The Implementation of Nested Quotation Marks

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Abstract

In a lot of languages, quotation marks are set using characters. In some styles, e.g. `czech.sty`, `slovak.sty`, a special macro command is used. However, none of these methods allows for correct typesetting of nested quotation marks.

This contribution describes a solution to this problem in LaTeX. A set of macros in a special TeX-style has been composed and settings for various languages have been created. The presented solution is user-friendly and general. In addition, the standard settings can be configured by user.

Streszczenie: W wielu językach składa się cudzysłowy bezpośrednio przy użyciu znaków. W niektórych stylach używa się poleceń specyficznych (tzw. makropoleceń). Niemiej żaden z tych sposobów nie prowadzi do poprawnego składu cudzysłowa wewnętrznego. Artykuł opisuje rozwiązanie ww. problemu w systemie LaTeX. Przedstawione rozwiązanie jest bardzo proste i pozwala na konfigurowanie domyślnych ustawień przez użytkownika.

Introduction

Recently, I was preparing a book for print. The book consisted mainly of narrations and passages from newspapers. In direct speech as well as in passages, direct speech or other sections of text stated in quotation marks appeared again.

Two things made the situation more challenging:

1. The source text was not accurate enough. For example, quotation marks were missing, quotations were not clearly marked, etc.

2. Till the very end, it was not clear whether direct speech and quotations of the highest level were to be stated in quotation marks or marked in a different way, e.g. indentation or italics. This would affect the format of quotation marks of the lower levels.

   Leaving this issue without resolving it would decrease the efficiency of TeX work. Any change would then have to be done through manual corrections in the entire text.

Review

Czech Using Czech quotation marks is described in many sources ([8, 9, 5]). Described rules can be summarized as follows:

1. Quotation marks in the „“ format have the highest priority.
2. Nested quotation marks are possible. However, the number of levels of nesting is not defined.
3. The format using pairs ‚‘ and »« has the same priority, but pair ‚‘ is very common in the second level.
4. If necessary, other character pairs can be used for any level.

Slovak Slovak quotation marks are described in [10]. The format using the pair „“ is preferred in Slovak. In printed text, it is possible to use the character pair ‚‘ on the first level. This pair in Slovak can be used to mark text on the second level. Other characters are not mentioned. Multiple nesting is also possible.

English In English, the character pair “” is used for quotation marks. In printed text, the pair ‘’ can be used ([3]).

German In German, there are two types of quotation marks [2]. The pair „“ is used for marking direct speech, while the pair ‚‘ marks parts of sentences or words.

Spanish In Spanish, direct speech and parts of sentences are marked in the same way as in English (“”). However, words are marked in French quotation marks (« »). [6]

Italian In Italian, the basic quotation is made by the apostophe pair (‘ ’). Words are emphasized by French quotation marks (« »). [7]

Portuguese In Portuguese, quotation marks are identical with those in English. [1]

Russian In Russian, there are two types of quotation marks: French type « » and original Russian ones « ».

Polish A very detailed description of Polish quotation marks is published in [11]. The authors described not only the usage but also how the quotation marks look like. This is very interesting from the typographic point of view. Below is a summary of their description:

1. The highest priority is reserved for character pair „ ”.
2. The second level can be marked by French pairs « » or » « .
3. The pair (’ ’) can be used for the second level in professional, particularly linguistics literature.

Style for TEX `uviq`

These facts and conclusions have been used to create the style `uviq.sty` of LaTeX 2.09 [4], and to adapt this style for LaTeX 2_ε. In this version (1.04), some macros from `czech.sty` or `slovak.sty` are necessary. However, these will be replaced by internal macros in the future.

Macro `\uviq` All text to be put in quotation marks must be marked with structure command `\uviq`.[1] This macro uses a counter `@uvLevel` which increases by one when the macro starts, and decreases by one when the macro stops. In this way, the level of nesting is known at all times. After incrementation, the correct opening quotation character is selected. When the quotation marks are closed, the macro `\closeuviq`[2] is called and the correct closing character is used.

Example:

```
The speaker said: \uviq{In the
Bulletin, it was stated:
\uviq{We have \uviq{clever}
quotation marks!}}
```

The speaker said: “In the Bulletin it was stated: ‘We have «clever» quotation marks!’”

How to set characters pairs In this style, there are five pairs of macros prepared to be used at five levels. These macros are internal and cannot be directly changed by user. User settings can be defined by a special macro command `\UVIQ` with three parameters: 1) level number, 2) description of opening quotation mark, and 3) description of closing mark. This command cannot be used as a parameter of `\uviq`.

Example: Default settings for Czech

```
\UVIQ{1}{\clqq}{\crqq}
\UVIQ{2}{\clq}{\crq}
\UVIQ{3}{\clqqq}{\crqqq}
```

Example: Default settings for Polish

```
\UVIQ{1}{\clqq}{\crqquk}
\UVIQ{2}{\flqq}{\frqq}
```

If this setting is to be changed to a “linguistic” one, the following definition is used:

```
\UVIQ{2}{\plq}{\crquk}
```

How to set the number of quotation mark levels As mentioned above, this style makes it possible to use a maximum of five levels of nesting. This number can be increased if necessary. However, three levels suffice for practical use. Therefore, the counter `@uvMaxLevel` was implemented. The counter stores the highest level of nesting for the language in question. When macro `\uviq` is called more often than allowed, an error message is displayed.

The value of the counter `@uvMaxLevel` can be set only in the style file.

Deafult setting and switching among languages When this style is joined to a document, Czech settings are active. Macro `\uviqInit` allows one to change the setting to other languages. It has one parameter in which an abbrevitation of language, similar to the abbrevitation of the respective country, is used. In this version, abbrevitations `cz`, `sk`, `pl`, `us`, `uk`, `gb`, `de`, `fr`, `es`, `it`, `pt`, `ru`, and `rufr` are supported.

These initializations define character pairs and the highest level of nesting for different languages. For character pairs, see page 54.

Notes

Russian: Settings in this version are prepared for characters in the `wncyr` font. Similar characters in `csr` font family, i.e. Czech version of Computer Modern, can be switched on using the setting command `\uviqInit{rufr}`.

Relationship between `\uviq` and `\uv`: The `\uviq` macro does not prevent the user from using the `\uv` macro from national styles `czech` and `slovak`.

[1] This procedure is analogous to marking by macro `\uv` known from Czech and Slovak styles.

[2] This principle is also used in Czech and Slovak styles.

Substitution of quotation marks by other characters is allowed in many languages. A dash used instead of opening quotations marks expresses very often the beginning of direct speech, while closing quotation mark is set as a new line or a new paragraph, e.g. `\UVIQ{1}{---}{\\}`

Conclusions

The macros presented in this article allow one to address the challenge described in the Introduction. The solution is general and enables the user to make his or her own modifications of quotation marks. It is up to the user to decide how many pairs and levels to use. One thing to keep in mind is that changes should not impair the clarity of the text.

Reference

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[10] Pravidlá slovenského pravopisu. [Rules of Slovak Ortography.] 1st ed. 533 pp. Bratislava: Veda, 1991.

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