

ISO

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

ISO RECOMMENDATION R 639

SYMBOLS FOR LANGUAGES, COUNTRIES AND AUTHORITIES

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BRIEF HISTORY

The ISO Recommendation R 639, *Symbols for Languages, Countries and Authorities*, was drawn up by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (Principles and co-ordination)*, the Secretariat of which is held by the Oesterreichischer Normenausschuss (ÖNA).

Work on this question by the Technical Committee began in 1951 and led, in 1964, to the adoption of a Draft ISO Recommendation.

In December 1964, this Draft ISO Recommendation (No. 769) was circulated to all the ISO Member Bodies for enquiry. It was approved, subject, to a few modifications of an editorial nature, by the following Member Bodies:

Argentina	India	Romania
Austria	Israel	Spain
Chile	Italy	Switzerland
Czechoslovakia	Korea, Rep. of	Turkey
Denmark	New Zealand	U.A.R.
France	Pakistan	United Kingdom
Germany	Poland	U.S.A.
Greece	Portugal	U.S.S.R.

No Member Body opposed the approval of the Draft.

The Draft ISO Recommendation was then submitted by correspondence to the ISO Council, which decided, in November 1967, to accept it as an ISO RECOMMENDATION.

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FOREWORD

Co-operation and communication between experts engaged in all branches of science and technology are assuming ever-increasing importance as essential conditions for progress, both within each country and between countries. For this exchange to be successful, technical terms should have the same meaning for everyone who uses them. This goal can be achieved only if there is general agreement on the meaning of these terms. Hence the importance of technical vocabularies, in which concepts and terms, as well as their definitions, are standardized (terminological standards). It is just such standards which aid to assure mutual understanding.

These vocabularies are prepared by the National Standards Associations and by the Technical Committees of ISO. During the work on terminology carried out by these bodies, it quickly became apparent that it was necessary to have directives applicable to any field of knowledge and that it was possible to establish them.

Accordingly, ISO set up a Technical Committee, known as ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (Principles and co-ordination)*, with the mission of finding out and formulating general principles on scientific terminology and lexicography.

The ISO Recommendations prepared by this Technical Committee deal with problems that fall under the following four headings:

1. Vocabulary of terminology;
2. Procedure for producing national or international standardized vocabularies;
3. National and international standardization of concepts, terms and their definitions: principles for their establishment and criteria of value;
4. Layout of monolingual and multilingual vocabularies, including lexicographical symbols.

The ISO Recommendation included in class 2 deal with guidance in the organization of the work, while the other classes are concerned with technical details.

The following ISO Recommendations will be prepared:

Class 1

ISO/R ... * Vocabulary of terminology

Class 2

ISO/R ... ** Guide for the preparation of classified vocabularies

Class 3

ISO/R ... *** Naming principles

ISO/R ... International unification of concepts and terms

Class 4

ISO/R ... Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies

ISO/R ... Layout of monolingual classified vocabularies

ISO/R ... Lexicographical symbols

ISO/R ... Symbols for languages, countries and authorities

* At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 781

** At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 792

*** At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 676

SYMBOLS FOR LANGUAGES, COUNTRIES AND AUTHORITIES

INTRODUCTION

This ISO Recommendation deals with items included in class 4, mentioned in the foreword.

Its purpose is to provide symbols showing

- to which language a term or document belongs (language symbols);
- in which country a term is used (country symbols);
- from what authoritative source a term or definition has been taken (authority symbols).

These symbols may be used in vocabularies, in treatises on terminology, and in any other text where a brief indication of language, country or authority is useful.

1. LANGUAGE SYMBOLS

1.1 Form of language symbols

Letter symbols or UDC numbers * may be used at will as language symbols.

Examples: E (or En) or = 20 for English
F (or Fr) or = 40 for French

Two tables showing these symbols are appended to this ISO Recommendation (Annexes A and B).

1.2 Application of language symbols

Language symbols are necessary in the following particular instances:

1.2.1 TO INDICATE THE LANGUAGE USED

1.2.1.1 Generally

Example: In a list of delegates issued at the meetings of the ISO Council, the symbols (E), (F) and (R) may indicate whether the delegates spoke in English (E), French (F) or Russian (R).

