
i18nspector

Release 0.17.2

May 31, 2016

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Synopsis

i18nspector [-language *lang*] [-debian] *file* [*file* ...]

Options

- l lang, --language lang** Assume this language. *lang* should be a 2- or 3-letter ISO 639 language code, possibly followed by underscore and a 2-letter ISO 3166 territory code.
- debian** Allow checking Debian (binary or source) packages. This option is enabled by default on modern Debian systems and its derivatives; it needs to be explicitly enabled on other systems.
- h, --help** Show the help message and exit.
- version** Show the program's version number and exit.

Description

i18nspector is a tool for checking translation templates (POT), message catalogues (PO) and compiled message catalogues (MO) files for common problems. These files are used by the GNU gettext translation functions and tools in many different development environments.

The following format is used for all the reported problems:

code: file: tag [extra]

where:

- *code* is a letter indicating type of the message: **E** (error), **W** (warning), **I** (informative message), or **P** (pedantic message);
- *tag* is a name of the problem that was discovered;
- *extra* can contain additional information about the problem.

4.1 ancient-date

The date refers to the time before the first GNU gettext release. As such, it's extremely unlikely to be correct.

References:

<http://git.savannah.gnu.org/cgit/gettext.git/tree/ChangeLog.0#n1767>

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.2 arithmetic-error-in-plural-forms

Computing a plural form value triggers division by zero or integer overflow. This normally indicates an error in the plural form expression.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.3 arithmetic-error-in-unused-plural-forms

Computing a plural form value triggers division by zero or integer overflow. (But there are no translated messages which use plural forms.) This normally indicates an error in the plural form expression.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.4 boilerplate-in-content-type

The Content-Type header field contains xgettext boilerplate. It should be in the form `text/plain; charset=encoding`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html#index-encoding-of-PO-files

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.5 boilerplate-in-date

The date header field contains xgettext boilerplate. The date format should be `YYYY-MM-DD hh:mm+ZZzz`, e.g. `2011-11-05 10:14+0100`.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.6 boilerplate-in-language-team

The Language-Team header field contains xgettext boilerplate. It should contain English name of the language, and the email address or homepage URL of the language team.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.7 boilerplate-in-last-translator

The Last-Translator header field contains xgettext boilerplate. It should contain the last translator's name and email address.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.8 boilerplate-in-project-id-version

The Project-Id-Version header field contains xgettext boilerplate. It should contain the name and the version of the package.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.9 boilerplate-in-report-msgid-bugs-to

The Report-Msgid-Bugs-To header field contains xgettext boilerplate. It should contain an email address or URL where one can report bugs in the untranslated strings.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.10 broken-encoding

Header fields and messages contained by this file couldn't be decoded to Unicode. The usual cause of this is incorrect or missing encoding declaration.

Note that in the absence of encoding declaration, i18nspector assumes ASCII encoding.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html#index-encoding-of-PO-files

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-5>

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.11 c-format-string-argument-type-mismatch

There's a type mismatch between a C format argument in `msgid` and the corresponding format argument in `msgid_plural`; or between a C format argument in `msgstr` and `msgid`; or between a C format argument in `msgstr[N]` and `msgid` or `msgid_plural`.

References:

printf(3)

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.12 c-format-string-error

A C format string could not be parsed.

References:

printf(3)

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.13 c-format-string-excess-arguments

A C format string for `msgid` consumes more arguments than `msgid_plural`; or `msgstr` consumes more arguments than `msgid`; or `msgstr[N]` consumes more arguments than `msgid` or `msgid_plural`.

References:

printf(3)

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.14 c-format-string-missing-arguments

A C format string for `msgid` consumes less arguments than `msgid_plural`; or `msgstr` consumes less arguments than `msgid`; or `msgstr[N]` consumes less arguments than `msgid` or `msgid_plural`.

Note that in some languages, the commonly used Plural-Forms expression evaluates to the same value for `n=1` and `n=21`, `n=31`, and so on. Take this Serbian translation for example:

```
Plural-Forms: nplurals=3; plural=n%10==1 && n%100!=11 ? 0 : n%10>=2 && n%10<=4 && (n%100<10 || n%100>=10) ? 1 : 2;
...
msgid "one byte"
msgid_plural "%d bytes"
msgstr[0] "%d bajt"
msgstr[1] "%d bajta"
msgstr[2] "%d bajtova"
```

