The Path of the Legal Language in the Hungarian Language

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This paper presents the emergence of the concept of law and the word law (jog) itself in the Hungarian language, the development of its meaning; the birth and the Hungarianization of the Hungarian legal language (the continuous efforts of language renewal); the critical approach of linguists to legal language; the new linguistic approaches to legal language and communication, and especially the present-day programmes of public comprehensibility (e.g. norm clarity), and proposes the linguistic strategy to be pursued in this field.
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1. The semantic origins of the concept of jog (law) and the path of the word jog (law) in the Hungarian language

An important addendum to the history of culture and language in relation to legal language is the history of the word jog (law) itself, which sheds light on the background of this powerful, social and professional activity. János P. Balázs writes that the basic word of jurisprudence, jog (law), is an old element of our vocabulary.[1] Its first known record is a place name from 1326, which suggests that it is even older as a common name.

The first time it is described as a common name is in the Jókai Codex researched by János P. Balázs (a text dating from after 1372 in a copy dating from around 1448). At that time, it had two meanings: (1) right side, right hand, (2) good, justice. The word jog is thus a derivative of the adjective jó; and this original, Old Hungarian meaning is still unconsciously preserved, since jog is meant to serve a good cause, to make people's lives better. In other languages, too, there is a connection between the two. For example: the

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1 Balázs János, P.: Jogi szókincsünk történetéből; 1973; Magyar Nyelvőr 97: 484–490.

German Recht (right hand) ~ Recht (right, justice), the English right (right hand, right side ~ right), the French la droite (right hand) ~ le droit (right). The Latin ius (right) goes back a long way, the Old Indian word yoh (happiness, luck) refers to it. The Old English word for law became obsolete after the age of the codex and was not used until the 19th century. The meanings jobb kéz (right hand), jobb oldal (right side) are taken by the middle form of the adjective jó: jobb (hand, side). And the Latin ius was either used in Latin (jus, from which comes the Hungarianized juss, i.e.: law given by law) or was denoted by the word law, justice.

The linguistic innovators of the early 19th century wanted to find a Hungarian equivalent for Latin ius, and that is when they found the Old Hungarian word jog. In the collection of the Great Dictionary of 1799, it is written: "because, under the law, immovable properties (javak) are not transferred (radicaliter)". According to the Dictionary of the Hungarian Language Revival (Szily 1902: 155), the first use of the word was by Gábor Döbrentei in 1822: "the right to it makes no distinction between them".[2] And János Fogarasi (1833) is the first to dictionary it: "Jus, jog v. ig". At that time, the root of the word igaz (true) was also seen in the word jog, and the word ig was also used. However, the verb or verbal version of this (in the sense of someone's right) easily caused confusion. So the Hungarian ig did not take root, and in the reform era both the Latin jus and jog were used. The prevalence of jog is shown by the reformed forms: jogja (joga), jogos (in Dániel Berzsenyi, 1832), jogosít, feljogozás, jogozat, jogsérelem, jogviszony (1838), jogtalan, jogszerű (1838), jogilag (1843), jogos, jogérvényes, jogügylet (1851), jogerő, jogosítvány (1853), etc.[3]

The word jog is derived from the conceptual circles of job oldal (right side), jó (good) and igaz (just). The expressions and conceptual expansions of the word jog in the 19th century show that its role and significance expanded, and this process has continued ever since. The etymology of the word jog is discussed in this way in the most recent Etymological Dictionary (Zaicz 2021: 384).[4]

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2 Szily Kálmán: A magyar nyelvújítás szótára. Hornyánszky Viktor kiadása; 1902; Budapest. (Reprint: Nap kiadó, 1999.)

3 Szily Kálmán: A magyar nyelvújítás szótára; Hornyánszky Viktor kiadása; Budapest; 1902; (Reprint: Nap kiadó, 1999) p. 155.

4 Zaicz Gábor: Etimológiai szótár; Tinta Könyvkiadó; Budapest; 2021; p. 381.

2. The birth of the Hungarian legal language, the Hungarianisation of the legal language

Mária B. Kovács (1995) summarized the birth of the Hungarian legal language, so I will rely on her work for a concise presentation of its antecedents. The litigation documents of the late 1700s still contain a large number of Latin terms, but there are also attempts at change and attempts at Hungarianization. From the beginning of the 1800s, there was a proliferation of manuals and dictionaries (e.g., officer's dictionaries), but the emerging legal terminology still showed regional differences, and the second half of the 19th century and the 20th century marked the next step towards unification.

