

COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS DOCUMENTS ISSUED

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Abstract

In a world which is more and more threatened by the isolation of the individuals because of the communication gap between them, in a society in which the roles of the state institutions is more and more conspicuous and the members of the society complain about the issue of beaureaucracy, we considered a review of the methods and means of communication encountered in public administration to be of utmost importance.

Keywords: individuals, isolation, communication gap, beaureaucracy, public administration

1. Means of communication between the individual and the organising institutions of a society

Citizens come into contact with the local public institutions and, therefore, they need to know how to address themselves in order to satisfy a legitimate interest, what papers to fill in and what types of procedures to follow.

The local public institutions have the duty of placing practical information at their disposal in order to bring to the citizens' notice the rules they have to obey and to facilitate their access in proportion to the local public services.

For the purpose of our research, the administrative style is one of the functional styles. They originate in the specialisation of the messages in proportion to the type of knowledge and the way of communication.

The functional style is a variant of a language, that is to say, a language which carries out communication functions in a determined area of activity.

In an involuntary or intentional way, speakers or language users adapt their utterances to the concrete situation the communication takes place.

Mention should be made that styles are not isolated, they interact; it is for this reason why will not find a proper model anywhere but illustrations which are more or less close to the original. It corresponds to the communication between the individual and the organising institutions of a society.

The juridical-administrative style is used in the area of official relations under the following shape:

- written monologue (in papers and documents of administrative, political, diplomatic, juridical and economical nature);
- oral monologue (in discourses held within official occasions);
- written dialogue (in official correspondence);

- oral dialogue (in the official relations between institutions and public).

This message of this style is the the standardization of communication.

The way of expression is rigid and strongly formalised. It is for this reason why we consider the linguistic cliché to be a fundamental characteristic of this style (inception and ending expressions, ways of addressing) as well as the invariable employment of particular standard expressions (“in accordance to”; it is for this reason”; “considering”; “compulsory”).

Communication accompanies the activity of public institutions contributing to its putting into practice in favourable conditions.

Public communication refers both to the exchange and the sharing of public information and to the maintainance of the social binding agent. It also has the function of creating and promoting a favourable image of the public institution.

The means of communication with the citizens are: speech, information acts, debates, communication sessions, investigation programmes, cultural-educational activities, taking part in competitions, publications, notice boards, the transmission of diverse information in written or oral form towards and from the leading and specialised units of public administration institutions.

2. Analysis of the administrative style on documents issued by the County Council from Braila

Despite the fact that there are many ways of manifestation, we have chosen to analyse, from the wide domain of public administration communication, particular documents as representative of the administrative style.

The analysis of some documents issued by the County Council of Braila has targetted the identification and exemplification of the particularities of the administrative style described above both in the light of grammar notions (vocabulary, morphology and syntax) and of the quality of style (general and particular).

We have presupposed that this style aims at standardizing communication having a minimal vocabulary and the freedom of speech of the speaker being limited to the minimum.

At the same time, the linguistic innovations should not be used; instead, the norms of the literary language should be followed.

The style is supposed to be denotative, impersonal, fully neutre as expresiveness, lacking any affective charge and the figures of speech are supposed to be eliminated.

It is for this reason why we have analysed a **Resolution** of the Parity Commission within the County Council of Braila with regard to the attribution of the routes encompassed in the Programme of the County Public Transportation of Citizens; a **request** of the issuing of the Town Planning/Urbanism Certificate; **an announcement of attribution** of the Administrative-Territorial Unit of the County of Braila; an announcement of recruitment of the County of Braila; a request of public information.

After studying the documents very minutely, we reached the conclusion that a part of the schematized syntactical structures encompassed by these documents are imposed by the formation of particular trite constructions, which have been previously handed down by means of tradition, and at this moment, the most of them being multiplied by means of the beaureaucratic forms which contain, as an example, the same structures, especially in the case of the ones of inception and ending .

The depersonalization of the administrative statement is an outcome of the descending in this direction of the lexical level combined with the morphological and syntactical level and with the proper syntactical level which can be realized through:

- the frequent development of the interdependence relationship between a post-infinitival noun and a verb in the present tense without relation to time;
- the high frequency of the reflexive of the indetermination;
- the reflexive of the indetermination alternates with the passive of the indetermination, built within the same type of verbal structures of the predicate: “a putea” (can/to be able to)+ the passive infinitive of the main verb;
- the frequent use of the nouns and of the personal pronouns in then Dative and Accusative.

