

Lexical features of legal context

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Annotation *Legal language, with its distinct vocabulary and structure, plays a critical role in conveying legal intentions and ensuring clarity in judicial and legislative communication. This study investigates the lexical features that characterize legal contexts by analyzing authentic legal texts through a qualitative linguistic lens. The focus is placed on identifying specialized terminology, archaic expressions, nominalizations, redundancy, and the strategic use of modal verbs and passive constructions. These features are essential for achieving precision, formality, and consistency in legal communication, but they also present significant challenges for interpretation, especially among non-experts and in legal translation. The methodology involves a corpus-based analysis of diverse legal genres, including statutes, contracts, and judicial opinions. Using both computational tools and manual annotation, the research identifies key patterns in the lexicon of legal English. The results highlight the prevalence of technical terms, the enduring presence of Latinisms, and a reliance on dense, nominal structures. Furthermore, the discussion explores the pragmatic functions of redundancy and binomial expressions in enhancing legal certainty. The paper concludes that while these lexical features fulfill crucial legal functions, they also complicate accessibility and translation. Understanding these features is therefore vital for legal practitioners, translators, and educators. The findings underscore the importance of legal lexical awareness and provide insights that may improve legal drafting, interpretation, and cross-linguistic communication. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the linguistic intricacies of the legal domain and advocates for a more informed approach to legal language pedagogy and reform.*

Keywords: *legal lexicon, legal discourse, legal terminology, lexical features, legal language*

Лексические особенности юридического контекста

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Аннотация: *Юридический язык, с его специфическим словарным запасом и структурой, играет ключевую роль в передаче юридических намерений и обеспечении ясности судебной и законодательной коммуникации. Настоящее исследование изучает лексические особенности, которые характеризуют юридический контекст, анализируя подлинные юридические тексты с качественной лингвистической точки зрения. Особое внимание уделяется идентификации специализированной терминологии, архаизмов, номинализаций, избыточности и стратегическому использованию модальных глаголов и пассивных конструкций. Эти особенности важны для достижения точности, формальности и последовательности в юридической коммуникации, но также представляют собой значительные трудности для интерпретации, особенно среди неспециалистов и при*

юридическом переводе. Методология включает корпусный анализ различных юридических жанров, таких как законы, контракты и судебные решения. С использованием как вычислительных инструментов, так и ручной аннотации, исследование выявляет ключевые паттерны в лексиконе юридического английского языка. Результаты показывают преобладание технических терминов, продолжающееся использование латинизмов и зависимость от плотных номинальных структур. Кроме того, в дискуссии рассматриваются прагматические функции избыточности и биномиальных выражений для повышения юридической определенности. В статье делается вывод, что, хотя эти лексические особенности выполняют важные юридические функции, они также усложняют доступность и перевод. Понимание этих особенностей является важным для юристов, переводчиков и педагогов. Результаты подчеркивают важность осведомленности о юридической лексике и предоставляют идеи, которые могут улучшить юридическое написание, интерпретацию и межъязыковую коммуникацию. Это исследование способствует более глубокому пониманию лингвистических тонкостей юридической области и призывает к более осознанному подходу к преподаванию и реформированию юридического языка.

Ключевые слова: юридический лексикон, юридический дискурс, юридическая терминология, лексические особенности, юридический язык

Yuridik kontekstdagi leksik xususiyatlar

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Annotatsiya: Huquqiy til, o'ziga xos so'z boyligi va tuzilmasi bilan, huquqiy niyatlarni etkazishda va sud-huquqiy va qonun chiqaruvchi aloqa jarayonida aniqlikni ta'minlashda muhim rol o'ynaydi. Ushbu tadqiqot, haqiqiy huquqiy matnlarni sifatli lingvistik nuqtai nazardan tahlil qilish orqali huquqiy kontekstni xarakterlovchi leksik xususiyatlarni o'rganadi. Tadqiqotda maxsus terminologiya, qadimgi ifodalar, nominalizatsiyalar, ortiqcha so'z ishlatish va modal fe'l va passiv qurilmalardan foydalanish kabi leksik xususiyatlar aniqlanishga qaratilgan. Ushbu xususiyatlar huquqiy aloqa jarayonida aniq, rasmiy va izchil bo'lishni ta'minlash uchun muhim, ammo ular, ayniqsa, huquqiy tarjimonida va mutaxassis bo'lmaganlar uchun talqin qilishda katta qiyinchiliklarni keltirib chiqaradi. Tadqiqot metodologiyasi huquqiy janrlarning turli-tumanlari, jumladan qonunlar, shartnomalar va sud qarorlari bo'yicha korpusli tahlilni o'z ichiga oladi. Hisoblash vositalari va qo'l bilan belgilashni birlashtirgan holda, tadqiqot huquqiy ingliz tilining leksikonidagi asosiy naqshlarni aniqlaydi. Natijalar, texnik atamalar, lotincha iboralarning davom etadigan mavjudligi va zich nominal strukturalarga bo'lgan ehtiyojni ko'rsatadi. Bundan tashqari, ortiqcha so'z ishlatish va binomial ifodalarning huquqiy aniqlikni oshirishdagi pragmatik funksiyalari muhokama qilinadi. Ushbu maqolada xulosa qilinadiki, ushbu leksik xususiyatlar muhim huquqiy vazifalarni bajarishda yordam bersa-da, ular kirish imkoniyati va tarjimani murakkablashtiradi. Bu xususiyatlarni tushunish, shuningdek, huquqshunoslar, tarjimonlar va pedagoglar uchun juda muhimdir. Tadqiqot natijalari huquqiy yozuvlarni, talqinlarni va tillararo kommunikatsiyani yaxshilashga yordam beradigan g'oyalarni taqdim etadi. Ushbu tadqiqot, huquqiy tilning lingvistik murakkabliklarini chuqurroq tushunishga hissa qo'shadi va huquqiy tilni o'rgatish va isloh qilishga yanada ongli yondashuvni targ'ib qiladi.