The following dictionaries (and authors) were at the forefront in the birth and establishment of the Hungarian legal language: Dániel Ottlik: A tisztbeli írásmód saját szavai (Pest, 1806), Pesti gyűjteménye a tisztbeli írásmód saját szavainak (Pest, 1807), Imre Péchy: A magyar nyelvről a polgári és peres dolgok folytatásában (Pest, 1806), Sámuel Pápay: Észrevételek a magyar nyelvnek a polgári igazgatásra, és törvénykezésre való alkalmaztatásáról és az oda tartozó kifejezések gyűjteményével (Veszprém, 1807), Károly Pauly: A magyar tiszti írmód a polgári igazgatás és törvénykezés szótárával (Buda, 1827), A pesti királyi Curia szótára (Pest, 1837), Császár Ferenc: Váltójogi műszótár (Pest, 1837), Fogarasi János: Jogtani műszókönyv (Pest, 1838), Törvénytudományi műszótár (Pest, 1843). In the early 20th century, the issue of legal terminology became more important because of the need to explain German terms. After Rusztem Vámbéry's initiative, Izidor Schwartz and Ödön Hojtás published a Legal Dictionary (Budapest, 1908).

3. Linguistic criticism of legal terminology

From the beginning, the linguistic movement was hostile to legal language. Therefore, the initial language renewal and Hungarianization efforts, i.e. the efforts to establish the Hungarian legal language, were later followed by new ones. In fact, there is a continuous renewal of the language.[5] This is also valid for the legal language.[6] At first, the intention is rather language-fearing and language-protecting, then from the second half of the 20th century, professionalism, accuracy and emancipatory aspirations in the spirit of democratism, such as the public comprehensibility (norm clarity), are the focus.

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5 Minya Károly: Mai magyar nyelvújítás. Szókészletünk módosulása a neologizmusok tükrében. A rendszerváltozástól az ezredfordulóig. Tinta Könyvkiadó; 2003; Budapest.
6 Balázs Géza: Folyamatos nyelvújítás. A magyar nyelvújítások és értékelésük; Glossa Iuridica; Új folyam (Károli Gáspár Református Egyetem), 2014. I/1: 21–28.

Legal terminology, which had already become more hungarianized, posed a new problem because of the excessive striving for professionalism: it became increasingly unintelligible to the masses, and even contained linguistic inconsistencies and errors. Although it is customary to look askance at and condemn linguistic endeavours, I will give an example which clearly demonstrates the need for a linguistic critique of legal terminology.

Lajos Seregy (1989) begins his analysis and critique by stating that law is a discipline which "in its entirety and in all its manifestations has only a linguistic mode of existence.[7] Whether we are talking about a jurisprudential treatise, a law, the provision of legal services or other legal activities, these activities are also linguistic manifestations." Therefore, a text cannot be technically sound from a legal point of view if it is not linguistically sound. The example is taken from an (unnamed) legal encyclopaedia:

"Grammatical interpretation is concerned with the syntactic and semantic analysis of the linguistic form of the normative structure; logical interpretation with the analysis of the logical interrelationship between the structure and its linguistic form; taxonomic interpretation with the analysis of the interrelationship of the normative structure in larger units, ultimately the legal system as a whole; and the historical analysis with the the historical context of the legislative development of the norm structure, i.e. the legislative purpose enshrined in the norm structure.

In the grammatical interpretation, the analysis of legal language as an artificial language, distinguished in principle from natural language; in the logical interpretation, the examination of historically traditional (and partly in opposite directions and leading to opposite results) logical arguments; in the taxonomic interpretation, the deduction of inconsistencies arising from possible facts of consistency or contradiction within the legal system; and, finally, in the historical interpretation, the examination of the materials which prepared the legislation comes to the forefront."[8]

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7 Seregy Lajos: Nem szakszerű, ha érthetetlen. Nyelvi normák a szakszövegekben. In: Bíró Ágnes szerk.: Szaknyelvi divatok. Gondolat; 1989; Budapest; pp. 28–36.; p. 31.
8 The quoted text reads as follows in Hungarian: „A *nyelvtani* értelmezés a norma-struktúra nyelvi formájának szintaktikai és szemantikai elemzésére; a *logikai* értelmezés a struktúra és nyelvi formája logikai összefüggéseinek az elemzésére; a *rendszertani* értelmezés a norma-struktúrának nagyon egységekben, végső soron a jogrendszer egészében mutatkozó összefüggései elemzésére; a *történeti* elemzés pedig a norma-struktúra jogalkotói kialakítása történelmi összefüggéseinek, vagyis a norma-struktúrában rögzített jogalkotói cél elemzésére irányul. A nyelvtani értelmezésben a jogi nyelv mint a természetes nyelvtől elvileg megkülönböztetett *mesterséges nyelv* elemzése; a logikai értelmezésben a történelmileg hagyományosult (és részben kölcsönösen ellentétes

