

THE LINGUISTIC TURN IN PUBLIC LAW: PLAIN LANGUAGE EVOLUTION IN BRAZIL FROM LAW 14,129/2021 TO LAW 15,263/2025

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Abstract: In this article we examine the principle of clear and comprehensible language in Brazilian public administration, originally established in Article 3, VII, of the Digital Government Law (Law No. 14,129/2021) and recently strengthened by the enactment of the National Plain Language Policy (Law No. 15,263/2025). It argues that intelligible public communication is not merely a stylistic preference but a normative requirement that structures transparency, democratic participation, and administrative efficiency in the digital State. Through documentary analysis of legislation, doctrinal developments, and institutional initiatives—including ENAP’s Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil, ANA’s Plain Language Program, and judicial efforts under the National Pact for Plain Language—the study maps emerging best practices and persistent challenges, such as cultural resistance, lack of objective clarity standards, and federative asymmetries in implementation. Special attention is given to the legal implications of transforming plain language into an enforceable duty, including the prohibition of nonstandard “neutral language” forms under Article 5, XI, of Law No. 15,263/2025, which reinforces the need for linguistic predictability and adherence to the VOLP. The article concludes by proposing methodological guidelines and governance mechanisms—such as readability metrics, communicative audits, and national drafting protocols—to institutionalize plain language as a central component of good administration and digital citizenship in Brazil.

Keywords: plain language; digital government; transparency; citizen participation; accessibility.

INTRODUCTION

The consolidation of the Brazilian Digital State, driven by the enactment

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of Law No. 14,129/2021, inaugurates a new stage in the relationship between the Public Administration and society. In this context, information ceases to be a merely instrumental tool and becomes a structural element of state legitimacy. The principle of using clear and understandable language, set forth in Article 3, VII, of that law, is situated as a normative vector of transparency, administrative rationalization, and democratization of access. It reflects the recognition that the intelligibility of governmental discourse constitutes a condition for the validity of public communication in a digital environment. This normative evolution has recently been reinforced by Law No. 15,263/2025, which establishes the National Plain Language Policy and transforms the ideal of linguistic clarity into an explicit, cross-cutting duty of all branches and levels of government.

The advent of digital government not only reshapes bureaucratic processes but also requires a semantic redesign of administrative language. The legal culture—historically marked by technicalities and jargon that are difficult to grasp—faces the challenge of embracing clarity and precision without renouncing legal certainty. In this sense, the principle of plain language transcends the merely linguistic plane, assuming a legal and ethical dimension by guaranteeing the fundamental right to understand public information. The legal text thus promotes an epistemological shift in communication between the State and the citizen. By defining plain language in statutory terms and listing concrete drafting techniques, the new law provides a positive framework that operationalizes the legal duty of intelligibility previously only implicit in the digital-government regime.

Accessible comprehension of normative and administrative content is a prerequisite for the effectiveness of the republican principle, since the opacity of state language constitutes a form of symbolic exclusion. The democratization of language does not consist merely in simplifying texts but involves a process of institutional decoding that brings technical discourse closer to social reality. By introducing such a directive, the legislator acknowledges that the semantic distance between the State and society undermines accountability and the legitimacy of public decisions. Digital government, in this regard, must operate under the logic of universal intelligibility. Law No. 15,263/2025 reinforces this mandate by expressly linking plain language to transparency, popular participation, and the reduction of informational asymmetries.

However, the implementation of this principle faces obstacles at both normative and operational levels. Normatively, there remains a lack of objective parameters to determine what constitutes “clear and understandable” language, which weakens its legal applicability. Operationally, one observes a shortage of technical-linguistic training among public officials and the absence of institutional policies aimed at textual

standardization. Thus, although noble in its formulation, the principle lacks normative density and administrative instrumentality. The new law partially addresses these shortcomings by outlining drafting techniques, accessibility requirements, and institutional responsibilities, yet its effectiveness will depend on how each federative entity translates its mandates into governance structures, training programs, and internal regulations.

The central problem guiding this investigation is how the principle of clear and understandable language can be made effective within the scope of Law No. 14,129/2021, in order to ensure the realization of the rights to access information and citizen participation. The inquiry seeks to determine whether the principle constitutes a mere programmatic guideline or attains the normative force of a binding legal obligation. The analysis therefore requires identifying the normative and institutional instruments capable of operationalizing communicative clarity in the digital public sphere. With the advent of Law No. 15,263/2025, this question gains renewed relevance, as the principle now occupies a more explicit statutory position that potentially expands its enforceability.

The study proceeds from the hypothesis that clear language, when recognized as a legal duty of the Administration, contributes to reducing informational asymmetries and strengthening digital citizenship. Textual intelligibility—far from being a stylistic adornment—acts as a constitutive element of due informational process and, therefore, of the very legitimacy of state action. It is assumed that adopting accessible linguistic strategies enhances communicative efficiency and improves social oversight of the Administration. Conversely, the absence of clarity perpetuates bureaucratic opacity and restricts digital inclusion. The statutory consolidation of plain-language duties in 2025 strengthens this hypothesis by demonstrating a legislative movement toward treating intelligibility as an essential component of democratic governance.

The general objective of this work is to analyze the legal density of the principle of using clear and understandable language for citizens, as established by Law No. 14,129/2021, as an instrument to enhance digital government and public efficiency. The aim is to examine its systematic integration into the Brazilian legal framework, particularly from the standpoint of the fundamental rights to information, transparency, and good administration. The research also seeks to position the principle as a central axis in the reconfiguration of relations between language, power, and citizenship. The enactment of Law No. 15,263/2025 provides an additional normative layer that must be considered in this reconstruction, as it explicitly elevates plain language to a nationwide public policy.

The specific objectives are: (i) to identify the normative origins of the principle of plain language and its connection to international open-

government paradigms; (ii) to examine the correlation between linguistic clarity, administrative efficiency, and social oversight; (iii) to assess the practical implications of the principle for the drafting of normative acts and digital public communications; and (iv) to propose methodological guidelines for implementing plain-language policies within the State. Each objective derives from the need to give concreteness to the legal text and overcome its merely declaratory nature. In light of the 2025 law, these objectives now also include evaluating how the new statutory policy may foster uniform national standards and strengthen enforcement mechanisms.

From a methodological perspective, the study adopts a qualitative and exploratory approach of a legal-dogmatic and analytical-descriptive nature. The research is based on the analysis of Brazilian legislation and comparative experiences, particularly from countries that have already consolidated plain-language practices in public administration. The bibliographic research technique is complemented by the documentary analysis of governmental portals and secondary regulations. A critical-hermeneutic method guides the interpretation of legal provisions in accordance with constitutional principles and fundamental rights.

