Colloquium Area "Current Approaches to Terminology Translation and Interpreting"

SOCIAL WORK TERMINOLOGY FROM LINGUISTIC, COGNITIVE AND COMMUNICATIVE PERSPECTIVES



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Abstract

The study of specialized lexicon has undergone significant theoretical and methodological development over the last few decades, shifting from a predominantly normative and dictionary-oriented perspective to a dynamic, text-based, and discourse-oriented approach. As some terminologists convincingly argue, specialized vocabulary can no longer be treated as a static inventory of terms isolated from usage, but must be understood as a living component of professional and scientific communication. This reconceptualization emphasizes texts, contexts of use, and the interaction among linguistic form, conceptual structure, and communicative function. Within this framework, terminology is seen not merely as a system of labels for concepts, but as a functional resource shaped by discourse practices and disciplinary conventions. In this evolving theoretical landscape, Maria Teresa Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors represents a pivotal contribution to modern terminology studies. Cabré proposes an integrative model that allows access to terminological units through three complementary perspectives: the linguistic door, the cognitive (conceptual) door, and the communicative (pragmatic) door. Unlike classical terminological theories that privilege conceptual systems independently of language use, Cabré's model aligns closely with the views expressed by other renowned terminologists regarding the mobility of specialized lexicon between dictionaries and texts. Both approaches emphasize that terms acquire full meaning only at the intersection of form, concept, and communicative situation.

Keywords: *social work terminology, Theory of Doors, multidimensional terminology, linguistic dimension, cognitive dimension, communicative dimension, conceptual structure, professional discourse, terminological variation, conceptual fluidity*

Introduction

Current research in terminology and specialized discourse increasingly adopts this multidimensional perspective, especially in corpus-based and discourse-analytic studies. The integration of linguistic structure, conceptual organization, and communicative context enables a more accurate description of terminological varia-

tion, polysemy, and contextual meaning shifts. In this sense, Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors can be regarded as a theoretical response to the challenges identified in contemporary terminology studies offering a flexible and empirically applicable framework for the analysis of specialized vocabulary in real texts and professional communication.

Building on this dynamic view of specialized lexicon, some terminologists emphasize the central role of texts as the primary environment in which terminological units function and evolve. Rather than treating terminology as a closed system stabilized exclusively through dictionaries, the author argues that specialized vocabulary must be analyzed within authentic discourse, where terms interact with co-text, genre conventions, and communicative intentions. This text-oriented perspective highlights phenomena such as terminological variation, contextual resemanticization, and the coexistence of specialized and general meanings. Consequently, the study of terminology increasingly relies on corpus-based methods, which allow researchers to observe how terms circulate across disciplinary texts, institutional documents, and professional communication, revealing patterns that remain invisible in purely lexicographic approaches.

Furthermore, scholars underlined the interdisciplinary nature of specialized lexicon, positioned at the intersection of linguistics, cognitive science, and discourse analysis. Specialized terms are not only linguistic units but also cognitive tools that structure domain-specific knowledge and facilitate expert communication. This perspective challenges traditional prescriptive models of terminology by acknowledging the influence of users, communicative contexts, and pragmatic constraints on terminological choice. Such an understanding resonates strongly with contemporary functional and communicative approaches to terminology, paving the way for integrative models like Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors, which systematically accounts for the linguistic form of terms, their conceptual underpinnings, and their communicative realization in discourse.

Diachronic Evolution of Terminology from Classical Approaches to Integrative Models

Early reflections on the nature of language that are relevant to terminology studies can be traced back to structural and evolutionary approaches such as that of Cohen (1950). Cohen conceptualizes language as a structured system subject to continuous historical evolution, emphasizing that linguistic units are shaped by both internal organization and external socio-cultural forces. Although his work does not explicitly address terminology, it provides a theoretical foundation for understanding how specialized vocabulary emerges as knowledge develops and differentiates. From this perspective, lexical specialization appears as a natural consequence of linguistic adaptation to increasingly complex domains of human activity.