The text is incomprehensible on first reading, perhaps somewhat comprehensible on second reading, but even then it is obscure, and the serious errors of grammatical correctness to which Lajos Seregy draws attention are striking:

"By way of explanation: the "norm-structure" is the totality of legislation. Instead of "grammatical interpretation", we should understand linguistic interpretation (…) the text describes legal language as an "artificial language", although this term denotes a different concept. An artificial language is Esperanto, or perhaps various computer languages, etc., but not legal language. In this case, the practitioners of one discipline, jurisprudence, have ignored the results of another, linguistics. They have attributed a different meaning to a linguistic term… (…) The complex structure of the two sentences quoted, their impossible possessive chains and incorrect word usage make them barely intelligible. The fact that linguistic and logical interpretation are to a certain extent in conflict with each other is also puzzling, even though logic as a science also exists in linguistic forms, i.e. the logical analysis of a text is always based on a linguistic interpretation."

There is a widespread view that linguists or linguists persecute the use of technical language. But there are plenty of counter-examples. For example, a university textbook used for decades says: "Vocabularies are an evolving, useful branch of the national language." (Rácz 1968: 472.)

This linguistic criticism was also adopted by the earlier legal linguistic criticism. László Kiss (later a constitutional judge) speaks out in connection with the problems of interpretation and comprehensibility of legal language: "The language of the law is such that one cannot even fully understand a legal rule written in one's own mother tongue. Today, it is hard to find a law whose wording would help to improve the terms. (It is said that Stendhal, before he began his daily work as a writer, always read a page of the Code Napoleon to ensure that his expressions were accurate.)"[9] He also points to specific linguistic phenomena: too many words, over-abundant verbosity. And finally, he quotes Klaus-Michael Groll (In der Flut der Gesetze. Düsseldorf, 1985): "The flow of laws also threatens legality". So it is when the language of laws is incomprehensible.

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irányú és eredményekre vezető) logikai *argumentumok* vizsgálata; a rendszertani értelmezésben a jogrendszeren belüli *összhang* vagy ellentmondás esetleges tényeiből adódó következetlenségek levonása; és végül a történeti értelmezésben a jogszabályok alkotását *előkészítő anyagok* vizsgálata lép előtérbe."

9 Kiss László: Jogállam – jogalkotás – önkormányzatok (Örökségünkről mai szemmel); Jegyzők dokumentumtára 12. Közigazgatás-módszertani Betéti Társaság; Pécs; 1998; p. 94.

The interrelationship between legal and linguistic norms (norm clarity) is addressed by Balázs Arató and Géza Balázs (2022) in a theoretical approach: "As a starting point, it should be noted that an essential component of the rule of law is the accountability of public authorities to the laws and the requirement of legal certainty. For example, the requirement of the clarity of norm, or access to and comprehensibility of the text of laws, the predictability of the law as a whole and of its individual rules."[10]

4. Making legal language intelligible

A new approach to legal language is that of Sándor Karcsay (1981). In his view, the language of law cannot be expected to become simpler, since the circumstances to be regulated are becoming more and more complex, which naturally leads to over-regulation, but the application of the law could do much to make complex legislation understandable.[11] Over-regulation is indeed a characteristic feature of the Hungarian legal system, but since the 1980s there have been serious efforts to improve the clarity of the law, both in the field of legislation and in the field of law enforcement.

As the world becomes more and more complex, the use of language is also trying to follow suit, and the language used in certain fields is therefore becoming increasingly detached from the vernacular. The emergence of increasingly complex (or more specialised, compound) technical languages is therefore a natural process. It must be accepted that a specialised language in a given field is intended to ensure accurate understanding by professionals in that field.[12] This is a feature of the internal communication of a given discipline, what we call professional language, technical language or, less elegantly, jargon (or even "thieves' tongue"), and a central part of this is terminology, i.e. a vocabulary. As Sándor Karcsay succinctly summarises: "the purpose of a technical language is to ensure communication, i.e. understanding, in a pre-

10 Arató Balázs – Balázs Géza: The linguistic norm and norm of legal language; Magyar Nyelvőr 146: 91–103.; 2022; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.5.91.; https://nyelvor.mnyknt.hu/wp-content/uploads/146507.pdf.