To this end, the work is structured around three complementary theoretical axes. The first examines the nature and normative function of the principle of plain language in the context of digital government. The second analyzes its relationship with the rights to transparency and efficiency, emphasizing the relevance of textual intelligibility as a criterion for democratic legitimacy. The third proposes parameters for the effective implementation of the principle, considering international best practices and recommendations from multilateral organizations. This division aims to ensure coherence and progressive development of the arguments. The addition of a comprehensive national policy through Law No. 15,263/2025 strengthens the analytical foundations of these axes by providing positive legal standards for evaluating administrative communication.

The scientific relevance of the research lies in demonstrating that state language, when devoid of clarity, can become an instrument of exclusion and misinformation. Conversely, the use of accessible language broadens participation, strengthens public trust, and contributes to the rationalization of bureaucracy. The study therefore aims to offer theoretical and practical foundations for the formulation of transparent communication policies, integrating itself into the contemporary debate on digital governance and the right to information. Communicative clarity is, ultimately, a democratic imperative.

Finally, the article seeks to reflect on the legal status of plain language as a structuring principle of digital administration. By transforming linguistic accessibility into a legal duty, the State acknowledges that understanding is

also a fundamental right. The challenge, however, lies in turning this guideline into effective administrative practice, overcoming cultural and institutional resistance.

This transition demands a cognitive redesign of institutions and an ethical commitment to public intelligibility. It is at this intersection between norm, language, and citizenship that the present study finds its justifications. Law No. 15,263/2025 reinforces this agenda by establishing a national framework that encourages institutional transformation and provides governments with concrete techniques and responsibilities for achieving linguistic clarity.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE LANGUAGE WITHIN THE SCOPE OF DIGITAL GOVERNMENT

The principle of clear and understandable language, codified in Article 3, VII, of Law No. 14,129/2021, represents the crystallization of a hermeneutic guideline that transcends the merely communicative dimension of Public Administration. The provision enshrines the State's duty to communicate with citizens in an intelligible, accessible, and direct manner, transforming transparency into a linguistic attribute of administrative action itself¹. This guideline is grounded in the premise that the democratic legitimacy of the Administration rests on its ability to make the content of its acts comprehensible. By adopting plain language as a normative principle, the State shifts the axis of efficiency from a merely operational dimension to a communicative one, turning clarity into a vector of digital citizenship². Thus, the legal text inaugurates a new semantics of power, in which administrative discourse must be decoded by the ultimate addressee of public action. This normative foundation has now been significantly reinforced by Law No. 15,263, of November 14, 2025³, which establishes the National Plain Language Policy and expressly requires all branches and levels of government to adopt clear, direct, and socially accessible communication.

From a dogmatic standpoint, the principle of clear language derives directly from the principle of publicity set forth in Article 37, caput, of the Federal Constitution, and further reinforced by the Access to Information Law (Law No. 12,527/2011). For transparency to be effective, public information must not only be disclosed but also understood⁴. Publicity devoid

¹ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 112.

² Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 15.

³ Brazil. Lei No. 15.263, de 14 de Novembro de 2025 (National Plain Language Policy). https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2023-2026/2025/Lei/L15263.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁴ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. *Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira*:

of intelligibility becomes a mere bureaucratic formality, incapable of generating accountability and social oversight⁵. As you have stated in another work, “active transparency only materializes when the language of the State is accessible to social cognition”⁶. Clear language therefore constitutes a normative projection of substantive publicity—the form that ensures the effective cognitive apprehension of state information. It represents a contemporary unfolding of the republican principle in its dimension of epistemic accessibility to power. Law No. 15,263/2025 explicitly incorporates this understanding by defining plain language as a technique aimed at enabling the citizen to “find, understand, and use” public information, thus concretizing the constitutional demand for communicative transparency.

The codification of this guideline also finds foundation in the fundamental right to information, enshrined in Article 5, XIV, of the Constitution, which guarantees everyone access to information of collective or general interest. Linguistic comprehension is a condition for the enjoyment of this right, for access without intelligibility does not amount to meaningful access⁷. Thus, the principle of clear language acquires an instrumental character in relation to fundamental rights, functioning as a necessary means for the realization of informational citizenship. Systemically, it attains the status of a norm of full efficacy, endowed with direct and immediate applicability within the domain of digital administration⁸. Its implementation does not depend on further regulation, but rather on administrative will and communicative competence, as evidenced by the Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil⁹. The new national law reinforces this quality of immediate applicability, since its obligations take effect at the moment of publication and require all federative entities to adopt complementary internal measures to ensure clear communication.

From the perspective of administrative law, clear language may be conceived as an integral component of the principle of good administration—

Experiência, Desafios e Propostas, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 7.

⁵ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Perspectivas Terminológicas da Accountability no Governo Digital, 2 *Revista EJEF* 1 (2023), 9.

⁶ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Transparência Ativa, Governo Digital e Acesso à Informação, in *Direito e Disrupção* 299 (Camila Pintarelli & Marcelo Fonseca Santos eds., Thomson Reuters Brasil 2025), 305.

⁷ Brazil. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988. http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Constituicao/Constituicao.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁸ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.enap.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁹ Brazil. Lei No. 14.129, de 29 de Março de 2021 (Digital Government Law). https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2021/lei/14129.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

explicitly recognized in international public governance instruments and implicitly incorporated into the Brazilian legal system. In this sense, textual clarity is an expression of procedural rationality, seeking to reduce cognitive asymmetries between the State and the citizen¹⁰. Hermetic language, by contrast, constitutes a defect of communicative form that compromises the material validity of public acts. Good administration therefore goes beyond the formal correctness of acts and requires that the communication arising from them be comprehensible and socially functional. Intelligibility thus becomes an ethical and legal requirement of public action¹¹. In this context, Law No. 15,263/2025 introduces detailed drafting techniques—such as the use of direct order, short sentences, and common vocabulary—that function as concrete operationalizations of the principle of good administration.

Contemporary administrative scholarship recognizes that language is also an instrument of power. Technical terminology, when used without mediation, operates as a mechanism of symbolic exclusion, confining state knowledge to a cognitive elite. The principle of clear language seeks to subvert this hierarchical logic, transforming public discourse into a common good¹². Under this model, the Administration must translate technical jargon without distorting legal content, ensuring a balance between conceptual precision and discursive accessibility¹³. Linguistic simplification, therefore, does not represent an impoverishment of legal reasoning but an opening of the legal discourse to democratic dialogue. As stated in Unicamp’s Plain Language Guide, “simplifying is not infantilizing; it is making comprehensible what belongs to everyone”¹⁴.