Here `%d` should not be replaced with the spelled-out form `jedan`. Either `%d` should be kept, or the Plural-Forms expression should be amended, so that there is a special case for `n=1`:

```
Plural-Forms: nplurals=4; plural=n==1 ? 3 : n%10==1 && n%100!=11 ? 0 : n%10>=2 && n%10<=4 && (n%100<10 || n%100>=10) ? 1 : 2;
...
msgid "one byte"
msgid_plural "%d bytes"
msgstr[0] "%d bajt"
msgstr[1] "%d bajta"
msgstr[2] "%d bajtova"
msgstr[3] "jedan bajt"
```

References:

printf(3)https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.15 c-format-string-non-portable-conversion

A C format string uses a conversion specified or length modifier, for which a more portable replacement exists:

- For integer conversions (%d, %i, %o, %u, %x, and %X), use the ll length modifier instead of L or q.
- For floating-point conversions (%a, %A, %e, %E, %f, %F, %g, and %G), don't use the l length modifier.
- Use the z length modifier instead of Z.
- Use %lc instead of %C.
- Use %ls instead of %S.

References:

printf(3)

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, possible

4.16 c-format-string-redundant-flag

A C format string includes a redundant character flag. Either it's a duplicate, or it has no effect:

- The + flag overrides the *space* flag.
- The - flag overrides the 0 flag.
- If a precision is given, the 0 flag has no effect on integer conversions (%d, %i, %o, %u, %x, and %X).

References:

printf(3)

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, possible

4.17 codomain-error-in-plural-forms

Either a plural form value is outside the declared range, or some values within the declared range can never be reached. This normally indicates an error in the plural form expression.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.18 codomain-error-in-unused-plural-forms

Either a plural form value is outside the declared range, or some values within the declared range can never be reached. (But there are no translated messages which use plural forms.) This normally indicates an error in the plural form expression.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.19 conflict-marker-in-header-entry

The header contains a conflict marker (`#-#-#-#-# ... #-#-#-#-#`). The conflict will have to be resolved manually.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Creating-Compendia.html#Creating-Compendia

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.20 conflict-marker-in-translation

One of the translated messages appear to contain a conflict marker (`#-#-#-#-# ... #-#-#-#-#`). The conflict will have to be resolved manually.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Creating-Compendia.html#Creating-Compendia

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.21 conflicting-message-flags

Two flags with conflicting meanings are associated with one of the messages.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.22 date-from-future

The date refers to the future. As such, it's extremely unlikely to be correct.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.23 distant-header-entry

The header entry in this file is preceded by other entries. The header entry should be always the first one.

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.24 duplicate-flag-for-header-entry

Multiple identical flags are associated with the header entry.

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.25 duplicate-header-entry

This file contains multiple header entries.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.26 duplicate-header-field

This file contains multiple header fields of the same name.

Severity, certainty:

minor, wild-guess

4.27 duplicate-header-field-content-transfer-encoding

This file contains multiple Content-Transfer-Encoding header fields.

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.28 duplicate-header-field-content-type

This file contains multiple Content-Type header fields.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.29 duplicate-header-field-date

This file contains multiple date header fields of the same name.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.30 duplicate-header-field-language

This file contains multiple Language header fields.

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.31 duplicate-header-field-language-team

This file contains multiple Language-Team header fields.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.32 duplicate-header-field-last-translator

This file contains multiple Last-Translator header fields.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.33 duplicate-header-field-mime-version

This file contains multiple MIME-Version header fields.

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.34 duplicate-header-field-plural-forms

This file contains multiple Plural-Forms header fields.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.35 duplicate-header-field-project-id-version

This file contains multiple Project-Id-Version header fields.

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.36 duplicate-header-field-report-msgid-bugs-to

This file contains multiple Report-Msgid-Bugs-To header fields.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.37 duplicate-header-field-x-poedit

This file contains multiple X-Poedit-* header fields.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.38 duplicate-message-definition

This file contains multiple definitions of the same message.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.39 duplicate-message-flag

Multiple identical flags are associated with one of the messages.

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.40 empty-file

This file doesn't contain any messages.

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.41 empty-msgid-message-with-plural-forms

The message with empty msgid contains plural forms. Such messages are reserved by GNU gettext for header entries, and your code should not call `gettext("", ...)`.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.42 empty-msgid-message-with-source-code-references

The message with empty msgid contains plural forms. Such messages are reserved by GNU gettext for header entries, and your code should not call `gettext("")`.

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.43 encoding-in-language-header-field

The language header field contains encoding declaration. Such information shouldn't be included in this field.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.44 fuzzy-header-entry

The header entry is marked as fuzzy. To increase operability with very old (<< 0.11) **msgfmt**(1) versions, which didn't support fuzzy header entries, it shouldn't be marked as such.