Cohen's approach implicitly supports the rejection of static and prescriptive models of terminology, as later developed in contemporary studies of specialized discourse. His emphasis on structure aligns with the linguistic dimension of terminology, while his focus on evolution foreshadows the communicative and con-

textual variability of terms observed in professional texts. These ideas resonate with later functional and communicative frameworks, including Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors, which integrates structural (linguistic), conceptual (cognitive), and pragmatic (communicative) dimensions of terminological units. Thus, Cohen's work may be seen as an important theoretical precursor to modern integrative approaches in terminology studies.

The formal establishment of terminology as an autonomous discipline is closely associated with the work of Eugen Wüster, whose *General Theory of Terminology* laid the foundations of classical terminological studies. Wüster's approach is characterized by a strong normative orientation, prioritizing the standardization of terms and the establishment of stable conceptual systems. Within this framework, terminology is conceived as an autonomous system of concepts, independent of linguistic variation and contextual usage, with a strict one-to-one relationship between concept and term. Such a model proved highly effective for technical standardization and international communication in scientific and industrial fields.

However, Wüster's prescriptive view has been increasingly challenged by later scholars, who argue that terminological units cannot be fully detached from language use, discourse, and communicative context. The rigidity of the classical model has been criticized for its inability to account for variation, polysemy, and pragmatic adaptation in real texts. These limitations paved the way for functional, communicative, and text-oriented approaches to terminology, such as those advanced by Bidu-Vrănceanu and later systematized in Cabré's theory.

Following Wüster, terminology studies increasingly incorporated cognitive and discourse-oriented perspectives. Condamines (1994) emphasized that terminology is a dynamic system representing specialized knowledge within domains, where conceptual networks, hierarchies, and relational structures play a critical role. Similarly, Cortès (2004) highlighted the interplay between terminology and syntax, demonstrating that term meaning is co-determined by grammatical patterns and phraseological conventions, especially in specialized or classicist texts. These insights foreground the inseparability of terminology from language use, anticipating approaches that treat terms as simultaneously linguistic and conceptual entities.

Building on cognitive insights, researchers such as Faber and Cabezas-García (2012, 2019), and Molina-Plaza and Maroto (2024) propose that terms function as conceptual tools organized within semantic frames or mental networks, allowing scholars to capture prototype structures, conceptual relations, and situational constraints that shape term usage. Fernández-Silva (2019) further demonstrates that cognitive approaches can illuminate term variation, showing how contextual and pragmatic factors influence the selection and adaptation of terms in real discourse.

In addition, socio-cognitive and descriptive frameworks have broadened the study of specialized lexicon by bridging the gap between general and domain-specific language. Recent works (FASTEF, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, 2026; ASJP, Alger, 2026) highlight that terminology is not only cognitive but also social, functional, and context-dependent, shaped by users, communities, and professional interaction. Edited volumes such as Berbinski and Velicu (2018) underscore

the importance of translation and cross-linguistic comparison in understanding how terms operate across different discursive and professional environments.

Collectively, these developments demonstrate a shift from normative, concept-first models toward integrative, dynamic, and user-centered approaches, combining insights from linguistics, cognitive science, and discourse analysis.

Subsequent developments in terminology studies reflect a growing dissatisfaction with purely normative approaches. Scholars such as Bidu-Vrănceanu (2007) argue for a reconceptualization of specialized lexicon as a dynamic and text-bound phenomenon, shifting the focus from dictionaries to authentic discourse. According to this view, terminological units acquire meaning and function through use in specialized texts, where variation, contextual resemanticization, and interaction with general language are unavoidable. This discourse-oriented perspective aligns with corpus-based methodologies and underscores the interdisciplinary nature of terminology, situated at the intersection of linguistics, cognition, and communication.

It is within this evolving theoretical context that Maria Teresa Cabré's *Theory of the Three Doors* emerges as an integrative response to the limitations of classical terminology. Cabré proposes a model that allows access to terminological units through three complementary dimensions: the linguistic, the conceptual, and the communicative. Rather than rejecting Wüster's emphasis on conceptual structure, Cabré incorporates it into a broader framework that accounts for language form and contextual use. Her theory thus reconciles conceptual rigor with empirical analysis of texts, offering a flexible and operational model for the study of specialized vocabulary in contemporary discourse.

