Three Types of Terminology in Chess

Pius ten Hacken & Maria Koliopoulou

Leopold-Franzens-Universität Innsbruck
The game of chess is played between two opponents who move their pieces on a square board called a ‘chessboard’. [...] (Art. 1.1)

The chessboard is composed of an 8 x 8 grid of 64 squares alternately light (the ‘white’ squares) and dark (the ‘black’ squares). [...] (Art. 2.1)
Terms in rules

- There must be a precise definition.
- The definition determines for every entity whether it falls in the domain of the term.
- Definitions arise from authority (FIDE).
Opening

Middle game
Specialized vocabulary

• There is no need for a precise definition.
• The transition from one concept to an adjacent one is of the continuum type.
French Defence

1. e4 e6
French Defence

1. e4 e6
2. d4 d5
Questions in defining openings

- Position or sequence of moves?
- Which sequences of moves belong together?
- Variations
- Which positions are significant?
Terms in chess theory

- Definitions are not necessary to play the game.
- Definitions are necessary to make theoretical statements.
- The choice between definitions is theoretical.
Translation

king
König
roi
βασιλιάς

bishop
fou

Läufer
αξιωματικός
Borrowing

Gambit

καμπί
countergambit
Gegengambit
contre-gambit
αντιγαμπί
Optional translation

en passant
en passant
en passant

ανπασάν / εν διελεύσει
Two classifications

Term

- Specialized vocabulary
- Term in the narrow sense
  - Term in rules
  - Term in theory

Translation

Borrowing