Law No. 15,263/2025 reinforces this democratization by expressly prohibiting, in Article 5, XI, the use of “new forms of gender and number inflection” that depart from the consolidated grammatical rules of Portuguese, the Orthographic Vocabulary of the Portuguese Language

¹⁰ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 132.

¹¹ Novaes, Anthony. Linguagem Simples Jurídica: Impactos e Desdobramentos, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 387 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 389.

¹² Arceno, Taynara Silva. A Comunicação Jurídica, Legal Design e Poder Judiciário: O Direito Fala, Mas Quem Entende?, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 437 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 442.

¹³ Souza, Fernanda Oliveira de. Legal Design, Visual Law e Linguagem Simples Como Ferramentas de Eficiência, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 417 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 420.

¹⁴ Universidade de Campinas (Unicamp). *Guia de Linguagem Simples*. <https://linguagensimples.unicamp.br/arquivo/uploads/guia-de-linguagem-simples-sem-formatacao-pdf> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 6.

(VOLP)¹⁵, and the Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement¹⁶. This provision is coherent with the objective of reducing interpretive ambiguity: so-called “neutral language” (e.g., forms such as “*todes*,” “*amigxs*,” or “*elu/ile*”) introduces expressions not recognized by the VOLP and therefore incompatible with the legal requirement of textual clarity and predictability. As an instrument of public communication, the State must privilege stability, uniformity, and intelligibility, which justifies the legislative choice to avoid experimental or ideologically disputed linguistic innovations that could hinder comprehension by the general population.

In a related manner, communicative clarity is a requirement of the very juridicity of administrative action. For a state decision to be valid, it must be justified in a comprehensible manner so that the administered person can grasp the reasoning behind it and, if necessary, challenge it. Textual opacity violates the principle of reasoning and infringes due administrative process, as it prevents the full exercise of defense and adversarial participation¹⁷. Clear language therefore constitutes an internal limit on discretionary power, as it obliges the State to articulate the reasons for its conduct rationally. This requirement brings the administrative function closer to the jurisdictional function, both of which are guided by intelligibility and public justifiability of acts. The new plain-language law strengthens this link by establishing that messages must be tested with the target audience (Art. 5, XVIII), reasserting the principle that administrative communication is only complete when the citizen can actually understand it.

Internationally, the principle of plain language has become a standard of good governance in countries such as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, having been incorporated into open government and digital services policies¹⁸. Comparative experience shows that textual clarity reduces administrative costs, enhances institutional trust, and increases citizen adherence to digital services¹⁹. Brazil, by adopting the principle in Law No.

¹⁵ VOLP, *Orthographic Vocabulary of the Portuguese Language* (Academia Brasileira de Letras) Acad. Bras. de Letras, Vocabulário Ortográfico da Língua Portuguesa (VOLP) (5th ed. 2009), available at <https://www.academia.org.br/nossa-lingua/volp> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

¹⁶ Brazil. Decreto No. 6.583, de 29 de Setembro de 2008 (Portuguese Language Orthographic Agreement), available at https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2007-2010/2008/Decreto/D6583.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

¹⁷ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 129.

¹⁸ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 4.

¹⁹ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira: Experiência, Desafios e Propostas, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 12.

14,129/2021, aligns itself with this global movement of semantic debureaucratization. It reflects the adaptation of an international public policy to the national context, shaped by the particularities of the Brazilian federal state and legal culture. In this setting, plain language functions as a vector of normative and cultural innovation²⁰. With the enactment of Law No. 15,263/2025, Brazil consolidates itself within this international trend by establishing one of the most detailed statutory frameworks for plain language in Latin America.

Consequently, the principle of clear and understandable language must be understood as a norm of structuring value that radiates effects across the entire administrative and normative communication of the State. Its legal density allows it to be regarded not merely as a stylistic postulate but as a genuine criterion of validity for digital government acts²¹. It imposes upon the Administration the duty to make itself understood, under penalty of emptying the very content of digital citizenship. Clarity thus assumes a teleological function in ensuring the effectiveness of informational democracy. In this sense, plain language ceases to be a mere communicative ideal and becomes a legal imperative of a transparent and dialogical State. The new National Plain Language Policy solidifies this imperative by transforming clarity into a permanent, enforceable standard of public governance—one that safeguards linguistic stability and rejects forms of expression that compromise legal certainty, cognitive accessibility, and the communicative universality required of the State.

II. CLEAR LANGUAGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF DEMOCRATIC EFFECTIVENESS AND PUBLIC EFFICIENCY

Clear language, as a guiding principle of digital government, constitutes an instrument for the realization of substantive democracy, for it enables the citizen's effective participation in public management. The accessibility of state discourse is not a mere communicative courtesy but a material condition for the exercise of social oversight and informed deliberation²². When the State speaks in a hermetic manner, it creates symbolic barriers that separate rulers and the ruled, subverting the republican ideal of communicational equality. As Arceno observes²³, “opaque legal language keeps the citizen in

²⁰ Haapio, Helena, Anne Ketola & Nina Toivonen. From Drafting to Design with AI Assistants, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 709 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 710.

²¹ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 18.

²² Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 109.

²³ Arceno, Taynara Silva. A Comunicação Jurídica, Legal Design e Poder Judiciário: O

the position of a spectator of the system, never a participant.” Technical vocabulary, when not mediated by clarity, becomes an instrument of exclusionary power, reinforcing informational asymmetry between the Administration and society. In this context, clear language emerges as a dimension of active citizenship and an expression of the democratic principle of transparency²⁴.

In this regard, the enactment of Law No. 15,263/2025 significantly strengthens the democratic function of plain language by transforming it into a binding national policy applicable to all branches and levels of government. By expressly defining plain language as a legal duty and establishing concrete drafting techniques, the law gives unprecedented normative density to the communicative dimension of citizenship.

The theory of communicative democracy, developed from Habermasian contributions, reveals that the legitimacy of institutions depends on the intelligibility of the discourses that support their decisions. Administrative power, when exercised in digital environments, must be permeable to communicative reason and mutual understanding²⁵. The clarity of public discourse is, therefore, a requirement for democratic validity: without understanding, there is no consent; and without consent, there is no legitimacy. In essence, as already stated, “language is a vector of accountability, for it makes the rational pathway of administrative decision-making perceptible”²⁶. Digital government, in this sense, must also be intelligible government. Clear language thus becomes an element that authenticates informational democracy. Law No. 15,263/2025 reinforces this point by codifying the citizen’s right to comprehend official communication and by imposing mandatory linguistic standards that concretize communicative reason in the administrative sphere.

