On University Libraries' Two-Way Services to International Users

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ABSTRACT

Under the background of "Double First-Class" construction, the number of international students and teachers of universities is larger and larger, and they have been one of main service objects of university libraries. University libraries should advance with the times, maximize these new service objects and carry out special services. In this article, the current situation of services of Chinese universities represented by "Double First-Class" universities to international users is analyzed, foreign peers' advanced experience is followed, and feasible methods to promote university libraries' multicultural services to international users are discussed, including providing multilingual guidance system to use libraries, constructing multicultural, international library collections, building multilingual websites, operating reading promotion activities geared to the needs of international users, and so on. In addition, library should replace traditional one-way service with two-way mutual service, leading international users to take their advantages of languages to help libraries to improve the construction and services of foreign resources.

Keywords: university library, international user, multi-cultural services, two-way mutual service

1. INTRODUCTION

The 21st century is an era of internationalization of higher education. China's reform and opening up has been continuously promoted, economic and cultural globalization has been further deepened, and information and communication technologies have also developed rapidly. Against this background, China's higher education has accelerated the pace of becoming the world-class university. On the basis of inheriting and carrying forward our own traditions and characteristics, China's higher education has gradually adapted to the development of the world situation and drawn on the experience of international higher education. As a world-class university, it must be people-oriented. It needs to meet two basic requirements: the number of international students and the world-class faculty[1] .As international process of universities, the proportion of international students is bound to expand. Take Xiamen University where the author works as an example, the number of international students enrolled has grown by an average of 25% annually. By the end of 2017, there were 1,437 international students with academic degrees. Of the 5,237 new undergraduate students in 2018, 306 of them were from Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, while 191 were international students. The first batch of Xiamen University Malaysia in 2016 only accepted 200 freshmen，but by 2018 it had reached 4,100 students, of which 2/3 were foreigners[2]. Not only Xiamen University, but the number of international students in all Chinese universities has been rising year by year. For example, Tsinghua University has accumulatively recruited more than 30,000 international students by 2017[3], Peking University has enrolled over 7,000 international students every year[4], and about 7,000 international students study at Fudan University each year[5]. In addition to international students, the number of international teachers is also increasing. From 2008 to 2009, the number of long-term international teachers in Xiamen University has exceeded 100[6]. Like domestic teachers and students, international teachers and students will inevitably become users of university libraries. They regard the library as an important place to acquire knowledge and information, learn Chinese and professional knowledge, conduct scientific research and complete their studies. International user service work, therefore, has become an important part of university library services. "User-oriented and service-oriented" is not only the basic concept of Peking University Library, but also the purpose of all university libraries. Adhering to the principle, it is imperative to carry out diversified services for international users.

However, at present, the research on international user services in university libraries has not been paid enough attention, and the related research results are few. This paper will sort out the current situation of international user services in domestic university libraries, and explore feasible measures. Meanwhile, it is hoped that this paper can serve as a trigger, so as to attract the attention of experts, scholars and peers.

2. SERVICE MODEL FOR INTERNATIONAL USERS

As a 24-hour media platform, the website is the most timely way for the libraries to disseminate information and a convenient way to communicate with users. Its importance is self-evident. Facing the rising number of international users, the library website should reflect its targeted services.

The author has investigated the current situation of the language construction of the websites of 42 "Double First-Class" university libraries that can represent the level of Chinese universities, which can be divided into the following four categories:

One, only Chinese websites. There are 16 "Double First-Class" university libraries without English homepages, with a proportion38.1%, including Nanjing University, Nankai University, Zhejiang University, Renmin University of China, Sichuan University ,Jilin University, Northeastern University ,South China University of Technology, Ocean University of China, Hunan University, Sun Yat-sen University, Central South University, Central University for Nationalities, National University of Defense Technology, Zhengzhou University, Xinjiang University, etc. Among them, the new version of the website of Shandong University has added English conversion, but it has not been completed yet, which also represents a development direction of the language construction of the university library website.

Two, there is an English version of the homepage, but it has two defects: first, there is a problem with the homepage; second, the content is too simple. There are 11 "Double First-Class" university libraries having the problems, with a proportion 26.19%. The former, such as the libraries of Harbin Institute of Technology, Beijing Institute of Technology, and China Agricultural University, etc. They have English pages, but the pages can't be opened. The latter's problem is reflected in the library of University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, University of Science and Technology of China, Southeast University Library. Their English homepages are very simple, and the content contains links to Chinese pages or no content except the library introduction and opening hours.

Three, there is a quite complete English homepage. Libraries other than those listed in the above two categories, such as Peking University, Tsinghua University, Fudan University, Xiamen University and other university library websites have Chinese-English conversion, and their English websites have the advantages of mature construction, complete webpage columns, and informative content.