* UDC: Universal Decimal Classification published by national standards organizations under authority of the International Federation for Documentation (FID), The Hague.

1.2.1.2 *At the head of documents*

Example 1: The drawing up of documents in English, French or Russian respectively may be indicated by adding the letters E, F or R. *Example:* ISO/TC 27 (India - 3) 19 E.

(Quotation from the ISO Directives, clause A 6.2.3., document ISO/DIR (GS-20), January 1966).

Example 2: A well-known watch factory encloses with its five-language catalogue an introduction in only one of the five languages, according to the request of the addressee. These interchangeable introductions are held together by tapes which are only marked by one of the five letters E, F, D, I or S.

1.2.1.3 *In bibliographies*

In multilingual bibliographies the language symbols are added to the title of the publications recorded.

1.2.2 TO INDICATE THE LANGUAGE TO WHICH A TERM BELONGS

1.2.2.1 *In treatises on terminology*, the language symbols are generally put in front of the term, either singly or combined in groups.

Example 1: E *positron* D *Positron* I *positrone* F *positon* S *positón*

Example 2: EFR *ion* D *Ion* SvPl *jon*.

1.2.2.2 *In vocabularies and dictionaries*, language symbols are especially useful to distinguish similar languages such as Italian and Spanish, Norwegian and Danish. They normally precede the terms they refer to (see also Annex C).

Examples: E *ion* or = 20 *ion* I *ione* or = 50 *ione*
 D *Ion* = 30 *Ion* S *ión* = 60 *ión*
 F *ion* = 40 *ion* R *ion* = 82 *ion*
 E *ion* // D *Ion* // F *ion* // I *ione* // S *ión* // R *ion*
 or = 20 *ion* // = 30 *Ion* // = 40 *ion* // = 50 *ione* // = 60 *ión* // = 82 *ion*

In vocabularies or dictionaries including only a few languages, the language symbols may be omitted.

If, however, the vocabulary or dictionary already consists of a file with separate slips for each language, or is so designed that it may be divided into such slips, the language symbols are indispensable.

In vocabularies and dictionaries of international words, the language symbols are placed after the terms they refer to, so as not to interfere with the alphabetic sequence.

Example:

<i>ion</i>	EFR	<i>positon</i>	F
<i>Ion</i>	D	<i>positón</i>	S
<i>ión</i>	S	<i>positron</i>	ESv
<i>ione</i>	I	<i>Positron</i>	D
<i>jon</i>	SvPl	<i>positrone</i>	I
		<i>pozyton</i>	Pl

2. COUNTRY SYMBOLS

2.1 Form of country symbols

There exist two internationally agreed sets of symbols for countries which could be used in publications on terminology. They are:

- country initials for motor vehicles
- UDC numbers.

The country initials for motor vehicles are restricted to States. In default of an internationally recognized complete set of country symbols applicable to all fields, it is recommended that either one of the above-mentioned sets should be used.

When country initials for motor vehicles are used they are put between strokes, e.g. /USA/, to distinguish them clearly from language and authority symbols.

UDC numbers for countries are always enclosed in parentheses, e.g. (73), meaning the United States.

2.2 Application of country symbols

Country symbols are used to indicate the linguistic area in which a term is used. They are applied, as needed, either with language symbols (as shown in the last column of Annex A) or independently.

Country symbols may be used:

2.2.1 AT THE HEAD OF DOCUMENTS AND IN BIBLIOGRAPHIES

This usage is relatively rare.

2.2.2 IN PUBLICATIONS ON TERMINOLOGY OR IN VOCABULARIES AND DICTIONARIES

Country symbols are added to a term if it is not used in all the countries where the language is spoken. In such cases the term will generally be followed by a synonym marked by another country symbol.

2.2.2.1 *In treatises on terminology*, the country symbols may either precede or follow the term they refer to.

Example: The element for connecting a commutator segment to the winding is called
F *jonction au collecteur*; E *commutator lug* /GB/; *commutator riser* /USA/ (or:
E/GB/ *commutator lug*; E/USA/ *commutator riser*).

2.2.2.2 *In vocabularies and dictionaries*, country symbols follow the terms they refer to.