11 A good example of this is the increasing complexity of public procurement law due to the diversity of situations. See for example the evolution of the legal terminology of public procurement here: Arató, Balázs: A közbeszerzési jog jogorvoslati rendszere; speciális közbeszerzési jogviszonyok; Szegedi Tudományegyetem (SZTE), Állam- és Jogtudományi Doktori Iskola; PhD disszertáció; 2014; p. 189.; pp. 34–35.

12 Making legal language understandable for those involved in a legal case, often even for practitioners, is a major challenge. See for example: Visontai-Szabó, Katalin: Hogy mondjam el, hogy te is megértsd? A bírói kommunikáció és a gyermek tájékoztatáshoz való joga egy angol példa tükrében; in: CSALÁDI JOG 16:1; pp. 1–8., 2018.

cisely defined and unambiguous way in a definable professional field".[13] To avoid misunderstanding. The communicative situation of misunderstanding shows some affinities with judicial legislation.[14] Arató points out that the latter is actually a reflection of decades of case law in the text of the law.[15]

Understandably, some professional languages, including legal language, raise the need and necessity of transprofessional communication. After all, legal issues are not confined to the profession, but extend to practically everything and everyone, and this raises the need to be able to apply them on several levels, i.e. not only to internal professional language use, but also to external language use that affects others.[16] And hence the aspirations and considerations of language teachers (language users). Edina Vinnai (2017) formulates a double task and need for legal language. From the definition of legal language arises the criticism of legal language: why it is not sufficiently clear for the layperson. The reason is that legal language has the task of "ensuring that all professionals always, in all circumstances, attribute the same meaning to certain legal words and expressions, which is also a primary requirement for legal certainty." I used to call this internal (professional) communication. "At the same time, compared to other professional languages, lay people have a justified expectation of greater clarity in legal language, since law, as a system of norms that plays a prominent role in maintaining social order, regu-

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13 Karcsay Sándor: Jog és nyelv; Jogtudományi Közlöny; 36/4.; 1981; pp. 325–338. p. 329.
14 Tahin Szabolcs: A közérthetőség érvényesülése a bírósági határozatokban és a bírósági tárgyaláson; In: Mailáth György tudományos pályázat 2017; edited by: dr. Ábrahám Márta; Országos Bírósági Hivatal, Budapest; pp 8-43. https://birosag.hu/sites/default/files/D%C3%ADjazott%20dolgozatok%20Mail%C3%A1th%20Gy%C3%B6rgy%20Tudom%C3%A1nyos%20P%C3%A1ly%C3%A1zat%202017._0.pdf;, a theoretical approach to the pragmatics of misunderstanding: Vesszős Balázs: A félreértés pragmatikája; Magyar Nyelvőr 146; 2022; 458–475 DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.4.458. This question also emerges in case of the commercial arbitration procedures, especially on the field of challenging arbitral awards. See in this regard: Boóc Ádám: *A választottbírósági ítéletek érvénytelenítése: Jogösszehasonlító elemzés és az új magyar szabályozás bemutatása*. Budapest, 2018.; Boóc Ádám: Észrevételek a kereskedelmi választottbírósági ítéletek érvénytelenítéséről a közrendbe ütközés okán a magyar jogban. Jogtudományi Közlöny 75 (2020) pp. 167–173. Boóc Ádám: *Elméleti észrevételek a nemzetközi kereskedelmi választottbírósági ítéletek érvénytelenítése vonatkozásában.* Jogtudományi Közlöny 74 (2019) pp. 367–372.
15 Arató Balázs: A titok fogalma a jogban; in: Balázs, Géza; Minya, Károly; Pölcz, Ádám (ed.): A titok szemiotikája; Budapest; Magyar Szemiotikai Társaság; 2019; p. 367; pp. 29–39.
16 The use of legal language has been also an important issue during the COVID-19 pandemic era, as well. See in this regard: Boóc Ádám: *Megjegyzések a Covid-19 vírus hatásairól a magyar szerződéses jogban, különös figyelemmel a vis maior fogalmára.* Glossa Iuridica 7 (2020). pp. 85–94.