The Theory of the Three Doors and the Nature of Terms

Cabré's approach is based on the idea that terminology is an inherently interdisciplinary field, integrating cognitive, linguistic, semiotic, and communicative dimensions. The central focus is not terminology as a discipline, but the term itself, conceived as a terminological unit conveying specialized knowledge.

Terminological units can be linguistic or non-linguistic; however, only linguistic units in a natural language are the primary object of study. While sharing formal characteristics with lexical units in general language, terms differ in their pragmatic conditions, their mode of meaning, and the fact that their signified is negotiated among experts within specialized discourse.

Maria Teresa Cabré proposes the so-called "Theory of the Doors" (23, p. 186), a metaphor representing the possible ways to access, analyze, and understand terminological units. She compares a terminological unit to a polyhedron, a three-dimensional solid figure with a varying number of faces. Similarly, a terminological unit can be considered to have three dimensions: a cognitive dimension, a linguistic dimension, and a communicative dimension. Each dimension represents a separate door through which terminological units can be accessed. However, choosing one door (or focusing on one perspective) does not exclude the other two, which remain in the background. The Communicative Theory of Terminology approaches units through the linguistic door, but always within the broader context of specialized communication.

By these principles of the Theory of the Three Doors, a multidimensional treatment of terms is enabled. A term is conceived as a unit with three inseparable aspects:

– linguistic and semiotic aspect;

– cognitive aspect;

– communicative aspect.

Terms are dynamic and recursive units, capable of moving across different specialized domains. This mobility explains terminological polysemy, understood as a functional extension of meaning rather than mere homonymy.

Terminological units are treated as discursive units, derived from basic lexical units, whose terminological value is activated contextually depending on discourse, pragmatic, and encyclopedic conditions.

The field of social assistance terminology is a specialized domain that has developed in response to the increasing complexity of social services, legal frameworks, and humanitarian interventions. This terminological field is interdisciplinary by nature, drawing on contributions from law, public administration, social work, psychology, and healthcare. The evolution of its vocabulary reflects both historical and institutional developments: key concepts such as *family reunification*, *vulnerable populations*, *social protection*, and *case management* emerged from practice and policy documents, while terms like *triage social*, *intervention plan*, or *community outreach* illustrate ongoing adaptation to new social realities and emerging professional standards. Terminological control (TC) in this context involves ensuring that concepts are clearly defined, consistently applied, and adequately communicated across multiple professional and linguistic communities.

In this interdisciplinary environment, Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors offers a systematic framework for analyzing, classifying, and applying specialized terms. The theory proposes three complementary perspectives for accessing and understanding terminological units:

(1) The Conceptual Door

This dimension emphasizes the organization of knowledge within the domain. In social assistance, concepts are shaped by policy frameworks, legal mandates, and professional standards. For example, the concept of *social vulnerability* can encompass multiple sub-concepts such as economic hardship, health risk, and social isolation. Through the conceptual door, terminologists can define *clear boundaries, hierarchical relationships, and dependencies among terms*, ensuring conceptual coherence across documentation, training materials, and service guidelines. The conceptual door also facilitates interdisciplinary integration, allowing terminology from law, healthcare, and psychology to converge in a unified system relevant for social workers and humanitarian practitioners.

In social assistance, conceptual systems often revolve around notions such as *vulnerability, protection, welfare, inclusion, and rights.* For example, the English concept "social assistance" refers broadly to state- or community-based support mechanisms aimed at individuals or groups in need. Its Romanian counterpart, „asistenţă socială", shares a similar core meaning but is embedded in a distinct legal and institutional framework, regulated by national legislation (e.g. Law no. 292/2011 in Romania).

Conceptual asymmetries become evident when examining related terms. The English concept "child protection" encompasses preventive services, risk assessment, and intervention mechanisms. In Romanian, *protecția copilului* functions as an umbrella term, but its sub-concepts (e.g. *plasament, tutelă, măsură de protecție specială*) reflect a more legally codified system. While the conceptual core is shared, the internal structuring of the conceptual field differs, revealing how social assistance knowledge is shaped by national policy traditions.

