

A Three-in-One Terminology Handbook: To Teach, Harmonise, and Support Terminology Policy Aims in the Legal Domain in Hungary

Terminologijos žinynas „trys viename“:
mokyti, derinti ir remti terminologijos politikos
tikslus teisės srityje Vengrijoje

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1. INTRODUCTION

Building bridges between theory and practice is crucial in the field of teaching and dissemination of legal terminology. The book series presented in this paper, which has evolved itself into a subproject within the IUSterm Plus 2 project forming part of the OFFI company strategy, deals with topics of high relevance: the selected 193 key Hungarian legal terms and equivalents can facilitate the pursuing of didactic aims, the harmonisation of terms, and, last but not least, terminology policy goals. This article sets out to present the background and the methods used during this development path and emphasises the features of this experimental handbook series of legal terminology.

2. ABOUT THE CORE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUNGARIAN OFFICE FOR TRANSLATION AND ATTESTATION LTD.

Certified translation has a long history in Hungary: the roots of services provided by the state go back to 1869. Nowadays, the Hungarian Office for Translation and Attestation Ltd. (OFFI Ltd.), which is in charge of preparing certified translations, is a fully state-owned company with the owner's rights being exercised by the Ministry of Justice. It is headquartered in Budapest with 27 provincial offices across the country. The company, which operates under ISO certification, has a statutory public service obligation covering all the territory of Hungary. Certified translations, translation attestations, and certified copies in foreign languages may only be carried out by the Hungarian Office for Translation and Attestation Ltd., unless otherwise provided by law. The company works in a total of 67 languages, handles more than 300 orders a day, has 140 employees, and collaborates with nearly 600 freelance translators. The professional department of the company is the Translation and Revision Department employing excellent revisers, translators, terminologists, and language technologists.

The main activities of OFFI Ltd. are as follows: providing certified (attested) translations, specialised translations, and court interpreting. Its special projects include translation of laws, terminology work aimed to expand the termbase IUSTerm containing terms of the legal and public administration domain; moreover, the company is also an accredited partner of NATO.

In addition, the company places great emphasis on knowledge transfer and continuous training of translators, revisers and other employees. This has been realised in the framework of the OFFI Academy through the organisation of workshops, national and international conferences in cooperation with universities, research institutes, and foreign partners, and supported by the involvement in publications of different peer-reviewed volumes since 2019. Translators, revisers, and terminologists of the Translation and Revision Department regularly teach and are invited to give lectures at Hungarian universities.

At this point, it is necessary to briefly define our precise understanding of an attested translation. Since the attested translations have to fulfil a necessary function in administrative and judicial procedures, it is a special

genre within professional translations, produced for a specific purpose. According to OFFI's position, certified translations are produced according to audited terminology and methodology by an authorised (legal or natural) person and – typically, but not exclusively – are accurate translations of official documents, which have been certified by an attestation procedure (Németh 2020: 68). Consequently, certified translations are revised and proofread translations of official documents, which have to conform to strict formal and substantive requirements. The types of documents translated in the case of certified translations are, for instance, certificates of civil registration services, degrees, diplomas, company documents, and judicial decisions. The field of certified translation does not include the translation of entire law texts, although judicial texts often quote from legislation. However, from 2017, OFFI Ltd. has participated in a law translation programme in collaboration with the Hungarian Ministry of Justice, gaining further experience in this specific field. As evident, all the above-mentioned text types contain mainly terminology of the domains of law and public administration.

As for legal translation, we are in line with the description presented by the standard ISO 20771: 2020, *Legal Translation – Requirements*, worked out by the Committee ISO TC/37. The document distinguishes between two basic forms of legal translation:

- legal translation in general including “agreements, contracts, acts of law, powers of attorney, notarial deeds, court decisions, financial statements, registration documents or any other legal documents” (ISO 20771: 2020: 8), and
- authorised legal translation: “personal documents, certificates, documents used in court and administrative proceedings, and any other personal of corporate documents that require certification” (ibid.).