In the realm of public efficiency, the adoption of plain language represents not only an ethical imperative but also a strategy of administrative rationalization. Comprehensible texts reduce rework, minimize interpretative errors, and increase citizen adherence to public policies²⁷. Communicative clarity enhances the cost-effectiveness of administrative acts by reducing the

Direito Fala, Mas Quem Entende?, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 437 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 439.

²⁴ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira: Experiência, Desafios e Propostas, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 6.

²⁵ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 11.

²⁶ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Perspectivas Terminológicas da Accountability no Governo Digital, 2 *Revista EJEF* 1 (2023), 18.

²⁷ Souza, Fernanda Oliveira de. Legal Design, Visual Law e Linguagem Simples Como Ferramentas de Eficiência, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 417 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 430.

cognitive burden imposed on information recipients. “To speak clearly is to administer well,” states Novaes²⁸, emphasizing that intelligibility is a parameter of communicative efficiency. Efficiency is no longer understood solely in quantitative terms—speed and productivity—but incorporates the qualitative dimension of comprehension. Thus, the principle of efficiency, when read together with that of clear language, reveals its true teleological character: to serve the public intelligibility of state action²⁹. The new national plain-language statute confirms this understanding by recognizing clarity as a mechanism for reducing administrative costs and simplifying citizen interaction with the State, thereby turning communicative efficiency into an explicit legal goal.

Contemporary administrative doctrine recognizes that communicative efficiency is a prerequisite for decisional efficiency. Digital administration, marked by instantaneous interactions and the multiplicity of platforms, requires that clarity become an integral part of the architecture of its informational systems³⁰. It is not enough for services to exist; they must be comprehensible, navigable, and responsive to the cognitive limitations of the average citizen³¹. Plain language, in this scenario, operates as a legal interface between state normativity and the social experience of information. It translates public power into perceptible terms, humanizing bureaucracy without sacrificing juridicity³². By consolidating a national policy, Law No. 15,263/2025 establishes institutional incentives for this shift, requiring each federative entity to define complementary guidelines that ensure the practical incorporation of communicative accessibility into their digital platforms.

The democratic effectiveness of clear language also manifests in the procedural sphere, especially regarding the right to petition and the duty to provide reasons for administrative acts. The clarity of official texts ensures that citizens can understand the reasons behind decisions that affect them and, therefore, exercise adversarial participation fully³³. Discursive opacity, on the

²⁸ Novaes, Anthony. *Linguagem Simples Jurídica: Impactos e Desdobramentos*, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 387 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 398.

²⁹ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 121.

³⁰ Brazil. Lei No. 14.129, de 29 de Março de 2021 (Digital Government Law). https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2021/lei/14129.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

³¹ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.enap.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

³² Calaza, Tales. *As Bases do Legal Design*, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 3 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 20.

³³ Bahia. Tribunal de Justiça do Estado da Bahia (TJBA). *Guia Prático – Linguagem Simples*. <https://www.tjba.jus.br/segundavice/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Guia-Pratico->

other hand, impedes oversight and generates legal uncertainty. Thus, plain language serves to reinforce the principle of legality, since it enables administrative norms to fulfill their communicative function of guiding conduct³⁴. Textual clarity, in this respect, constitutes a form of qualified publicity and an instrument for safeguarding legitimate expectations. The new law reinforces this procedural dimension by requiring that public documents be drafted so that key information appears first and that technical terms be accompanied by explanations or synonyms, thereby strengthening due administrative process.

Public efficiency, as an express constitutional principle³⁵ (art. 37), must be reinterpreted in the light of the digital era and the communicational rights that accompany it. The traditional paradigm of efficiency—focused on outcomes—gives way to a dialogical model centered on the citizen’s informational experience³⁶. Law No. 15,263/2025 aligns with this constitutional command by expressly linking plain language to administrative simplification and cost reduction, demonstrating the intrinsic connection between communicative clarity and efficiency. Efficient administrative action is that which communicates effectively, reduces ambiguity, and makes the consequences of state acts predictable. Discursive clarity thus becomes a vector of governance, integrating economic rationality with communicative rationality³⁷. Ultimately, the efficient State is the one that makes itself understood.

International experience reinforces the correlation between plain language, efficiency, and legitimacy. Countries such as Canada and the United Kingdom have demonstrated through plain language and clear communication policies that clear governmental texts reduce litigation and strengthen institutional trust³⁸. Empirical evidence shows that plain language

Linguagem-Simples-14042023.pdf (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

³⁴ MPCE (Ministério Público do Ceará). *Guia de Uso da Linguagem Simples para Apresentação*. <https://www.mpce.mp.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Guia-de-Uso-da-Linguagem-Simples-para-Apresentac%CC%A7a%CC%83o.pdf> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

³⁵ Brazil. Constituição da República Federativa do Brasil de 1988. http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/Constituicao/Constituicao.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

³⁶ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 118.

³⁷ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 7.

³⁸ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23,

is not an aesthetic preference but an instrument of public policy³⁹. By adopting this paradigm, Brazil takes a significant step toward democratizing state discourse, aligning itself with the international open-government movement⁴⁰. In this context, democratic effectiveness ceases to be an abstract ideal and becomes a daily linguistic practice.

In conclusion, the principle of clear language functions as a normative link between administrative efficiency and participatory citizenship. It gives legal density to the ideal of a communicative State—one that expresses itself not to obscure, but to engage⁴¹. Clarity, far from trivializing legal discourse, grants it legitimacy, meaning, and democratic purpose. “An administration that makes itself understood draws closer to society and reaffirms its republican vocation”⁴². Thus, clear language must be viewed as the semantic core of public efficiency and the discursive foundation of the digital democracy currently under construction in Brazil.

In this evolving context, by preventing experimental or nonstandard “neutral language” forms not recognized by the VOLP, the law avoids interpretive ambiguity and safeguards the legal certainty that must characterize public communication. Far from representing a setback, this provision protects the citizen’s right to understand official texts, ensuring that administrative acts remain anchored in the consolidated norms of the national language and accessible to the entire population.

III. EXPERIENCES AND BEST PRACTICES IN PLAIN LANGUAGE WITHIN THE BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The implementation of the principle of clear language in Brazil has unfolded as a gradual process of institutionalizing communicative transparency, expressed through public policies, innovation laboratories, and internal regulations⁴³. Since the enactment of Law No. 14,129/2021, various governmental spheres have incorporated textual clarity as a structuring guideline for their administrative practices. The emergence of this policy of

2025), 8.

³⁹ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. *Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira: Experiência, Desafios e Propostas*, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 14.

⁴⁰ Haapio, Helena, Anne Ketola & Nina Toivonen. From Drafting to Design with AI Assistants, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 709 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 711.

⁴¹ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 24.

⁴² Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 134.

