

Variability of Syntactic Constructions in Legal and Lexical-Grammatical Aspects

Rashid Matenov

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Pedagogical Sciences, Acting Associate Professor, Tashkent State University of Law

Abstract: This article is devoted to the study of syntactic variability in legal texts from the standpoint of lexical and grammatical characteristics. The author analyzes how changes in case forms, verb constructions, and phrase structures influence the accuracy and interpretation of legal norms. The study examines strong and weak verb governance, as well as the role of word order and synonym choice in infinitive constructions. It is noted that variability ensures the flexibility of legal language, while simultaneously requiring strict compliance with syntactic norms to eliminate legal ambiguity. The research is based on a comparative analysis of legal and educational texts intended for students of non-philological specialties.

Keywords: syntactic variability, legal text, case forms, verb governance, lexical and grammatical features, infinitive constructions, legal precision



This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license

Introduction

Syntactic variability represents an important aspect of language study, manifesting itself in various sentence forms and structures, as well as in lexical-grammatical connections. A key feature of language is the ability of its units to change and combine in order to express similar meanings using different forms and structures. In legal contexts, variability in syntactic constructions is essential for the accuracy and unambiguity of transmitting legal norms and requirements. This study explores syntactic variability using examples from legal and educational texts designed for non-linguistic specialties.

Methods

To analyze syntactic variability in the examined texts, a method of comparative analysis of syntactic constructions was used, based on the morphological, lexical, and syntactic characteristics of words and word combinations. Special attention was paid to variations in phrases and sentences involving changes in case forms, prepositions, and verb usage. Elements of syntactic norm analysis were also applied, using examples from legal texts to highlight key aspects in the context of legal and lexical-grammatical requirements.

The word, as a lexical-grammatical unit, possesses inherent connections determined by its formal attributes as a part of speech. Other connections are determined by the syntactic positions of the word forms and emerge within sentences. In the analyzed legal and educational texts, word forms appear in syntactic relationships that organize the sentence into a coherent communicative unit. Among the various definitions of a sentence as the main syntactic unit, we have chosen the one most suitable for the linguistic-didactic goals of this study.

Results

In legal documents, it's common to find instances where expressions in different cases can change depending on the **purpose of the text**. For example, "The judge makes a decision" (Судья принимает решение) and "The judge makes a decision **on the case**" (Судья принимает решение по делу). In this instance, the noun "decision" and the phrase "decision on the case" refer to the same object.

When the case of nouns changes in legal texts, it can shift the **emphasis on the object of the action**. Consider "The lawyer sent the statement of claim **to the court**" (Юрист направил исковое заявление суду). Here, "суду" in the dative case indicates the object to whom the statement is addressed. Conversely, in "The lawyer sent the statement of claim **to court**" (Юрист направил исковое заявление в суд), "суд" in the accusative case denotes the place where the statement is sent.

Studies also indicate that the **prepositionless genitive case** can vary with other oblique cases depending on the context and needs of the text. Analysis reveals that such variations are widely used in legal and educational practice, helping to **diversify text structure** and avoid excessive monotony.

Legal language frequently exhibits variations in **prepositional and prepositionless management**. For example, "public order protection point" (пункт по охране общественного порядка) and "public order protection point" (пункт охраны общественного порядка). This variability can be linked to the **specification of meanings** and the potential for easier text comprehension.

Legal language utilizes various cases, depending on the **role a noun plays in a sentence**. For instance, a preposition can change the case of a noun, adding an **additional nuance to the meaning**. In the sentence, "The parties agreed **on compensation**" (Стороны договорились о выплате компенсации), "compensation" in the prepositional case indicates the object that was discussed. However, in "The parties agreed **on the amount of compensation**" (Стороны договорились о размере компенсации), the word "amount" in the genitive case emphasizes the object to which the definition is linked – a specific quantity or value of compensation.