The standard includes even the required special competences by legal translators, namely, translation competence, linguistic and textual competence, specialist legal field competence, competence in research, information acquisition and processing, legal culture competence and technical competence (ISO 20771: 2020: 8–9). In the above description, the key linguistic elements mentioned are genre, collocations, and terminology acknowledging the importance in legal translations of these factors.

3. THE MAIN FEATURES OF THE TERMINOLOGY HANDBOOKS

Before introducing the legal terminology handbooks, one at a time, it is worth mentioning their main common features and then point out the diverging characteristics of this series of books or the so-called “three-in-one handbook”. The common features are based on the same selected 193 key legal terms and concepts around which the books revolve, representing challenges for translators in attested translations and laws, especially for students and new career entrants.

The legal concepts are presented with their definitions, sources, and equivalents such as terms, functional equivalents, and term candidates or paraphrases. The selection was carried out by the generator of the idea of the book, whereas all data are the result of the collaboration between linguistic and legal experts, such as translators, interpreters, revisers and teachers in higher education.

As for the diverging features, the handbook differs in its aims, content, and structure. Other textual differences include, for instance, the lack of original and anonymous text samples, complementary articles, and chosen languages.

As the title of the article implies, the three volumes are focused on three different aims, namely:

- didactic goals (the first volume),
- harmonising legal terms (the second volume), and, last but not least
- terminology policy aims (the third volume).

It is worth mentioning that the fourth volume dealing with terminology policy is already in the pipeline.

3.1. The first handbook

The first volume, *Introduction to the Terminology of Law through the Lens of a Terminologist*, which is a textbook primarily beneficial for teaching in translation training in higher education, traineeships, and mentoring programmes at OFFI, appeared in 2017 (Tamás 2017). It was the aspect of teaching that motivated the first handbook in the series, and the main aim was to offer support to the teaching of translation-oriented terminology in higher education, traineeship and mentoring programs at OFFI Ltd. in the form of a textbook. The idea was inspired by the highly experienced reviser Tamás Vida, who used to draw the attention of his mentees to the

nature of the recurring difficulties posed by certain Hungarian legal concepts and the useful methods and solutions that could be adopted. In line with this, legal terms were selected based on the experiences gained from the translation services and terminological work at OFFI Ltd., most of them used in certified translations provided by OFFI as a public task, and in the translation of Hungarian laws by senior terminologist (Tamás 2017).

As for the structure, the first volume contains three major parts:

- an introductory article about the main characteristics of legal terminology forming a theoretical basis of the handbook;
- a glossary of terms consisting of 193 Hungarian legal terms in the form of tables with data categories similar but not identical to those used in termbases, and foreign equivalents with country codes and explanatory tables;
- anonymised and typical text samples for certified translations at OFFI Ltd.

The book was published in paper version and was available online in the form of an e-book.

It is worth mentioning the special structure of the records contained in the e-book. The main data categories of a record are similar, but because of didactical reasons not identical to those of an entry in a termbase, namely: term, definition, domain, international overview with equivalents in different foreign languages, see also, context, document type, sources, and notes for translators (please note!). The core categories are:

- the definition;
- the data category named as notes for translators;
- the international overview.

The definition is the description of the concept of selected Hungarian legal terms with references to citations of laws, legal textbooks, and remarks of legal experts. The international overview contains equivalents in four foreign languages (in the first handbook: English, German, French and Italian) and mostly indicate functional equivalents, term candidates, and country codes. The notes for translators are focused on the conceptual differences between legal terms and describe specific problems and strategies related to the concepts, mainly issues of equivalence, and methods generally adopted in the case of the legal concepts handled in the records. Based on the feedback, the definition, the international overview, and the notes for translators were particularly interesting for the readers and users of the handbook.

Some records present even additional information, which was added to the glossary in order to enhance the identification of the concepts. These are usually given in the form of explanatory tables or, in the case of the term of public administration, as a tree diagram (with state institutions and local governments as its main branches). The use of these two types of tools for the representation of terms was already recommended by Wüster (1985: 137–201). For instance, the explanatory tables may contain conceptual distinguishing marks (instance.g., between theft and robbery), the description of the various levels of courts, examples of contract terms and terms of the parties involved in a legal transaction, and the process of examination of a complaint in courts.

