

IS THERE ANYTHING WE CAN DO?

**Questions to Terminological Service Centres (TSC's)
Em. Prof. Dr. Willy Martin (Free University Amsterdam),
President of NL-TERM (Association for Dutch terminology)
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INTRODUCTION

- **TOPIC:** the organisation of terminological activities and the role of TSC's therein
- **TITLE: AMBIGUOUS**
 - Rhetorical question (negative statement) → mission impossible (impossibility to 'steer' language)
 - 'Can I help you?', 'What can I do for you?' → it depends
- **FORMAT: QUESTIONS** ('scientists never should stop asking questions')
- **THE QUESTION FRAME: WH-7: WHO** says **WHAT** to **WHOM**, **WHEN**, **WHERE**, **WHY** and **HOW?**
- **REVERSING THE SITUATION:** questioning TSC's

WHO?

- **Who is who? (the many faces of TSC's)**
- **Who are the others? (similarities/differences with other (similar) language services)**
- **Should there be a division of labour?**
- **Is a 'co-operative terminology' desirable/feasible?**

WHAT?

- **What is what? (terminology as data; terminology as theory and/or praxis to come to data; view on the way one should do terminology work)**
- **What do/should TSC's do?**
- **Is there an inventory of 'services'?**
- **Are some services lacking?**
- **What is 'core business' for TSC's?**

(FOR) WHOM?

- **Cui bono?: Who gets 'better' from what you are doing?**
- **Is terminology a matter of importance for all (language users) or for some?**
- **How do you know the needs of your target group(s)?**
- **Are your activities dependent on your target group(s)?**
- **Are multi-functionality, multi-usability, multi-purposeness, multi-lingualism assets?**

HOW?

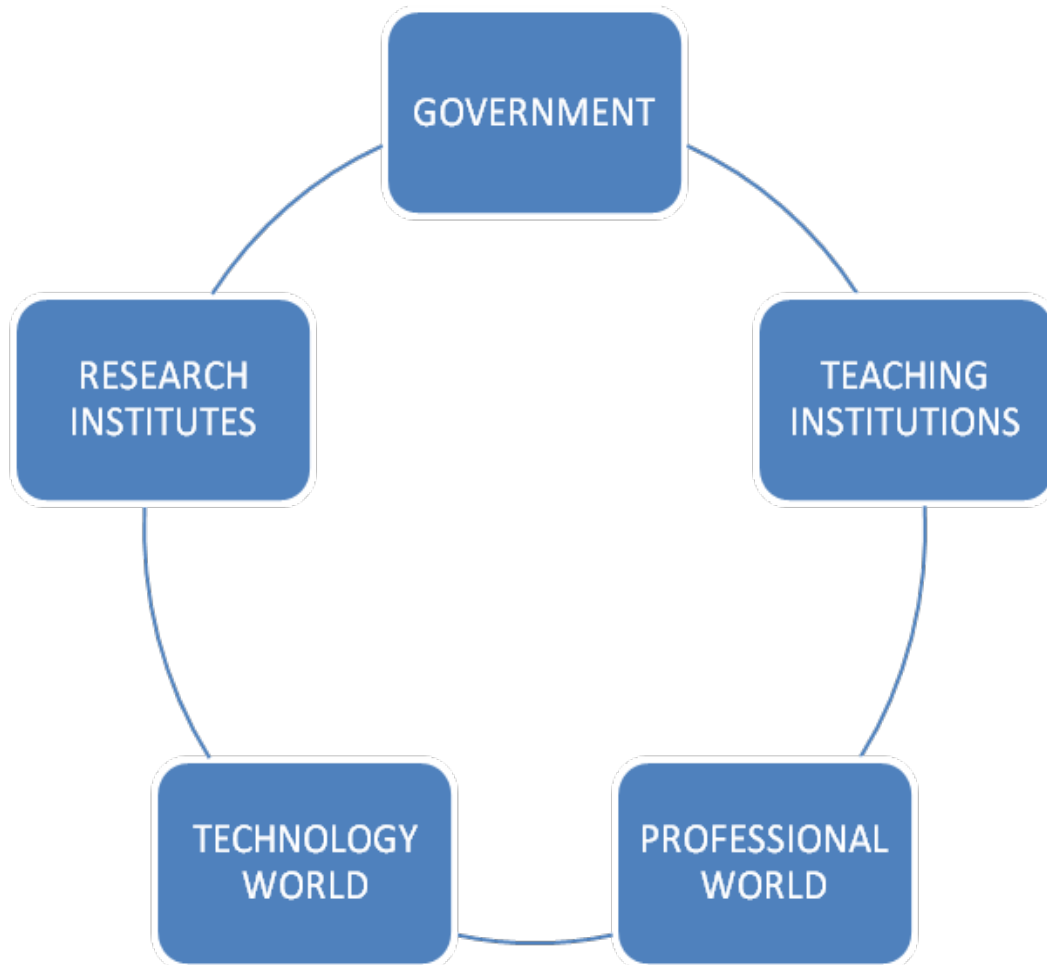
- **Which approach do you follow and why? (user driven? data driven?)**
- **Are there 'best practices' in tackling needs? (prescriptive, descriptive approaches)**
- **Do you aim at 'sustainability' (w.r.t. resources (data, tools) and services) ? If so, how do you reach it?**
- **Should you help in bridging the gap between theory and practice?**

WHEN?

- **Do you prioritize certain activities?**
- **If so, why? and on which criteria do you base your prioritization?**
- **Do you prioritize certain domains?**
- **If so, why? and on which criteria do you base your selection?**
- **Can one generalize over selectional and priority criteria?**

WHERE?

- Also see WHO?
- At which level do you situate yourself and what impact does this have on your activities? (e.g. at regional, national, supranational level)
- Where does/should your money come from?
- How can you characterize your relationship with ...



SUMMARY: A DOZEN (or so) OF QUESTIONS (that terminologists always had liked to ask to TSC's but never have dared to)

- **What is the core-business of TSC's?**
- **Are there different types of TSC's and, if so, are all of them equally desirable/necessary?**
- **Is co-operation between TSC's desirable/necessary and, if so, which form should it take?**
- **Cui bono TSC's : who gets better from them?**
- **How can TSC's relate their offer to the demands of their users?**
- **Are there any best practices for TSC's?**
- **How can TSC's reach 'sustainable' results?**
- **If TSC's have to prioritize their services, on which criteria should they base themselves?**
- **Where should/do TSC's get their money from?**

- **Should there be contacts between TSC's and actors from other areas, such as: government, industry, universities, research institutes, IT?**
- **Which are the main problems TSC's are confronted with and how can one solve them?**
- **How do TSC's see their own future?**