



## The importance of accurate terminology in research and its role (with reference to education)

Prof. Kalpana Kushwah<sup>1</sup>, Vasanti Athaley Sant<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Professor and Head, Faculty of Education, Department of Education, Institute of Professional Studies, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Department of Education, Madhav College of Education, Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh, India

### Abstract

In any research—whether in technical or non-technical fields—terminology holds a crucial place. The selection of correct and precise terms not only determines the direction of research but also defines its quality. Incorrect or inconsistent use of terminology can be detrimental. Therefore, clarity, specificity, and authenticity should always be kept in mind while choosing research terminology.

**Keywords:** Accurate terminology, research quality, educational research

### Introduction

When selecting research terminology, specificity must be considered. Using precise terms makes research outcomes more specific. For example, if you are conducting research on rural problems, instead of using the broader term “social problems,” specifying “unemployment in rural areas” is more appropriate. Similarly, accuracy in terminology enhances the authenticity of research. Correct terminology demonstrates deep understanding of the subject, provides clarity to readers, and serves as a bridge between the researcher and the audience.

### Role of Research Terminology in Education

- 1. Clarification of Concepts:** In educational sciences, accurate terminology is necessary to explain concepts, theories, and methods.
- 2. Accurate Description of Research Methods:** Different methods—survey research, experimental research, action research—rely on precise terminology.
- 3. Analysis and Findings:** Using proper terminology makes research findings clear and accurate.
- 4. Defining Theories Properly:** Theories like Behaviorism, Constructivism, and Motivation theories gain clarity only with precise terminology.
- 5. Effective Communication of Findings:** Accurate terminology ensures that research findings are clearly conveyed.

### Consequences of Incorrect Terminology

- Ambiguity and Confusion
- Misleading Results
- Reduced Credibility
- Difficulty in Replication
- Barriers in Scientific Communication
- Reader Misunderstanding
- Accusations of Unethical Practice
- Reviewer Rejection
- Negative Impact on Future Research

### Method used in this paper

This study is theoretical and descriptive in nature. It uses a qualitative review approach, focusing on the role of accurate terminology in research (particularly in Education). Data and examples are drawn from secondary sources (books, journal articles, online research portals, and published studies).

### Results

The analysis of literature and conceptual review highlights the following results

- 1. Accuracy of terminology is central:** Correct use of terminology improves clarity, validity, and replicability of research findings.
- 2. Terminology functions as a bridge:** It connects the researcher with the reader and ensures effective communication of concepts, theories, and results.
- 3. Common misuses identified:** Terms like assessment vs evaluation, statistical significance vs practical significance, and overlapping use of educational theories are often misunderstood or used interchangeably.
- 4. Impact of incorrect terminology:** Misuse leads to ambiguity, reduces reliability, creates barriers in scientific communication, and may result in rejection of research work by reviewers.
- 5. Educational research dependency:** In education, precise terminology is essential for defining concepts like constructivism, inclusion, enrichment, and teaching effectiveness.

### Discussion

The findings confirm that terminology plays a decisive role in shaping the quality and acceptance of research. In the context of educational research, where multiple theoretical frameworks coexist, accurate terminology becomes even more significant.

The correct use of terminology ensures transparency in defining research problems, explaining methodologies, and communicating findings.

The examples and data from prior studies further demonstrate how incorrect terminology has led to misleading conclusions in different disciplines (e.g., psychology, transportation studies, and e-learning).

This indicates that terminology literacy is as important as research design and statistical knowledge for researchers.

In education, terms like evaluation and assessment or constructivism and positivism are often confused; therefore, special emphasis on conceptual clarity is necessary.

The discussion also suggests that developing glossaries, peer review of terminology, and training workshops could minimize misuse and strengthen academic writing.

**Conclusion**

Examples of Incorrect Terminology Usage in Research

Example	Error / Confusion	Source / Data
Statistical Significance vs Clinical/Practical Significance	Results were statistically significant but not clinically/practically meaningful (or vice versa).	About 20.5% of 500 RCTs showed inconsistency between statistical significance and clinical importance (PubMed, 2024).
Misinterpretation of Statistical Significance in Textbooks	Introductory psychology textbooks misrepresented or inaccurately defined statistical significance.	Around 89% of introductory psychology textbooks failed to define statistical significance correctly (Study discussed in Reddit Science).
Misuse in Transportation Research Literature	Papers treated statistical significance as sufficient, ignoring economic or policy relevance.	67% of transportation studies conflated statistical significance with policy/economic importance (arXiv, 2022).
Terminology Confusion in E-Learning	Different definitions of 'e-learning' across studies created research gaps and confusion.	Article: 'E-Learning: Confusing Terminology, Research Gaps and Inherent Challenges' (Journal of Distance Education, Canada).
Assessment vs Evaluation	Assessment and Evaluation used interchangeably even though they have distinct meanings.	Blog: Assessment vs Evaluation – The Content Authority (Education domain).

Terminology plays a crucial role in research by making every stage clear, structured, and precise. Correct terminology enhances research quality and ensures effective communication with readers and reviewers. Conversely, misuse of terminology not only reduces reliability and clarity but also leads to misunderstandings in the academic community. Researchers must therefore have a thorough understanding of research terminology and apply it appropriately.

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