



HARMONIZING SPECIALIZED DISCOURSE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES IN MODERN TERMINOLOGY

Phd, senior teacher

Khodjakulova Feruza Rustamovna

International academy of Islamic studies of Uzbekistan

“Uzbek and foreign languages” department

tel: 911642157

gmail: feruzahodjakulova77@gmail.com

Abstract: *This article examines the evolution of terminology science, from Wüster's prescriptive General Theory to flexible communicative and cognitive approaches (e.g., Cabré). It explores harmonizing prescriptive and descriptive elements via ISO standards, terminology management, and corpus methods to enhance clarity and multilingual specialized discourse in a globalized world.*

Keywords: *terminology science, specialized discourse, general theory of terminology, communicative theory of terminology, sociocognitive terminology, term harmonization, ISO standards*

Introduction

Terminology, as the study and management of specialized terms, plays a pivotal role in facilitating precise communication within expert domains. In an era of rapid scientific advancement and globalization, inconsistencies in specialized discourse can impede knowledge dissemination, technical collaboration, and multilingual translation. The title "Harmonizing Specialized Discourse" reflects the core objective of modern terminology: to reconcile diverse theoretical perspectives and practical needs, ensuring terms accurately represent concepts while adapting to communicative contexts.

Historically rooted in standardization efforts, terminology science has evolved from a rigid, onomasiological framework to one that embraces cognitive,



social, and discursive dimensions. This article examines key principles—such as concept orientation, monosemy, and systematicity—and contemporary practices, including digital tools and ISO-guided methodologies. By synthesizing literature and theoretical developments, it argues for a balanced approach that harmonizes prescriptive standardization with descriptive flexibility, ultimately enhancing the efficacy of specialized knowledge representation.

Methodology

This article adopts a qualitative, synthetic methodology typical of theoretical reviews in terminology science. It draws on secondary sources, including seminal works (e.g., Wüster's foundational texts, Cabré's communicative framework) and recent compilations such as *Theoretical Perspectives on Terminology* (Faber & L'Homme, 2022). Sources were selected for their influence on the field, identified through systematic searches of academic databases and references in key publications. Analysis involves comparative examination of theoretical paradigms: prescriptive (GTT) versus descriptive (communicative, sociocognitive). Principles are evaluated against ISO standards (e.g., ISO 704:2009 on terminology principles) and practical guidelines from handbooks (e.g., Wright & Budin, 1997–2000). No primary empirical data collection was conducted; instead, the review synthesizes historical and contemporary insights to propose harmonization strategies.

Literature Review

Eugen Wüster (1898–1977), often regarded as the founder of modern terminology science, developed the General Theory of Terminology (GTT) in the mid-20th century. His work, culminating in posthumous publications like “Einführung in die allgemeine Terminologielehre und terminologische Lexikographie” (1991), emphasized onomasiology—starting from concepts to designations. Key tenets include: Terms are secondary to stable, logical concepts organized in systematic hierarchies. Advocacy for monosemy (one term per concept) and synonymy avoidance to ensure unambiguous communication, particularly in



technical standardization. Influenced by engineering needs, Wüster's theory supported international norms via bodies like ISO/TC 37.

Critics later noted its rigidity, overlooking variation in real usage (Humbley, 2022). From the 1990s, descriptive theories emerged in response to GTT's limitations. Socioterminology (Gaudin, 2003) highlighted social factors in term creation and usage, viewing terms as products of community practices rather than fixed entities. Rita Temmerman's sociocognitive terminology (2000) integrated cognitive linguistics, arguing for prototypical concepts and accepting variation (e.g., synonyms, polysemy) in life sciences, where rigid categorization fails.

Maria Teresa Cabré's Communicative Theory of Terminology (CTT; 1999, 2003) represents a pivotal shift. Terms are multifaceted units with cognitive, linguistic, and socio-communicative dimensions. Cabré posits that terminology operates within discourse, where activation depends on context. This "polyhedral" view allows for variation while maintaining systematicity, bridging prescription and description. Pamela Faber's frame-based terminology incorporates cognitive frames for multidimensional concept representation, useful in multilingual resources. Corpus-based and textual approaches further emphasize empirical analysis of term behavior in texts.

ISO standards (e.g., ISO 704 on principles, ISO 1087 on vocabulary) provide practical frameworks for term formation, definition writing, and management. Handbooks like Wright and Budin's (1997–2000) detail applications in translation, technical writing, and databases. Recent works, such as *Theoretical Perspectives on Terminology* (Faber & L'Homme, 2022), synthesize these evolutions, advocating integration for "harmonized" discourse. By integrating these, terminology facilitates clear specialized discourse amid globalization.

Conclusion

Harmonizing specialized discourse requires synthesizing prescriptive rigor with descriptive adaptability. From Wüster's foundational emphasis on concepts and standardization to Cabré's communicative multidimensionality, terminology science



has matured into a versatile discipline. Modern practices, supported by ISO standards and digital tools, enable effective management of terminological variation while preserving precision.

Future directions include deeper integration with AI for automated harmonization and greater focus on emerging domains like sustainability and digital ethics. Ultimately, a harmonized approach not only clarifies specialized knowledge but also fosters global collaboration and innovation.

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