lates the lives of all citizens and an ever-increasing number of areas of their lives, and it is our civic duty to know, follow and apply the law."[17] There is also another aspect of the complexity of legal language: "the law is increasingly regulating a growing number of fields (e.g. technical, medical, economic, financial, IT), and in many cases the complex language of these fields makes legal language difficult." These give its twofold character: „Legal terminology thus belongs within the national language to a group of specialised languages which can be distinguished from ordinary language, but because of its function in the life of society it is in a special position compared to other specialised languages."[18]

Legal language is thus multi-layered. Just as there can be several levels of intelligibility, because there is no intelligibility in general.[19] In his paper, Szabolcs Tahin (2017) mentions the following layers of intelligibility: rhetorical, grammatical, stylistic, semantic, grammatical.[20] I would rather emphasize the concrete-abstract use of language (in the context of the use of language in the media, it is common to speak of the so-called ladder of abstraction, on which the increasingly abstract language stands on the broad ground of concrete language use.[21]

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17 This question is especially important in the case of contracts with significant economic content. See in this regard: Boóc Ádám: *Gazdasági szerződések Magyarország új Polgári Törvénykönyvében.* Gazdaság és Jog 21 (2013). pp. 3–8.

18 Vinnai Edina: Harc a szavakért – közérthetőség a jogban. Alkalmazott Nyelvészeti Közlemények; Miskolc; 2017; XII/1: 42–53.; pp. 137–139. On the field of contract law the language has a special role in the area of contract of donations. See in this regard: Boóc, Ádám: *Az ajándékozási szerződés néhány kérdése a magyar magánjogban.* Állam- és Jogtudomány 46 (2005). pp. 53–76.

19 For an illustration of the accessibility of legal documents, can be found here: Arató Balázs: A végrendeletek értelmezésének egyes kérdései; in: Magyar Nyelvőr 147; 2023; pp. 78-92.; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2023.1.78. On the law of succession in Hungary in general see: Boóc, Ádám: *Comments on Some Important and Current Problems of the Law of Succession in Hungary – Considering Historical Aspects.* Journal on European History of Law 11 (2020) pp. 104–110. Regarding the last wills the question of the legal language has an important role, when such delicate legal institutes as substitute succession or substitute legatee are applied. See in this regard:
Boóc Ádám: *Quo vadis heredis substitutio? Észrevételek az utóöröklés szabályaihoz Magyarország új Polgári Törvénykönyvében.* In: Földi András, Sándor István, Siklósi Iván (ed.): *Ad geographiam historico-iuridicam ope iuris Romani colendam: Studia in honorem Gábor Hamza.* Budapest, 2015. pp. 77–87.

20 Tahin Szabolcs: A közérthetőség érvényesülése a bírósági határozatokban és a bírósági tárgyaláson; In: Mailáth György tudományos pályázat 2017; edited by: dr. Ábrahám Márta; Országos Bírósági Hivatal, Budapest; pp. 8–43.

21 Balázs Géza: A sajtónyelv szociokultúrája; Valóság 7; 1997; pp. 51–57. and Balázs Géza:

Intelligibility is achieved by more concrete forms of language use (and these can indeed be described by grammatical, stylistic, rhetorical features).

In the work of the judiciary, for the sake of social acceptance, particular efforts must be made to achieve comprehensibility: "court judgments can be comprehensible to the public if they comply with the categories of "common sense", "economy", "morality" and "public good" as laid down in Article 28 of The Fundamental Law of Hungary.

I believe that these categories are the ultimate justifying principles which the judge must constantly bear in mind. That is to say, judicial judgments which, although lawful, i.e. based on positive law, fail the test of interpretation of Article 28 of The Fundamental Law of Hungary, are incomprehensible to citizens seeking justice, since they are contrary to the convictions at work in all of us, i.e. in the political community."[22]

We can therefore formulate a triple linguistic and functional characteristic of legal language:

linguistic feature:	function:
1. internal legal jargon, technical terminology	clarity within the profession, legal certainty
2. cross-disciplinary technical terminology	cross-disciplinary compliance
3. colloquial usability (norm clarity)	public comprehensibility, democratic participation

Linguistic features and functions determine the spaces and possibilities for action:

spaces for action:	possibilities for action:	
technical terminology	terminological, technical language development	LANGUAGE STRATEGY
technical terminology in several fields	interdisciplinary cooperation	
colloquial usability	norm clarity programme	

Implementation cannot be disorganised and therefore requires a strategy, a management body and joint programmes. Some of these are presented below.

