# NON-VERBAL EQUIVALENTS OF TERMS IN THE FIELD OF ICT

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**Abstract**

The study points to the fact that in professional communication increasingly parallel to standard or standardized terms their various non-verbal equivalents are used too. It characterizes some frequent types of non-verbal equivalents of terms. It shows that in the field of ICT has emerged and increasingly used some new forms of non-verbal equivalents of terms. It refers to cases where the use of non-verbal equivalents is not appropriate.

**Key words:** terms, non-verbal equivalents of terms, acronyms, abbreviations, symbols, pictograms

## 1 Introduction

Terms are generally defined as words or expressions, that have a precise meaning in some uses or is peculiar to a particular field (1, p. 1069). The verbal nature of terms is reflected in all sources of terminological information. Contrary to notions / concepts whose content is independent of national language terms are created according to national rules. And often even in the cases when as term elements are used internationally accepted words or their parts.

In the terminological practice we often encounter the phenomenon that instead of verbal terms are used equivalents, which can not be considered as verbal.

The aim of the study is to show the variety of non-verbal equivalents of terms and to draw attention to cases when their use is not proper in written professional communication.

## 2 Most frequent types of non-verbal equivalent of terms

The non-verbal equivalents of terms can be divided into two main groups.

The first group includes non-verbal equivalents which are derived from full verbal forms of terms. We consider such equivalents as **semi-verbal**. There are several sub-groups of semi-verbal equivalents:

- **Acronyms**, which can be defined as artificial words created from selected letters of a full term. After some period of time such words become standard part of a language. Examples: *bit* (from **bi**nary digi**t**), *modem* (from **mo**dulator – **dem**odulator), laser (from **l**ight **a**mplification by **s**timulated **e**mission of **r**adiation);
- **Initials**, which can be defined as abbreviations formed from the first letters of a verbal terms. Examples: *CD* (from **c**ompact **d**isc), *IT* (from **i**nformation **t**echnology), *PC* (from **p**ersonal **c**omputer);
- **Conventional, internationally accepted symbols**, which can be defined as abbreviations formed from selected letters of verbal terms. Examples: *Ag* (silver, from Latin **a**r**g**entum), *ca* (from **c**irc**a**), *Hz* (from **h**ert**z**, unit of frequency in SI);
- **Compound terms which have some non-verbal element.** As the non-verbal element can serve letters of some alphabet or code, characters, numerals, shortenings and similar. Examples: *e-learning*, $Fe_2O_3$ (ferric oxide), $SiO_2$ (silicon dioxide), *X ray;*
- **Conventional, internationally accepted graphical symbols.** Examples: % (percent), © (copyright), ∞ (infinity);

The second group includes term equivalents which are not derived from verbal form of terms. As a rule they have a conventional nature and must be accepted in a national, international, oft in worldwide range.

- **Conventional, internationally accepted letter signs.** Examples: *G* (electrical conductance), *λ* (wavelength), *Z* (impedance);
- **Conventional, internationally accepted names of functions.** Examples: ln (natural logarithmic function), log (decimal logarithmic function), sin (function sinus), cos (function cosines), tang (function tangent);
- **Conventional, internationally accepted graphical signs.** Examples**:** electrotechnical signs**,** map signs, road signs, information signs, pictograms, icons;

## 3 Some special non-verbal equivalent of terms in the field of ICT

Sector of ICT is very broad and encompasses many scientific and engineering disciplines.

In addition to above mentioned types also many specific types of non-verbal equivalents of terms are used in the sector. As most frequent we can quote:

- @ (ampersand) – a sign for separating a user name from a name of server in a e-mail address;
- (asterisk) – graphical symbol used as a wildcard in many operating systems to mean any series of characters in a search (2, p. 24);
- ↑, or other graphical signs (e. g. picture of a hand) for defining of the position of cursor on a screen;
- & – sign of conjunction.
- Pictograms and icons in informatics and computer technologies are very often used and have a special position in communication between computer and user. Software applications use on their toolbars the same or very similar symbolic icons for standard activities and tasks as “Open”, “Save”, “Print”, “Help”, etc. For example on the toolbar of each Microsoft Office application we can find lot of same icons, but also specifically for the application. In pictures Fig. 1, Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 we can compare the content of each toolbar and found the same icons and recognize for each the specific one. For example, in the beginning of the bars we can recognize the same icons for Open new application, Open existing application, Print, for Font selection, Font size definition, etc. All off them have exact, clear and unambiguous meaning, but not each corresponds to a notion (pseudoequivalents).

