of different cultures; therefore, the deep-level implication of integrating different knowledge systems is actually the integration of different cultures. The heterogeneity of Chinese and Western academia and culture often meant the two remained merely “juxtaposed” rather than organically integrated. The mission of building “Chinese library science” (Liang Qichao) or “new Chinese library science” (Du Dingyou) was not thoroughly completed at the textbook level during the Republic of China period.

5 Discussion and Summary

5.1 Evolutionary Direction: Enhancing Localization Through Changing Relationships Between Old and New Knowledge

In the development of these three textbook types, the relationship between Chinese and Western learning, “old learning” and “new knowledge,” serves as a central thread. Changes in this relationship reflect the evolution of modern Chinese library science knowledge systems: First, translation-style textbooks, whether complete translations or compilations excerpting multiple works, primarily consisted of pragmatic Western modern library science “new knowledge,” greatly enriching the Republic of China library science knowledge system be-

yond Chinese classical bibliography “old learning.” At this stage, Western “new knowledge” and Chinese “old learning” were two independent “parallel lines.” Second, compilation-style textbooks were based primarily on either foreign modern library science “new knowledge” or Chinese ancient textual criticism and bibliography “old learning.” At this stage, “new knowledge” and “old learning” still largely existed in a “parallel” relationship. Third, original-writing-style textbooks either localized Western library science knowledge within Chinese practical contexts or attempted to establish new knowledge systems based on deep integration of Chinese “old learning” and Western “new knowledge.” At this stage, the relationship between “new knowledge” and “old learning” evolved from “parallel” to “intersecting,” attempting to achieve organic integration of the two knowledge systems.

Simultaneously, from translation to compilation to original writing, the autonomy and localization of library science knowledge production continuously increased, enhancing adaptability to Chinese local library practice and talent cultivation. This is evident in the chronological sequence of the three textbook types. Their appearance roughly followed the vertical evolutionary direction of translation → compilation → original writing, differing from Zhang Shunhui’s observation that ancient documents first featured original writing (pre-Han), then compilation (Han to Sui) [8]. The reason lies in the strong foreign origin of modern library science, necessitating translation works first, then compilation works drawing on various sources, and finally original works integrating Chinese and Western elements into unique systems. The journey of Republic of China library science textbook construction reflects the arduous efforts to localize Western, especially American, library science and build “Chinese library science.”

5.2 Overall Characteristics: Practical Orientation and the Republic of China Knowledge Landscape

Practical orientation is the overall characteristic of translation-style, compilation-style, and original-writing-style textbooks. As noted in Section 2, translation-style textbooks primarily consisted of Western, especially American, works. In 1933, Shen Zurong wrote in the preface to Zhang Xinmin’s translation of *Public Library Administration*: “If we read this book, we will know how to manage libraries, how to operate library work effectively, and how to avoid wasting funds” [31]. Similarly, the other two textbook types demonstrated clear practical orientation. For example, Du Dingyou’s *School Library Science*, written for normal school library science courses, stated that “the various methods described are specifically for small and medium-sized school libraries, with extremely simple procedures that can be followed by those without specialized knowledge” [32]. Even general works expounding library science principles hoped to provide introductory references for library students and others for self-study, without being overly abstruse. For instance, Liu Guojun’s *Essentials of Library Science*, originally part of

Zhonghua Book Company's *Encyclopedia of China* and targeting middle school students and general youth, followed the principle of "lively writing, easy to understand, aiming to inspire readers' interest in independent research" to "guide their further study" [33]. *Essentials of Library Science* focused on explaining library science principles, written in accessible language using questions to arouse reader interest, such as "How can we say modern libraries are automatic?" "How can we say modern libraries are popularized?" and "How can we say modern libraries are socialized rather than individualized?" Each chapter also included questions and references to deepen understanding and expand learning, facilitating study for beginners.