Médianorma. A nyilvános megszólalás esztétikája; Magyar Rádió; Budapest; 2000.
22 Tahin Szabolcs: A közérthetőség érvényesülése a bírósági határozatokban és a bírósági tárgyaláson; In: Mailáth György tudományos pályázat 2017; edited by: dr. Ábrahám Márta; Országos Bírósági Hivatal, Budapest; p. 8.

5. Comprehensibility programmes

In the 2000s, the constitutional judge László Kiss regularly organised legal language training courses at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Pécs. In a short paper, the constitutional judge ridiculed the language of local government decrees.[23] In a magazine for lawyers, poorly worded legal documents were published as a lesson under the title Pocsék irat (Lousy document).

2012-2014: the Ministry of Public Administration and Law's programme for the linguistic simplification of legislation ("simplification programme"), which was triggered by a speech by Tibor Navracsics, Minister of Justice: "It is a serious problem that even a citizen with an average level of education has little chance of understanding his rights and obligations from legislation, so we need simpler structure, language and shorter legislation".[24]

Géza Szőcs, the State Secretary for Culture, would have employed linguists (language guards) to check the linguistic adequacy of the legislation in preparation, but he could not provide the financial resources to implement the idea. It turned out that both simplification by lawyers alone and simplification by non-lawyers (e.g. linguists) alone had their limitations.

In the final phase of the programme, the Ministry also brought in external linguistic assistance. The Hungarian Language Service Office was involved at this time and "produced a specific guide on language correctness for those carrying out simplification, and Professor Géza Balázs was involved in the training sessions. During the training, the questions and problems of both simplification staff and managers were discussed, the most important of which was whether all the simplification possibilities identified should necessarily be transposed into the legal system. After discussing this issue, the consensus was that no".[25] (As written earlier, it must be accepted that the language in a given field is intended to ensure accurate understanding by professionals in that field.)

There was no resolution or well-communicated statement at the end of the programme, but there were some results: "Some ministries have trans-

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23 Kiss László: Jogelkövetés; Népszabadság; 2007. márc. 22.
Közérthetőség a bíróságokon – a bíróságokba vetett bizalom erősítése. https://birosag.hu/sites/default/files/users/K%C3%B6z%C3%A9rthet%C5%91s%C3%A9g%20 k%C3%B6zlem%C3%A9ny.pdf
24 Nagy Balázs Ágoston: Miért olyan nehéz a jogszabályok egyszerűsítése? In: Glossa Iuridica, I/2.; 2014; pp. 101–113.; p. 103.
25 Nagy Balázs Ágoston: Miért olyan nehéz a jogszabályok egyszerűsítése? Glossa Iuridica, I/2.; 2014; pp. 101–113. p. 111.

posed certain language simplification elements in the forthcoming revision of their regulations, which will be amended in any case in terms of content", and: the experience of the programme "may help to design further attempts to address the problem and may have had a positive impact on the attitudes and expertise of government officials involved in the work".

It should also be added that linguists were involved only in the final phase of the multiannual programme. If this had been done at the beginning of the programme, many theoretical issues could have been clarified and the practical results could have been more impressive, since linguists have experience in transforming (in this case simplifying) texts.[26]

The intelligibility programme continued at the Curia (the Supreme Court of Hungary). On 17 January 2013, the President of the Curia set up a jurisprudence analysis group entitled Decision Drafting. It was headed by the Council President, Árpád Orosz.[27] In addition to lawyers, a dramaturge (Krisztina Kovács) and a linguist (Géza Balázs) were also involved in the work of the group. The linguistic result of the group's work was the publication of the Stylebook (Guide to the Drafting of Curia Decisions, 2013) by the Curia, which included the Hungarian Language Service Office's rules system: Possibilities for linguistic simplification and unification.[28]

Legal language training has also been regularly provided at the Hungarian Judicial Academy since the 2000s.The National Office for the Judiciary has dedicated 2017 to the „Year of the Accessible Court", with the aim of making the written and oral language used by the courts easy to understand. The programme, which was implemented in cooperation with the National University of Public Service, focused on three areas: court administration, judging and press communication.[29]

In 2022, the editorial team of the Magyar Nyelvőr (Hungarian Language Monitor) published a special issue in English entitled Norm clarity, dedicated to plain legal language. The editor of the issue, Balázs Arató, formulated the

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26 for example: Minya Károly-Vinnai Edina: Hogyan írjunk érthetően? Kilendülés a jogi szaknyelv komfortzónájából. Magyar Jogi Nyelv; 2018/1. pp. 13–18.

