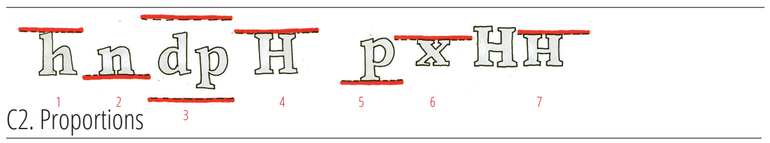
Multilingual Typeface Anatomy Terminology

Developing a proposal for a comprehensive translation framework applicable to multiple languages

C1. Measurement Lines

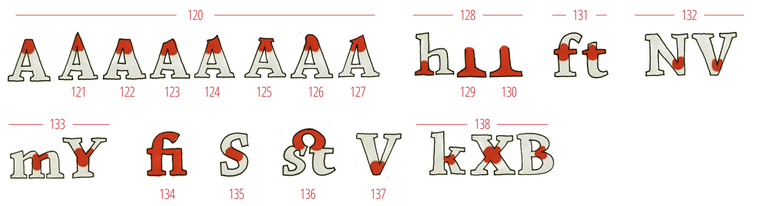


C2. Proportions

C3. Positive and Negative Shapes

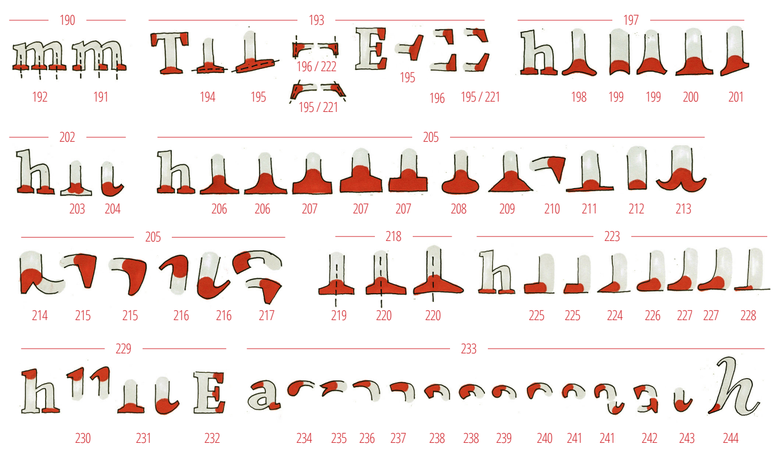
C4. Strokes

C5. Stroke Connections



C6. Stroke and Glyph Properties

C7. Terminal and Serif Properties



C8. Optical Adjustments

C1. Measurement Lines

1	**Ascender Line**	E P S F
2	**Baseline**	E P S F D
3	**Beard Line**	E P S
4	**Cap Line**	E P S F
5	**Descender Line**	E P S F
6	**Meanline / Midline / Waist Line**	E P S F D
7	**Small Cap Line**	E P

C2. Proportions

8	**Ascender Height**	E P S
9	**Beard / Reserve Space / Line Space**	E P S
10	**Body (Height) / Glyph Space**	E P S F D
11	**Cap Height**	E P S F D
12	**Case / Glyph Form**	E P S F D
13	Lowercase / Minuscule	
14	Small Cap	
15	Uppercase / Majuscule / Capital	
16	**Descender Height / Length**	E P S
17	**Set Width**	E P S D
18	**x-Height**	E P S F D

C3. Positive and Negative Shapes

19	**Aperture**	E P S
20	Closed	
21	Open	
22	**Counter / Negative Space**	E P S F D
23	Closed	
24	Open	
25	**Extender**	E P F
26	Long	
27	Medium	
28	Short	
29	**Eye**	E P S F D
30	**Foot**	E P D
31	**Glyph**	E P S F
32	**Head**	E P S D
33	**Italic / Cursive**	E P F
34	**Kerning**	E P S F D
35	**Optical Corrections / Ajustments**	E P S F
36	**Shoulder**	E P S F D
37	**Sidebearing / Exterior Shape / Letterspace**	E P
38	**Stroke / Ductus**	E P S D
39	**Throat / Aperture**	E
40	**Torso / Eye**	E P

