

The Importance of Being A Linguist in International Law

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Abstract: This paper explores the vital function of linguists in the realm of international law, emphasizing how their knowledge of language structure, translation principles, and intercultural communication enhances and often exceeds the linguistic skills of lawyers. While attorneys are educated to interpret and apply the law, they can encounter challenges with the intricate linguistic aspects of legal English, such as outdated terms and contextual subtleties. Linguists, particularly those who are also lawyers, play a crucial role in drafting, translating, and interpreting multilingual legal documents with accuracy and clarity, ensuring legal equivalence among languages. The study also presents research that compares the skills of linguistic and legal students in areas like terminology, analysis of legal texts, search strategies, and communication, demonstrating that both professions possess distinct strengths. The results support the need for greater interdisciplinary collaboration between law and linguistics to improve the precision, efficiency, and fairness of international legal proceedings.

Keywords: International law, linguist, lawyer-linguist, legal English, translation, multilingual legal documents, legal drafting, intercultural communication, terminology, interdisciplinary collaboration.

Introduction: International law is crucial for every individual, not only for them, but also for countries. It interacts heavily with official documents, including treaties, conventions, and diplomatic correspondence, where linguists can be better at than lawyers. Although lawyers are taught to deal with legal documents, they may lack the deep comprehension of language structure and translation theory required for precise interpretation across multiple languages.

Linguists, however, improve their ability to analyze syntax, syntax, and cultural context, which makes them indispensable in drafting, translating and interpreting international legal texts. This article explores how linguists, especially those with legal practice, play a critical role in ensuring clarity, regularity, and justice in international legal communication. It argues for wider recognition of their role and the necessity for interdisciplinary practice in both law and linguistics.

Legal English and its struggles

Legal English differs from the general English that

native speakers use. Legal English is a form of English used in the field of law in England, America and other countries whose official language is English (Veretina-Chiriac, 2012). Because it has various unusual features related to terminology, which are linguistic features and punctuation. Legal English is the style of English used by lawyers and other legal professionals in the course of their work (Supardi, 2013). Legal English includes some updated words that can lead to misunderstanding. The use of archaisms: Archaic terms refer to the use of old expressions by lawyers called legalese, such as under (under; by); before (before); after (after), etc., which makes it hard for laypersons to understand (Veretina-Chiriac, 2012). Plain English is when linguists replace legal English with appropriate words. Although legal practitioners have tended to simplify legal English by replacing them with more understandable forms, that is "Plain English" movement (Mellinkoff, 2004), a variety of archaic words, e.g., hereinafter, aforesaid, therein, thereto, thereof, can still be found in English legal documents under the common law legal system. People who want

to be linguists spend more time understanding the context of the written communication, which includes books, articles, and even old documents. Even if they have reading skills, which is useful for understanding international legal texts. Reading comprehension is, however, not an easy task at all. (Broek, 2012) states that: "reading comprehension is a complex interaction among automatic and strategic cognitive processes that enables the reader to create a mental representation of the text". Lawyers are only trained to find suitable information for their cases; on the other hand, they sometimes face rare cases that make the information challenging to understand when the lawyer tries to find a solution. Butler (2015) indicated that legal writing was the most complicated skill among the four skills for both teachers and learners. It is partly explained because most teachers of legal English are language teachers, not legal experts. Therefore, they lack experience in writing and drafting legal correspondence and legal documents. According to Marzano (Marzano, 2004), "what students already know about the content is one of the strongest indicators of how well they will learn new information related to the content". Similarly, (Gurthrie, 2000), who considers comprehension impossible without prior knowledge, states definitely "all learning involves transfer from previous experience. Even initial learning involves transfer that is based on previous experience and prior knowledge" (p. 26) and "background knowledge, often called prior knowledge, is a collection of "abstracted residue" (p. 33).

The crucial role of lawyer-linguists as a solution for legal language issues in globalization

Lawyer-linguists come to the new world, where there is more demand for them as professionals engage with multilingual legal texts such as treaties, conventions, and international agreements, where precision and clarity are crucial. "Lawyer-linguists ... are a relatively new type of profession[al] who came into existence following the creation of the EEC, EC, and EU, and they typically work for the European institutions ... responsible for making legislation in a multiplicity of

languages." The goal of these professionals, trained in both language and the law, is essentially to close the gap between lawyers and linguist-translators that can create problems with the quality and equivalency of texts by revising texts in their mother tongue and comparing the resulting text with a base text model. This method ensures greater accuracy and ensures a more faithfully equivalent translation. (Hargitt) (442p, INDIANA JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LEGAL STUDIES 20:1).

In recent times, people have noticed lawyers' weak point, which is understanding of legal English. As a result of this problem, it causes lawyers to spend more time than necessary. This leads to clients having to wait more and pay even though this is not their problem. All of them caused the creation of a new occupation: lawyer-linguists. Lawyer-linguists often engage in co-drafting. Co-drafting, or "codecision" within the context of the European Union, is a process that helps to assure that the maximum level of equivalency is achieved in legislative drafting.' (See Co-Decision or the "Ordinary Legislative Procedure," supra note 120.)

Similarities and differences between the lawyers and linguistics in international law

In the field of international law, both lawyers and linguists play crucial yet distinct roles that ensure the accurate interpretation and application of legal norms among various legal and linguistic systems. Both professionals engage with multilingual legal tasks such as treaties, conventions, and international agreements, where precision and clarity are essential. Although lawyers are trained to interpret and apply the law, they do not have enough skills to represent clients or states before international courts, and ensure legal compliance with international frameworks. Linguists specialize in the analysis, translation, and interpretation of legal language in multiple languages. In that way, the co-operation between lawyers and linguists strengthens the productivity and justice of international legal communication.