Four, set up multilingual websites. Among the First-Class university libraries, only the Yunnan University and East China Normal University have multilingual websites. The website of Yunnan University Library is known as "China's first responsive multilingual design website"[7], which provides conversion between Chinese, English, Japanese, Thai, Vietnamese, and Burmese. The website of East China

Normal University Library provides translations in 27 languages, but they only provide links to Baidu translations. The content in the translated pages cannot be opened, and specific operations such as retrieval cannot be performed, too. Shanghai Library is relatively mature in the construction of domestic multilingual library websites. In addition to the Chinese simplified and traditional Chinese websites, it also has foreign language websites in English, Japanese, and Russian. The future website construction of university libraries can learn from it.

Table 1 The current situation of the language construction of the websites of 42 "Double First-Class" university libraries

University libraries	Having only Chinese websites.	A problem with the English website or the content is too simple.	Having a complete English website.	Setting up multilingual websites.
Peking University			√	
Renmin University of China	√			
Tsinghua University			√	
Beihang University		√		
Beijing Institute of Technology		√		
China Agricultural University		√		
Beijing Normal University			√	
Central University for Nationalities	√			
Nankai University	√			
Tianjin University		√		
Dalian University of Technology		√		
Jilin University	√			
Harbin Institute of Technology		√		
Fudan University			√	
Tongji University			√	
Shanghai Jiao Tong University			√	
East China Normal University				√
Nanjing University	√			
Southeast University		√		

3. NEW SERVICE MEASURES FOR INTERNATIONAL USERS

3.1 Building a Multicultural Library Collection with International Features

Collections are not only the material foundation on which libraries exist, but also the necessary conditions for achieving libraries' service goals and a fundamental guarantee for meeting readers' needs. Faced with the new service object of international users, university libraries should conduct targeted research on their needs, the amount of books borrowed, and the utilization rate of resources. Besides, they should analyze and evaluate the collection level of their own related resources. On these foundations, we can build a multicultural collection with international characteristics.

First of all, the library can conduct research on the needs of foreign users by adopting different methods such as different colleges, disciplines, and nationalities. In addition, it can combine the characteristics of the university's professional settings to carry out the compilation of professional literature resources specifically for international users.

Secondly, for years of practice, we find that international users have a strong demand for popular press and multimedia resources in their mother tongue or English. Therefore, university libraries can increase their holdings of periodicals, newspapers, and multimedia resources in their native or English language versions to attract them to visit the library frequently. If the funds permit, it is best to purchase more popular press and classic works in different foreign languages. In this way, it can not only arouse the interest of international users in reading, but also shorten the distance between the library and the world, and increase the internationalization and sense of times of the library.

Thirdly, international users who come to China are bound to have access to Chinese literature resources. It is understood that they have always been interested in Chinese language, culture, society, economy, and history. Moreover, China's political, social, economic, language and cultural books rank among the top five categories of books borrowed by foreign users. Therefore, the university library can adjust the resource collection and compilation according to the corresponding information needs, and improve the work of arrangement, introduction, and promotion of related bibliographies.

3.2 Create an International Humanities Reading Environment and Space

The reading environment is an external force that influences the reading effect. In order to make better use of the library's functions of disseminating knowledge, promoting culture, and carrying out learning and research, the library should create a good reading environment and space according to users' characteristics so as to maximize its service functions. For international users, we should start by improving the library environment, focusing on increasing the internationalization of its environment and space, and providing them with special service places. Such as foreign language resource thematic databases, international user seminar rooms, activity rooms, etc. enhance the attraction of the library to them, so that they can take the initiative to enter the library for reading, self-taught, study, discussion, and even party. For example, Xiamen University Library's "Foreign-Language Book Stacks", "Regional Foreign-Language Shelves", "Xiang'an Foreign-Language Book Area", etc. they all have special reading areas and seminar rooms for international users to carry out activities such as "Chinese Corner". Another example is the Shanghai Library, which has specially opened a " "Foreign Language Reading Area", including "the United Nations Data Depository Library", "German Language Information Area", and "Australian Book Corner". In addition, the Guangzhou Library has also set up a "Multi-Document Library"", which is divided into "American Pavilion", "Korea Pavilion", "German Pavilion" and so on [8]. These changes have increased the internationalization and characteristics of the library environment and strengthened the library's appeal to international users.

Dedicated ports. The English websites of Xiamen University Library and its Malaysian Branch Library both have a "Literature Delivery" port, emphasizing that it is a special service specifically for international users in China and at Xiamen University Malaysia (2/3 are international users). The port is very easy for them to fill in and submit information.

At present, the projects of "CALIS Interlibrary Loan", "CASHL Literature Delivery and Interlibrary Loan" are very rich in resources. CASHL has more than 26 core and important printed periodicals in the foreign humanities and social sciences, nearly 3,000 electronic periodicals, more than 2 million paper books in foreign languages, and over 730,000 electronic books[9]. Although its resources are so huge, it is a pity that it is not fully understood and widely used by international users in universities across the country. University libraries and CASHL should work together to focus on the growing number of international users, guide them to make full use of "Interlibrary Loan and Delivery" services, and provide them with as many resources and services as possible. The future development direction of "Interlibrary Loan" and "Literature Delivery" service should not only help international users to find and borrow more literatures, but also guide them to learn to use this service to fulfill other personalized needs conveniently and accurately, and actively develop more and deeper special services for them.

