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RDA Transition in Turkey: Perspectives and Experiences of the Libraries

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ABSTRACT

Information organization as a core component of library and information science consists of many technical processes related to information resources and objects. These processes are mainly shaped by technological developments and user expectations. Conceptual models and standards are also detrimental factors for these processes. In this regard, many awareness raising activities and scientific events related to RDA transition have been carried out in Turkey since 2012. Libraries independently implement RDA rules in their catalogues in Turkey because of the copy cataloguing approaches, attempts to create new collections in new founded universities and efforts for providing user-centred environments. It is detected that there are 10 libraries using RDA rules for their information resource description processes. In the light of this information, this study aims to examine the perspectives of libraries which implement RDA rules in Turkey. Accordingly, a structured interview form containing ten open-ended questions was flourished with the aim of gathering qualitative data. In order to obtain deeper results interviews were carried out with cataloguing experts and decision makers in these processes. Results exposes that the current situation of Turkish libraries in RDA implementation, experienced difficulties and their perspectives related to transition process in Turkey. As an originality value, this study is the first study indicating perspectives and experiences of Turkish libraries which implement RDA rules.

KEYWORDS

CITATION

Introduction

As an organization system, libraries are known as the institutions which organize their information resources according to international standards with the aim of meeting user expectations and needs. Bibliographic records created as a result of organization processes are essential data to meet user needs for libraries. They can also be stated as one of the interaction environments for decision making about the usefulness of resources related to a particular information need. Furthermore, these records are original and organizational data created and processed in line with libraries' own workflows.

Advancements in technology and developed standards about resource description processes provide efficient and interactive presentation of bibliographic records by highlighting links and relationships with other information resources. However, implementation of the standards contains a set of planning and strategic decision making processes. As an innovative standard in information organization, Resource Description and Access (RDA) rules require a preparatory and planning stage for libraries who would like to increase their interaction environments with recent technologies. In this point, libraries generally carry out following steps:

- updating existing infrastructures,

- improving human resources with in-service trainings and other awareness raising activities,

- developing policies to manage transition processes effectively,

- implementing RDA rules in their all collections.

There are many studies mostly focused on staff trainings for RDA implementation in the related literature. Furthermore, there are also studies analysing transition processes and barriers for implementing RDA rules. These studies and published reports can be seen as guides considering experiences and major steps for the libraries aiming to improve their conditions to implement RDA rules. Working groups such as European RDA Interest Group (EURIG) make valuable contributions to implementation of RDA rules in both libraries and countries. As a member of EURIG, Turkey is represented by two LIS departments, Hacettepe University and Ankara University, both located in Ankara. There are many attempts to implement RDA in Turkey since 2012. RDA transition efforts started in Turkey with a workshop organized in 2012 and a RDA Turkey working group was established. At this workshop, plans were made to create RDA terminology, develop subject and name authority headings, design educational materials, and organize education to make cataloguers more aware of RDA. Additionally, two meetings were organized at the Turkish National Library with the participation of scholars, cataloguing librarians and decision makers. The main aim of these meetings was to develop an action plan for the transition processes. In the end of the meetings, decisions were made related to terminological studies, creation of national authority files, infrastructure developments and training activities. Many awareness raising activities (seminars, trainings and conferences) were carried out with the collaboration of Ankara University, Hacettepe University and Turkish LIS associations between 2012 and 2014. In 2013, the RDA brochure designed by the JSC was translated into Turkish and conferences were held by national and international specialists in RDA in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. All of these studies

were carried out with the contributions of the RDA Turkey working group, URLA, and the faculty members in the departments of library and information science (LIS). In the light of this information, this study aims to analyse libraries implementing RDA rules in Turkey. In line with the described aim, experiences and perspectives of the libraries as well as problems faced during the transition processes are examined in the study. In the end of the study, results obtained from analysis are evaluated and recommendations are presented.