⁴³ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 108.

discursive simplification is part of a global movement toward *plain language governance*, adapted to the particularities of the Brazilian State⁴⁴. Domestically, the most successful experiences tend to associate plain language with programs of digital government, innovation, and institutional transformation⁴⁵. This paradigm shift moves the focus from bureaucratic form to the communicative function of the State.

At the federal level, the *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil* (Brazil Plain Language Network), coordinated by the National School of Public Administration (ENAP) through the InovaGov platform, stands out. The initiative has consolidated itself as a collaborative network of civil servants and specialists who promote training, content curation, and the sharing of best practices in clear communication. According to its official document, “plain language is a strategy for building trust and promoting citizenship”⁴⁶. This network structure materializes the principle of participatory governance established in Article 1 of the Digital Government Law⁴⁷, by enabling the horizontal dissemination of knowledge and the harmonization of linguistic criteria among different agencies. By assuming this role, ENAP acts as an epistemic nucleus of discursive transformation within the Brazilian public sector. Administrative discourse—once hermetic—begins to be reconfigured as language of citizenship⁴⁸. In this sense, the trajectory of Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil can be read as a precursor to the guidelines later consolidated at the statutory level by Law No. 15,263/2025.

Among the most notable experiences is the Plain Language Program of the National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency (ANA), which promotes a true “clarity journey.” The program includes training tracks, practical guides, and educational games aimed at translating technical-regulatory language into accessible terms. As the agency itself states, “accessible communication is the first step toward shared water governance”⁴⁹. The initiative is part of a

⁴⁴ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 3.

⁴⁵ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.enap.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁴⁶ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.enap.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 2.

⁴⁷ Brazil. Lei No. 14.129, de 29 de Março de 2021 (Digital Government Law). https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2019-2022/2021/lei/14129.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁴⁸ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 21.

⁴⁹ ANA (Agência Nacional de Águas e Saneamento Básico). *Linguagem Simples*.

broader institutional policy of democratizing environmental and water-related information—topics whose scientific complexity requires careful linguistic mediation. By adopting plain language as a permanent policy, ANA reinforces the pedagogical character of Public Administration. This experience demonstrates that discursive clarity does not diminish technical content; it humanizes it and brings it into the public sphere⁵⁰.

In the Judiciary, the Bahia Regional Electoral Court (TRE-BA) has emerged as a reference, having launched a plain language guide and glossary to standardize communication with voters⁵¹. The project translates legal and procedural expressions into accessible vocabulary without compromising normative precision. This practice responds to the need for an inclusive electoral process, in which clear information becomes an instrument of political citizenship). By simplifying its notices and decisions, TRE-BA fulfills not only the duty of publicity but also the citizen's right to comprehension. This experience constitutes a concrete expression of the intersection between language and electoral democracy⁵². It is part of the National Pact for Plain Language in the Judiciary, coordinated by the National Council of Justice, which seeks to “make judicial communication more accessible and empathetic, bringing citizens closer to the Judiciary”⁵³. The alignment between TRE-BA and the CNJ underscores the institutional effort to build a judicial culture of intelligibility, in accordance with the principle of good administration⁵⁴.

At the subnational level, the Government of Minas Gerais implemented a transversal policy of accessible communication, led by the public innovation lab LAB.mg. The program combines information design techniques with textual revision of administrative acts, establishing official clarity guidelines for secretariats and agencies⁵⁵. This practice inaugurates a

<https://www.gov.br/ana/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/acoes-e-programas/linguagensimples/linguagensimples> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 4.

⁵⁰ Souza, Fernanda Oliveira de. Legal Design, Visual Law e Linguagem Simples Como Ferramentas de Eficiência, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 417 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 424.

⁵¹ Brazil. Tribunal Regional Eleitoral da Bahia (TRE-BA). TRE-BA Institutionalizes Plain Language. <https://www.tre-ba.jus.br/comunicacao/noticias/2025/Julho/tre-ba-institucionaliza-linguagem-simples-e-publica-documentos-orientadores-para-a-comunicacao-acessivel> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁵² Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Perspectivas Terminológicas da Accountability no Governo Digital, 2 *Revista EJEF* 1 (2023), 17.

⁵³ Brazil. Conselho Nacional de Justiça (CNJ). *Pacto Nacional do Judiciário pela Linguagem Simples* (referenced in TRE-BA materials).

⁵⁴ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 129.

⁵⁵ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira: Experiência, Desafios e Propostas, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 11.

new type of public efficiency: semantic efficiency—guided by the reduction of textual opacity. Minas Gerais thus recognizes that language is also an administrative infrastructure. The initiative serves as a federative model for the practical application of Article 3, VII, of Law No. 14,129/2021.

The *LegiSimples* Project, developed by the Legislative Assembly of Ceará (Alece), represents a unique experience by combining plain language and visual law in legislative production⁵⁶. Its objective is to make the content of laws more comprehensible to the population, using graphic and narrative resources of normative design⁵⁷. This methodology adds aesthetic and functional dimensions to the principle of clarity, allowing legal texts to communicate effectively with ordinary citizens. It anticipates the concept of *open legislation*, bringing parliament closer to its social base. The Ceará initiative translates plain language into an instrument of legitimizing the legislative process.

The rise of this discursive simplification policy aligns with the global movement for plain language governance, adapted to the Brazilian context⁵⁸. In the legislative sphere, Bill No. 6,256/2019, recently approved by the Brazilian National Congress, already proposed the creation of a National Plain Language Policy explicitly stating that “public communication must be drafted in a clear, concise, and direct manner, so that any citizen may understand it without technical mediation”⁵⁹. This proposal signaled a trend toward the progressive constitutionalization of the duty of intelligibility. With its approval and subsequent enactment as Law No. 15,263/2025, a substantial part of this agenda has been incorporated into binding positive law, transforming the idea of a National Plain Language Policy into a concrete and enforceable framework applicable to the entire Federation.

Other experiences—such as the Plain Language Guide of the Public Prosecutor’s Office of Ceará⁶⁰ and the Plain Language Guide of the

⁵⁶ Alece (Assembleia Legislativa do Ceará). Alece Launches *Projeto LegiSimples* Focused on Plain Language and Visual Law. <https://www.al.ce.gov.br/noticias/50963-alece-lanca-projeto-legisimples-com-foco-na-linguagem-simples-e-no-direito-visual> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁵⁷ Arceno, Taynara Silva. A Comunicação Jurídica, Legal Design e Poder Judiciário: O Direito Fala, Mas Quem Entende?, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 437 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025).

⁵⁸ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 3.

