Acronyms for errors in technical reports

By J.D. for SH2600 and SH2704, version 2022-09-23

KTH

The reviewer of your report draft will mark the stylistic errors only by acronyms listed below. Look up the meaning of the acronyms here.

NUM. The number has an incorrect decimal point or scientific format.

The decimal point is typed as a point and not a comma. Examples:

Correct: 2.34; 1.23; 1.; 1.0; 0.2; .2

Incorrect: 2,34

Examples of numbers with scientific format:

Correct: 2.34×10^5; 12.4×10^{-23} (command "times" in the Latex math mode)

Incorrect: 2.34e5; 2.34E5; 2.34e-5; 2.34E-5; $2.34 \cdot 10^5$; $12.4 \cdot 10^{-23}$

CAP. A missing or incorrectly placed figure or table caption. A figure caption is always placed below the figure, and it is a sentence ending with the dot. A table caption is always placed above the table, and it is just a label, not ending with a dot. Take a close look at any engineering textbook for examples.

LABEL. The figure axis is not labelled.

ELEM. Chemical elements, like uranium, boron, hydrogen, nitrogen, and helium, are not capitalised when stated in a sentence. These should be treated the same as common nouns. Their chemical symbols, however, like U for uranium, B for boron, H for hydrogen, N for nitrogen, and He for helium, are indeed capitalised.

CASE. You should change case (upper/lower) for the first letter of the word(s).

UNITS. Units are missing in figure axis/axes, or the units are not specified for data in tables.

BITMAP. The plot is imported in a bitmap format. When you generate plots, always export them only in vector formats, such as pdf, eps or svg. Vector formats make it possible to zoom into the plot without a loss of resolution. Import a figure in the bitmap format, such as jpg, png or gif, only if it is a photo.

REF. Incorrectly referenced figure/table/equation/section. When a table/figure/equation/section is referenced then it must have a number. "Table 1" or "Tab. 1" is the name of the table, and so it starts with a capital letter. If you address some tables in general then the word "tables" does not start with the capital letter (unless it is at the beginning of the sentence). There is a space between the word "Table" (or "Tab.") and the number (same for figures and equations). Examples:

Correct: Results are summarised in Table 1. Results are given in Tab. 1. Results are given in tables in report [1]. We conclude that Eq. 1 is incorrect. We assume that Eqs. 1-5 are correct. We assume that all equations are correct. We assume that Eqs. (1-5) are correct. Our results are given in Fig. 1. Our results are stated in Figure 2. We generated several figures in Sec. 3.

Incorrect: Results are summarised in table 1 (not capitalised). Results are given in tab. 1 (not capitalised). Results are given in Tab 1 (dot missing). Results are given in Tab.1 (space missing). Results are given in Table.1 (the dot should not be there and space is missing). Results are given in Tables in report [1] (should not be capitalised). We conclude that eq. 1 is incorrect (not capitalised). We assume that equation 1 is correct (not capitalised). We assume that Eq 1 is correct (dot missing). We assume that Eq.1 is correct (space missing). We assume that eqs. 1-5 are correct (not capitalised). We assume that Eqs 1-5 are correct (dot missing). We assume that equations 1-5 are correct (not capitalised). Our results are given in fig. 1 (not capitalised). Our results are stated in figure 2 (not capitalised). We generated fig 2 (not capitalised, dot missing). We generated Fig 3 (dot missing). We generated Figure3.1 (space missing). Results are given in the next table (number missing). Results are given in the table below (number missing). Results are given in the Table below (number missing). Results are in section 4 (not capitalised).

CITE. A missing reference/citation for a statement/equation/data/figure. Each statement you make must be either justified by the previous text or referenced to another report/article/book/person. The same applies to each included equation, data and figure. The source must be cited when the statement/equation/data/figure is not derived/justified in the report.

TITLES. Titles of sections/subsections have an inconsistent style. Either all words are capitalised or only the first word is. You cannot mix the style.

VAR. Incorrect font style for variables stated in the sentence or equation. Variables are always written in the italic font, irrespective of whether they are in a standalone equation or in the text. The font style of a variable in the text must be identical to the font style of the same variable in an equation. Beware that constants are not variables. Examples:

Correct: The values of m_1 and m_2 are the same. The speed v was lower than the speed of light c, $v < \mathrm{c}$ (here, c is a constant and not a variable). The value of m in Eq. 1 depends on v. Note that σ_i is a cross section for reaction i, while σ_f is a cross section for the fission reaction. (In this example, the i is a variable, while f denotes the fission reaction and so f is not a variable.)

Incorrect: The mass m of the object could not be measured.

NOTVAR. This term is not a variable, and so it should not be typed in the italic font.

DOT. Use the dot operator preferably only for the dot product of two vectors. If you use it elsewhere you will confuse readers. When you multiply a scalar with some variable then either use no operator or, preferably, use $\times$ (having the command "times" in the Latex math mode). Examples:

Correct:

$$E = m \times \mathrm{c}^2 \tag{1}$$

GR. The sentence/paragraph violates the basic grammar rules. Check the whole report with the Grammarly online tool.

STYLE. The sentence may be grammatically correct, but its style is not. Reformulate the sentence, and check the sentence with the Grammarly or Heminghway online tools.

CHANGE. This word/sentence is not suitable in the context of the sentence/paragraph.