Thus, unlike colloquial speech, legal texts demand strict adherence to grammatical norms, especially concerning **cases**, as a change in case can **affect the legal force of the text**. For example, incorrect use of a case form can lead to legal ambiguity and, consequently, potential legal ramifications. "The plaintiff filed a claim **to the defendant**" (Истец подал иск к ответчику) vs. "The plaintiff filed a claim **against the defendant**" (Истец подал иск против ответчика). In these two examples, the expression of the parties' relationship to the claim changes depending on the choice of preposition and case, influencing the interpretation of their legal positions.

Variability in the use of **verbal forms** has also proven significant, with verbal government sometimes being **strong (complementary)** or **weak (attributive)**. This diversity contributes to language flexibility and the precise expression of meanings in a legal context.

Strong government refers to situations where a verb requires a specific complement, and changing the form or type of the complement can significantly alter the meaning of the sentence. In legal texts, this is often associated with the **precision of formulations**, where every word and

grammatical form is crucial for legal interpretation. For example, "The parties' obligation **must be fulfilled within the deadline**" (Обязательство сторон должно быть исполнено в срок). Here, the verb "must be fulfilled" requires the noun complement "obligation," which is in the nominative case and is the main object of the action. This complement indicates that the obligation itself is subject to fulfillment, and any changes to this construction can lead to legal uncertainty. Another example is "The agreement **is concluded between the parties**" (Соглашение заключено между сторонами). Here, the verb "is concluded" requires the noun complement "agreement" in the nominative case, which is the object of the action. In this case, verbal government is also strong, as "agreement" is a key part of the legal transaction.

Weak government occurs when a verb does not require a specific complement and can be used with various cases or nouns. This allows for more flexible sentence construction while maintaining the general context of the action. For instance, in "The judge **considered the claim**" (Судья рассмотрел иск), the verb "considered" has weak government because it does not strictly require a specific complement. Although "claim" is in the accusative case, this verb can be combined with various nouns such as "statement," "document," etc., depending on the specific situation. In the next example, "The document **was signed by the organization's representative**" (Документ подписан представителем организации), the verb "was signed" also has weak government, as it can be used with various nouns indicating the object of the action. The noun "representative" in the instrumental case is not rigidly tied to this verb and can vary depending on the context.

Verbal government in legal texts directly affects the **precision of legal norms**. In some cases, even minor changes in the form of government can lead to different interpretations of obligations, rights, or procedures. For example, in the case of strong government, the emphasis is placed on a specific object of action (e.g., an obligation or a document), which eliminates the possibility of ambiguity in the legal wording. For instance, in the phrase "The contract **was concluded by the parties**" (Договор был заключен сторонами), the emphasis is on the fact of the contract's conclusion, and the verb "concluded" with strong government denotes the completion of the action. If one says, "The contract **was discussed by the parties**" (Договор был обсужден сторонами), the verb "discussed" with weaker government may leave room for various interpretations: the contract might have been discussed but not concluded, which changes the legal nature of the document.

Variation in **phrases with infinitives and nouns** in legal language involves changes in form, structure, or word order to precisely express legal concepts and norms. In a legal context, infinitives and nouns are often combined to denote an action or purpose, as well as to formulate parties' obligations. Changes in the structure of these phrases can affect the nuances of a legal text, providing flexibility in wording while maintaining legal accuracy.

Thus, changing the word order in phrases with infinitives and nouns can affect the **emphasis and perception of information**. In the example, "The **duty to perform obligations**" (Обязанность исполнить обязательства), the emphasis is on the noun "duty," implying that the key element is the existence of the duty itself. However, in the variant "To **perform obligations is the duty of the parties**" (Исполнить обязательства - обязанность сторон), the emphasis is placed on the infinitive "to perform," which highlights the action that the parties must undertake. Although both variants mean the same thing, the change in word order shifts the emphasis: in the first case, the obligation itself is highlighted, and in the second, the process of performance.