Kalit so‘zlar: huquqiy leksikon, huquqiy diskurs, huquqiy terminologiya, leksik xususiyatlar, huquqiy til.

Introduction

Legal language, often regarded as a specialized and complex form of communication, is designed to achieve clarity, precision, and consistency in the interpretation of laws and regulations. While legal texts are intended to provide clear guidelines, their distinct lexical features often make them difficult to understand for non-experts. This study aims to explore the lexical characteristics of legal discourse, focusing on the linguistic structures, specialized terminology, and syntactic features that shape legal communication. Legal language is fundamentally different from everyday language. It relies heavily on precise terminology, the use of nominalizations, passive constructions, and formal syntactic structures to convey legal principles in a standardized manner (Bhatia, 1993). These features help to ensure that legal documents are unequivocal and can be interpreted with minimal ambiguity. However, they also contribute to the formality and complexity of legal texts, creating barriers for individuals without a legal background.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the key lexical features of legal language, particularly focusing on the following aspects:

- **Legal Terminology:** The specialized vocabulary used in legal contexts, including terms of art, statutory definitions, and technical jargon.
- **Nominalization:** The transformation of verbs and adjectives into nouns, a process that abstracts legal concepts and contributes to the formality of legal discourse.
- **Redundancy and Repetition:** The use of binomial expressions, reiterations, and fixed legal phrases, which serve to reinforce key legal concepts and ensure clarity.
- **Formal Syntax:** The complex sentence structures and passive voice that are common in legal texts, which promote objectivity and neutrality in legal communication.

1. To achieve these objectives, a comprehensive analysis of various legal texts was conducted, including statutes, case law, contracts, and regulatory documents. By examining these texts, the study explores how lexical features such as specialized legal terminology, syntactic structures, and formal expressions work together to achieve the goals of legal communication. The research also addresses the accessibility of legal language (Tiersma, 1999). While the formality and complexity of legal language are crucial for precision, they can also alienate individuals without a legal background. As legal systems around the world move towards greater transparency, the findings of this study may contribute to ongoing efforts to simplify legal language without compromising its accuracy and effectiveness. In this paper, the first section discusses the theoretical background of legal language and its unique features. The subsequent sections describe the research methods used to analyze the lexical characteristics of legal texts, present the results of the study, and discuss the implications of these findings for both legal practice and legal communication. Finally, the conclusion offers suggestions for future research in the area of legal linguistics, particularly with regard to improving accessibility and understanding in legal communication (Mellinkoff, 1963). Language is central to the practice and interpretation of law. Legal language, often referred to as legalese, is characterized by a set of lexical features that distinguish it from ordinary language. These features serve to convey authority, precision, and unambiguous meaning within legal frameworks. While some of these characteristics have historical origins, others have evolved to meet the demands of contemporary legal communication [Mattila, H. E. S. (2006). *Comparative Legal Linguistics*. Ashgate.]. The present study aims to investigate the lexical features that define legal English and to examine their role in ensuring legal clarity, coherence, and enforceability.

The research questions addressed in this study include:

- What are the key lexical features that characterize legal English?
- How do these features function within legal communication?
- What implications do these features have for translation and legal education?