At the lexical level they are defining for the administrative style being emphasized by the analysis of the documents we put forward:

- the semantic uniqueness of the word. There are situations when the words either belong to the juridical-administrative style or they are uttered in the common language as well; in these cases the words encompass a single specific lexical meaning;
- the functional character of the semantical differentiation within a series of synonyms which are apparently perfect in the light of the common language: the defendant-the accused; decision-resolution;
- the relatively stable nature of the vocabulary determined by the specificity of the communication through the juridical-administrative text.

HYPOTHESIS:

The analysis of two documents issued by the County Council of Braila proposed the identification and the exemplification of the particularities of the administrative style, from the point of view of both the grammar notions (elements of vocabulary, morphology and syntax) and the quality of style (general and particular). We presuppose that this style aims at standardizing communication because it has a minimal vocabulary and the freedom of speech of the speaker is limited to the minimum.

At the same time, the linguistic innovations should not be used; instead, the norms of the literary language should be followed.

The style is supposed to be denotative, impersonal, fully neutre as expresiveness, lacking any affective charge and the figures of speech are eliminated.

Objectives:

- 1) Identifying, in the respective documents, the grammar notions which characterize the juridical-administrative style;
- 2) Emphasizing, in the text, those stylistic characteristics specific to the style of the messages emitted by the public administration.

The analysed documents:

- 1) A request of the issuing of the Town Planning/Urbanism Certificate**

To

THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL OF BRAILA

**REQUEST OF THE ISSUING OF THE TOWN PLANNING/URBANISM
CERTIFICATE**

The undersigned⁽¹⁾ P.N.C. | | | | | | | | | | |

| |
residence municipality
with in the county town
.. registered office commune
village sector postal code ..
street no. block of flats staircase floor
..... apartment
telephone/fax e-mail

In accordance to the provisions of the Law no. 50/1991, concerning the authorizing of the carrying out of the buliding work, republished, I request the issuing of

THE TOWN PLANNING/URBANISM CERTIFICATE

For the house - land and / or building- situated in the county
municipality
town village sector ..
commune
postal code street no. block of flats staircase
floor apartment
or identified by means of

.....
The area of the land which I request the town planning/urbanism certificate for is of

I request the town planning/urbanism certificate with the purpose of:

.....
Annexes :

SIGNATURE

Date

As far as the form of the request of the town planning/urbanism certificate is concerned, as in the case of the resolution, the basic linguistic method is the cliché, because it offers the possibility of a numberless multiplying of a structure which is partially built. Although “the request” is a type of standardized document; it can be adapted by each institution depending on the domain of activity and on the domain in which the request is written.

This type of form aims at the avoidance of ambiguity and, therefore, the poetic function of the language is annulled (through which any message communicator conveys his/her feelings and s/he “communicates himself/herself” (which is not an aim of the administrative style).

Therefore, the text cannot be built by the petitioner but partially, through the filling in of the lacunae with the phraseological elements which define its identity, the identity of the land the request is written, the purpose of the request and by the voicing of the attached documents. Thus, the semantic polyvalency of the linguistic signs is annulled.

The first person singular comes to join this type of individual administrative text, to be more specific, it appears in the enunciation of the request when it enters in collision with the third person of the noun having the function of subject: “The undersigned... I request [...]”.

The request has an impersonal, restrained, objective tone which is specific to the texts referring to the correspondence with the public administration institutions.

The text is performative creating a language act which constitutes itself in an assertion. The emitter (E) is no longer depersonalised. On the same line of thinking, the receiver (R) is recognised by the addressability formulated in the beginning despite the fact that s/he does not identify himself/herself through his/her personal details but through his/her job s/he exercises.

The language act is a performative one and it is successful to the extent to which the respective request is accepted.

Analysing the text from the lexical and grammatical units’ point of view, the preponderance is held by the common nouns (house/building, land, certificate etc.); besides, when it is filled in, the proper nouns, which are simple or compound, will be emphasised as well (name and surname of the petitioner, the name of the street/locality etc).

Verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are present as well. Although the personal pronoun misses, the predicative verbs are in the first person singular: e.g. “I request”; “I attach”.

