

Introducing “Language & Law”

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WELCOME

to the journal of the International Language and Law Society (www.illa.org).

All manner of all scientific discourse is couched in language. This holds for language in the domain of law with a vengeance: all concepts in law are linguistically constituted and expressed. All legally relevant meanings and contexts are transported through the vehicle of language. They are thus created through and in language, and cannot therefore be independent of language, just as the law cannot be independent of society, which is where language resides. While the laws of nature would be valid even if nobody would ever have verbalized them, the laws of society only come about via communication. The laws of society do not exist before they are debated and negotiated. The “meaning”–and the change of meaning–of concepts in law, as well as the “interpretation” of terms is to a large extent some kind of linguistic analysis, with attendant and persistent problems including issues of vagueness, ambiguity, precision and “plainness”.

Apart from this inherent fundamental affinity between language and law, there are numerous ways in which the legal process at various stages involves language in negotiations or contestations, such as court proceedings or police interviews, for which linguistic analysis has developed well-established concepts of description and explanation. These concepts can be taken up to elucidate the legal process and help analyze and teach successful procedure.

Language, languages, and dialects are themselves often the issue in many legal procedures around the world, apart from the language-related issues of access to justice. In addition, there are many ways in which law, language and society are inextricably interrelated. Law-makers and judges should be supplied with a body of scientific knowledge to draw upon in making their decisions.

It is therefore appropriate that an international society should advance and focus research on the interdependence of language and law in all of its facets, from theoretical approaches to the resolution of practical issues.

With the world moving together ever closer in trade, law and communication, it is appropriate that the study of language in law comprise all points of interface between these disciplines. As these issues appear in law generally and are not restricted to a particular

nation or culture, the scope of the journal is therefore international. While the issue may be exemplified by cases from all over the world, the focus of interest of the journal is on the theoretical issue itself.

Submissions are invited on all topics relating to law and language, including the following:

- forensic linguistics
- plain language movement
- the language of the law as a language for special purposes
- comprehensibility of the law and legal texts
- semantics and pragmatics of law
- the use of rhetorics in law
- legal communication
- information management for lawyers
- law of data
- translating and interpreting at court/ in the law
- legal theory from the perspective of logic
- text linguistics for lawyers
- language rights and language policies
- plagiarism and copyright
- the language of trademark disputes
- media and the law