2. This paper seeks to fill a gap in applied legal linguistics by providing a comprehensive examination of legal lexical structures. It aims to contribute to a better understanding of how these features shape the function and perception of legal texts across different legal genres. Legal language is a specialized form of communication, shaped by the requirements of precision, clarity, and formality. It serves a pivotal role in the legal profession, as it ensures that legal norms, obligations, and rights are expressed unambiguously and authoritatively. Legal texts, including statutes, contracts, judgments, and regulations, must not only reflect the intentions of lawmakers and legal practitioners but also establish a framework for resolving disputes and guiding future behavior (Crystal, et al., 1969). As such, the lexical features of legal language are integral to its functionality, making it distinct from general discourse. One of the defining characteristics of legal language is its use of specialized vocabulary. Legal terms, often referred to as "terms of art," carry meanings that differ significantly from their everyday usage. These terms are meticulously defined within the legal system, ensuring that their meaning is clear and consistent across various legal contexts. Words like "plaintiff," "defendant," "jurisdiction," and "tort" serve specific roles within legal proceedings and cannot be substituted for other terms without altering their intended legal implications (Kim, Y. 2004, 107-124). The precise nature of legal terminology is essential for upholding the rule of law and ensuring that legal concepts are consistently interpreted. In addition to specialized terminology, legal language frequently employs a variety of syntactic and stylistic features that contribute to its formal tone and complexity. One such feature is nominalization, the process of converting verbs or adjectives into nouns. This process is used extensively in legal writing to create more abstract and formal expressions. For example, "termination of contract" is favored over "to terminate the contract." This practice not only increases the density of legal language but also emphasizes the conceptual nature of legal processes, which are often concerned with abstract principles rather than specific actions. Nominalizations allow for greater precision and objectivity, but they can also contribute to the perceived inaccessibility of legal texts. The formal tone of legal language is also reinforced by the frequent use of Latin expressions and archaic terms. Latin has been the lingua franca of legal discourse for centuries, and many legal concepts continue to be expressed in Latin. Phrases like *habeas corpus* (to have the body), *mens rea* (guilty mind), and *prima facie* (on its face) are deeply embedded in legal practice. These expressions convey specific legal meanings and often lack direct equivalents in other languages. While the use of Latin gives legal language an air of authority and tradition, it also poses a challenge for non-experts and individuals unfamiliar with legal culture. Archaic words and phrases, such as "hereinafter" or "aforementioned," further contribute to the formality and complexity of legal texts, even though they are not commonly used in everyday speech. Another important aspect of legal language is its reliance on redundancy and binomial expressions. Legal texts frequently repeat terms or use paired phrases to ensure that the meaning is clear and unambiguous. For instance, expressions like "null and void," "cease and desist," or "terms and conditions" are used to reinforce key concepts. This redundancy serves multiple functions: it clarifies the meaning of legal provisions, emphasizes the importance of certain terms, and helps avoid potential misinterpretations. Binomial expressions are often used to express two related ideas in a concise and comprehensive manner. They are also a means of strengthening legal certainty, ensuring that all possible interpretations are accounted for. The passive voice is another notable feature of legal language. It is used extensively in legal documents to maintain objectivity and focus on actions rather than the individuals performing them. For example, rather than stating "The parties must sign the contract," legal language prefers the passive construction "The contract must be signed." This structure shifts attention away from the actor and places it on the action or the obligation, thus enhancing the formality and neutrality of the text. The passive voice is particularly useful in legal contexts where the identity of the actor is less important than the action itself or when the action is directed at an unspecified party. In recent years, legal language has come under scrutiny for being overly complex and difficult for laypeople to understand. Critics argue that the excessive use of technical jargon, nominalizations, and formal expressions creates barriers to access, preventing the

general public from fully engaging with legal processes. This issue is especially problematic in a society where legal rights and obligations are increasingly intertwined with daily life. As a result, there has been growing interest in legal reform, with calls for "plain language" initiatives aimed at making legal documents more accessible to non-specialists. Plain language advocates argue that legal texts should be written in clear, simple language that is easily understood by the general public, without sacrificing the necessary precision and formality. Despite these criticisms, legal language serves a vital function within the legal system. Its complexity is not arbitrary but is designed to ensure that legal concepts are expressed with precision and clarity. By using specialized vocabulary and formal structures, legal texts can communicate complex ideas without ambiguity. In this sense, the lexical features of legal language are not merely stylistic choices but are fundamental to the integrity and functioning of the legal system. Legal language is, by design, a tool for precise communication in a specialized context, where accuracy is paramount. This paper aims to explore the lexical features that define legal language and examine their implications for legal communication, interpretation, and translation. Through a detailed analysis of various legal texts, the study will identify the key linguistic features that contribute to the distinctiveness of legal language, focusing on terminology, syntactic structures, and stylistic choices. It will also discuss the challenges these features pose for non-experts and the potential for reform in legal language practices. In addressing these issues, the paper will contribute to a better understanding of the linguistic characteristics that shape legal discourse and provide insights into how these features influence legal practice, education, and translation. Ultimately, the goal is to shed light on the complexities of legal language and to explore ways in which it can be made more accessible without compromising its precision or authority.

Methods

To investigate the lexical features of legal English, this study adopts a qualitative corpus-based methodology. A representative sample of legal texts was compiled, including contracts, statutes, case law, and legal reports. These texts were selected based on their relevance, diversity of legal genres, and accessibility in public legal databases.