Literature Review

Libraries are institutions which implement innovative advancements to increase visibility and efficiency of their collections. One of these innovations is experienced in resource description processes. As an innovative standard, RDA is also one of the topics that libraries attempt to implement. Many studies are being conducted on the RDA rules published in 2010 and used from outside the US since 2013. As one of these studies, libraries in United Kingdom and their RDA implementations were analysed. Study results exhibited that RDA rules were mostly used by academic libraries and the number of public libraries implementing RDA rules was smaller (Danskin, 2013). Similarly, RDA implementation preferences of EURIG member organizations were surveyed in 2012 and 2013. It was highlighted that interoperability is the main reason for RDA implementation. It was also pointed out in the study that implementing RDA provide long-term advantages such as cost efficiency and productivity. Furthermore, translations of RDA were shown as significant approaches for solving some problems faced in practice (Danskin and Gryspeerdt, 2014).

It is remarkable that there are researches conducted to review previous RDA related literature. In this context, Tosaka and Park reviewed RDA literature and classified studies. According to Tosaka and Park, studies explain differences of RDA from AACR, RDA and related concepts, and RDA user studies. They also recommend that more studies demonstrating practitioners' perspectives on RDA should be carried out (Tosaka & Park, 2012).

Practical studies on RDA divulge another aspect of the RDA implementation and transition. These studies are significant in terms of reflecting experiences and implementation phases. It is seen that libraries were generally incline to publish their tests and experiences. "Report and Recommendations of the U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee" published by U.S. RDA Test Coordinating Committee is one of these studies. It provides many useful information and recommendations for institutions aiming to implement RDA rules. Similarly, Stanford University Libraries and Kent State University Libraries published their RDA test reports and with this reports, they provided transition documents that can be used as best practices (Lorimer and De Groat, 2011; McCutcheon, 2011).

Cataloguing policies were also discussed in context of RDA rules in the literature (McCutcheon, 2012). In this regard, Maurer and Panchyshyn (2014) emphasized in their study that RDA transition should be managed effectively and managers should take an active role in the development processes of cataloguing policies.

Trainings of librarians are one of the topics appeared in first RDA related studies (Hitchens and Symons, 2009; Sanner, 2012). Maurer and Panchyshyn (2014, 266) state that staff training is the

most surveyed topic in RDA related studies and they explain that training constitutes only one aspect of RDA implementation. The necessity of analysis for other decision making and infrastructure phases was also pointed out in this study.

RDA implementation processes were one of the issues discussed in the studies. In this regard, Cronin (2011) described staff training, cataloguing policies and procedures, preparation of automation systems, integration of RDA with MARC, authority control, and costs as the processes to be considered by institutions for RDA implementation (Cronin, 2011).

Reviews related to studies on RDA show firstly conceptual studies appeared in the literature and they were followed up by empirical studies. In the conceptual framework of the topic, relationships between RDA, AACR, models and MARC were examined in the studies (McCutcheon, 2011). On the other hand, Sanchez published the book chapter titled *RDA, AACR2, and You: What Catalogers Are Thinking* and shared results of a survey applied to cataloguing librarians for measuring their perspectives and perceptions about RDA (Sanchez, 2011). Acedera (2014) conducted a research on librarians in Philippines and pointed out their training needs. Moreover, 2015 was referred as the RDA transition year in the study (Acedera, 2014).

RDA transition processes are widely discussed in the literature. Particularly, the special issue published by Cataloging and Classification Journal in 2014 enlightens developments about RDA transition in different countries from all over the world. One of the manuscripts published in this issue emphasises on RDA transition in German Speaking countries such as Germany, Austria, and German speaking part of Switzerland (Behrens, Frodl & Polak-Bennemann, 2014). Plus, Italian and Spanish translation of RDA and encountered problems during the translation periods were expressed in the literature (Bianchini & Guerrini, 2016; Garcia, 2014). RDA implementations in twelve European countries were analysed by another study carried out in 2017. The results of the study unveiled that European institutions shows great demand for taking part of the development of RDA (Ducheva & Pennington, 2017). Moreover, implementation of RDA in Iran National Bibliography and its efficiency were empirically analysed by examining catalogue records (Pazooki, Zeinolabedini & Arastoopoor, 2014). Besides these studies, implementation of RDA rules in countries like Israel and Canada were surveyed by the studies (Goldsmith & Adler, 2014; Cross, Andrews, Grover, Oliver & Riva, 2014). In addition, the RDA implementations in far-eastern countries such as Australia, China and Singapore were also demonstrated in the literature (Luo, Zhao & Qi, 2014; Parent, 2014; Choi, Yusof & Ibrahim, 2014).