ART. Check that the definite/indefinite articles are used correctly. The indefinite article "a/an" is used for singular countable nouns that were not mentioned previously. The definite article "the" is used for countable nouns that were mentioned before. Uncountable nouns do not use articles (unless exceptions apply). Also, you may not use articles in titles/labels if you do so consistently throughout the report. Check the sentence with the Grammarly online tool.

OMG. The sentence is over-compounded. Simplify the sentence or split it into a number of simple sentences. Complex unreadable sentences are a product of a lazy writing. It takes effort to write well in simple sentences and simple words.

PAR. The structure of the paragraph is bad. Rewrite the paragraph. In a paragraph, a sentence must closely relate to the previous sentence. If a sentence does not relate to the previous sentence then it does not belong to the same paragraph. For instance, you can start the paragraph with a statement that you justify in the successive sentences.

PAR1. A paragraph cannot have a single sentence (or even just two sentences). Join the sentence to another paragraph or expand the paragraph so that it has at least three sentences.

LONG. The paragraph is way too long. Break it into several paragraphs. A single paragraph should deliver a single message. When the paragraph spans over half a page or more then break it.

BREAK. Break the paragraph here.

SEC. Improve the structure of the section. Each paragraph in the section must have a logical connection to the previous paragraph (otherwise it does not belong in the same section).

WORD. The word is not typed correctly. Check the text of the whole report with the Grammarly online tool.

FRENCH. The word you use has a bit different meaning/application in English and French, and its application in this sentence is not appropriate. Use only words that have the correct English meaning. Read a textbook written in English before you start writing.

SHORT. Short forms are not used in technical reports. Examples:

Correct: We cannot explain it.

Incorrect: We can't explain it.

SPACE. A space is missing after a sentence dot or comma.

COMMA. The comma is either missing or used incorrectly. Check the sentence with the Grammarly online tool.

PASSIVE. Change the voice of the sentence from passive to active. Use only the active voice in all sentences. The passive voice is acceptable only when the subject/actor is irrelevant in the perspective of the sentence. If the actor is yourself then do not use the passive voice - unless you consider yourself irrelevant. Examples:

Correct: We do not understand what went wrong. We obtained the data.

Incorrect: It is not clear what went wrong. Data were obtained.

REMOVE. The word/sentence/paragraph/section serves no good purpose in the report. Remove it.

CONSI. Names/words are not typed consistently in the report. For instance, the name of the same code is typed as Serpent in one sentence and as SERPENT in another sentence.

AM/BRIT. You are mixing American and British English. Set your spellchecker either to American or British, and use it consistently.

CLARIFY. Clarify your statement. It is not clear as to what do you mean by the sentence. What did you actually want to say here?

BECAUSE. Do not start a sentence with the word "Because".

REPEAT. Do not repeat your statements at multiple places. Remove all but the first statement.

EQ. Equations are a part of the sentence. Equations do not stand independently in the text.

Correct:

The energy E is given by the equation

$$E = m \times c^2, \tag{2}$$

where c is the speed of light in vacuum. (Note also that the word "where" is not capitalised, and that the equation includes a comma.)

Incorrect:

The energy E is given by the equation below.

$$E = m \times c^2, \tag{3}$$

where c is the speed of light in vacuum.

INDENT. Indent only the start of a paragraph. Do not indent anything else.

Incorrect example:

The energy E is given by the equation

$$E = m \times c^2, \tag{4}$$

where c is the speed of light in vacuum. (The word "where" has no reason to be indented here.)

IF. Use the word "if" only to declare a condition for a statement.

Correct:

I will give you 5 points if you solve the problem.

Incorrect:

We checked the output file to see if the simulation was finished or not.

(The above sentence could be fixed e.g. like this: We checked the output file to see whether the simulation finished.)

ABS. The Abstract is not written well. Abstract is a very short version of the whole report. It must contain a brief description of the objective, methods, results and conclusions of the report. The Abstract does not include anything else. It may contain more paragraphs, but it must not be longer than about half a page. The text of the rest of report must be written in such a way as if the Abstract did not exist; i.e., the Abstract and the rest of the article are completely independent, and they must stand on their own.

LIST. The list environment is not grammatically correct. When you format text into any kind of list environment, the text must still obey grammar rules. If you start a sentence (with a capital letter) then it must end with the dot (not the comma). Also, the sentences should still contain verbs and subjects.

Correct example 1:

We assume the following simplifications.

- Neutron energy dependent cross sections are approximated by tables (obtained via the Janis database).

- The geometry treatment uses the delta tracking method.

In the example above, the list contains two full sentences.

Correct example 2:

We assume that:

1. neutron energy dependent cross sections are approximated by tables (obtained via the Janis database),

2. the geometry treatment uses the delta tracking method.

In the example above, a single sentence is formated into a list.

Incorrect example:

We assume the following simplifications:

- Neutron energy dependent cross sections are approximated by tables (obtained via the Janis database),

- The geometry treatment by the delta tracking method.

In the example above, the comma should be changed into a dot.

POS. You use possessive 's incorrectly. We use apostrophe s ('s), also called possessive 's, as a determiner to show that something belongs to someone or something. We also use possessive 's to talk about time and duration.

Correct example:

Is that Olivia's bag? Is that yesterday's paper?

Incorrect example:

We obtained coolant's density.

The above example should be changed to "We obtained coolant density", since "coolant" does not really possess the "density".