Example: E *flame-proof* /GB/; *explosion-proof* /USA/
F *antidéflagrant*
I *antideflagrante*
D *explosionsgeschützt*.

3. SYMBOLS OF AUTHORITIES

3.1 Sources quoted as authorities

Among the documents which may be used as sources * of terms or definitions, national and international standards, recommendations and agreements command attention in the first instance by their authority. They may be classified as follows:

- (a) Recommendations of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), formerly ISA.
- (b) Standards issued by the national standards organizations (e.g. BS, NF), see Annex D.

* For "sources" in general see Recommendation ISO/R 639, *Guide for the Preparation of Classified Vocabularies (Example of Method)*, clause 2.1 (at present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 792).

- (c) Documents and recommendations issued by specialized international professional organizations (e.g. IEC, IIV).
- (d) Documents issued by certain specialized national organizations (e.g. ASTM, VDE).
- (e) International agreements between States (e.g. UIT).
- (f) National acts (e.g. MEG = Mass- und Eichgesetz, i.e. the Austrian Measures and Standards Act).

3.2 Form of authority symbols

The symbols for the above mentioned documents take the form determined for them by the organizations and authorities which have issued them.

Authority symbols are normally written without full stops, e.g. ISO, NF, USAS, DIN, IEC. Forms as B.S., U.N.I.T. are exceptions. They should be replaced in multilingual vocabularies by the forms BS, UNIT, without full stops.

3.3 Application of symbols of authority

- 3.3.1 If in a vocabulary or dictionary a term or a definition is to be marked as established or approved by an important organization or authority, then an authority symbol may be put after this term or this definition.

Example: E *flame-proof* BS; *explosion-proof* USAS
F *antidéflagrant* NF

- 3.3.2 Authority symbols are superfluous in vocabularies which as a whole are national standards. They are, however, used to designate synonyms which are standardized in another country with the same language and which are added for information.

Example: Terms standardized in the United States and mentioned in a standardized vocabulary of the BSI.

- 3.3.3 Authority symbols can be useful also in an official international vocabulary to designate standardized synonyms differing in countries with the same language. In these cases authority symbols are preferred to country symbols.

- 3.3.4 Wide use of authority symbols is recommended for private vocabularies and dictionaries and for treatises on terminology where standardized and non-standardized terms and definitions are intermingled.

4. COMBINATION OF SYMBOLS

There will often be occasion to mention several symbols after a term or a definition. In such cases, the following principles should be observed:

- (a) Where an authority symbol is used, the corresponding country symbol should be omitted.
- (b) Several authority symbols may be used at the same time. On the other hand, country symbols will usually stand alone, because of their exclusive character (see clause 2.2.2).

Example: In a vocabulary in which only the British and the U.S.A. usage of English are taken into consideration, one of the following five indications may appear after a term:

/GB/ or BS
/USA/ or USAS
USAS, BS.

ANNEX A

CLASSIFIED LIST

of languages and their symbols, arranged by families

ANNEXE A

LISTE PAR PARENTÉ

des langues et de leurs indicatifs

Indices UDC CDU	Language names Nom des langues		Language symbols	Combinations of language and country symbols
	English Anglais	French Français	Indicatifs de langue	Combinaisons d'indicatifs de langue et de pays
INTERLANGUAGESINTERLANGUES				
= 089.2 = 089.6 = 089.7	Esperanto Interlingue (= Occidental) Interlingua		Eo Ie Ia	
GERMANIC LANGUAGESLANGUES GERMANIQUES				
= 20 = 30 = 393.1 = 393.6 = 396 = 397 = 398	English German Dutch Afrikaans Norwegian Swedish Danish	Anglais Allemand Néerlandais (Hollandais) Afrikaans Norvégien Suédois Danois	E, En D, De Nl Af No Sv Da	E/GB/, E/USA/, E/AUS/, E/CDN/ D/D/, D/A/, D/CH/, D/I/, D/R/, D/USA/ Nl/NL/, Nl/B/ Af/ZA/ No/N/ Sv/S/, Sv/SF/ Da/DK/
ROMANCE LANGUAGESLANGUES ROMANES				
= 40 = 50 = 590 = 60 = 690	French Italian Romanian Spanish Portuguese	Français Italien Roumain Espagnol Portuguais	F, Fr I, It Ro S, Sp, Es Pt	F/F/, F/B/, F/CH/, F/CDN/ I/I/, I/CH/ Ro/R/ S/E/, S/RA/, S/MEX/, S/USA/, S/PI/ Pt/P/, Pt/BR/
LATIN, GREEKLATIN, GREC				
= 71 = 75	Latin Greek	Latin Grec	L, La G, Gr	