The analysis was conducted using both digital tools and manual techniques. AntConc software was used for concordance and keyword analysis, enabling identification of frequently occurring legal terms and phrases. In addition, manual annotation was applied to categorize lexical items into thematic groups, including technical terminology, Latin expressions, archaic terms, nominal structures, and modal constructions.

The scope of the analysis focused on five primary lexical categories:

- Legal terminology
- Archaic and Latin expressions
- Nominalization and compound structures
- Redundant and binomial expressions
- Modal verbs and passive constructions

This methodological approach allowed for a detailed examination of how these lexical features operate within the context of legal communication.

The analysis of the corpus of legal texts revealed several distinctive lexical features that contribute to the specialized nature of legal language. These features encompass both vocabulary and syntactic structures, each playing a crucial role in maintaining the precision, clarity, and formality that legal texts require. The results of the investigation focused on five primary lexical categories: legal terminology, Latin expressions, nominalization, redundancy, and modal constructions. Below are the key findings for each of these categories:

Specialized Legal Terminology

One of the most striking aspects of legal language is the extensive use of specialized terminology, which is essential for maintaining the precision and specificity of legal discourse. Legal terminology includes words and phrases that have meanings distinct from those found in ordinary language. These terms are often referred to as "terms of art," and their use is critical for avoiding

ambiguity in legal texts. For instance, the terms "plaintiff," "defendant," "jurisdiction," "tort," "liable," and "damages" carry specific legal connotations that are central to understanding legal proceedings and outcomes. A key feature of legal terminology is that many terms have no direct equivalent in everyday language. This lexical distinction is vital for the accuracy of legal processes, as it ensures that all parties involved understand the same concept in the same way. For example, the term "contract" in legal contexts refers to a legally binding agreement, whereas in common parlance, it can refer to any type of arrangement or understanding. This specificity allows legal professionals to convey nuanced meanings that are crucial for determining rights, responsibilities, and obligations. Furthermore, legal terminology is often highly technical and specialized, leading to a situation where individuals outside the legal profession may struggle to understand these terms. While legal experts are well-versed in the meanings and usage of these terms, the general public may find the legal lexicon opaque and difficult to navigate [Munday, J. (2016). *Introducing translation studies: Theories and applications*. Routledge.]. Despite this, the necessity for legal precision means that specialized terminology is a key component of the language of law.

Latin Expressions and Archaic Terms

Latin has long been a cornerstone of legal discourse, and its usage continues to shape modern legal language. Legal texts often contain Latin expressions that have become embedded in legal practice. Terms such as *habeas corpus* (a writ requiring a person under arrest to be brought before a judge), *mens rea* (guilty mind), and *prima facie* (at first glance) are common in legal documents and serve to communicate complex legal concepts concisely (Neff, 2012, p.22-40). These Latin expressions are widely recognized within the legal community and provide a degree of consistency across different legal systems. However, the use of Latin terms in legal texts presents challenges for those who are not familiar with the language. Non-experts may find these expressions confusing or inaccessible, which can hinder their understanding of legal documents. In addition to Latin, legal language often retains archaic terms such as "hereinafter" (in the following sections) or "aforesaid" (mentioned earlier), which contribute to the formal tone of legal writing. While these terms are intended to provide clarity and continuity in legal texts, they can be seen as outdated and unnecessary, particularly in contemporary legal practice, where plain language is becoming increasingly advocated.

Nominalization and Complex Structures

Another defining feature of legal language is the frequent use of nominalization, the transformation of verbs or adjectives into nouns. Nominalization is a common syntactic strategy that serves to increase the formality, abstraction, and precision of legal language. For example, phrases like "the termination of the contract" or "the implementation of the policy" replace more direct verb constructions such as "terminate the contract" or "implement the policy." This tendency to nominalize verbs contributes to the dense and often complex structure of legal writing. While nominalization adds a layer of formality and abstraction to legal discourse, it can also obscure meaning for non-experts. The use of long noun phrases makes legal texts more formal and impersonal but can reduce readability and accessibility. Legal language often requires readers to focus on abstract concepts rather than concrete actions, which can make it more challenging for laypersons to follow and understand.

Redundancy and Binomial Expressions

Redundancy is another prominent feature in legal texts. Legal language frequently employs repetitive phrases or redundant expressions to reinforce meaning and ensure that the message is clear and unambiguous. This redundancy serves multiple purposes, including eliminating potential ambiguities and emphasizing key legal principles. For example, expressions like "null and void," "cease and desist," and "terms and conditions" repeat essential ideas in a way that minimizes the risk of misinterpretation. In addition to redundancy, legal language often utilizes binomial expressions, which consist of two related words or concepts. Examples of these include "rights and obligations," "freedom and responsibility," and "hereby agreed and undertaken." These pairs are used to capture

two complementary or contrasting elements, reinforcing the idea that both concepts must be considered in tandem. The use of binomials ensures that legal concepts are fully articulated and understood from different perspectives, contributing to the comprehensive nature of legal texts. While redundancy and binomial expressions are useful for clarifying and emphasizing legal points, they can contribute to the perceived complexity of legal language. Some critics argue that these features may be unnecessary or excessive, especially in light of efforts to simplify legal language and make it more accessible to a broader audience. However, from a legal standpoint, redundancy and binomial expressions fulfill important functional roles, helping to guarantee that legal terms are understood in their full context.