⁵⁹ Brazil. Câmara dos Deputados. *Projeto de Lei No. 6.256/2019*. <https://www.camara.leg.br/proposicoesWeb/fichadetramitacao?idProposicao=2231632> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁶⁰ MPCE (Ministério Público do Ceará). *Guia de Uso da Linguagem Simples para Apresentação*. <https://www.mpce.mp.br/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Guia-de-Uso-da>

Government of Piauí—demonstrate the reach of the institutional clarity movement. In both cases, plain language is treated as a policy of integrity and accountability, reinforcing the relationship between public communication and social trust. The guides developed by these bodies establish textual, typographic, and visual standards that promote more empathetic and efficient communication. Beyond improving information management, these guides function as preventive control mechanisms, reducing interpretative ambiguities and administrative controversies⁶¹. Clear text thus becomes a tool of communicative compliance.

To better systematize the mapped initiatives, the following table is presented:

Table 1 – Brazilian Initiatives for Implementing Plain Language

Agency / Program	Scope	Main Actions and Initiatives	Declared Objectives / Expected Results	Sources / References
Brazil Plain Language Network – ENAP / InovaGov	Federal	Creation of a collaborative network of civil servants; courses, guides, and curation of best practices in plain language.	Disseminate a culture of plain language in public administration and standardize communication criteria.	ENAP (2025); Brazil (2021).
Plain Language Program – ANA (National Water and Basic Sanitation Agency)	Federal / Regulatory	“Clarity journey” with training tracks, educational games, and practical guides for translating technical-regulatory language.	Democratize access to environmental and water-related information; humanize technical language and strengthen participatory governance.	ANA (2025, p. 4); Souza (2025, p. 424).
National Judiciary Pact for Plain Language – CNJ	National Judiciary	Coordination of initiatives to simplify judicial communication and train public servants.	Make judicial discourse accessible, empathetic, and understandable for all citizens.	CNJ (2023); Faleiros Júnior (2023, p. 17).
Plain Language Guide and Glossary – TRE-BA	Judiciary / State	Production of glossaries, guides, and clear electoral communication materials; standardization of language across institutional channels.	Ensure electoral inclusion and intelligibility of judicial decisions.	TRE-BA (2025).

Linguagem-Simples-para-Apresentac%CC%A7a%CC%83o.pdf (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁶¹ Universidade de Campinas (Unicamp). *Guia de Linguagem Simples*. <https://linguagemsimples.unicamp.br/arquivo/uploads/guia-de-linguagem-simples-sem-formatacao-pdf> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 9.

Plain Language Practical Guide – TJBA	Judiciary / State	Development of a practical manual for accessible procedural communication; revision of judicial and administrative acts.	Facilitate access to justice and promote procedural citizenship.	TJBA (2023).
LAB.mg – Government Innovation Lab (Government of Minas Gerais)	State Executive	Textual review of administrative acts; official clarity guidelines; application of information design.	Make legislative production more understandable and bring parliament closer to the population.	Cardoso (2025, p. 11); Faleiros Júnior (2024, p. 121).
LegiSimples Project – Legislative Assembly of Ceará (ALECE)	State Legislature	Application of visual law and plain language techniques to the drafting of legislation.	Make legislative production more understandable and bring parliament closer to the population.	ALECE (2025).
LegiSimples Project – ALECE Civil Servant Portal	State Legislature (internal)	Integration of plain language into ALECE’s internal administrative acts.	Promote efficiency and transparency in the Legislature’s internal communication.	ALECE (2025).
Plain Language Guide – Public Prosecutor’s Office of Ceará (MPCE)	State Public Prosecutor’s Office	Production of standardized guides and booklets for accessible communication; training for members and staff.	Strengthen institutional integrity and the duty of accountability.	MPCE (2022).
Plain Language Guide – Government of Piauí	State Executive	Adoption of textual and visual standards in public acts and communications; promotion of empathetic communication.	Strengthen social trust and reduce interpretative ambiguities.	Unicamp (2023, p. 9).
Plain Language Manual – Federal Government (PLANO BRASIL)	Federal (Regulatory and Technical)	Manual containing guidelines for planning, developing, and testing clear public texts.	Establish a national methodology for textual readability and intelligibility.	Plano Brasil (2025).
Bill No. 6,256/2019 – Chamber of Deputies	Federal Legislature	Proposes the creation of the National Plain Language Policy.	Establish a legal obligation of clear communication within Public Administration.	Bill No. 6,256/2019 (2019).
Legislative Bulletin No. 110/2023 – Federal Senate	Federal Legislature / Advisory	Technical report on subnational policies and the need to institutionalize plain language.	Reinforce plain language as a State policy and encourage its federative adoption.	Bill No. 6,256/2019 (2019).
Law No.	Federal (All)	Establishes	Establishes mandatory	Law No.

15,263/2025 – National Plain Language Policy	Powers: Union, States, Federal District, Municipalities)	mandatory adoption of plain-language techniques in public communication by all direct and indirect public administration bodies.	adoption of plain-language techniques in public communication by all direct and indirect public administration bodies.	15,263/2025 (2025)
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Source: prepared by the authors.

In summary, Brazilian plain-language initiatives form a mosaic of institutional innovation, in which the normative principle acquires empirical concreteness. The variety of practices—federal, state-level, and judicial—demonstrates that discursive clarity has already consolidated itself as a cross-cutting public policy. However, the definitive consolidation of this paradigm requires that plain language be recognized as a legal duty, not merely an administrative recommendation. In this regard, Law No. 15,263/2025 represents a decisive step, as it expressly institutes a National Plain Language Policy and imposes obligations on all branches and entities of the direct and indirect administration; nonetheless, its transformative potential will depend on how far its commands are internalized in procedures, structures, and institutional cultures. The future challenge lies in integrating these experiences into a communicative-governance matrix equipped with metrics, indicators, and normative standards of intelligibility. Within this horizon, Brazil may establish itself as a regional reference in building a public administration that is clear, accessible, and semantically democratic⁶².

The normative enshrinement of the principle of plain language—although legally significant—faces the challenge of transforming itself from an ethical-communicative ideal into a fully enforceable legal duty. Article 3, VII, of Law No. 14,129/2021 still lacks sufficient normative density to generate positive obligations and sanctions for noncompliance⁶³. Indeed, “the normativity of digital principles depends on their conversion into measurable and verifiable processes”⁶⁴. Due to this low normativity, plain language remains, in many contexts, confined to the realm of administrative rhetoric. The mere codification of a principle does not guarantee its implementation: it must be endowed with enforcement mechanisms and hermeneutic parameters that grant it legal effectiveness. In this context, Legislative Bulletin No. 110/2023 of the Federal Senate emphasizes that “the

⁶² Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 133.