C4. Strokes

41	**Arc / Arch (Stem)**	E P S
42	**Arm**	E P S F D
43	Lower	
44	Medium	
45	Upper	
46	**Ascender**	E P S F D
47	Clubbed	
48	Curved	
49	Diagonal	
50	Vertical	
51	**Bowl**	E P S F D
52	**Chin / Jaw / Hook**	E P S
53	**Cross Stroke**	E P S F D
54	**Crossbar / Bar / Horizontal Stroke**	E P S F D
55	Hairline	
56	Forked	
57	**Curl / Swash**	E
58	**Curve**	E P S D
59	Oval	
60	Round/Circular	
61	Round/Slightly Square	
62	Square	
63	Ogee	
64	Exagerated	
65	Open	
66	Closed	
67	Jaws Close-set	
68	**Descender**	E P S F D
69	**Diacritic**	E P F D
70	**Dot / Jot / Tittle**	E P S F D
71	**Ear**	E P S F D
72	**Entry Stroke / Head Serif**	E P S F D
73	**Exit Stroke**	E P S
74	**Flag**	E P D
75	**Hook**	E P S D
76	Head	
77	Foot	
78	**Jaw / Hook**	E P S
79	Open / Detached	
80	Closed	
81	Pelican	
82	**Knee**	E
83	**Leg**	E P S D
84	Vertical	
85	Curved	
86	**Link / Connection / Joint / Connecting Stroke / Hairline Arc / Branching**	E P S F D
87	**Lobe / Bowl**	E P S F D
88	Upper	
89	Lower	
90	**Loop / Lobe / Bowl**	E P S F D
91	**Neck / Link**	E P S D
92	**Serif**	E P S F D
93	**Spine / Double Curve**	E P S D
94	**Spur / Barb**	E P S D
95	**Stem**	E P S F D
96	Vertical	
97	Diagonal	
98	Thin / Hairline	
99	Thick / Main Stroke	
100	**Stem Body**	S
101	**Swash / Flourish**	E P S
102	Attached	
103	Dettached	
104	Ascender	
105	Descender	
106	Flag	
107	Plume	
108	Finial	
109	Tongue	
110	**Tail / Finial**	E P S F D
111	Straight	
112	Curved.	
113	Attached	
114	Dettached	
115	Cross Stroke	
116	**Talon / Link / Heel / Entry Arc**	S D
117	**Terminal**	E P S
118	**Throat**	E P D
119	**Belt / Tongue / Tarabita**	S

C5. Stroke Connections

120	**Apex**	E P S F D
121	Pointed	
122	Flat	
123	Oblique	
124	Concave/ Hollow	
125	Extended	
126	Rounded / Blunt	
127	Sheared	
128	**Bracket / Fillet**	E P S F D
129	Adnate / Abrupt / Angular	
130	Bracketed / Transitional / Transitive	
131	**Cross / Crossing / Junction / Crossbar**	E P S
132	**Crotch**	E P
133	**Fork**	E
134	**Ligature**	E P S F D
135	**Thorax / Thoracic (middle) Spine**	
136	**Tie / Link**	E P
137	**Vertex**	E P S D
138	**Waist / Juncture**	E P S D