Indices UDC CDU	Language names Nom des langues		Language symbols	Combinations of language and country symbols
	English Anglais	French Français	Indicatifs de langue	Combinaisons d'indicatifs de langue et de pays
SLAVONIC LANGUAGES			LANGUES SLAVES	
= 82	Russian	Russe	R, Ru	R/SU/
= 83	Ukrainian	Ukrainien	Uk	Uk/SU/
= 84	Polish	Polonais	Pl	Pl/PL/
= 850	Czech	Tchèque	Cs	Cs/CS/
= 854	Slovak	Slovaque	Sk	Sk/CS/
= 861/862	Serbo-Croat	Serbo-croate	Sh	Sh/YU/
= 863	Slovenian	Slovène	Sn	Sn/YU/
= 867	Bulgarian	Bulgare	Bg	Bg/BG/
INDIAN LANGUAGES			LANGUES INDIENNES	
= 912.3	Sanskrit	Sanskrit	Sa	
= 914.3	Hindi	Hindi	Hi	Hi/IND/
= 914.31	Urdu	Urdu	Ur	Ur/IND/, Ur/PAK/
SEMITIC LANGUAGES			LANGUES SÉMITIQUES	
= 924	Hebrew	Hébreu	He	He/IL/
= 927	Arabic	Arabe	Ar	Ar/ET/, Ar/IRQ/ Ar/SYR/
TURANIAN LANGUAGES			LANGUES TOURANIENNES	
= 943.5	Turkish	Turc	Tr	Tr/TR/
= 945.11	Hungarian	Hongrois	Hu	Hu/H/
= 945.41	Finnish	Finnois	Fi	Fi/SF/
ASIAN LANGUAGES			LANGUES DE L'ASIE	
= 951	Chinese	Chinois	C, Ch	C/RC/
= 956	Japanese	Japonais	J, Ja	
= 957	Korean	Coréen	Ko	
LANGUAGES OF OCEANIA AND INDONESIA			LANGUES DE L'OCÉANIE ET DE L'INDONÉSIE	
= 992.21	Bahasa Indonesia Indonesian	Bahasa Indonesia Indonésien	In	In/RI/

For all languages, two-letter symbols are provided.

For the principal languages only there are, in addition, variants consisting of a single letter. Examples: D(e), E(n), F(r), R(u). The one-letter variants are preferable in such cases where they can be considered sufficient to inform the reader without any doubt.

Pour toutes les langues, des indicatifs à deux lettres sont prévus.

En outre, pour les langues principales, il existe des variantes à une seule lettre. Exemples: D(e), E(n), F(r), R(u). Celles-ci seront employées de préférence dans tous les cas où elles apparaîtront comme suffisantes pour renseigner le lecteur sans aucun doute possible.