Modal Verbs and Passive Voice

Legal texts frequently rely on modal verbs such as "shall," "must," "may," and "should" to convey obligations, permissions, and prohibitions. These verbs are crucial in establishing the normative force of legal documents. For instance, "shall" is used to indicate an obligation, while "may" suggests permission or discretion. Modal verbs help clarify the extent of legal requirements and the discretion granted to individuals or entities. The passive voice is another syntactic feature commonly found in legal texts. The passive construction shifts the focus from the subject (the actor) to the object (the action or the recipient of the action). For example, in a legal document, one might find "The contract shall be executed" rather than "The parties shall execute the contract." The passive voice serves to depersonalize the language, emphasizing actions over the individuals involved. This is particularly useful in legal contexts where the identity of the actor is less important than the action or its legal consequences. The use of modal verbs and passive voice contributes to the formality and objectivity of legal language, ensuring that legal requirements are communicated in a precise, impersonal manner. While these features contribute to the clarity and neutrality of legal texts, they also add to the complexity and density of the language, making it harder for non-experts to understand.

Results

To investigate the lexical features of legal language, a qualitative, corpus-based approach was adopted. The aim was to systematically analyze a range of legal texts, focusing on their lexical characteristics, including the use of specialized terminology, nominalizations, redundancy, and formal syntactic structures. The study focused on identifying recurring linguistic patterns and understanding how these features contribute to the unique nature of legal discourse. This section outlines the research design, data collection process, and analytical techniques used in the study.

2.1 Corpus Selection

The corpus for this study was composed of various legal documents, selected to represent different types of legal discourse. These documents included statutes, case law, contracts, and legal regulations, which were chosen for their relevance and variety in legal communication. Statutes and legal regulations were selected to represent formal legislative language, while contracts were included for their contractual lexicon and phraseology. Case law provided insight into how legal language is applied in judicial reasoning and argumentation. The corpus comprised over 100 pages of legal texts from different jurisdictions, ensuring a diverse range of legal contexts. These texts were selected based on their accessibility and their prevalence in legal practice. For example, prominent international and national statutes, legal case summaries, and sample contracts were used to provide a representative sample of legal language across various areas of law, such as criminal, civil, and constitutional law. In addition to the textual corpus, a selection of secondary sources, including academic papers, legal dictionaries, and legal commentaries, was consulted. These sources helped clarify the meanings of legal terms and provided additional context for the interpretation of certain linguistic features. This broad selection allowed the research to explore a wide array of lexical features in legal discourse and to ensure that the findings were not restricted to a single genre of legal text.

2.2 Data Collection

The primary data for this study was collected from publicly available legal texts and documents. To compile the corpus, various legal databases and repositories were accessed, including government websites, legal journals, and institutional archives. These sources provided a rich variety of legal documents that were up-to-date and relevant to contemporary legal practice. Once the corpus was assembled, the texts were formatted for analysis. The collected data included not only written documents but also excerpts of legal commentary and court rulings. Special attention was given to ensuring that the texts were representative of both written and oral forms of legal discourse, as certain lexical features, such as redundancy and formal syntax, may differ between the two modes. The collection process involved systematic sampling to ensure that texts were not only varied but also reflected the diversity of legal genres. The selection was designed to balance texts from different legal traditions and jurisdictions, ensuring that the analysis accounted for both common law and civil law systems, which often differ in their use of legal language.

2.3 Analytical Framework

The analysis was conducted using a combination of qualitative and computational methods to examine the lexical features of the legal texts. A critical linguistic approach was adopted to investigate the texts' use of terminology, sentence structures, and stylistic features. The study focused on the following key lexical features:

- **Legal Terminology:** The identification of technical legal terms and phrases, such as "plaintiff," "defendant," "tort," and "jurisdiction," was a major aspect of the analysis. These terms were categorized based on their function and role in legal discourse. Their frequency of occurrence and distribution across different genres of legal texts were also examined.

- **Nominalization:** The study specifically focused on the process of nominalization, identifying verbs and adjectives that were transformed into noun phrases. The occurrence of nominalized forms, such as "termination" (from "terminate") and "implementation" (from "implement"), was tracked across different legal texts.

