

TO: Joint Steering Committee for Development of RDA

FROM: Bill Leonard, CCC Representative

SUBJECT: Internationalization and RDA Appendix A Capitalization: Discussion Paper

Background

Members of the Canadian Committee on Cataloguing and Library and Archives Canada personnel participated in the translation of RDA from English into French. During that process it became evident that in some places the structure of instructions, the order of lists, or the general instructions were English-based. Some, but not all, of these aspects could be converted to follow French language practice by following the principles expressed in RDA 0.11 Internationalization or by deducing the editorial intention (such as in applying alphabetical order to the Glossary or within lists). In some cases the cues needed to make this determination were incomplete or contradictory. The translation team repeatedly questioned whether the English-based features needed to be retained to respect the intention of RDA or whether they could be replaced by French language practices. However, in some cases desirable localization could not be implemented by the translation team because it was too far-reaching and disruptive.

Canadian cataloguers use either the French version of RDA or the English version or both in the case of Library and Archives Canada staff. Working in a bilingual environment raises the awareness of differences between the two texts and variations in application depending upon the language of cataloguing.

Various differences in capitalization practice between English and French were the impetus for the CCC proposal [6JSC/CCC/12](#). That proposal would have added an explicit statement concerning capitalization of the first element in an ISBD area. The proposal also mentioned other issues relating to internationalization of Appendix A. Even though the paper was not approved, there was encouragement from JSC to keep the broader issue of internationalization alive. CCC shared its list of concerns with the DNB representative who had been involved in the translation of RDA into German. It was agreed to present issues of common concern to translation teams for JSC's consideration.

The following sections discuss the issues and present potential approaches for their resolution.

Discussion

Not all languages are written in scripts that include both upper and lower case forms of letters. However, the concept of capitalization applies, among others, to many languages of European origin into which RDA has been, or may soon be, translated. RDA presently includes sections providing guidance for 23 languages or language families, in addition to English.

Cataloguers frequently deal with resources written in a variety of languages other than the language or

languages preferred by their home agency since libraries of all kinds frequently collect resources in a range of languages. Even when the content of a resource is primarily in the agency's preferred language, it may include parallel data elements that must be transcribed respecting the conventions of each language. Thanks to the inventiveness of creators and publishers, the cataloguer cannot count solely on the presentation of information on preferred sources to produce a cataloguing record which will respect the conventions of the languages involved. In their daily work cataloguers need to be able to quickly and efficiently identify the applicable instructions in languages they know more or less well.

The details of capitalization practice vary considerably between languages and indeed have varied within individual languages over time. As a result, language-specific style manuals can be found to give contradictory advice. Even when a generally accepted authoritative manual exists for a language (not always the case, for instance in French there is no style manual accepted in both France and Canada) most such manuals are designed for general writing and are not geared to providing guidance for the situations most encountered in a cataloguing context. Another drawback to directing cataloguers away from RDA to language-specific style manuals, is that these manuals are written in the target language, making them a challenge to use when dealing with a language the cataloguer does not completely master.

Appendix A -- Capitalization-

The issues identified regarding Appendix A can be grouped into the following general themes:

- Structure (including the overall structure of the appendix and ordering principle for the language-specific instructions, and ordering of subsections within each language);
- Situations where there are no instructions providing guidance regarding specific elements;
- Incomplete or outdated language-specific practices.

1) Structure.

The present structure of Appendix A is carried over from AACR2, and was devised to be as concise as possible with the view that it would be published in a print publication and would be applied only by English-language cataloguing agencies. These considerations are less and less relevant in the present online environment.

Present outline

A.0-A.1 Scope and General Guideline
A.2-A.9 Instructions organized by data element
A.10-A.30 English language
A.31-A.32 General Instructions for other languages
A.33-A.55 Individual Other languages

The other languages are presented in alphabetical order by the English name of the language or language family.

The provisions at A.37 Danish, A.45 Norwegian, A.54 Swedish consist solely of a reference to A.49 Scandinavian languages even though A.49.5 (Personal Pronouns) has sub-instructions by language, but

Romance languages (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish) are handled individually, as are Slavic languages. A.55 Ukrainian consists solely of a reference to A.48 Russian; A.51 Slovak consists solely of a reference to A.36 Czech (Bohemian) (note the synonym given in parentheses).

The structure of the appendix does not lend itself to application in languages other than English. After some sections that cover how certain data elements should be handled, there are rules for English capitalization, fairly complete and based on CMOS. Then the rules for other languages are given, but ONLY when those rules differ from the corresponding English rule. Hard enough to use for English-language cataloguing agencies, but essentially impossible to use in translation. It also gives the impression that other languages are to be seen as exceptions to English rather than having complete systems of their own.

Citing [6JSC/CCC/12](#) (p.2):

“The very ordering principle of the appendix, alphabetical order by the English name of the language, cannot be preserved in translation. Appendix A is structured such that the capitalization rules for languages other than English are formulated as exceptions to English language capitalization rules. This view of other languages as exceptions is not particularly friendly to the international adoption of RDA. When applying RDA in translation it is also extremely difficult for cataloguers to consult the rules for the language of the catalogue, as these are incomplete and must be used in conjunction with English language rules, some of which are not applicable. Some standard rules for French are missing (and were indeed missing in AACR2), this is probably also the case for other languages. Any action to mitigate the English language bias and complete the instructions for other languages would require considerable restructuring.”

Order of instructions A.31 to A.55

The instructions for the other languages are ordered alphabetically by the English name of the language, resulting in an arbitrary order in translation. One suggestion that had been made in the past is to order by ISO 2-character language codes, these codes are less English-based than the 3-character language codes which are essentially the MARC 21 codes. Another idea might be to group languages by language family as rules for this sort of thing tend to be similar within a language family. On the other hand, non-linguists probably find this order just as arbitrary as a foreign alphabetical order.