ANNEX B

ALPHABETICAL LIST
of letter symbols for languages

ANNEXE B

LISTE ALPHABÉTIQUE
des indicatifs littéraires de langue

Language symbols Indicatifs de langue	Language names Noms des langues		Indices UDC CDU
	English Anglais	French Français	
Af	Afrikaans	Afrikaans	= 393.6
Ar	Arabic	Arabe	= 927
Bg	Bulgarian	Bulgare	= 867
C	Chinese	Chinois	= 951
Ch	Chinese	Chinois	= 951
Cs	Czech	Tchèque	= 850
D	German	Allemand	= 30
Da	Danish	Danois	= 398
De	German	Allemand	= 30
E	English	Anglais	= 20
En	English	Anglais	= 20
Eo	Esperanto	Espéranto	= 089.2
Es	Spanish	Espagnol	= 60
F	French	Français	= 40
Fi	Finnish	Finnois	= 945.41
Fr	French	Français	= 40
G	Greek	Grec	= 75
Gr	Greek	Grec	= 75
He	Hebrew	Hébreu	= 924
Hi	Hindi	Hindi	= 914.3
Hu	Hungarian	Hongrois	= 945.11
I	Italian	Italien	= 50
Ia	Interlingua	Interlingua	= 089.7
Ie	Interlingue (= Occidental)	Interlingue (= Occidental)	= 089.6
In	Indonesian	Indonésien	= 992.21
It	Italian	Italien	= 50
J	Japanese	Japonais	= 956
Ja	Japanese	Japonais	= 956
Ko	Korean	Coréen	= 957
L	Latin	Latin	= 71
La	Latin	Latin	= 71
Nl	Dutch	Néerlandais (Hollandais)	= 393.1
No	Norwegian	Norvégien	= 396
Pl	Polish	Polonais	= 84
Pt	Portuguese	Portugais	= 690
R	Russian	Russe	= 82
Ro	Romanian	Roumain	= 590
Ru	Russian	Russe	= 82
S	Spanish	Espagnol	= 60
Sa	Sanskrit	Sanskrit	= 912.3
Sh	Serbo-Croat	Serbo-croate	= 861/862
Sk	Slovak	Slovaque	= 854
Sn	Slovenian	Slovène	= 863
Sp	Spanish	Espagnol	= 60
Sv	Swedish	Suédois	= 397
Tr	Turkish	Turc	= 943.5
Uk	Ukrainian	Ukrainien	= 83
Ur	Urdu	Urdu	= 914.31

ANNEX C

SEQUENCE OF LANGUAGES
IN VOCABULARIES

In vocabularies containing many languages the following sequence should be observed:

The languages in which definitions are given precede those in which only the terms are enumerated.

Within these two groupings the languages should follow one another as shown in the table on page 13.

The sequence of languages described above should also be observed in a vocabulary when letter symbols are omitted. In vocabularies using UDC numbers as language symbols the order of the languages should follow the UDC numbers, the two afore-said groups being maintained.

NOTES

1. The table is compiled according to the following principles:
 - (a) Languages are grouped by families, i.e. in conformity with the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC).
 - (b) Within families, the languages symbolized in the table by a single letter precede always those languages designated in the table by two-letter symbols.
 - (c) Within the two groups formed according to principle (b), languages are arranged in the alphabetical order of their symbols.
2. There are vocabularies in which the definitions are given in one language only, or in several languages of the same family only. In this case it may be useful to present immediately after the defining language(s) all the other languages of the same family (all Slavic languages, for instance) and then only the other families.

ANNEXE C

ORDRE DES LANGUES
DANS LES VOCABULAIRES

Dans les vocabulaires contenant beaucoup de langues, celles-ci devraient être disposées dans l'ordre suivant:

Les langues dans lesquelles sont données les définitions précèdent celles dans lesquelles sont énumérés les termes seuls.

A l'intérieur de ces deux groupes, l'ordre des langues devrait être conforme à celui du tableau de la page 13.

L'ordre de présentation décrit ci-dessus devrait être observé également dans les vocabulaires où les indicatifs littéraux sont supprimés. Dans les vocabulaires utilisant les indices CDU comme indicatifs de langue, l'ordre des langues doit suivre les indices CDU, à l'intérieur des deux groupes décrits ci-avant.

NOTES

1. Le tableau a été dressé selon les principes suivants:
 - a) Les langues sont groupées en familles, c.-à-d. conformément à la Classification Décimale Universelle (CDU).
 - b) A l'intérieur de chaque famille, les langues désignées dans le tableau par des indicatifs à une seule lettre précèdent toujours les langues désignées dans le tableau par des indicatifs à deux lettres.
 - c) Dans chacun des deux groupes formés conformément à la règle b), les langues se suivent dans l'ordre alphabétique de leurs indicatifs.
2. Dans certains vocabulaires, les définitions ne sont données que dans une seule langue ou dans plusieurs langues d'une même famille. Dans ce cas, il peut être utile de présenter immédiatement, après la langue (ou les langues) de définition, toutes les autres langues de la même famille (toutes les langues slaves, par exemple), et ensuite seulement les autres familles.