References:

<http://git.savannah.gnu.org/cgit/gettext.git/tree/NEWS?id=v0.11#n44>

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.45 inconsistent-leading-newlines

Some strings in an entry start with a newline, but some don't. Either all of them should start with a newline, or none of them should.

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.46 inconsistent-number-of-plural-forms

Number of plural forms in a message definition doesn't match number of plural forms declared in another message definition.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Translating-plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.47 inconsistent-trailing-newlines

Some strings in an entry end with a newline, but some don't. Either all of them should end with a newline, or none of them should.

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.48 incorrect-number-of-plural-forms

Number of plural forms in a message definition doesn't match number of plural forms declared in the header.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Translating-plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.49 incorrect-plural-forms

The Plural-Forms declaration is incorrect, according to i18nspector's linguistic data.

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.50 incorrect-unused-plural-forms

The Plural-Forms declaration is incorrect, according to i18nspector's linguistic data. (But there are no translated messages which use plural forms.)

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.51 invalid-content-transfer-encoding

Value of the Content-Transfer-Encoding header field is invalid. It should be `8bit`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-6.1>

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.52 invalid-content-type

Value of the Content-Type header field should is invalid. It should be in the form `text/plain; charset=encoding`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html#index-encoding-of-PO-files

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-5>

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.53 invalid-date

The date is invalid or in an invalid format. The format should be `YYYY-MM-DD hh:mm+ZZzz`, e.g. `2011-11-05 10:14+0100`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.54 invalid-language

The Language header field couldn't be parsed, or it contains an unknown language.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.55 invalid-language-team

The Language-Team header field contains an e-mail address that uses a reserved domain name.

References:

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2606>

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.56 invalid-last-translator

The Last-Translator header field could neither be parsed as an e-mail, or the e-mail address uses a reserved domain name.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2606>

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.57 invalid-mime-version

Value of the MIME-Version header field is invalid. It should be 1 . 0.

References:

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-4>

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.58 invalid-mo-file

This file couldn't be parsed a MO file.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.59 invalid-range-flag

A `range :` flag couldn't be parsed, or the designated range contained less than two numbers. The syntax is `range : min . . max`, where both values are non-negative integers.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.60 invalid-report-msgid-bugs-to

The Report-Msgid-Bugs-To header field could neither be parsed as an e-mail nor as a URL, or the e-mail address uses a reserved domain name.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2606>

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.61 language-disparity

Language of this file has been declared in multiple places, but the declarations don't match.

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.62 language-team-equal-to-last-translator

Language-Team and Last-Translator header fields contain the same e-mail address.

Severity, certainty:

minor, possible

4.63 language-variant-does-not-affect-translation

The Language header field contains a variant designator that is not relevant for the message translation.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, possible

4.64 malformed-xml

The original string or the translated string contains an XML fragment, which is not well-formed.

References:

<http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-xml/#sec-well-formed>

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.65 no-content-transfer-encoding-header-field

The Content-Transfer-Encoding header field doesn't exist. It should be set to `8bit`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-6.1>

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.66 no-content-type-header-field

The Content-Type header field doesn't exist. It should be set to `text/plain; charset=encoding`.

Note that in the absence of encoding declaration, i18nspector assumes ASCII encoding.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html#index-encoding-of-PO-files

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-5>

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.67 no-date-header-field

The date header field doesn't exist.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.68 no-language-header-field

The Language header field doesn't exist.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.69 no-language-team-header-field

The Language-Team header field does not exist. It should contain English name of the language, and the email address or homepage URL of the language team.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.70 no-last-translator-header-field

The Last-Translator header field doesn't exist. It should contain the last translator's name and email address.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.71 no-mime-version-header-field

The MIME-Version header field doesn't exist. It should be set to 1.0.

References:

<https://tools.ietf.org/html/rfc2045#section-4>

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.72 no-package-name-in-project-id-version

The Project-Id-Version header field doesn't appear to contain any name. It should contain both the name and the version of the package.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, possible

4.73 no-plural-forms-header-field

The Plural-Forms header field does not exist, even though some of the messages use plural forms (although none of them have been translated).