The Appendix presents different types of original anonymised documents issued by different countries in the four languages of the equivalents contained in the records (for instance, in the case of German: original documents from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland). The document samples in the Appendix are of four document types: company documents (mainly certificates of incorporation), court decisions (judgments on dissolution of marriage), a Hungarian real property sales contract, a copy of a Hungarian abstract of title. The purpose of the document samples and basic types of documents was to familiarise new translators with these types of texts.

3.2. The second handbook

In the second handbook, the focus switched to the issues of standardisation and harmonisation of the English terms in line with the programme of law translation realised in partnership with the Hungarian Ministry of Justice, the supervisor of OFFI Ltd., which started in 2017 and the results of which were incorporated into the translators' toolbox. Although the second volume has the same title as the first one, *Introduction to the Terminology of Law through the Lens of a Terminologist*, its aims were different: namely, harmonising terms, especially the English equivalents thanks to the participation of OFFI Ltd. in the law translation programme and resulted in having the main terms marked at least for English. The structure remained unmodified, changes have been carried out where up-to-date-ness was required.

All languages handled in these two volumes presented some distinctive and interesting features. In the case of English, special solutions were required due to Common Law and pluricentricity; in the case of French

and Italian, the common roots become obvious due to the Roman/continental law, and in the case of German and Hungarian, the traditional German influence on Hungarian law was recognisable (even with the use of verbatim translation).

3.3. The third handbook

The third handbook, *Terminology Strategy and Basic Legal Terms in the Languages of the Neighbouring Countries*, which concentrates on terminology policy issues, covering six of the seven languages of the neighbouring countries (namely, Slovak, Ukrainian, Romanian, Serbian, Croatian and Slovenian), was published with the focus on supporting language use of Hungarian minorities in the field of legal terminology. The volume forms part of the series of books published by the OFFI Academy and was realised within the IUSTerm Plus 2 terminological project by OFFI Ltd. The second and the third handbooks are available in print and as an electronic version on the homepage of the company (<https://www.offi.hu/offi-akademia/kiadvanyaink>).

The volume is divided into two major sections. The first, the theoretical part, contains studies mainly on language planning, including terminology policy and foreign language strategy. Unfortunately, Hungary does not have an explicit language strategy, which could be devoted to a terminology strategy and a future action plan for the Hungarian language, but we considered it important to address these issues while compiling this volume (Szoták 2011, 2017). The handbook even includes the article *Legal Terminology Observed Through the Lens of a Terminologist, or Objectives Worth to Be Pursued in the Field of Education, Standardisation and Terminology Policy*, which describes the different purposes of a handbook about legal terminology and the description and analysis of the characteristics of legal terminology with specific examples, the result of studies of the technical literature of LSP (Language for Specific Purposes), research and experiences collected from several years of practice of translation and terminology work. The second part of the handbook contains the 193 Hungarian legal terms with their equivalents in six foreign languages.

In the legal domain, equivalence is very often only a partial equivalence due to the special features of legal terminology, which is characterised by (Tamás 2021: 61–73):

- a high demand for up-to-dateness due to a continuous exposure of the language of law and public administration to socio-cultural changes; as a result, new concepts and terms are born, modified, and previous terms are reintroduced into the legal language at the level of language use (Heylen, Steurs 2014; Steurs, Tryczyńska 2021);
- a strong verballity (i.e., a high number of abstract concepts and a very strong link between the legal area and the language) in contrast, for instance, to the material reality of the technical language (Melinkoff 1963; Cao 2007);
- a duality of clarity and adaptability, especially in law-texts with a flexibility in the interpretation of legal institutions to be adapted to unforeseen life situations as already existing legal texts should be able to regulate even new social phenomena;
- a difference in classification methods due to system-boundedness (De Groot 1999; De Groot, Van Laer 2006; Šarčević 2014; Somssich 2018), which is valid in terms of legal families, judicial systems, branches of law or laws with differences in the classification of legal concepts;
- the country-specific use of national terms even within the same language (Šarčević 1997; Cao 2007; Chromá 2016; Chiocchetti 2019; Gáspár, Somssich 2019; Prieto Ramos, Cerutti 2021), and
- the neutrality of the language of law and administration of the European Union (Fischer 2018; Somssich 2011, 2018) and international institutions.