Thus, the conceptual door allows the terminologist to map equivalences, partial overlaps, and gaps between English and Romanian terminological systems, highlighting that concepts in social assistance are not universally fixed but institutionally and culturally mediated. At the conceptual level, EU social assistance terminology is structured around overarching policy constructs such as *social protection, social inclusion, adequate minimum income*, and *equal access to services,* as articulated in documents like the European Pillar of Social Rights, Council Recommendations, and Commission Communications. These concepts are intentionally broad, enabling transposition into diverse national welfare regimes.

In the Republic of Moldova, corresponding concepts are institutionalized through framework legislation (e.g. *Legea asistenței sociale nr. 292/2011*, *Legea serviciilor sociale nr. 123/2010*), which translates EU-level abstractions into operationalized legal categories. For example, the EU concept of *minimum income schemes* is conceptually aligned with the Moldovan *ajutor social,* but the latter is more narrowly defined in terms of eligibility criteria, assessment procedures, and benefit calculation.

From the perspective of the conceptual door, this illustrates a *process of selective conceptual borrowing,* where EU concepts are retained but restructured to fit national socio-economic realities. The terminological system thus reflects partial equivalence rather than full conceptual identity, a crucial insight for translation, policy analysis, and comparative terminology.

In contrast, Moldovan terminology reflects a more operationalized and legally grounded conceptual system, closely linked to specific benefits, services, and eligibility criteria. For instance, the EU concept of "social inclusion" encompasses employment, education, housing, and access to services, whereas the Moldovan equivalent *incluziune socială* is frequently operationalized through targeted programs addressing poverty reduction and vulnerable populations.

Conceptual Domain	**EU Terminology (EN)**	**Romanian Terminology (RO)**	**Conceptual Notes**
Social protection	social protection	protecție socială	Broader in EU policy, more legally codified in Moldova
Social inclusion	social inclusion	incluziune socială	EU concept more multidimensional
Vulnerability	vulnerable groups	grupuri vulnerabile	Similar core concept, different subcategorization
Child welfare	child protection	protecția copilului	Moldovan system more legally stratified

Income support	minimum income schemes		EU focuses on schemes, Moldova on benefit

Table 1: *Conceptual Door. Core Institutional Concepts*

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(2) The Linguistic Door

The linguistic perspective addresses the *form, structure, and usage of terms*. In social assistance, terms often carry specialized morphology, collocational patterns, and phraseological constraints, as seen in expressions like *plan de intervenţie socială* (social intervention plan) or *punct focal al programului* (program focal point). Cabré emphasizes that understanding a term's linguistic properties is essential for accurate communication and translation, especially in multilingual or multicultural contexts. This door also ensures *consistency in term choice,* reducing ambiguity when practitioners from different backgrounds collaborate.

The linguistic door treats terminology as part of the lexical system of a natural language, subject to morphological, syntactic, and semantic constraints. From this perspective, terms are analyzed as linguistic signs—simple or complex units—whose form and combinatorial behavior matter. In English social assistance discourse, nominal compounds are highly productive, for example: *social worker, income support, housing benefit, and means-tested assistance.* Romanian, by contrast, relies more heavily on analytic constructions and prepositional phrases: *asistent social, sprijin financiar, ajutor pentru locuinţă, asistenţă bazată pe evaluarea veniturilor.*

This contrast illustrates how terminological condensation operates differently across languages. English favors compact noun phrases, while Romanian often expands the term syntactically to preserve clarity and legal precision. Furthermore, Romanian social assistance terminology shows a strong tendency toward institutionalized multiword terms, frequently stabilized through legislation and administrative usage.

Another relevant example is "case management", a key concept in English-speaking social services. Romanian usage alternates between *management de caz* and *gestionarea cazului*, reflecting ongoing terminological variation. This illustrates Cabré's claim that terms are not static labels but linguistic units subject to variation and negotiation, especially in emerging or interdisciplinary fields.

Through the linguistic door, contrastive analysis reveals how language-specific grammatical resources shape the expression of social assistance concepts, even when conceptual alignment exists. Institutional terminology reveals clear contrasts in term formation, syntactic structure, and lexical preference. EU English tends to favor abstract nominalizations and multiword units, which facilitate conceptual generalization and policy transfer across languages and legal systems.