- **Redundancy:** Redundant expressions, such as "null and void," "cease and desist," and "terms and conditions," were identified and analyzed. These phrases were examined to determine their function in legal language and the reasons for their repetitive use.

- **Formal Syntax and Passive Voice:** The study examined the use of passive constructions and other formal syntactic structures that contribute to the objectivity and formality of legal language. Sentences like "The contract must be signed" were analyzed to understand how passive voice shifts focus away from the actor and emphasizes the action or obligation.

- **Latin and Archaic Terms:** A comprehensive analysis was conducted on the use of Latin phrases and archaic terms that are often present in legal documents. The study examined the frequency and context of these terms and evaluated their role in legal discourse.

To facilitate the analysis, AntConc software, a corpus analysis tool, was used to identify the frequency of specific lexical items and to conduct concordance searches for particular terms or phrases. This tool was particularly useful for identifying recurring patterns of legal terminology and syntactic structures across the corpus. In addition to the computational analysis, a manual review of the texts was carried out to contextualize the findings. This manual review allowed for a deeper understanding of how the identified lexical features functioned within specific legal contexts, such as contracts or court rulings. Particular attention was paid to how these features influenced the clarity, precision, and formality of the legal texts.

2.4 Interpretation and Analysis

Once the data was collected and categorized, the analysis proceeded by interpreting the frequency and distribution of the identified lexical features across different types of legal texts. The aim was to understand how these features contributed to the distinctive nature of legal language and to explore their implications for legal communication. The analysis focused on the relationship between formality and clarity in legal texts. For example, while nominalization and redundancy contribute to formality, they may also complicate understanding for non-experts. Similarly, the use

of passive constructions and complex syntactic structures may promote objectivity and neutrality but can also render legal texts difficult to interpret. Additionally, the study explored how these features were used to ensure legal certainty and prevent ambiguity. Legal terms, for example, were often found to be highly specific and context-dependent, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation in legal proceedings. The use of Latin expressions and archaic terms was found to contribute to the authority and tradition of legal discourse, although they may alienate individuals without legal training. Finally, the findings were compared across different types of legal texts to identify any patterns in the use of these lexical features. For example, it was noted that case law often contained more nominalized phrases than statutes, suggesting a greater emphasis on abstract concepts in judicial reasoning. On the other hand, contracts tended to feature more formal syntactic structures and legal terminology, highlighting their role in establishing clear legal obligations. The study of lexical features in legal language requires an approach that combines linguistic analysis with practical data collection from various types of legal documents. This research utilized a mixed-methods approach, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the lexical features of legal texts. The analysis focused on identifying and examining key lexical characteristics such as legal terminology, syntactic structures, nominalization, redundancy, and the use of formal or archaic expressions. Below are the details of the methods employed in this study, which are structured into the corpus selection, data collection, and analytical techniques.

2.1 Corpus Selection

To explore the lexical features of legal language, a wide-ranging corpus of legal texts was compiled, encompassing a variety of genres and document types within the legal field. The selection aimed to capture the diversity of legal language as it is used in different contexts, including legislative texts, judicial opinions, contracts, and administrative documents. This variety allowed for a more nuanced understanding of how different legal contexts influence the use of specific lexical features.

The primary corpus included the following categories of texts:

1. **Statutory Documents:** These included national and international laws and regulations, such as civil codes, criminal statutes, and constitutional texts.
2. **Case Law:** Selected court rulings and judgments from both common law and civil law jurisdictions were included to explore the application of legal language in judicial reasoning and argumentation.
3. **Contracts and Agreements:** These texts provided insight into the specific legal vocabulary used in contractual relationships, with an emphasis on the phrasing of obligations and rights.
4. **Legal Commentary and Legal Dictionaries:** To supplement the primary data, legal commentary and specialized legal dictionaries were also examined to understand the standard definitions and uses of legal terms.

The selection of texts was not arbitrary but aimed at ensuring a broad representation of legal language across different legal systems and documents. Efforts were made to balance texts from various jurisdictions, including both English-speaking and non-English-speaking legal traditions. This diversity of sources ensured that the analysis would reflect the global nature of legal language and its various manifestations in different legal cultures.

2.2 Data Collection Process

The data collection process involved accessing a range of publicly available legal documents from digital archives, online legal databases, and governmental websites. A systematic approach was used to gather texts that were both representative and up-to-date, ensuring that the corpus included relevant legal materials that reflected current trends in legal language.

The data was collected from two primary sources:

1. **Online Legal Databases:** Databases such as Westlaw, LexisNexis, and government legal portals were accessed to retrieve statutes, case law, and other legal documents. These sources provided high-quality, authoritative legal texts.

2. **Printed Legal Texts and Law Reports:** In addition to digital sources, printed legal texts, such as law reports and legal commentaries, were also included. These texts were chosen for their accessibility and relevance to the study's objectives.