In addition, language mediators in the field of legal terminology have to face context-dependence, especially in the case of English due to its economic lexical use and, of course, clear language expectations (see plain language movements) for assuring undisturbed professional communication. Not to mention that the translator and terminologist need of be aware of terminological conceptual and legal comparison methods at the same time in order to be able to handle legal terms properly (Szoták, Tamás 2020; Tamás 2021).

As for the linguistic background, attention should be drawn to the fact that Hungarian is a pluricentric language, present in eight countries in the Carpathian Basin. Linguistic fragmentation has been going on since 1920, with Hungarians living in the neighbouring countries compensating for

the lack of specialised language registers by translating from the official language. Due to the different country-specific concepts, this also means that the Hungarian language has developed differently in the eight countries at the same time, namely in and outside Hungary, consequently Hungarian has a minority status in the neighbouring countries.

In line with the above, we asked our authors to investigate whether an explicit terminology policy existed in the neighbouring countries and what the role of Hungarian was in it. In all volumes, the participation of subject field experts was crucial to us. In the case of the third book, we collaborated with about twenty experts, the authors of our articles and records contained in the book.

During this collaboration, we considered some of the following principles:

- the collaboration of linguists and lawyers should be realised for all languages;
- as for the linguists, the team of linguistic experts should include an OFFI colleague with an extensive experience and expertise in the field of certified and legal translation, and a colleague living and working in a neighbouring country;
- authors of our articles are recognised experts in the field of law and legal translation and have experience in teaching and publishing.

As a result of our efforts, 1351 legal terms in Hungarian and six foreign languages (the official languages of the countries surrounding Hungary) were worked out in the third volume in order to harmonise the terminology of the legal domain. Often, due to differences in the social and legal systems of the different countries, it was worth highlighting the conceptual differences in translations when conveying certain legal terms, such as in the case of the terms *cégbíróság* and *cégjegyzék* (see Tables 1 and 2). In Hungary, the company register is kept and not only supervised by the courts (in contrast to the Companies House in the United Kingdom), and this can vary from country to country, namely, how the official body charged with this task is controlled or supervised by the state (being a court or a state office). The equivalents of the Hungarian terms were worked out in accordance with the conceptual background in all the ten languages in the form of terms, term candidates, or functional equivalents:

Table 1. Foreign equivalents of the Hungarian term *cégbíróság* and *cégjegyzék* in English, German, French, and Italian (Tamás 2019: 118–119)

HUNGARIAN TERM	EN	DE	FR	IT
<i>cégbíróság</i>	<i>Company Registration Court</i>	<i>Handelsgericht</i>	<i>tribunal de commerce</i>	<i>tribunale del registro delle imprese</i>
<i>cégjegyzék</i>	<i>company register</i>	<i>Handelregister (D)/ Firmenbuch (A)</i>	<i>registre du commerce et des sociétés</i>	<i>registro delle imprese (I)</i>

Table 2. Foreign equivalents of the Hungarian terms *cégbíróság* and *cégjegyzék* (Tamás, Szoták 2021: 348–349)

HUNGARIAN TERM	SK	UK	RO	SR	HR	SL
<i>cégbíróság</i>	<i>registrový súd</i>	<i>реєстраційний суд</i>	<i>Oficiul Registrului Comerțului (RO)</i>	<i>registarski sud</i>	<i>trgovački sud (HR)</i>	<i>registrsko sodišče</i>
<i>cégjegyzék</i>	<i>obchodný register</i>	<i>реєстр юридичних осіб</i>	<i>Registrul Comerțului (RO)</i>	<i>sudski registar privrednih subjekata</i>	<i>registar trgovačkih društava</i>	<i>sodni register</i>

4. TERMINOLOGY POLICY IN THE REGION

Language planning is a complex activity, especially for pluricentric languages such as Hungarian. The complexity of the task is indicated by the fact that the Hungarian ethnic groups in the eight countries in the Carpathian Basin differ in size, status, economic power, institutional support, and ethnolinguistic vitality. There are also significant differences in terms of LSP, which play a significant part in the vocabulary of a language. The state and development of LSPs are crucial for the competitiveness and social usefulness of a language (Szoták et al 2023). The maintenance of LSPs and the working out of terminology belong to the field of corpus planning (Haugen 1972), and as already mentioned, all activities related to the development of LSPs can form part of a language strategy. Since the Hungarian language is spoken not only in Hungary but also in seven neighbouring countries (Austria, Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia) and the Hungarian diaspora communities in many countries of the world, the language planning process is complex and involves the entire Hungarian

language community (cf., for example, Article D of the Constitution; Szoták 2017; Tolcsvai Nagy 2017).