Content of language-specific sections

There is no standard template for the sub-sections for individual languages. The coverage of the sections varies considerably in fullness, and sometimes topics are covered under a single instruction in one language that are separate in another related language. This variation increases the difficulty of consulting and comparing the conventions between languages.

2) Guidance for the capitalization of specific elements_

RDA A.2 to RDA A.9 consist of instructions for the capitalization of the first word in certain data

elements, both transcribed elements and elements used within access points. Most of these instructions were carried over from AACR2, but due to the differences in organization of the data with RDA, some gaps may need to be addressed.

2.1) Access points for expressions

Names of languages are expression attributes and could potentially be used in the authorized access point representing an expression. However, there are no instructions in A.3 Titles of Works, to A.4 Titles of Manifestations to capitalize names of languages used as attributes of an expression. For a cataloguer working in an English-language catalogue, English language practice (included in the last paragraph of A.12 Names of Peoples, etc.) of capitalizing names of languages would unconsciously be applied resulting in the language term being capitalized in the access point. Cataloguers who might not share the same impulse to unconsciously follow English language capitalization practice would not capitalize the language name when used as an expression attribute. In French, language names are not capitalized unless they occur at the beginning of a new sentence (see RDA A.40.1 Proper Names and their Derivatives). It is not evident whether each addition to an access point should be considered to be the equivalent of the start of a new sentence. Clearly, this results in a difference in practice depending upon whether the language of description is English or French. The alternative would be to build access points that break the established capitalization practice of the language of description. An earlier CCC attempt to propose a fast track change to A.3.2 to address this gap was not approved.

2.2) Identification of a Manifestation

Elements within a composite production, publishing, distribution or manufacture statement
In AACR2 there were directives to capitalize the first word of each ISBD area, and not elements within it. English language cataloguers will not question the practice of supplying *Place of publication not identified* for the first element within the composite statement (RDA 2.8.2.6) while supplying *publisher not identified* for an intermediate element (RDA 2.8.4.7). This practice might not explicitly replicate English sentence style, but it certainly pays homage to English style.

As mentioned in a 2013 CCC paper [6JSC/CCC/12](#), there are gaps in the directives on where to capitalize when following ISBD presentation, nor is there a reference to ISBD to fill in these gaps. Now it is not clear what to do with a publisher, distributor, manufacturer preceded by a statement of function, and this is coming out randomly. The difference in capitalization between the supplied data *Place of publication not identified* and *publisher not identified* will look appear more inconsistent when these elements are removed from the context of composite statements

3) Incomplete or outdated instructions in specific languages

During the French translation project the instructions for Slavic languages were noticed to be in error and incomplete by a native speaker consulted by the translation team. These provisions had been the same in AACR2 and transferred unchanged. Fast-track corrections were approved to deal with the immediately apparent deficiencies. The same situation might be the case in other languages.

3.1) German in RDA A.41

Certain provisions of RDA A.41 do not follow the latest edition of the accepted style manual for German, "***Duden, Die deutsche Rechtschreibung***".

3.2) Names of languages and peoples in French

The English practice is to capitalize names of languages. When in English the name of a language is used adjectivally to describe a group of people, RDA A.12 gives the instruction to capitalize the name. French language practice differs from English. In French, the rule is to capitalize all demonyms (but NOT the names of languages). -

However in RDA A.40.1 the third paragraph says: Capitalize nouns indicating nationality: les Français. Since French practice is to capitalize all demonyms, the instruction is too restrictive and should be revised to include all names used to designate the residents of a locality (city, province, state, region, country, etc.). The English instructions at A.12 do not explicitly say to capitalize the names labelling the residents of cities, provinces, states, or regions. This is just an example of the situations that are not fully covered in A.40.

3.3) Latin capitalization

The rule (in the English text of AACR2 and RDA) is to follow the English rules. In the French RCAA2 the rule was to follow the French rules, giving quite different results for many titles and corporate body names. The French RDA translation team decided not to adapt the text, so Latin capitalization in the French RDA follows English language practice. This results in noticeable differences between RCAA2 and RDA practice, that look especially odd because they do not conform to French practice.

Discussion points

CCC suggests these points to promote comment and discussion.

1) *An ideal structure for the language specific instructions would be flexible, expansible and provides a logical order in English as well as in translation.*

It may be useful to consider a different structure for Appendix A in general, which reduces the bias toward English language practice.

1a) *Develop a standard template which would be filled in for each language.*

In recognition that an appendix on capitalization practices is useful for cataloguers, it may be useful to restructure the appendix using a standard template for each language. Each section in the template could be mapped to the specific instructions or group of instructions it would be used in.

1b) *Reducing the normative status of Appendix A*

Retaining capitalization instructions close-at-hand is a convenience for cataloguers and supports efficiency of the task. Reducing the normative status of Appendix A to that of recommended best practices instead of strict rules, could encourage the use of judgment, and provide latitude to adapt over time as practices within each language adapt.

2) Review sections A.2 to A.9 to ensure that all RDA data elements that might require guidance are indeed covered.

In this review it is important to keep in mind the need for the instructions to be translated into other languages and so any dependency on the conventions of the language of the catalogue should be avoided.

3) Review language-specific instructions with experts from the languages involved to fill-in any gaps and update provisions to conform to current style.

Such a review was done for the English provisions to conform to the latest edition of CMOS. A similar exercise is desirable for French and German.

The re-formatting of the language-specific sections to a common template will also reveal situations where guidance is lacking and could be filled in during such a review.

4) Form a working group to review the possibilities for restructuring Appendix A.

CCC is willing to lead such a working group.