The overall practical orientation of Republic of China library science textbooks demonstrates the important position of Western, especially American, library science knowledge in the Republic of China library science knowledge landscape. Driven by the large-scale introduction of translation textbooks, the return of American-educated scholars, and the urgent demand for modern library management knowledge in new-style libraries, foreign "new knowledge" gradually became centralized in the Republic of China library science knowledge landscape, playing important roles in cultivating library professionals and disseminating library science knowledge, and promoting the spread of Western, especially American, library science knowledge in China. Meanwhile, the Chinese classical library science knowledge system centered on textual criticism and bibliography showed a decentralization trend. However, efforts by scholars like Xu Xu to produce local "new knowledge" based on Chinese library practice and by scholars like Mao Kun to integrate Chinese "old learning" with Western "new knowledge" expanded the proportion of indigenous knowledge in the Republic of China library science knowledge landscape.

5.3 Conclusion

This paper classifies Republic of China library science textbooks into three major categories—translation-style, compilation-style, and original-writing-style—from the perspective of document formation methods, further subdividing each type based on knowledge composition and discussing representative textbooks. On this basis, the study reveals that in the development of these three textbook categories, the relationship between "new knowledge" and "old learning" evolved from "parallel" to "intersecting," with the autonomy and localization of library science knowledge production continuously increasing. The overall practical orientation of Republic of China library science textbooks demonstrates the important position of Western, especially American, library science knowledge in the Republic of China library science knowledge landscape.

This classification is merely an attempt and may not cover all Republic of China library science textbooks; scholars may have different views on classifying some textbooks. Reviewing the history of Republic of China library science textbook construction offers insights for future library science textbook construction, disciplinary development, and academic research. Based on this, the following

suggestions are proposed:

First, avoid path dependence in learning and borrowing. Much content in Republic of China translation-style and compilation-style textbooks originated from the United States, which was indeed related to the development level of American library science education and library undertakings and the predominance of American-educated scholars. However, this in fact created “path dependence” for disciplinary development. As previously noted, such path dependence may neglect the diversity of library science education as a cultural undertaking and multiple possibilities for disciplinary development, leading to uniformity in educational models [34]. The overall practical orientation of Republic of China textbooks somewhat verifies this point. After 1927, under the leadership of two deans, George A. Works (1877-1957) and Louis R. Wilson (1876-1979), the University of Chicago Graduate Library School championed scientific research, publishing *The University of Chicago Studies in Library Science*, advancing the scientization of library science and its integration with social sciences [35]. However, the University of Chicago’s scientization exploration of library science, particularly its representative *Studies in Library Science* series (many of which were textbooks), did not exert substantial influence on Republic of China library science textbook construction and disciplinary transformation. This “historical misalignment” warrants deep reflection. Today, as the iSchools movement again profoundly influences Chinese library and information science education, greater attention should be paid to different models of American library science education and the diversity of disciplinary education in other countries to minimize the damage of “path dependence” to the discipline.

Second, promote local “new knowledge” into textbooks from both Chinese classical book culture and library practice perspectives. Beyond learning from foreign “new knowledge,” future library science textbook construction can absorb indigenous knowledge from two aspects: On one hand, besides inheriting the intellectual legacy of traditional textual criticism and bibliography, select representative research achievements from recent years in library science and related disciplines (such as Chinese classical philology, historical documentation studies) in areas including bibliography, edition studies, collation, document compilation, lost text recovery, local gazetteers, and book history, and incorporate them into textbook content. On the other hand, grounded in local practice and within an international comparative perspective, summarize and organize the latest practical achievements and original theoretical results that have had important impacts on Chinese library 事业发展, promoting more indigenous “new knowledge” to enter library science textbooks.

Third, re-examine the appropriateness of integrating Chinese and Western knowledge. In Republic of China textbook construction, library scientists diligently worked to integrate Western “new knowledge” with Chinese “old learning.” However, as this paper notes, integrating different knowledge systems from different countries is essentially integrating different cultures, making organic integration rather than mechanical combination extremely

difficult. Undoubtedly, building “Chinese library science” requires integration of Chinese and Western elements, but what integration approach should be adopted? Have existing efforts overlooked the crucial factor of the cultural environment in which academic knowledge exists? For example, if we strip Chinese bibliography of its endowment with traditional Chinese academic culture and humanistic spirit, view it solely from a technical methodological perspective, and simply integrate it with pragmatic, efficiency-oriented Western bibliography and classification methods, we may actually damage its proper academic value. Therefore, in research on library science education history, academic history, and disciplinary history, the relationship between Chinese and Western knowledge and the appropriateness of their integration need to be re-examined.

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