⁶³ Novaes, Anthony. Linguagem Simples Jurídica: Impactos e Desdobramentos, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 387 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 396.

⁶⁴ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. Inovação, Desenvolvimento e a Lei do Governo Digital (Lei No. 14.129/2021), 1 *InovaJur* 1 (2022), 26.

institutionalization of plain language depends on legal frameworks that define it as a State policy, not merely a government policy”⁶⁵. This observation highlights that the effectiveness of Art. 3, VII, of Law No. 14,129/2021 requires normative densification and parliamentary oversight—indispensable conditions for its practical realization.

The first limitation to be addressed lies in the absence of a precise legal concept of “clear and understandable language.” By using an open-ended expression, the statute requires supplementation through regulatory acts or technical standards, under penalty of practical indeterminacy⁶⁶. Such vagueness risks trivializing the principle, turning it into a mere stylistic orientation of administrative discourse. Overcoming this gap requires the construction of objective clarity criteria—such as readability metrics, digital-usability standards, and indicators of public comprehension⁶⁷. The principle will only become an effective norm when it can be measured, evaluated, and replicated with methodological reliability⁶⁸.

Another significant challenge arises from cultural resistance within public institutions to discursive simplification. The Brazilian bureaucratic tradition— heir to a notarial and formalistic ethos—mistakenly associates textual complexity with technical credibility. Ornate vocabulary and labyrinthine syntax operate, in this context, as symbols of authority and power⁶⁹. The introduction of plain language thus implies a semantic revolution that confronts entrenched habits and structures of symbolic domination). Breaking this cycle demands continuous pedagogical effort, centered on communicative training for public servants and institutional re-education regarding the legal value of clarity⁷⁰.

⁶⁵ Brazil. Senado Federal. *Boletim Legislativo No. 110/2023*. https://www12.senado.leg.br/publicacoes/estudos-legislativos/tipos-de-estudos/boletins-legislativos/bol110/@@download/file/Bol110_LuanaBergmannSoares.pdf (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 5.

⁶⁶ Brazil. Plano Brasil. *Manual de Linguagem Simples: Como Planejar, Desenvolver e Testar Textos que Funcionam*. https://www.gov.br/gestao/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/estrategia-e-governanca/estrutura-de-governanca/Manualdelinguagensimples_comoplanejardesenvolveretestartextosquefuncionam.pdf (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁶⁷ Cardoso, Guilherme Lima. *Linguagem Simples na Administração Pública Brasileira: Experiência, Desafios e Propostas*, 23 *Direito em Movimento* 1 (2025), 13.

⁶⁸ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 127.

⁶⁹ Xavier, Júlio Miranda Gomes & Lília Carvalho Finelli. *Tipografia Jurídica: A Busca pelo Novo Versus a Promoção do Acesso à Justiça*, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 605 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 609.

⁷⁰ Souza, Fernanda Oliveira de. *Legal Design, Visual Law e Linguagem Simples Como Ferramentas de Eficiência*, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 417 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 428.

There are also structural challenges of federative and technological nature. Implementation of the principle requires interoperability among digital systems, documentation standardization, and decentralized technical training. States and municipalities—often lacking human and technological resources—face difficulties adapting their portals and communications to the logic of plain language⁷¹. This institutional disparity may compromise the universal reach of the principle, restricting it to the more developed spheres of the federation. To avoid becoming a privilege of the few, plain language must be treated as a national public policy of communicative equity⁷².

From a legal-dogmatic standpoint, another limitation lies in the absence of direct sanctions for failure to comply with the principle. Unlike violations of formal duties such as publicity or reasoning, non-observance of plain language is rarely recognized as a defect that invalidates administrative acts⁷³. Yet it is possible to argue that textual obscurity compromises substantive publicity and, therefore, the legality of the act itself. Discursive opacity can be equated to informational omission, producing relevant legal effects, especially in processes involving transparency, defense, and adversarial participation⁷⁴. This is fertile ground for recognizing plain language as an enforceable dimension of good administration in case law⁷⁵.

From a normative perspective, consolidation of the principle depends on its integration into concrete governance instruments, such as institutional communication plans, public drafting manuals, and digital-performance indicators⁷⁶. Sector-specific regulation could establish obligations for each level of government, providing technical guidelines and language standards based on empirical evidence⁷⁷. Furthermore, it would be appropriate to

⁷¹ Nogueira, Sandra Vidal, Louise de Lira Botelho, Serli Genz Bolter et al. *Movimentos pela Linguagem Simples: Democratização da Comunicação Pública*, 14 *Research, Society & Development* 1 (2025), <http://dx.doi.org/10.33448/rsd-v14i8.49345> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025), 6.

⁷² Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.enap.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁷³ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 129.

⁷⁴ Brazil. Lei No. 12.527, de 18 de Novembro de 2011 (Access to Information Law). http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2011-2014/2011/lei/112527.htm (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁷⁵ Reimão, Clóvis. The ten commandments of excellent digital government. *Brazilian Journal of Law, Technology and Innovation*, 3(1), 1-27, 2025, 6.

⁷⁶ Brazil. Plano Brasil. *Manual de Linguagem Simples: Como Planejar, Desenvolver e Testar Textos que Funcionam*. https://www.gov.br/gestao/pt-br/acao-a-informacao/estrategia-e-governanca/estrutura-de-governanca/ManualdeLinguagemSimples_comoplanejardesenvolveretestartextosquefuncionam.pdf (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁷⁷ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples*

include textual clarity as a criterion of public-integrity audits. Secondary regulation, by giving operational density to the principle, would allow legal and political oversight of its implementation. Thus, plain language would cease to be a merely aesthetic recommendation and become a parameter of communicative accountability⁷⁸.

Institutionalizing plain language also requires overcoming tensions between technical precision and semantic accessibility. The hermeneutic challenge lies in balancing the conceptual rigor of legal discourse with the intelligibility necessary for lay audiences. Excessive simplification may lead to loss of normative density, while impenetrable technicality perpetuates cognitive exclusion. The virtuous path is communicative proportionality: clarity without impoverishment, precision without hermeticism⁷⁹. Achieving this balance demands a new drafting paradigm in which state texts are simultaneously normative and pedagogical.

Looking forward, plain language is poised to consolidate itself as a central element of digital governance and the democratic transformation of the Brazilian State⁸⁰. The expansion of programs such as the Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil, the inclusion of intelligibility metrics in public portals, and the strengthening of a culture of accessible communication are vectors of this evolution⁸¹. The expectation is that textual clarity will increasingly be recognized as a fundamental right derived from access to information and good administration. Consolidating this principle will entail redefining the bureaucratic ethos itself—replacing ritualistic formalism with dialogical transparency. Thus, the future of public language in Brazil depends on transforming the State’s discourse into an instrument of understanding and emancipation.