The same or similar icons use software application for their comfortable control by users as well. For all user is clear the meaning of icons in form of a flags for language selection, etc.

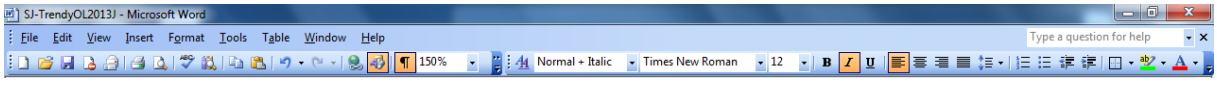


*Fig. 1 Toolbar of Microsoft Word*


*Fig. 2 Toolbar drawing from Microsoft Word*

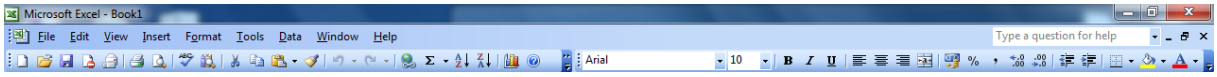


*Fig. 3 Toolbar of Microsoft Excel*


*Fig. 4 Toolbar of Microsoft PowerPoint*

*Fig. 5 Action buttons from Microsoft PowerPoint*

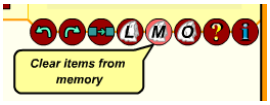


*Fig. 6 Action buttons of one application*

*Fig. 7 Flags for language selection*

## 4 Non-verbal pseudoequivalents of terms

Many users of terminology have a low terminological literacy and culture. They use as non-verbal equivalents of terms not only above mentioned correct equivalents but also expressions which cannot be considered as terms at all. The most common cases are:

- Instead of terms **trade names** of different products are quoted. Examples: *FoxBase* (instead of database program language), *Internet* (instead of internet), *PowerPoint* (instead of presentation software);
- Instead of terms **coded names** of different products are quoted. Examples: *BIZ* (instead of discussion group), *GeForce FX 5950* (instead of graphical chip), *UC2* (instead of comprimation program);
- **Non-standard individually created work shortenings** of terms, often without any explanation;
- **Emoticons** used in net communications like ☺.
- **Symbols of individual entities.** Examples: *e* (charge of electron), *e* (the base of natural logarithms), π (Ludolph number);
- A special group of non-verbal pseudoequivalents of terms are **logos**. All universities, banks, firms are clear and unambiguous represent by their logo. For their recognition and identification is enough to see their logo. All of common software products have also their logos

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| JSU Komárno, SK | University of Rzeszów, PL | PU Olomouc, CZ | Hungarian Academy of Science | EKC – Eger, HU | Radom Technical University, LP |

*Fig. 8 Logos of universities and institutions*

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|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| OS Windows | Internet Explorer | Fire Fox | MS-Word | MS-PowerPoint |

*Fig. 9 Logos of software applications*

## 5 Some limitations for using non-verbal equivalents of terms

There are some limitations for using non-verbal equivalents in a written text document. The most common limitations are as follows:

- A non-verbal equivalent cannot be used in names of documents (books, articles and similar). In such cases the full verbal term should be quoted.
- A non-verbal equivalent should not be placed at the beginning of sentences.
- In their spelling must comply with the rules applicable to the language or national standards. For example on territory of the Slovak Republic one shall apply a national standard STN according to which the numerical value of a variable and its symbol must be separated by a space. Data quoted in form *100%, 2MHz, 8Mb* are therefore incorrect, The correct form is 100 %, 2 MHz, 8 Mb. A similar rule is valid for symbols, e. g. mathematical ones. So the record operations in the form *2+4=6; 3x5=15, 10–2=8* are incorrect. The correct form is 2 + 4 = 6, 3 x 5 = 15, 10 – 8 = 8.

## 6 Conclusions and recommendations

Using of non-verbal equivalents of term can be considered as useful only in such cases where the abbreviated form allows to spare the space without a lost of information quality. One can recommend to give the full verbal terms as explanation at first quoting of a non-verbal term. In the case of larger documents we recommend include a separate list of used abbreviations and symbols used.

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