The phrases are binary organised having a subject and a predicate with a series of attributes – “building work”, “town planning/urbanism certificate” and complements “situated in the county”, “I request the certificate” etc.

Although the post-infinitival nouns are not frequently used (the authorizing of the carrying out **of the buliding work** [...]); “I request the issuing **of the certificate** [...]”, they are nonetheless a sign of the administrative style.

The stylistic marks of the administrative style are laid emphasis on as in the case of the text of the Resolution by means of the following constructions:

-the building of the Dative with the use which is specific to the juridical or administrative texts: “I request the issuing of the town planning/urbanism certificate [...]”

- the building of the Dative by means of specific prepositions or having become specific to the juridical texts: “in accordance to the provisions of the Law [...]”.

Unlike the text of the Resolution we have analysed above, the text of the request lacks specific structures which may emphasize both the generality aspect and the imperative and indisputable lawfulness, because communication takes place from the citizen towards the public institution, the former one being a petitioner and not a decisive factor.

In this text, lexical layers co-exists and the functional style overlaps the common literary language giving way to the manifestation of the specific individuality, especially in the situations of filling in the gaps/lacunae in which, in the light of the relationship with the literary language, the popular structures (which are not to be found in our text) may co-exist with neologisms: “e-mail”; “town-planning”; urbanism”.

The metalinguistic administrative code is added as to other lexical categories such as:

-super-textual terms by means of which there comes to being the process of creation and carrying out of the semantic plan of a given text: “law”

-the pillar terms containing a generic semantic area; they create in a syntactical and semantical support of the categorising terms defining different administrative concepts: “town planning/urbanism certificate; authorizing”

-periphrastic units situated at the interference of the lexical level with the syntactical one which have become specific to the administrative style: ”the Law no. 50/1991, concerning the authorizing of the carrying out of the buliding work, republished [...]”

The fusion between the general and the particular elements of the style are emphasised in the request through correctness, clear language, with the aim of conveying the message to the receiver; moreover, the abuse of clarity has as outcome boring statements which can become damaging.

We have used means of expression which are adequate to the text, lacking repetitions or useless explanations, a natural uttering lacking constraints, usual and priceless words.

We have also avoided the use of rudeness and vulgarity imprinting a superior tone to communication.

2) A request of public information:

<p>REQUEST OF PUBLIC INFORMATION - pattern -</p>
<p>The name of the authority or public institution:.....</p> <p>Address:</p> <p>Date:</p> <p>Dear Sir/Madam.....</p> <p>Herewith, I request in accordance to the provisions of the Law no.544/2001 concerning the free access to information of public interest.</p> <p>I need to receive a copy of the following documents (<i>the petitioner is asked to enumerate the documents or information requested as clear as possible</i>):.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

I want the requested information to be transmitted via e-mail following this link (*optional*):

I am willing to pay the taxes due to the services of duplicating the requested information (*if any copy in written format is requested*).

Thank you for the solicitude,

(*signature of the petitioner*)
 Name and surname of the petitioner:

Address:

Profession (*optional*):.....

Telephone (*optional*):

Fax (*optional*):

The form of the request of the free access to the documents which comprise information of public interest has the cliché as basic linguistic construction because it offers the possibility of multiplying this structure which has been partially built.

Hence, the “request”, a standardized document, may be adapted, as aforementioned, by every institution depending on the domain of activity and of the domain in which the request is written.

A form aims, as in the case of the other analysed documents, at the avoidance of ambiguity. Therefore, the petitioner cannot give the text its full expression, but partially, through the filling in of the lacunae with the phraseological elements which define its identity, the identity of institution which the request is addressed to, and by the entitling of the attached documents. Thus, the semantic polyvalency of the linguistic signs is annulled.

The first person singular comes to join this type of individual administrative text, to be more specific, it appears in the enunciation of the request when it enters in collision with the third person of the noun having the function of subject, although it is not the case of the typical constructions such as : “The undersigned... I request [...]” but a construction such as “Dear Sir/Madam [...] Herewith, I request [...]”

The request has an impersonal, restrained, objective tone which is specific to the the texts referring to the correspondence with the public administration institutions.

The text is a performative one creating a language act which constitutes itself in an assertion and it is successful to the extent to which the respective request is accepted. The emitter (E) of the text is no longer depersonalised. He identifies himself/herself through his/her personal details s/he fills in.

