

THE STRUCTURE OF LISTINGS OF REFERENCES

The way in which the components of language are weaved in order to achieve a structure that allows an adequate connection of the components and ideas, or syntax, is, curiously, little respected in some aspects of scientific edition. It so happens in the particular case of the manner in which bibliographic references are listed. Numerous systems have been proposed to this end, such as those from professional associations like the APA (American Psychological Association) or the JAMA (Journal of the American Medical Association), among many others, or as the editorial guidelines from prestigious academic institutions (Chicago, Harvard, Oxford, etc.). The proposed structures leave syntactic gaps that the editorial world ought to overcome. Also, the styles utilized in the natural sciences and in the social sciences differ, being difficult to conceive the usage of a generalized system.

Every journal or publishing house employs the system of their choice. *Interciencia* uses a minimalist scheme in its reference lists, avoiding redundant or unnecessary elements. There are components, such as the titles of papers or books, that differ in their presentation, which necessarily is related to some syntactic or style system. In the case of *Interciencia* the titles are differentiated using round low case letters (except for terms that should be in italics or proper names with capital letters), while the titles of books, theses, reports or other monographic works are written in italics and each word (except for conjunctions, prepositions and articles) is started with a capital letter.

Perhaps the most diversified and less coherent usage is that of separators or spacers. The space between words or signs, which is the most universal and conceptually simple separator, is not respected when other separating elements that are unnecessary, such as commas, points, semi-colon, colon and parenthesis are used. The fact is that in the case of, for instance, last name and initials of an author there is no justification for the use of comma and space between them and, the initials of the name can be joined together, without separation by space, comma or point between them. On the other hand, it does make sense to separate different authors with a comma (in addition to the space), so as to as-

certain as clearly as possible their individuality, but it lacks logic to use point, space and parenthesis between the last of the authors and the year of publication, it being enough to use space and parenthesis or, alternatively, point and space. Also, between the parenthesis with the year and the title of the paper it is aimless to separate anymore than with a space or a point in case a parenthesis is not used.

Another disparate element is the way in which words that are alien to the citation itself, which can generally be abbreviated, such as 'editor', compiler', 'translator', etc. In all these cases, *Interciencia* capitalizes them and abbreviates using the point, often leading to a double separation (if they are enclosed in a parenthesis, for instance).

When the source being referenced is a monographic work its title is not abbreviated, but if the source is a journal, the title is abbreviated and commonly written in italics or another outstanding typographic style. In this case, *Interciencia* utilizes point and space, the first of these separators being the key for the identification of the abbreviated term. There are many listings of such abbreviations that include the most relevant journals, the most important fact being in these cases that the reader is not to face ambiguities between the names of different journals and that the indicated one be easy to identify.

The way to indicate volumes and their parts should also be clearly stipulated. *Interciencia* does not include the issue number when the page numbering is sequential within a given volume, which is the norm nowadays, particularly in electronic media, and considers it to be sufficient to indicate the volume (in italics), separated by a colon from the initial and final pages (in round type, separated by a hyphen only). When it is clear that the page numbering is not sequential in a given volume, the issue number is given in parenthesis and rounds, between the volume and the colon.

MIGUEL LAUFER
Editor, *Interciencia*