27 Orosz Árpád: A „határozatszerkesztés" vizsgálatának tárgykörében felállított joggyakorlat-elemző csoport összefoglaló véleménye; Glossa Iuridica; I/2.; pp. 165–180.

28 Stíluskönyv. Útmutató a kúriai határozatok szerkesztéséhez; Kúria, Budapest, 2013. (sokszorosított anyag) p. 41.

29 Antal Zsolt (ed.): A bírósági szervezet sajtóközleményei a médiaképesség tükrében; authors: Antal Zsolt, Bódi Zoltán, Toót-Holló Tamás; Országos Bírósági Hivatal; Budapest; with appendix: A bírósági szervezet sajtóközleményei a médiaképesség tükrében; authors: working group members of the „Közérthetően a bíróságokról Team"; Országos Bírósági Hivatal; Budapest; 2018.

objective as follows: "In the domestic legal system, norm clarity is not only a linguistic and drafting requirement for legislation, but also a much more complex requirement affecting the application of the laws. In this context, the role of the courts in interpreting the meaning of laws and the obligation to draft court documents and decisions in plain, simple and clear language should be emphasised."[30]

In this context, the role of the courts in determining the meaning of legislation and the obligation to draft court documents and decisions in plain, simple and clear language should be highlighted. The concept itself can be derived from the Constitution: "The Constitutional Court has dealt with the issue of norm clarity in detail, and as early as 1992 it stated, as a matter of principle that "the clarity, intelligibility and proper interpretation of legislative content is a constitutional requirement for the legislative texts. Legal certainty which is an important element of the rule of law declared in Article 2(1) of the Constitution requires that the text of laws must contain a meaningful and clear legislative content that can be recognised in the course of the application of the law."[31] Thus, the requirement of norm clarity is inextricably linked to the principles of the rule of law and legal certainty, and can be derived from them in the practice of the Constitutional Court." [32]

6. Further tasks

Language issues often give rise to legal problems. Balázs Arató (2020) has examined the types of problems that have arisen in judicial practice in recent years and decades that require linguistic expertise. He found that courts more often appoint forensic linguists in criminal cases, but are still reluctant to involve linguists in civil and public law cases. "The concept of "intelligibility" for the average consumer is becoming more and more defined, but its content is still relatively uncertain and there is a lack of a uniform and standard definition." Another important observation is that "the courts do not approach

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30 Arató, Balázs: Norm clarity in the light of Hungarian case law; in: Magyar Nyelvőr 146; 2022; pp. 81–90.; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.5.81. For more details on the requirements of legislative clarity, see: Tóth J., Zoltán: Clarity of norms in the light of the content requirements of legislation, legislative errors and their consequences – in general and with particular regard to legislative requirements in Hungary; in: Magyar Nyelvőr 146; 2022; pp. 3–15.; 2022; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.5.3.
31 Arató, Balázs: Norm clarity in the light of Hungarian case law, Magyar Nyelvőr 146; 2022; pp. 81–90.; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.5.81.
32 Arató, Balázs: Norm clarity in the light of Hungarian case law, Magyar Nyelvőr 146; 2022; pp. 81–90.; DOI: 10.38143/Nyr.2022.5.81.

what is and is not understandable to the average consumer from a linguistic perspective, but consider this group of persons as a kind of legal abstraction. Understandability for the average consumer is therefore a legal issue in the practice of the courts, and not a dilemma within the competence of experts."[33] He also suggests that "a positive change in the attitude of civil courts could be brought about if a uniform, objective methodology and terminology were to make the procedure and competence of forensic linguists clear and verifiable".[34] In another paper, Arató points out the requirements for a fair expert procedure.[35] Also it needs to be mentioned that there are several challenges on the language of contracts concluded on online surfaces (via Internet, through electronic way of communications). [36]

All this can be achieved within the framework of a well thought-out language strategy and the institution that implements it. The framework of the Hungarian language strategy has already been defined by Géza Balázs and published in various places and in various versions.[37] Following this, the Hungarian Language Strategy Institute (Manysi) was established in 2014, but due to management incompetence, the institute's activities went astray, and the institute was closed down in 2018, with some of its staff being transferred to the then estabilished Hungarian Studies Institute, where they also do not carry out professional language strategy work under the title of "language planning".