The language act is a performative one and it is successful in the terms in which the respective request is accepted. On the same line of thinking, the receiver (R) is recognised by the addressability formulated in the beginning.

Analysing the text from the lexical and grammatical units’ point of view, the preponderance is held by the common nouns (request, information, duplication etc.); besides, when it is filled in, the proper nouns, which are simple or compound, will be emphasised as well (name and surname of the petitioner, the name of the street/locality etc).

Verbs, prepositions and conjunctions are present in a small number.

Although the phrases are binary organised, the subject is missing and some predicative verbs are expressed in the first person singular: “I request”, “I want”.

A series of attributes are also used “of public interest”, “due to the services” and complements “at ... the address”, “the requested information” etc.

As in the case of the request for the issuing of the urbanism certificate, this text lacks structures that may emphasize both the generality aspect and the the imperative and indisputable lawfulness, because communication takes place from the citizen towards the public institution, the former one being a petitioner and not a decisive factor who appeals to the law so that s/he can sustain his/her request.

Neologisms such as “solicitude” or “e-mail” shape this text bein a mark of the administrative style as well.

In addition, other lexical categories co-existant in the text which are specific to the administrative documents are:

- super-textual terms by means of which there comes to being the process of creation and carying out of the semantic plan of a given text: “law”

- the pillar terms containing a generic semantic area; they create in a syntactical and semantical support of the categorising terms defining different administrative concepts: “free access to information of public interest”

- periphrastic units situated at the interference of the lexical level with the syntactical one which have become specific to the administrative style: ”the Law no. no.544/2001 concerning the free access to information of public interest”.

Regarding the coming up of the general and particular qualities of the style in the text, it imprints a superior tone to communication using a clear expression, a logical waving of ideas, the means of expression specific to the text without leaving aside the central idea.

3. Outcomes of the analysis

The administrative style has a well defined applicability in a distinct socio-professional area. It is specific to the communication in the domain of the economical and juridical relations (with civil and economical applicability), of the diplomatic and state administration.

Studying administrative style is of utmost importance since within the functional styles of the literary language it has the greatest connection to the social life (next to the juridical one).

The syntactic and administrative enunciations are organised in a finite number of schemes which are relatively different in relation to the limited domain of activity, be it social, economical or administrative.

Part of this schematised sintactic structures is imposed by the emission of some standardised constructions, previously handed down by means of tradition, and at this moment , the most of them being multiplied by means of the beaureaucratic forms.

We shall include here the texts of the official reports, of the requests, contracts, orders, particular notary acts which contain the same structures, especially of inception and of ending, as aforementioned.

The linguistic material is issued from a series of texts (mentioned in the list of the analysed documents) in order to emphasize the great diversity of the modes of expression.

The depersonalization of the administrative statement is an outcome of the descending in this direction of the lexical level combined with the morphological and syntactical level and with the proper syntactical level which can be realized through:

- the frequent development of the interdependence relationship between a post-infinitival noun and a verb in the present tense without relation to time;

- the high frequency of the reflexive of the indetermination;

- the reflexive of the indetermination alternates with the passive of the indetermination, built within the same type of verbal structures of the predicate: “a putea” (can/to be able to)+ the passive infinitive of the main verb.

- the frequent use of the nouns and of the personal pronouns in then Dative and Accusative

At the semantic level, the types of the syntactical relations with the highest frequency are imposed by the rigidities of the way of encompassing all the possibilities of manifestation of the social and human connections’ dynamics which are institutionalised and, at the same time, taking into account the necessity of shaping them within the connection between general and particular.

At the level of expression, in order to avoid any misunderstandings and to comprise all the alternatives, the repetition or enumeration become basic ways in building a text which has the indented line as fundamental syntactical and practical unit.

At the lexical level the next elements define the administrative style.

- the semantic uniqueness of the word. There are situations when the words either belong to the juridical-administrative style or they are uttered in the common language as well; in these cases the words encompass a single specific lexical meaning;

- the functional character of the semantical differentiation within a series of synonyms which are apparently perfect in the light of the common language: the defendant-the accused; decision-resolution;

- the relatively stable nature of the vocabulary determined by the specificity of the communication through the juridical-administrative text.

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