Examples such as "access to social services", "active inclusion policies", or "adequate minimum income" illustrate a high degree of lexical abstraction. Ro-

manian institutional language, particularly in Moldovan administrative texts, tends to favor explicit, function-oriented formulations, often stabilized through legislation. For example, "social services provider" corresponds to *furnizor de servicii sociale*, a fully institutionalized term in Moldovan law. While structurally similar, Romanian versions often display greater syntactic explicitness, ensuring legal clarity and administrative enforceability. Terminological borrowing from EU discourse is also visible, especially in recent Moldovan policy documents, leading to partial calques and hybrid forms.

Furthermore, EU and Moldovan social assistance terminology reveals systematic differences in lexical density, syntactic structure, and standardization mechanisms. EU English displays a strong preference for abstract nominal groups and policy-oriented phraseology, such as *access to adequate social services* or *activation measures for labour market integration*.

Romanian terms, particularly in ministerial orders and methodological guidelines, tend toward explicit syntactic unpacking, ensuring interpretability and legal enforceability. This often results in longer, more descriptive multiword terms, for example *servicii sociale destinate persoanelor aflate în situaţie de risc.*

Corpus observations from EU policy documents and Moldovan legal texts show a high frequency of terminological calques, especially in recent Moldovan documents, reflecting the Europeanization of administrative language. However, these calques are often stabilized only after being embedded in normative acts, confirming Cabré's claim that linguistic realization depends on institutional validation.

English term	**Romanian term**	**Grammatical form/structure**	**Notes on linguistic features**
social assistance	asistenţă socială	noun phrase (Adj + N)	Stable collocation; institutionalized term
beneficiary	beneficiar	noun (countable)	High frequency in legal and administrative texts
social services provider	furnizor de servicii sociale	complex noun phrase	Terminological unit formed by expansion
vulnerable group	grup vulnerabil	adjective + noun	Adjective carries evaluative meaning
social worker	asistent social	compound noun / noun phrase	Professional title; fixed term
means-tested benefit	prestaţie bazată pe testarea veniturilor	participial adjective + noun	Romanian uses paraphrastic structure

Table 2: *Linguistic Door. Term Structure and Lexical Realization*

(3) The Communicative Door

The third dimension focuses on pragmatic and usage-based aspects of terminology, recognizing that terms gain meaning within the contexts of professional interaction, documentation, and service delivery. For instance, the word *beneficiary*

in a case file carries precise procedural implications, while in training materials it may be used more broadly to refer to service recipients. By accessing the communicative door, terminologists can observe actual term usage, adapt definitions to context, and ensure that terms are functional for both practitioners and clients. This approach also highlights the social dimension of terminology: terms are negotiated and validated within professional communities, reflecting shared understanding and practice.

Applying Cabré's model to social assistance terminology has multiple advantages. First, it provides a structured method for developing and maintaining terminological databases, ensuring that definitions, usage examples, and conceptual relationships are systematically recorded. Second, it supports interdisciplinary collaboration, allowing terms from law, social work, and health to be harmonized while respecting the specificities of each field. Third, it enhances practical communication, enabling professionals to convey complex concepts clearly and consistently to colleagues, stakeholders, and service users.

The communicative door is the most innovative aspect of Cabré's theory, emphasizing that terms only acquire full meaning in discourse, within specific communicative situations involving users, purposes, and genres. This perspective is crucial for social assistance, a field characterized by interaction between professionals, beneficiaries, institutions, and the public.

For instance, the term "*beneficiary*" in English professional discourse is relatively neutral and widely accepted. In Romanian, however, *beneficiar* may acquire different pragmatic values depending on context. In legal or administrative texts, it is neutral, but in direct communication with service users, practitioners may prefer alternatives such as *persoană asistată* or *persoană aflată în dificultate*, to avoid stigmatization.

Similarly, "vulnerable groups" in English policy discourse corresponds to *grupuri vulnerabile* in Romanian, yet the communicative impact may differ. Romanian practitioners increasingly opt for person-first formulations in oral and counseling contexts, reflecting ethical considerations and professional norms.

By contrast, Moldovan Ministry documents operate at the intersection of policy formulation and service delivery, addressing not only professionals but also local authorities and, indirectly, beneficiaries. As a result, terms tend to be more procedural and action-oriented, especially in methodological guidelines and implementation instructions.