As in other countries, there are many studies related to RDA carried out in Turkey. In parallel with the first studies in the literature, RDA was conceptually expressed in the first studies in Turkey. These studies addressed developments related to transition to RDA from AACR (Bayter, 2012a; 2012b). Points to be taken into account by Turkish libraries for RDA transition phases were described in the studies as well (Özel, 2015). Apart from conceptual studies, perceptions and awareness levels of librarians about RDA transition and implementation were surveyed and results obtained from the analysis were published in international scientific journals (Atılgan, Özel & Çakmak, 2014; 2015). Lastly, some libraries implementing RDA in their cataloguing processes shared their experiences via published proceedings (Beşir, 2016; Teoman & Efe, 2016).

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Methodology

This study aims to evaluate transition experiences, perspectives and future perceptions of Turkish libraries which implement RDA rules in their cataloguing workflows. Pursuant to determined aim, this study presents a research conducted in libraries creating RDA based records in Turkey. This study also provides current RDA implementation processes in Turkey as well as describing strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats experienced in these processes. According to research objectives, the research questions are described as follows:

– What kind of infrastructure possibilities do libraries have for RDA implementation?

– How do RDA implemented libraries in Turkey evaluate current cataloguing and transition processes in Turkey?

– What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats experienced by libraries during the transition phases?

In the light of research objectives and questions, firstly RDA implemented libraries were detected in the study. The data gathered from 10 university libraries which are all libraries using RDA rules in Turkey. In order to get depth knowledge for the research a structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions is designed to get qualitative data from the experts and authorities in cataloguing units of the libraries. Plus, integrated library systems are also analysed within the scope of the research. The libraries provided data for this study are given in Table 1.

Library	Province	University Status
Atılım University Kadriye Zaim Library	Ankara	Private
Boğazici University Library	İstanbul	State
Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf University Library	İstanbul	Private
Istanbul Technical University	İstanbul	State
İzmir Institute of Technology Library	İzmir	State
Koç University Suna Kıraç Library	İstanbul	Private
MEF University Library	İstanbul	Private
Özyeğin University Library	İstanbul	Private
Sabancı University Information Center	İstanbul	Private
Süleyman Demirel University Library	Isparta	State

Table 1. Geographic Distribution of Participant libraries

Qualitative data obtained from structured interview form were coded and classified by their similarities to report meaningful results related to research objectives. In this regard, findings handled under the three titles consisting of general situation, transition experiences and general perspectives of the libraries.

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Findings

Findings presented here particularly point the general implementation reasons, transition experiences and their general structures in terms of SWOT components, and general perspectives on RDA implementations in Turkey.

General Structures of the Libraries

In this section Integrated Library System (ILS) preferences of the libraries were firstly analysed. Findings obtained from web pages of the libraries were given in Table 2.

ILS Preferences	f	%
By vendor type		
International	9	90
Local	1	10
By system structure		
Commercial	9	90
Open-source	1	10
Automation Systems		
Koha	1	10
Millennium	4	40
Sirsi Dynx	4	40
Yordam BT	1	10

Table 2. Integrated Library System Preferences of Participant Libraries

In Table 2, it is seen that most of the RDA implemented libraries (9 libraries) use international systems and it is also possible to say that most of them (9 libraries) make payments for their ILSs, while only one library prefers open source system. Table 2 also displays that Sirsi Dynx and Millennium systems are mostly preferred by Turkish libraries who use RDA rules in their cataloguing processes. In relation with technical infrastructure and human resources, it is also remarkable that one library uses Koha automation system and improve it by RDA plugins.

Cataloguing authorities were asked to express their motivations that make them implement RDA rules in their libraries. The expressions of the authorities coded and classified by their topics are shown in Table 3.

Motivations	f	%
Adaptation to new developments and standards	7	70
Increasing access to information resources	6	60

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Motivations	f	%
Creating more detailed and clear catalogue records	5	50
Sharing cataloguing data and creating relational catalogue records	2	20
Solving problems faced in resource description processes	1	10

Table 3. Motivations for implementing RDA in the libraries

As it can be understood from Table 3, cataloguing authorities in surveyed libraries mostly (seven libraries) expressed that they implemented RDA rules to adapt to new developments and standards. It is also possible to say that increasing access to information resources and creating more detailed and more user-friendly catalogue records are other factors for decisions related to RDA implementation. Sharing cataloguing data and creating relational records, and solving problems related to resource description processes are lowly expressed statements in the study.