After collection, all legal texts were digitized (when necessary) and formatted into a uniform style to facilitate analysis. The corpus included over 200 pages of diverse legal documents, which were analyzed for key lexical features. These texts varied in length, complexity, and genre, which provided a balanced representation of legal language across different contexts.

2.3 Analytical Framework

The research focused on the identification and examination of several lexical features that are characteristic of legal language. The analysis was structured around the following core elements:

1. **Legal Terminology:** The first step in the analysis was to identify key legal terms and phrases that function as "terms of art" within legal discourse. These specialized terms often carry meanings distinct from their everyday usage. Examples include "jurisdiction," "plaintiff," "tort," "indemnity," and "damages." The study categorized these terms according to their function in legal processes and explored how their meanings were consistently maintained across different legal texts.

2. **Nominalization:** A key feature of legal language is its heavy reliance on nominalizations, where verbs and adjectives are transformed into nouns. This linguistic feature is used to create abstract concepts, which are essential for the precision and formality of legal texts. Nominalization allows for the distillation of actions and processes into static concepts, such as "termination" (from "terminate") and "implementation" (from "implement"). These nominalizations were extracted and analyzed to understand their prevalence and role in legal discourse.

3. **Redundancy and Repetitive Expressions:** Legal texts often include redundant phrases to reinforce meaning and reduce the risk of misinterpretation. Pairs of words or repetitive expressions, such as "null and void," "cease and desist," or "terms and conditions," were identified and analyzed for their function in ensuring clarity and preventing ambiguity. The research examined the frequency of these expressions in the corpus and explored their role in reinforcing key legal concepts.

4. **Formal Syntax and Passive Voice:** The study also analyzed the syntactic structure of legal sentences, with particular emphasis on the use of passive voice and formal syntactic structures. The passive voice is commonly employed in legal texts to shift focus away from the actor and place it on the action or the object. This detachment of the subject from the action helps maintain an impersonal tone, which is a hallmark of legal language. The frequency of passive constructions was noted, and the syntactic structures were analyzed for their contribution to the objectivity and formality of legal texts.

5. **Latin and Archaic Expressions:** Legal language is often enriched by Latin expressions, which have become embedded in legal tradition. Phrases like *habeas corpus*, *mens rea*, *prima facie*, and *ex parte* are used extensively in legal writing and serve to convey complex legal ideas in a concise form. In addition to Latin, archaic terms such as "hereinafter" and "aforementioned" were examined to explore their role in creating a formal, authoritative tone in legal documents (Orlova, O. et al. 2019,34-52).

2.4 Data Analysis Techniques

A combination of manual analysis and computational tools was used to process and analyze the collected data. The manual analysis involved reading through the texts and identifying recurring lexical features. This qualitative approach was essential for understanding the context in which specific terms or structures were used. To facilitate a more systematic analysis, corpus analysis software, such as AntConc, was employed to perform keyword searches and frequency analyses. This software helped identify the most commonly used terms, the frequency of nominalizations, and the occurrence of passive voice across different legal texts. Concordance lines and collocations were also examined to understand how certain terms were used in context. The findings were organized according to lexical categories and analyzed to determine the functional role of each feature. For example, legal terminology was analyzed for its consistency across different types of legal

documents, while nominalizations were examined for their contribution to the abstract, formal nature of legal language. Redundancy and binomial expressions were explored to understand their role in reinforcing legal concepts and ensuring clarity.

2.5 Interpretation and Contextualization

After completing the analysis, the findings were contextualized within the broader framework of legal language use. The study examined how the identified lexical features contributed to the precision, formality, and clarity of legal texts. It also assessed the challenges these features pose for laypeople, highlighting the tension between legal accuracy and accessibility. Overall, the methodology adopted in this study allowed for an in-depth exploration of the lexical features of legal language, providing a clear understanding of how language is used to communicate legal concepts effectively while maintaining precision and formality. The results are intended to contribute to ongoing discussions about the complexity of legal language and the need for reform in making legal texts more accessible to the general public. Once the data was collected and categorized, the analysis proceeded by interpreting the frequency and distribution of the identified lexical features across different types of legal texts. The aim was to understand how these features contributed to the distinctive nature of legal language and to explore their implications for legal communication. The analysis focused on the relationship between formality and clarity in legal texts. For example, while nominalization and redundancy contribute to formality, they may also complicate understanding for non-experts. Similarly, the use of passive constructions and complex syntactic structures may promote objectivity and neutrality but can also render legal texts difficult to interpret. Additionally, the study explored how these features were used to ensure legal certainty and prevent ambiguity. Legal terms, for example, were often found to be highly specific and context-dependent, reducing the likelihood of misinterpretation in legal proceedings. The use of Latin expressions and archaic terms was found to contribute to the authority and tradition of legal discourse, although they may alienate individuals without legal training. Finally, the findings were compared across different types of legal texts to identify any patterns in the use of these lexical features. For example, it was noted that case law often contained more nominalized phrases than statutes, suggesting a greater emphasis on abstract concepts in judicial reasoning. On the other hand, contracts tended to feature more formal syntactic structures and legal terminology, highlighting their role in establishing clear legal obligations. Legal texts frequently rely on modal verbs such as "shall," "must," "may," and "should" to convey obligations, permissions, and prohibitions. These verbs are crucial in establishing the normative force of legal documents. For instance, "shall" is used to indicate an obligation, while "may" suggests permission or discretion. Modal verbs help clarify the extent of legal requirements and the discretion granted to individuals or entities. The passive voice is another syntactic feature commonly found in legal texts. The passive construction shifts the focus from the subject (the actor) to the object (the action or the recipient of the action). For example, in a legal document, one might find "The contract shall be executed" rather than "The parties shall execute the contract." The passive voice serves to depersonalize the language, emphasizing actions over the individuals involved. This is particularly useful in legal contexts where the identity of the actor is less important than the action or its legal consequences. The use of modal verbs and passive voice contributes to the formality and objectivity of legal language, ensuring that legal requirements are communicated in a precise, impersonal manner. While these features contribute to the clarity and neutrality of legal texts, they also add to the complexity and density of the language, making it harder for non-experts to understand.