The communicative door foregrounds the role of genre, audience, and institutional function in terminological choice. EU documents primarily target policymakers, national authorities, and expert communities, resulting in terminology that is abstract, depersonalized, and strategically inclusive.

By contrast, Moldovan Ministry texts operate at multiple communicative levels:
– normative (laws, government decisions);
– procedural (methodologies, instructions);
– interactional (guidelines for social workers).

This layered communicative environment produces terminological variation, even for conceptually identical units. For instance, the EU term *beneficiaries* may appear in Moldovan discourse as *beneficiari* in legal texts, but be reformulated in practitioner-oriented materials as *persoane asistate* or *familii aflate în dificultate*, reflecting ethical and pragmatic considerations.

The communicative door also highlights genre sensitivity. Terms used in policy documents, assessment reports, case files, or counseling sessions may vary significantly, even within the same language. This reinforces Cabré's view that terminology cannot be fully understood outside real communicative practices. The communicative door thus reveals that terminological choices are influenced by institutional roles, ethical considerations, and audience design, reinforcing Cabré's argument that terminology is inseparable from discourse.

Communicative Context	**EU Usage (EN)**	**Moldovan Usage (RO)**	**Pragmatic Function**
Policy strategy	vulnerable populations	populații vulnerabile	Abstract policy framing
Legal text	Beneficiaries	Beneficiari	Neutral administrative use
Practitioner guidance	persons in need	persoane aflate în dificultate	Human-centered framing
Reporting	service users	utilizatori de servicii	Technical-professional tone

Table 3: *Communicative Door. Usage and Pragmatic Adaptation*

The terminology of social assistance used by European institutions (such as the European Commission, the Council of the EU, and EU agencies) and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova reflects distinct yet increasingly convergent conceptual and communicative frameworks. While EU terminology is shaped by supranational policy objectives, harmonization efforts, and multilingual governance, Moldovan terminology is rooted in national legislation, administrative practice, and ongoing processes of European alignment.

From a terminological perspective, this institutional discourse constitutes a particularly rich field of analysis, as it combines normative definitions, legal precision, policy abstraction, and practical implementation. Applying Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors makes it possible to systematically examine how terms function as concepts, linguistic units, and communicative tools within and across these institutional settings.

The comparative analysis of EU and Moldovan social assistance terminology demonstrates the analytical power of Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors. At the conceptual level, it reveals processes of alignment and adaptation; at the linguistic level, it highlights structural and lexical asymmetries; and at the communicative level, it captures pragmatic variation shaped by institutional roles and audiences.