4. GIVE FULL PLAY TO THE ADVANTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL USERS' LANGUAGES AND CARRY OUT TWO-WAY MUTUAL ASSISTANCE LIBRARY RESOURCE CONSTRUCTION AND SERVICES

On the one hand, international users have different levels of language barriers in Chinese when using the libraries, so libraries need to develop special services for them. Conversely, on the other hand, they also have foreign language advantages. While developing specific services targeted at them, university libraries can use their language advantages to change the traditional one-way service thinking mode and carry out two-way mutual assistance services. At the same time, in this way, they can be guided to give full play to their role, which will adversely affect the resource construction, promotion and service of the libraries.

4.1 Utilizing the Language Advantage of International Users to Serve the Library's Collection of Foreign Language Resources

With the increasing internationalization of China's library industry in recent years, the scale of international book donation has been expanding. It is welcomed by libraries in China due to the huge number of books donated, low prices (some are free), and complete subject categories. These advantages have made it become the most important and cost-effective way to expand library foreign language collection resources[10].For example, Xiamen University Library has the earliest and largest international book donation transfer station in China. Just in 2018, 19,000 foreign-language books donated by international transfer stations have entered the collection and circulated. These donated books come from all over the world, and have the characteristics of complete disciplines and complex and diverse languages, which make cataloging classification and reading promotion difficult. If we make good use of the advantages of international users, and convene international students from different countries, they will help catalogers better understand foreign language book resources in minority languages，more accurately classify and catalog books, and speed up the process of book cataloging, collection and circulation .

4.2 Integrate the Strengths of International Users and Domestic Students, and Carry Out Mutual Learning and Assistance Chinese and Foreign Language Reading Promotion + Activities

University libraries can also take advantage of foreign users in the promotion of foreign language resources and services. For example, through the methods of "Foreign Teacher Guided Reading" and "Recommended Reading for International Students", organize international users to promote collection resources and services. In addition, international and domestic students can be guided to give play to their respective language advantages and jointly organize and launch activities such as "Chinese Corner" and "English Corner". The activities should be the subject of library resources and services and mutually supportive. The "Language Learning Area of Xiang'an Campus Library" of Xiamen University Library has long carried out "Free Talk" activities and guided overseas students to be the speakers of Talk. Other students participate in and share how to use the library, learn Chinese language and culture, and exchange their experiences of living and studying in China. On the contrary, we can also organize relevant activities, which are led by Chinese students and attended by international students. For example, at the Malaysian Campus of Xiamen University, Malaysian students, Chinese students and students from other countries (regions) each account for one third, which is very suitable for carrying out multicultural exchange and mutual learning activities. Based on this, we can carry out various reading promotion activities led by Chinese students to spread Chinese culture, and we can also carry out activities led by Malaysian students or students from other countries and regions to promote cultural exchanges and integration of various countries. Such activities not only promote library resources and services in a lively way, but also provide good opportunities and places for Chinese and international students to learn languages and cultures. They have not only promoted the exchanges between Chinese and international students, enhanced the understanding and friendship between the two sides, but also contributed to the promotion of Chinese culture and the cultural exchange and integration all over the world. This can be said to kill many birds with one stone.

Carrying out two-way mutual assistance services for international users will not only help promote library resources and services, improve the quality of service provided by university libraries for them, but also fully enhance their initiative and stimulate them to actively explore, master and promote books collection resources and services. Help more international users master library knowledge faster and better, and can effectively alleviate the shortage of human resources in libraries, overcome language barriers, improve the quality of library foreign language resources construction, promotion, and services, and achieve a win-win situation.

5. CONCLUSION

In the context of Double First-Class construction, university libraries should keep pace with the times, and pay full attention to the increasing number of international user groups. Depending on the needs of international users and the characteristics of university disciplines, they can take the following ways: First, provide multilingual guidance system to use libraries; second, build a

multicultural collection with international characteristics; third, open an international multilingual website; fourth, improving the multilingual search system; fifth, us "Interlibrary Loan" and "Literature Delivery" ; sixth, set up specialized departments and librarians; Seventh, carry out reading promotion + activities and other methods for international users; in addition, continue to improve the cultural environment and software and hardware facilities of the libraries, while improving the quality of multicultural services provided by international users, give full play to the libraries' cultural and educational functions, enhance its internationalization, and promote the "Double First-Class" construction of universities. At the same time, the library can change the traditional service thinking mode and change one-way service into two-way service. The language advantage of the increasing number of international users can be used to guide them to integrate with Chinese students in the construction, promotion and service of foreign language resources in libraries, develop mutual assistance and learning user services, and achieve win-win cooperation.

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