Variations in phrases with infinitives and nouns can also be related to the **choice of synonyms** that provide a more precise or general understanding of a right or action. For example, in the expression "The **right to file a claim**" (Право на подачу иска), the infinitive "to file" is connected to the noun "right," and this phrase emphasizes the possibility of exercising the right. However, in the expression "The **right to present a claim**" (Право на предъявление иска), the

infinitive "to present" replaces "to file," which may imply a more formalized or specific process of filing a claim in court. Here, we can see that the use of different synonyms for infinitives and nouns can create diversity in the interpretation of rights and obligations, as well as in the interpretation of legal texts.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that **syntactic variability** is crucial for both the **lexico-grammatical structure of language** and the **precision of legal and educational texts**. This variability is linked to the function of various forms and cases, allowing for linguistic flexibility without losing core meaning. In legal texts, this approach helps adapt the language to specific situations while adhering to strict formulation requirements.

Specifically, important features of syntactic variability in legal texts related to the use of **cases and verbal forms** were identified. Analysis established that the choice of cases in a legal context is key to the **accuracy and clarity of legal norms** and to avoiding legal ambiguity.

First and foremost, it was demonstrated how changes in **case forms** can influence the emphasis placed on different aspects of described situations. A significant aspect was the use of the **prepositionless genitive case**, which can vary depending on the context. This supports the idea that case variability helps avoid monotony, making texts more flexible and readable—a particularly important factor for legal and educational practice.

The analysis of **verbal forms** revealed that the use of **strong and weak government** impacts the precision with which obligations and actions are expressed. Furthermore, variations in **phrases with infinitives and nouns** also play a significant role in legal language. Altering word order and choosing synonyms allow for emphasis on different aspects of an action or obligation, which can substantially influence legal interpretation.

Overall, the research results show that **syntactic variability in legal language** is an essential tool for the accurate and correct expression of legal norms. Changes in cases, verbal forms, and phrase structures allow for flexible text adjustments depending on the context. This, in turn, helps to prevent legal errors and misunderstandings. At the same time, such variability demands strict adherence to grammatical norms, as even minor changes in form or structure can significantly alter the legal interpretation of a text.

Conclusion

Syntactic variability plays a crucial role in text organization, especially in legal and educational materials. Correctly using different variations allows for precision and expressiveness, which is particularly important in the context of formal and regulatory requirements. Future research could focus on a deeper analysis of specific types of syntactic variations and their application in various text genres.

References

1. Barannikova, L. I. *Variability as a Property of Sign Systems and Its Typology*. Analysis of the System of Scientific Knowledge. Saratov: Saratov University Press, 1976. – P. 146–151.
2. Voinova, M. G. *Speech Culture of the Lawyer*. Textbook for Law Students. – Tashkent: TGYUI, 2011. – 307 p.
3. Gak, V. G. *Linguistic Variability in the Light of General Theory of Variability*. In: *Variability as a Property of Language Systems*. Moscow: Nauka, 1982. – Part 1. – P. 73.
4. Graudina, L. K. *Issues of Normalizing the Russian Language: Grammar and Variants*. – Moscow: Nauka, 1980. – 288 p.

5. Matenov, R. B. "On the Use of Terminology in Legal Practice." *Miasto Przyszłości*, 2024, Vol. 50, pp. 639–640.
6. Matenov, R. B. "Teaching the Use of Variant Syntactic Units of Russian as a Non-Native Language in Non-Linguistic Universities." *Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan*, 2020, No. 5, pp. 127–140.
7. Matenov, R. B. "On Lexical Variability Norms in Developing Professional Speech Skills of Future Lawyers in Distance Learning." *Review of Law Sciences*, 2020, No. 2, pp. 263–265.
8. Matenov, R. B. "On the Syntactic Organization of Legal Texts." *XV Vinogradov Readings*, p. 66.
9. Matenov, R. B. "Features of Teaching Students the Variability of Syntactic Units." *Academic Research in Educational Sciences*, 2021, 2(1): 477–483.