Conclusion

This study highlights the importance of lexical features in shaping legal discourse. From technical terminology and Latinisms to redundant binomials and modal structures, these features define the language of law. Their functions range from enhancing precision and authority to maintaining consistency and tradition. However, they also present challenges in terms of accessibility and translation. Greater awareness of these features can improve legal drafting, interpretation, and education. Legal professionals, translators, and language educators should consider both the benefits

and limitations of traditional legal lexicon when crafting or analyzing legal texts. Future research could expand this investigation to include cross-linguistic analyses, particularly within multilingual legal systems. The study of the lexical features of legal language has highlighted the distinctive characteristics that define legal discourse, from its specialized terminology to its formal syntactic structures. Through a thorough examination of various legal texts, this research has demonstrated that the use of precise legal terminology, nominalization, redundancy, Latin and archaic expressions, passive voice, and modal verbs are central to the structure and function of legal language (Tiersma, 2000, p.402-420). These lexical features collectively contribute to the formality, clarity, and precision required for effective legal communication. One of the most significant findings of the study is the centrality of legal terminology in ensuring that legal documents are both precise and unambiguous. The use of terms of art, which have meanings specific to the legal context, helps avoid potential misinterpretations and ensures that all parties involved in legal processes understand their rights and obligations in a consistent manner. However, this reliance on specialized terminology also creates barriers for non-experts, as many legal terms have no direct equivalents in everyday language, which can lead to confusion and a lack of accessibility in legal texts. Nominalization emerged as another key feature, with legal language favoring abstract nouns over verbs. This syntactic structure helps achieve the formality and objectivity that legal texts require. However, the frequent use of nominalized phrases can also contribute to the complexity and density of legal writing, making it harder for laypeople to fully grasp the meaning of legal provisions. The balance between formality and readability remains a challenge for legal writers, particularly in the context of growing calls for plain language reform in legal documents. Redundancy in legal texts, while contributing to the reinforcement of key concepts and the minimization of ambiguity, also serves as a reminder of the sometimes excessive nature of legal language (Williams, 2014, 123-145). Phrases such as "null and void" or "cease and desist" ensure clarity, but their repetitive nature may be seen as a linguistic artifact that adds to the verbosity of legal texts. Similarly, binomial expressions, though valuable for capturing complementary or contrasting ideas, also serve to make legal language more cumbersome and complex. Latin and archaic expressions, though central to the authority and tradition of legal discourse, present significant challenges for non-specialists. While these expressions provide a sense of continuity and legal tradition, their use often alienates those unfamiliar with them. The persistence of such terms in legal language raises questions about the need for modernization and simplification to ensure that legal texts are accessible to a broader audience. Lastly, the frequent use of passive constructions and modal verbs in legal writing is a reflection of the impersonal and objective tone that characterizes legal texts. While the passive voice ensures that the focus remains on actions rather than actors, and modal verbs clarify obligations and permissions, these syntactic choices contribute to the complexity of legal language. The challenge for legal writers is to maintain the necessary precision and neutrality of the legal text while improving its clarity and accessibility. In conclusion, the lexical features of legal language, while essential for the clarity, precision, and authority of legal texts, also present challenges for accessibility and readability

(Williams, 2014, p123-145). As legal systems continue to evolve, there is an increasing need to balance the formal and specialized nature of legal discourse with the demands for transparency and accessibility. Simplification efforts, such as the use of plain language, can help bridge the gap between legal professionals and the general public, ensuring that legal texts are not only precise but also understandable to those who must engage with them. The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the linguistic complexities of legal language and highlight the ongoing need for reform in legal communication.

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