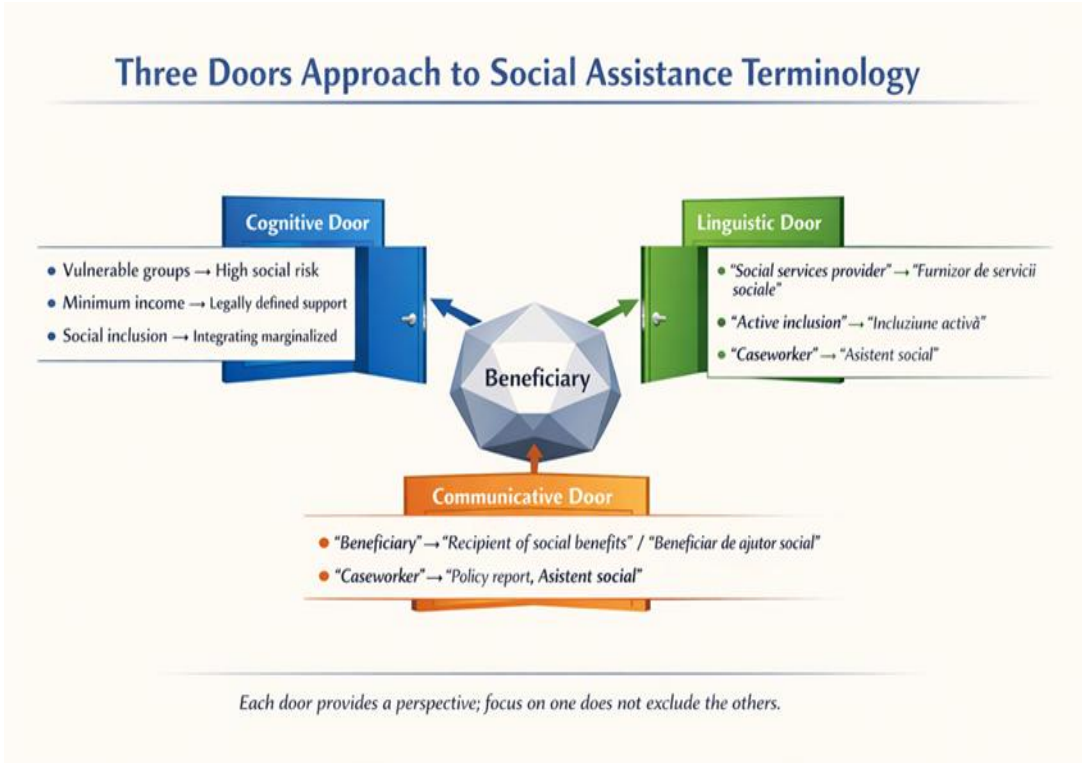


Figure 1: *The Three Doors Approach to Social Assistance Terminology*

In the context of European integration and policy transfer, this integrative framework provides a robust methodological tool for analyzing how specialized terminology functions across languages, institutions, and socio-political environments—particularly in fields such as social assistance, where language directly mediates access to rights, services, and protection.

The terminology of social assistance used by European Union bodies and by the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of the Republic of Moldova is shaped by different levels of governance, legal authority, and communicative purpose. While EU terminology is embedded in the *acquis communautaire*, policy strategies, and soft-law instruments, Moldovan terminology reflects national legislation, administrative implementation, and the process of conceptual and terminological convergence with European standards.

Applying Maria Teresa Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors allows for a systematic analysis of how EU-origin terms are conceptualized, linguistically realized, and communicatively adapted within the Moldovan social assistance system. This section integrates normative documents, institutional texts, and corpus-based observations, highlighting both convergence and divergence across the two terminological systems.

The analysis of EU and Moldovan social assistance terminology demonstrates that Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors offers a uniquely powerful integrative model for studying institutional language in contexts of policy transfer and legal harmonization. By simultaneously accounting for conceptual structure, linguistic

form, and communicative function, the model captures the complexity of social assistance terminology as a dynamic interface between governance, language, and social practice.

Applied to social assistance, Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors demonstrates that no single perspective is sufficient. The conceptual door ensures terminological coherence; the linguistic door accounts for language-specific realization; and the communicative door captures pragmatic and ethical dimensions of professional interaction. In contrastive English–Romanian analysis, this model proves particularly effective in identifying false equivalences, terminological variation, and discourse-driven adaptations. It allows terminology to be studied not only as a technical system, but as a living interface between knowledge, language, and society, which is precisely the nature of social assistance as a field of practice.

Conclusions

Terminology has evolved from a static to a dynamic paradigm. The diachronic review demonstrates a clear shift from the normative, concept-first model associated with Eugen Wüster toward integrative and discourse-oriented approaches. Contemporary research confirms that specialized lexicon cannot be adequately described outside authentic texts, professional practices, and communicative contexts.

Cabré's Theory of the Three Doors provides a robust integrative framework. By combining the linguistic, conceptual, and communicative dimensions, Cabré's model successfully reconciles earlier terminological traditions with modern corpus-based and socio-cognitive perspectives. The theory proves particularly effective for analyzing interdisciplinary domains such as social assistance, where terms function simultaneously as knowledge structures, linguistic forms, and pragmatic tools.

Social assistance terminology reflects institutional and cultural mediation. The contrastive analysis of EU and Moldovan terminology reveals that apparent equivalents often mask partial conceptual overlap, structural asymmetry, and pragmatic variation. Terminological systems in social work are shaped not only by universal professional knowledge but also by national legislation, administrative traditions, and ethical communication norms.

Corpus-informed analysis confirms the negotiated nature of terms. Evidence from institutional texts shows that terminological units are stabilized through discourse, institutional validation, and user communities. This supports the view advanced by Bidu-Vrănceanu, Condamines, and Cabré that terms are dynamic discursive units whose meaning emerges through use rather than through purely prescriptive definition.

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