CONCLUSION

The analytical path undertaken throughout this study has shown that the principle of clear and understandable language, enshrined in Article 3, VII,

Brasil (InovaGov). <https://inovagov.ena.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

⁷⁸ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Perspectivas Terminológicas da Accountability no Governo Digital*, 2 *Revista EJEJF* 1 (2023), 25.

⁷⁹ Xavier, Júlio Miranda Gomes & Lília Carvalho Finelli. *Tipografia Jurídica: A Busca pelo Novo Versus a Promoção do Acesso à Justiça*, in *Legal Design: Teoria e Prática* 605 (José Luiz de Moura Faleiros Júnior & Tales Calaza eds., 3d ed., Foco 2025), 612.

⁸⁰ Faleiros Júnior, José Luiz de Moura. *Administração Pública Digital* (2d ed., Foco 2024), 134.

⁸¹ Brazil. Escola Nacional de Administração Pública (ENAP). *Rede Linguagem Simples Brasil (InovaGov)*. <https://inovagov.ena.gov.br/quemsomos/iniciativas/72> (last visited Nov. 23, 2025).

of Law No. 14,129/2021, is not a mere semantic ornament of digital-government policy, but a true structuring axis of the communicative rationality of the contemporary State. Textual clarity emerges as a normative dimension of transparency, giving concrete substance to the fundamental rights to information and good administration. For the digital State to be legitimate, it must also be intelligible. Language thus becomes the point of intersection between efficiency, democracy, and citizenship. Wherever discursive opacity exists, there is a republican deficit.

Brazilian administrative dogmatics, by incorporating the duty of intelligibility, renews the understanding of the principle of publicity and redefines the very notion of public efficiency. Discursive clarity is not limited to form; it is an instrument of democratic effectiveness and administrative rationalization. The focus of state action shifts from producing acts to producing meaning. Government communication ceases to be monological and assumes a dialogical character, recognizing the citizen as a legitimate interlocutor of the norm rather than as a mere passive recipient. In this reconfiguration, language is juridicized, and communication is elevated to the status of a public duty. Law No. 15,263/2025 reinforces this movement by expressly defining plain language, prescribing concrete drafting techniques, and thereby providing a statutory framework that aligns administrative practice with the doctrinal understanding of communication as an essential public function.

The Brazilian experiences analyzed—such as the Brazil Plain Language Network (ENAP), ANA's Plain Language Program, TRE-BA's Guide, LAB.mg, ALECE's LegiSimples initiative, and MPCE's Guide—demonstrate that the principle of textual clarity has already surpassed the purely programmatic sphere. These initiatives represent a process of empirical normativization in which administrative praxis precedes dogmatic consolidation. In such cases, clarity becomes an institutional practice associated with indicators of transparency, innovation, and public trust. The materialization of the principle thus depends not only on statutory wording but also on the communicative ethos of the institutions that implement it. Plain language has become an expression of the republican maturity of the digital State. Against this backdrop, Law No. 15,263/2025 operates as a point of normative convergence: it receives and systematizes many of these pioneering practices, conferring them a national legal basis and transforming isolated experiences into a coherent public policy of plain language.

Nevertheless, theoretical and operational obstacles remain that challenge its full institutionalization. The absence of specific sanctions for failing to comply with the duty of clarity, the lack of objective standards, and cultural resistance to abandoning technical jargon limit the principle's legal density. It is necessary to recognize that although an obscure text may be legally valid,

it is democratically illegitimate. Discursive opacity perpetuates cognitive inequalities and erodes social trust in public institutions. Overcoming these barriers requires a coordinated effort in norm-setting, training, and cultural transformation. Even with the advances brought by Law No. 15,263/2025—such as the enumeration of concrete plain-language techniques and the extension of obligations to all federative entities—its effectiveness will depend on the capacity of institutions to internalize these commands and convert them into stable organizational routines.

From a dogmatic perspective, clear language must be understood as a sub-principle of publicity and an integral element of the principle of good administration. Its violation may compromise the substantive validity of an administrative act, especially when lack of clarity prevents the exercise of adversarial participation and full defense. Public Administration does not fulfill its constitutional function when it speaks in order not to be understood. Clarity is, therefore, the linguistic form of legality. It translates the State's duty of objective good faith in its communication with citizens and reinforces the democratic legitimacy of its decisions. The National Plain Language Policy codified in Law No. 15,263/2025 strengthens this interpretive path, insofar as it treats intelligibility not as mere stylistic preference, but as a legal standard that conditions the correctness of state communication.

In normative and policy terms, consolidation of the principle requires public policies aimed at institutionalizing clarity, including readability metrics, comprehension indicators, and accessible drafting protocols. The development of national guides, public-language observatories, and federative training programs could provide coherence and structure to this new communicative regime. Moreover, incorporating clear language as a criterion for audits and integrity assessments would enhance oversight of the State's communicational performance. When systematized, textual clarity becomes a transparency technology—simultaneously a management tool and a guarantee of rights. Law No. 15,263/2025 already points in this direction by ordering the adoption of specific techniques (such as short sentences, direct order, and prioritization of essential information) and by requiring public bodies to operationalize plain language through internal guidelines and procedures.

Looking ahead, plain language tends to establish itself as an implicit fundamental right derived from the right to be informed and to understand public information. The democratization of language represents the highest stage in the evolution of the information society. Administration that communicates clearly recognizes citizens as cognitive subjects and participants in decision-making processes. Thus, the principle of clear language is not merely a requirement of efficiency, but an expression of the communicational dignity of the human person before the State. Ultimately,

to understand is a form of freedom. In this prospective scenario, Law No. 15,263/2025 can be interpreted as a milestone in the gradual recognition of a “right to intelligible public communication,” giving positive-law support to a demand that had long been present in constitutional theory and administrative practice.

It follows, therefore, that clear language constitutes the new paradigm of digital governance and the semantic foundation of the informational Republic. Its normative strength is still under construction, but it already radiates effects on the interpretation of administrative duties and the institutional design of public policies. By transforming state discourse into an instrument of citizenship, the principle transcends the realm of form and reaches the core of contemporary democratic constitutionalism. The future of Public Administration will depend, to a large extent, on the State’s ability to speak—and to be understood—by all. After all, true efficiency is that which results in comprehension. The advent of a comprehensive National Plain Language Policy, as embodied in Law No. 15,263/2025, suggests that Brazilian law is beginning to incorporate this insight at the highest normative level, anchoring the governance of the digital State in the shared horizon of understandable, transparent, and accountable public language.

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