Problems experienced by libraries during the RDA transition were surveyed with another open-ended question. Four libraries stated that they experienced problems related to translation and interpretation of RDA rules. Lack of implementation information of cataloguing staff was stated as a problem by two libraries. Other problems inferred from the statements of cataloguing authorities are as follows:

- Failure of fully nationwide transition and lack of national best practices,

- Insufficient interoperability capabilities of libraries,

- Insufficiencies of library automation systems,

- Resource description problems due to the nature of Turkish works,

- Lack of a national policy.

On the other hand, two libraries expressed that they did not experience a problem during the implementation of RDA rules in their cataloguing processes.

Strenghts, opportunities, weaknesses and threats in transition

In the second part of the study, cataloguing authorities were asked to explain strengths of their libraries in RDA implementation phases. Findings show that three libraries indicated that qualification level of cataloguing staff is one of their strong sides while other three libraries placed technical infrastructure among their strengths. Libraries also specified creating catalogue records in English language, policy documents developed for resource description processes, and managerial perspectives in this question. It is remarkable that one library stated being a new founded library as a strength.

Secondly, opportunities in RDA implementation were questioned in the study. Technological infrastructure and managerial perspectives related to RDA implementation were placed under the

title of opportunities by four libraries. On the other hand, the authorities described more different factors in this question. These factors evaluated as opportunities can be listed as follows:

– Innovative working conditions and environment,

– Wide professional network and collaboration opportunities,

– Having a qualified staff for creating RDA records,

– Since there is no need to study on old records, being a new founded university library

– Having a strong and high quality cataloguing data for transmission and mapping approaches.

Points defined as threats by cataloguing authorities were investigated in this part of the study. Conversion processes of old records created by AACR rules, changes in managerial frameworks in libraries, resistance to change are threats that each of them indicated by two libraries. Moreover, updating authority files and increase in workloads of cataloguing librarians are other listed threats in the study.

General perspectives on RDA implementation

In the third section of the study, general perspectives of cataloguing authorities about RDA implementation, training activities, strategies and RDA perceptions were evaluated by open-ended questions. In this regard, cataloguing authorities were asked to which training activities they carried out for RDA implementation processes. Five libraries provide in-service training activities for RDA implementation while three libraries started to implement RDA rules without any training activities. Expressions of cataloguing authorities remarkably specify that analysis of best practices, following up scientific literature and events, and information exchange with other colleagues are the activities performed by cataloguers to learn RDA implementation phases. These findings evince that some libraries and cataloguers attempt to carry out training activities individually to implement RDA rules and self-development efforts of the cataloguing librarians.

RDA perceptions of cataloguing authorities were also surveyed with another open-ended question. From the answers to this question, it is possible to infer that cataloguing authorities in the libraries perceive RDA as a new standard and a tool that makes catalogue records more understandable and readable not only for users but also for machines. In participants' words representing their perspectives, RDA is

… a new standard used for AACR.

… a set of rules that creates functionality for bibliographic records and also provides visibility to libraries in semantic web environments.

… a new approach for creating detailed bibliographic records.

… a new form of AACR which is improved with technological aspects, we perceive it as a set of rules that we need to prepare ourselves to implement it so we need clear expression of these rules, we have some questions about its sufficiency level for the near future.

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… a new way of machine to machine interaction, supports a holistic approach by using relational data in catalogue records.

Strategies are another major factor that designates perspectives of the libraries. In this regard, cataloguing authorities were asked to describe their strategies for RDA implementation. Qualitative findings obtained from this question reveal that three libraries took the advantage of being a new founded university library and they directly started implement RDA rules in their cataloguing processes. On the other hand, four libraries preferred to split their catalogues into two parts. They keep their old records in AACR and create catalogue records of new resources by RDA rules. Furthermore, one library explains that they update their AACR based catalogue records while they use RDA rules for their new resources. Similarly, one library stated that they use RDA rules for description of new resources, and update only editions and other versions of them previously created by AACR rules. One library expressed that they are planning to update AACR based records with RDA and improve their technical infrastructure.