C6. Stroke & Glyph Properties

139	**Contrast**	E P S D
140	Exagerated	
141	High	
142	Medium	
143	Low	
144	Null / Monoline	
145	**Curve Treatment / Properties**	E
146	Continuous	
147	Angular	
148	Broken/Fractured	
149	**Modulation**	E P S D
150	High	
151	Medium	
152	Low	
153	Null / Monoline	
154	**Slope / Slant / Posture / Style / Axis**	E P S D
155	Roman / Normal / Vertical	
156	Sloped / Slanted Left / Backslant	
157	Oblique / Sloped / Slanted Right	
158	Italic (Italic, Cursive, Round, Spencerian)	
159	**Stem Properties (Edges)**	E
160	Parallel	
161	Convex	
162	Concave / Concave Elements	
163	Irregular	
164	Flared	
165	**Stress / Bias / Shadow Axis**	E P S F D
166	Vertical	
167	Angled / Humanist / Oblique	
168	Null / Monoline	
169	Horizontal	
170	**Stroke Transition**	E
171	Abrupt / Angular / Instant / Broken	
172	Bracketed / Gradual	
173	Transitive / Branching	
174	**Stroke With**	E P S
175	Upstroke / Thin Stroke / Hairline	
176	Stem / Main Stroke	
177	Downstroke / Thick Stroke	
178	Horizontal / Bar / Arm	
179	Crossbar	
180	Cross Stroke	
181	Diagonal / Leg / Arm	
182	**Weight / Weight Axis**	E P S F D
183	Bold	
184	Regular	
185	Light	
186	**Width / Width Axis**	E P S D
187	Expanded / Wide	
188	Normal	
189	Condensed / Compressed	

C7. Terminal & Serif Properties

190	**Reflection**	E P
191	Unilateral	
192	Bilateral	
193	**Serif Angle / End**	E P
194	Horizontal	
195	Sloped / Oblique / Splayed	
196	Vertical	
197	**Serif Cup**	E
198	Cupped	
199	Concave	
200	Flat / Horizontal	
201	Oblique	
202	**Serif Inflexion / Transition**	E P
203	Reflexive	
204	Transitive	
205	**Serif Shape**	E P S F D
206	Transitional / Classic / Bracketed	
207	Slab / Squared	
208	Rounded / Blunt	
209	Wedge	
210	Point	
211	Hairline	
212	Sans / Grotesk	
213	Hybrid	
214	Spur / Barb	
215	Beak	
216	Hook	
217	Sheared	
218	**Serif Symmetry**	E P
219	Symmetric	
220	Assymetric / Calligraphic	
221	Symmetric Splayed	
222	Symmetric Vertical	
223	**Serif Taper**	E
224	Wedge / Point	
225	Squared / Vertical	
226	Blunt / Round	
227	Sharp / Refined	
228	Line	
229	**Terminal / Serif Position**	E P S
230	Top Serif / Entry Stroke / Head	
231	Terminal / Foot / Exit	
232	Arm	
233	**Terminal Shape**	E P S F D
234	Teardrop / Drop / Lachrymal	
235	Tuscan / Bifurcating	
236	Tapered / Finial	
237	Straight	
238	Sheared	
239	Ball	
240	Beak	
241	Hook	
242	Spur	
243	Pot Hook / Transitive Serif	
244	Entasis	

C8. Optical adjustments

245	**Counter Overshoot**	
246	**Ink Trap / Ink Well**	E P S
247	**Light Trap**	E P S
248	**Notch**	F
249	**Optical Axis**	E
250	Caption	
251	Text	
252	Display	
253	**Overhang**	E P S
254	**Overshoot**	E P S D
255	**Taper / Link / Joint / Branching**	E P S

Abstract

This work proposes a comprehensive typeface anatomy terminology framework in English. The list of 255 entries results from the analysis, collection and synthesis of 2072 terms found in selected literature references in five different languages: English (E); Portuguese (P); Spanish (S); French (F); German (D). It aims to provide a reference tool for digital TD (Typeface Design) professionals, educators and students alike. It expands existing terminologies, adding to the classification and identification of specific language terms. It also proposes an original organization where the individual entries (#) are organized into 8 Categories (C), that aggregate specific terms and their properties.

It's a work in progress that aims to contribute to the proper identification of a common set of terms to be used and localized into different languages.