As a market player, OFFI is characterised by strategic thinking, and that is why in 2015 it started to build the IUStermTM terminology database of law and public administration as a task assigned in its company strategies. OFFI's main objective as a market player is to ensure high quality of its translation services with state-of-the-art tools (Németh, Szoták 2021). The also company seeks to establish contacts with all policy makers who might be interested in building a Hungarian terminology database for terms of law and public administration (Szoták et al 2023). As yet, Hungary does not have an outright language terminology strategy. However, OFFI is an active participant in the process aiming at a proper strategy.

OFFI regularly participates in the strategic terminology discourse in Hungary, with the active involvement of the Hungarian Terminology Council (MATT), the Termik Research Group of Károli University led by Professor Ágota Fóris, the Hungarian Research Centre for Linguistics guided by Professor Gábor Prószéky, and the Termini Hungarian Language Research Network led by Professor János Péntek and Szilvia Szoták. The latter is a research network of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences formed of linguistic research institutes operating outside Hungary's borders in countries neighbouring Hungary (Szoták 2018: 26). In the absence of an explicit language strategy, in the 1990s, the linguists belonging to the research network initiated language planning activities, which were intensively implemented in the border demarcation project of the Termini Hungarian Language Research Network with the establishment of cross-border research stations by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 2001. Termini's linguists understand border demarcation as a conscious corpus linguistic work, with the aim of ensuring that cross-border variations of the Hungarian language are represented in newly produced or revised Hungarian linguistic publications – and more recently in databases – in a proportion commensurate with their importance.

5. THE FUTURE: THE UNDERGOING PROJECTS

Since OFFI was asked to cover market and educational needs, the decision was made to publish a further volume in the autumn of 2023, which would include Dutch, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese language equivalents. The forthcoming handbook will be divided into two parts: an article about

the terminology policies of the countries in question and a glossary of the 193 legal terms.

As illustrated in the table below, the term *Kúria* (the Supreme Court of Hungary) can be conveyed with a functional equivalent (see *Tribunal Supremo* in Spanish or *Supremo Tribunal de Justiça* in Portuguese) or with a term candidate (see *Curia* in Spanish and *Cúria* in Portuguese) as well:

Table 3. Foreign equivalents of the Hungarian term *Kúria* in Dutch, Russian, Spanish, and Portuguese (Tamás 2023)

HUNGARIAN TERM	NL	RU	ES	PT
<i>Kúria</i>	<i>de Hoge Raad</i>	<i>Верховный Суд</i>	<i>Tribunal Supremo/ Curia</i>	<i>Supremo Tribunal de Justiça/ Cúria</i>

6. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of our article was to present the three-in-one terminology handbook of the Hungarian Office for Translation and Attestation Ltd, in which 193 key Hungarian legal terms have been worked out in Hungarian and ten other languages and four more will be added soon. The series of handbooks focuses on three different but interconnected objectives, namely, didactical, harmonisation and terminology policy aims.

The volumes represent mainly a descriptive approach with the different equivalents worked out for legal terms and in most cases indicate whether the conceptual comparison results in an equivalent term, a functional equivalent, or possibly a newly developed solution (see term candidate/interim or tested and established translation solution), because as mentioned above, partial equivalence often occurs in legal terminology. These key legal terms are today part of IUSterm, the internal terminology database of OFFI Ltd., supporting the use of legal terms and disseminating terminology knowledge among the language service providers of the company. In fact, the volume can also be used as a teaching aid for the acquisition of the terminological approach in the field of legal translation and terminology.

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