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.74 no-project-id-version-header-field

The Project-Id-Version header field does not exist. It should contain the name and the version of the package.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.75 no-report-msgid-bugs-to-header-field

The Report-Msgid-Bugs-To header field does not exist or it is empty. It should contain an email address or URL where one can report bugs in the untranslated strings.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.76 no-required-plural-forms-header-field

The Plural-Forms header field does not exist, even though some of the translated messages use plural forms.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.77 no-version-in-project-id-version

The Project-Id-Version header field doesn't appear to contain any version. It should contain both the name and the version of the package.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, possible

4.78 non-ascii-compatible-encoding

This file uses an encoding that is not compatible with ASCII.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.79 non-portable-encoding

This file uses an encoding that is not widely supported by software.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Header-Entry.html#index-encoding-list

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.80 os-error

An input/output error or another operating system error occurred while checking this file.

Severity, certainty:

serious, certain

4.81 partially-translated-message

Translation is missing for some plural forms of a message.

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.82 qt-plural-format-mistaken-for-c-format

A `c-format` flag is associated with the message, but `qt-plural-format` should be used instead.

The only C format directive that the message uses is `%n`. It is very atypical to use it alone in a C format string.

References:

<http://qt-project.org/doc/qt-5/i18n-source-translation.html#handling-plurals>

printf(3)

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.83 range-flag-without-plural-string

A `range:` flag is associated with a message that doesn't have plural string. `range:` flags only make sense for translations involving plural forms.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, certain

4.84 redundant-message-flag

A flag associated with one of the messages is redundant, because it's implied by another flag.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

pedantic, certain

4.85 stray-header-line

The header contains a line that does not belong to any header field. Note that RFC-822-style folding of long headers is not supported.

References:

<https://lists.gnu.org/archive/html/bug-gettext/2012-12/msg00010.html>

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.86 stray-previous-msgid

The message entry contains annotations about previous untranslated string (`#| msgid ...`), even though the message is not marked as fuzzy. These annotations are only useful for fuzzy messages, and should be removed when unfuzzifying.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.87 syntax-error-in-plural-forms

Value of the Plural-Forms header field could not be parsed. It should be in the form `nplurals=n; plural=expression`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.88 syntax-error-in-po-file

This file couldn't be parsed a PO file. In some rare cases this is due to incorrect or missing encoding declaration.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

<https://bugs.debian.org/692283>

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.89 syntax-error-in-unused-plural-forms

Value of the Plural-Forms header field could not be parsed. (But there are no translated messages which use plural forms.) It should be in the form `nplurals=n; plural=expression`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/Plural-forms.html

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.90 translation-in-template

The PO template file contains a translated message.

Severity, certainty:

minor, certain

4.91 unable-to-determine-language

i18nspector was unable to determine language of this file. Absence of this information will prevent it from performing further checks.

Severity, certainty:

normal, wild-guess

4.92 unexpected-flag-for-header-entry

An unexpected flag is associated with the header entry. The only flag that makes sense for the header entry is `fuzzy`.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, possible

4.93 unknown-encoding

This file declares an encoding that couldn't be recognized by i18nspector. It might be a typo. Absence of encoding information will prevent i18nspector from performing further checks.

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

4.94 unknown-file-type

File format of this file couldn't be recognized. It might be a bug in i18nspector.

Severity, certainty:

normal, wild-guess

4.95 unknown-header-field

The header field name is unknown to i18nspector. It might be a typo or a capitalization error (header field names are case-sensitive).

References:

<https://lists.gnu.org/archive/html/bug-gettext/2012-12/msg00010.html>

Severity, certainty:

minor, wild-guess

4.96 unknown-message-flag

An unknown flag is associated with one of the messages. It might be a typo.

References:

https://www.gnu.org/software/gettext/manual/html_node/PO-Files.html

Severity, certainty:

normal, wild-guess

4.97 unknown-poedit-language

Language declared in X-Poedit-Language couldn't be recognized. It might be a bug in i18nspector.

Severity, certainty:

minor, wild-guess

4.98 unrepresentable-characters

The declared encoding cannot represent all characters commonly used in this language. This is a strong indication that the declared encoding is incorrect.

Severity, certainty:

serious, possible

4.99 unusual-character-in-header-entry

The header entry contains an unusual character. This is usually an indication of an encoding problem, such as:

- using ISO 2022 escape sequences, or
- using UTF-8 despite declaring an 8-bit encoding.

References:

http://www.unicode.org/faq/utf_bom.html#bom6

Severity, certainty:

important, certain

4.100 unusual-character-in-translation

One of the translated messages contains an unusual character. This is usually an indication of an encoding problem, such as:

- using ISO 2022 escape sequences, or
- using UTF-8 despite declaring an 8-bit encoding.

References:

http://www.unicode.org/faq/utf_bom.html#bom6

Severity, certainty:

important, possible

See also

msgfmt(1), particularly the `-c` option