Introduction

This work is motivated by the need to have a clear, current and comprehensive terminology on TD that can be used by the different stakeholders in digital font production. On the one hand, it aims to identify all the relevant terms related to the anatomy of digital TD. On the other hand, it aims to detect and to reduce the ambiguity found not only in our native language (Portuguese), but also in the other languages analysed. This seems to be a legacy of the movable type technology in the current digital reality. Nevertheless, proposing a synthesis of clear and unique terms is a difficult and time consuming, if not impossible task. Therefore, this terminology framework does not aim to define a fixed set of universal terms. Instead, it aims to identify a comprehensive set of singular terms and their variants in order to provide the grounds for discussion in different local, linguistic, historical, artistic and technological contexts.

Methodology

This work was divided into 4 phases. The first phase consisted in the analysis of 26 literature references (Amado & Silva, 2012). The second phase consisted in the analysis 31 additional references:

- 7 in English (Baines & Haslam, 2002; Carter, Day, & Meggs, 2011; Clair & Busic-Snyder, 2005; Felici, 2003; Highsmith, 2012; Pohlen & Setola, 2011; Shaw & Goldstein, 2012);
- 6 in Portuguese (Bringhurst, 2006; Caja, 2007; Farias, 2004; Lessa, 2012; Mello, 2008; Neder, 2009);
- 11 in Spanish (Bibidesign, 2009; Henestrosa, Meseguer, & Scaglione, 2012; Mendez, 2009; Montesinos, Hurtuna, & Montesin, 2007; Moreno, 2004; Pepe, 2010; Rivera, 2009; Torres, 1991; UNLP, 2012; Unna, 2008, 2011);
- 4 in French (Bayle, 2006; Munsch, 2011; Porchez, 1999; Bracquemond, 2010);
- 3 in German (Cheng & Krause, 2006; Forssman & Jong, 2004; Schaffrinna, 2009).

The third phase currently in progress consists in requesting the help of national and international TD experts and educators. We've identified more than 50 relevant experts that can provide feedback and validation, but we expect the list to grow with feedback. The final phase will consist in the publication of the terminology with the terms, illustrations and with a brief description of each in the different languages.

Up until now, 35 experts have been contacted mainly by email, and 14 have provided feedback that has been, or is being incorporated into the final multilingual version. The current list of 102 unique terms and 153 properties was compiled from a total of 2072 terms found in literature references and proposed by experts. The English language is being used as a central axis for the translation and synchronization of the terms and, therefore, presented here. Following a common practice found in the literature references, the entries were compared and synthesized into an illustrated numbered list. The entries were organized into 8 Categories (C). Each Category holds a specific set of unique terms (T). Each term, when found in the references analysed, is identified with the corresponding language (E, P, S, F, D). The terms were also organized in order to present their properties. The main challenge was to compare and to compile different terms that have similar expressions, or ambiguous meanings into unique references (such as Terminal, or Axis). Another challenge was to identify and to organize unique and shared properties for each term – e.g. The Stroke Connection (C5) called Apex (#120), found in all 5 languages (E, P, S, F, D), can have a Flat (#122), or a Sheared Shape (#127) among 7 other alternative properties.

Selected Findings And Future Work

During the end of the second phase an in the current third phase, some terms were validated by experts – e.g. Taper (#255), or Overhang (#253). Some were suggestions – e.g. Notch (#248) –, or found in particular languages – e.g. Stem Body (#100, from the original Pilastra in Spanish). Some were not found in any reference, but are being proposed as new original terms to already existing shapes – e.g. Counter Overshoot (#245), or Thorax (#135). These are needed to describe complex, or specific shapes and properties, and will undergo experts' evaluation.

The translation is currently taking place, having identified 94% of the 102 terms in English, 87% in Portuguese, 72% in Spanish, 39% in French and 52% in German. TD experts' assistance will be fundamental to complete this task. In the final phase, and when this work finds a suitable stabilization, it will be made available to the public in a format that includes the illustrations, categories, terms and properties with a brief description of each, to further help explain or clarify any ambiguity.

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