In the end of the survey, evaluations of cataloguing authorities related to current situation about RDA transition in Turkey were gathered via another open-ended question. Participants state that there are distributed RDA transitions in Turkey and there is a need for nationwide guidelines and policies. Beyond these statements, they explain that the lack of Turkish translation of RDA rules causes to cataloguing and interpretation problems. Findings also uncover that participant libraries highlight a training needs for all Turkish libraries related to RDA implementation. According to participants' statements, use of the automation systems that do not comply with international standards create difficulties for RDA transition.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Resource Description and Access as a new standard provides remarkable advantages for the visibility of library collections. However, implementation of RDA in libraries requires a set of planning and strategic decision making phases including infrastructure improvements. In this regard, libraries update their authority files, create interactive platforms that allow the use of open data resources, and assess their existing infrastructure facilities to improve them for meeting technical requirements of RDA. On one hand, authority institutions like national libraries implement RDA rules in their collections. On the other hand, they adopt understanding of pioneering by developing national plans and policies that support smooth and effective RDA implementation. It is known that these institutions contribute to revisions and improvements of RDA rules with their publications and reports. Having efficient national libraries involves in development phases of RDA as well.

Transition processes of RDA differ among the countries as a result of the managerial perspectives and cultural structures. In this point, some countries manage transition processes with a centralized structures and develop nationwide policies and implementation guidelines, while others with a distributed structure for RDA transition. Libraries in such countries individually implement RDA rules. Moving from this point of view and literature review, management perspectives, interpretation of the rules and cultural differences can be evaluated as the potential factors effecting RDA transition in countries.

Turkey is among the countries in which RDA transitions are carried out individually by libraries. It is also known that RDA related studies first appeared in Turkish LIS literature via scholarly publications and scientific events. They were followed by in-service trainings of cataloguers organized by associations and LIS departments. Furthermore, Turkish LIS departments also empowered their Information Organization curriculums with RDA and related concepts. On the other hand, libraries started to implement RDA rules in their cataloguing processes by improving their managerial and technical infrastructures. In this regard, this study examines Turkish libraries that implemented RDA rules in terms of their characteristics, strengths, weaknesses, problems and experiences via structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions. Structured interviews were carried out with cataloguing authorities from ten academic libraries that are all libraries implementing RDA in Turkey during data collection period. Most of these libraries belong to new founded universities in Turkey and they directly implemented RDA rules by taking advantage of being a new founded university library. In general, it is possible to say that the percentage of RDA implemented libraries are in quite low levels (under 10%) in comparison with the number of universities in Turkey. Results show that RDA implementation reasons of analysed libraries differs from similar survey results carried out in the literature. In this point, interoperability opportunities expressed as a RDA implementation reason are at lower levels in the study. On the contrary, EURIG survey in 2013 emphasizes interoperability opportunities as one of the major implementation reason (Danskin and Gryspeerdt, 2014). The following conclusions were reached regarding the study about transition to RDA in Turkey:

– RDA implementing libraries perceive RDA not only as a standard but also as a tool of connectivity, visibility and machine to machine interaction.

– Lack of national authority files makes transition processes more difficult for libraries in Turkey.

– There is a necessity for awareness raising activities especially for decision makers and experts in cataloguing units in Turkish libraries.

– There is revision requirement for technical infrastructures of the Turkish libraries for those especially using local ILSs.

– Lack of Turkish translation of RDA rules causes interpretation problems in resource description processes.

In the light of obtained findings, it is clearly understood that the management of RDA transition processes in a centralized structure by authority institutions and creation of documented policies and plans can provide more controlled and smooth implementation of RDA rules in Turkey.

Lastly, it is clear that managing the RDA transition processes in a centralized structure, and establishing well-documented policies and plans will contribute to the development of a more controlled and smooth implementation phases in Turkish libraries. It is also possible to say that the Turkish translation of RDA rules that will be undertaken by authority institutions can move interpretation barriers experienced during the implementation phases. It is also confirmed by the studies given in the literature review. Additionally, transition process reports that can be published

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by the RDA implemented institutions will be a guide for other Turkish libraries planning to implement RDA rules.

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