Thus, for the time being, the existing language strategy tasks in the field of legal languages continue to be carried out without any organisation or management. There is still a need for a language strategy institution or a language ombudsman (guardian of the law).

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33 Arató Balázs: Quo vadis, igazságügyi nyelvészet? Magyar Jogi Nyelv; 2020/2.; pp. 8–15. https://joginyelv.hu/quo-vadis-igaszsagugyi-nyelveszet/.
34 Arató Balázs: Quo vadis, igazságügyi nyelvészet? Magyar Jogi Nyelv; 2020/2.; pp. 8–15. https://joginyelv.hu/quo-vadis-igaszsagugyi-nyelveszet/.
35 Arató Balázs: A tisztességes eljáráshoz fűződő jog, különös tekintettel a tisztességes igazságügyi szakértői eljárásra; in: Tóth J. Zoltán (ed.): Az Abtv. 27. §-a szerinti alkotmányjogi panasz. Tanulmányok a „valódi" alkotmányjogi panasz alkotmánybírósági gyakorlatáról; Budapest, KRE-ÁJK; Patrocinium; 2023; p. 216.; pp. 9–30.
36 See: Boóc Ádám: *Az online szerződéskötés magánjogi problémái.*In: Homicskó Árpád Olivér (ed.): *Egyes modern technológiák etikai, jogi és szabályozási kihívásai.* Budapest, 2018. pp. 37–48.
37 See: Balázs Géza: Magyar nyelvstratégia; Magyar Tudományos Akadémia; Budapest; 2001; and Balázs Géza Euroterminológia és a magyar nyelv (Szaknyelvi kommunikáció és nyelvstratégiai munka); 2004; pp. 279–288. In: Balázs Géza (ed.): A magyar nyelvi kultúra jelene és jövője I.; MTA Társadalomkutató Központ, Budapest; 2004.

In the meantime, the description of legal language has been discussed in a philosophical and theoretical framework, and the linguistic framework of legal terminology has also been described.[38] Csilla Dobos (2010) published a thorough descriptive study and Edina Vinnai (2017a) a book on legal language and communication.[39] In addition to definitions, she gives a good description of the morphological, syntactic, stylistic features of legal terminology, its subdivision according to legal branches, fields of application, areas of legal linguistics (legal communication, legal semantics, legal argumentation and rhetoric, legal terminology, language criticism, legal history and language history, legal theory and language theory, linguistic rights, forensic linguistics, legal language teaching), etc.[40]

For further professional work in legal language, there is therefore already practical experience (results) and a good theoretical basis.

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38 Varga Csaba: A jog nyelvi dimenziója. Jog *és* nyelv? Jog *mint* nyelv? Ontológia és episztemológia különneműségéről és végső egységéről; in: Szabó Miklós (ed.) 2015.; pp. 11–28.; Cs. Kiss Lajos Megjegyzések a jog és nyelv viszonyához; in: Szabó Miklós (ed.). és Kurtán Zsuzsa; 2015; pp. 53–92.; A magyar jogi szaknyelv leírásának kutatási programja; in: Szabó Miklós (ed.) 2015; pp. 189–202.; Szabó Miklós (ed.): A jog nyelvi dimenziója; Miskolci Egyetem Jogelméleti és Jogszociológiai Tanszék; Miskolc; 2015; (Prudentia Iuris, 31.).

39 Dobos Csilla: Jogi szaknyelv és szakmai kommunikáció; in: Dobos Csilla (ed.): Szaknyelvi kommunikáció. Miskolci Egyetem, Miskolc, Tinta Könyvkiadó, Budapest; 2010; pp. 257-284.; see also: Vinnai Edina: Jog és nyelv határán. A jogi nyelvhasználat nemzetközi és hazai kutatása. Budapest: Gondolat; 2017.

40 For a discussion of the effects of classical rhetoric on linguistic correctness and thus legal language, see: Pölcz Ádám: A nyelvművelés retorikai gyökerei. A nyelvhelyesség retorikai alapjainak hagyományáról. MNYKNT—IKU, Budapest; 2021; (IKU-monográfiák, 8.) and for a discussion of forensic linguistics, see Tolnainé Kabók Zsuzsanna: Interdiszciplináris kapcsolatok a rendészettudományok és az alkalmazott nyelvészet között – különös tekintettel a törvényszéki nyelvészetre; Magyar Rendészet 2015/5.; pp. 131–145. https://folyoirat.ludovika.hu/index.php/magyrend/article/view/3632/2916.