

Hart (quoted in Cao, 2007) argues that words in legal language differ in meaning, import and effect depending on who utters them, where and when.

Style on the other hand refers to “the linguistic aspects of the written legal language and also the way in which legal problems are approached, managed and solved” (Smith 1995:190). Legal writing is characterized by an impersonal style, with the extensive use of declarative sentences pronouncing rights and obligations.

Mattila (2007:65-96) tackles the specificity of the legal language from a different perspective. He mentions eight characteristics of legal language in more details by devoting a full chapter in his book. It is worth noting here that Mattila discusses the universal characteristics which show themselves when under examination at the textual level. Semantic, lexical, syntactic and stylistic elements of language are under scrutiny. Since the evaluation of the current research is on the lexical and syntactic levels, the following characteristics can be of great theoretical value.

3.2.1. Precision: Accuracy and precision are considered essential characteristics of legal language. This essentially results from the requirement for legal protection and legal certainty where legal rules should avoid ambiguity in order to avoid the possibility of arbitrariness. As a result of such accuracy, legal language utilizes tautology as a rhetoric device to achieve its goal in transmitting legal messages with absolute clarity and without ambiguity. The inclusion of definitions of legal terms within a particular context is another feature of legal language to avoid the multiple meanings of different words (polysemy)

3.2.2. Information (over)Load: On the one hand, legal language should be as concise as possible to avoid laws and regulations that would be over-long