

op_increment — Increment and decrement operators

Description Diagnostics	Syntax Also see	Remarks and examples	Conformability
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Description

$++i$ and $i++$ increment i ; they perform the operation $i=i+1$. $++i$ performs the operation before the evaluation of the expression in which it appears, whereas $i++$ performs the operation afterward.

$--i$ and $i--$ decrement i ; they perform the operation $i=i-1$. $--i$ performs the operation before the evaluation of the expression in which it appears, whereas $i--$ performs the operation afterward.

Syntax

$++i$	increment before
$--i$	decrement before
$i++$	increment after
$i--$	decrement after

where i must be a real scalar.

Remarks and examples

[stata.com](#)

These operators are used in code, such as

```
x[i++] = 2
x[--i] = 3
for (i=0; i<100; i++) {
    ...
}
if (++n > 10) {
    ...
}
```

Where these expressions appear, results are as if the current value of i were substituted, and in addition, i is incremented, either before or after the expression is evaluated. For instance,

```
x[i++] = 2
```

is equivalent to

```
x[i] = 2 ; i = i + 1
```

and

```
x[++i] = 3
```

is equivalent to

```
i = i + 1 ; x[i] = 3
```

Coding

```
for (i=0; i<100; i++) {  
    ...  
}
```

or

```
for (i=0; i<100; ++i) {  
    ...  
}
```

is equivalent to

```
for (i=0; i<100; i=i+1) {  
    ...  
}
```

because it does not matter whether the incrementation is performed before or after the otherwise null expression.

```
if (++n > 10) {  
    ...  
}
```

is equivalent to

```
n = n + 1  
if (n > 10) {  
    ...  
}
```

whereas

```
if (n++ > 10) {  
    ...  
}
```

is equivalent to

```
if (n > 10) {  
    n = n + 1  
    ...  
}  
else    n = n + 1
```

The ++ and -- operators may be used only with real scalars and are usually associated with indexing or counting. They result in fast and readable code.

Conformability

$++i$, $--i$, $i++$, and $i--$:

i :	1×1
$result$:	1×1

Diagnostics

$++$ and $--$ are allowed with real scalars only. That is, $++i$ or $i++$ is valid, assuming i is a real scalar, but $x[i, j]++$ is not valid.

$++$ and $--$ abort with error if applied to a variable that is not a real scalar.

$++i$, $i++$, $--i$, and $i--$ should be the only reference to i in the expression. Do not code, for instance,

```
x[i++] = y[i]
x[++i] = y[i]
x[i] = y[i++]
x[i] = y[++i]
```

The value of i in the above expressions is formally undefined; whatever is its value, you cannot depend on that value being obtained by earlier or later versions of the compiler. Instead code

```
i++ ; x[i] = y[i]
```

or code

```
x[i] = y[i] ; i++
```

according to the desired outcome.

It is, however, perfectly reasonable to code

```
x[i++] = y[j++]
```

That is, multiple $++$ and $--$ operators may occur in the same expression; it is multiple references to the target of the $++$ and $--$ that must be avoided.

Also see

[M-2] [exp](#) — Expressions

[M-2] [Intro](#) — Language definition