Similarities between Lawyers and Linguists in International Law

	Aspects	Description
1.	Work with Multilingual Legal Texts	There are some languages in the international law both lawyer and linguist use it in order to work with legal documents or reading comprehension.
2.	Precision in Language Use	In this field, wording is important to be accurate in case of avoiding diplomatic and legal misunderstandings.
3.	Cross-cultural Communication	Both deal with culturally diverse legal systems and must understand how legal meanings shift between language and contexts.

4.	Contribute to Legal Interpretation	Lawyers explain the law legally; linguists help with accurate interpretation by analyzing the structure and semantics of the language used.
5.	Collaborative Roles	While lawyers give legal expertise, linguists ensure linguistic and cultural clarity in multilingual legal texts.

Differences between Lawyers and Linguists in International Law

Although there are some differences between lawyers and linguists' main subjects, linguists can adopt,

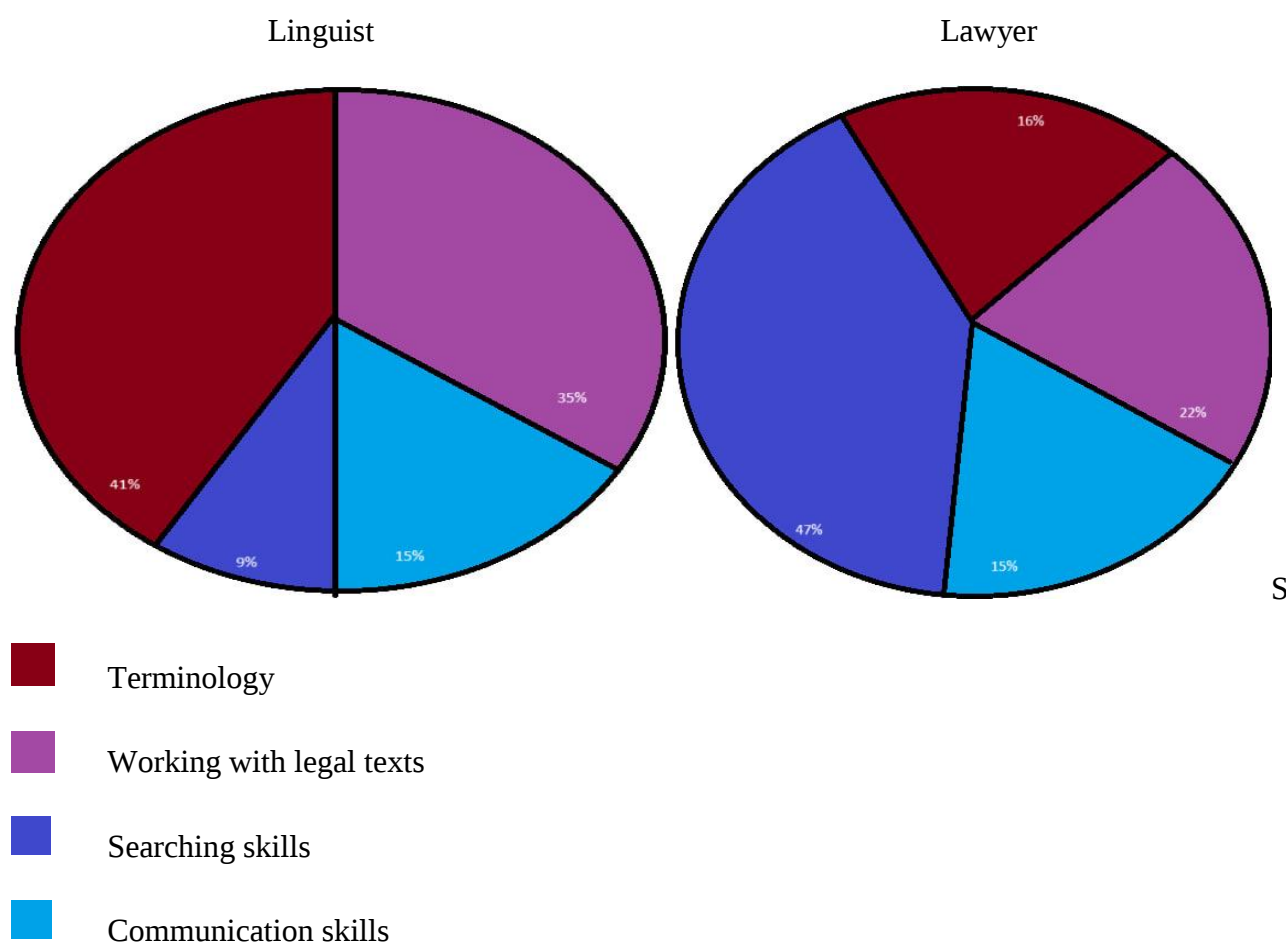
understand, or communicate in court or international law places better than lawyers can learn linguistically complex texts.

	Criteria	Lawyers	Linguists
1	Primary Role	Apply, interpret, and argue international law forms in courts and companies.	Critical thinking, analyzing, translate or interpret the language of legal content.
2	Training Background	High law schools specialized in international law, treaties, human rights, interaction law	Linguistics special grammars or translation studies, often with legal specialize.
3	Legal Authority	Can represent clients or states in international courts (e.g., ICJ, ICC)	May not provide legal representation, but ensure accuracy and cultural sensibility of context.
4	Responsibility in Legal Drafting	Draft legal documents with legal effect and obligation.	Help with clarity and prevent ambiguity in different language versions of a draft.
5	Focus Area	Legal arguments, justice, compliance with international conversations.	Language structure, translation quality, terminology alignment, cultural nuance.

Research between linguists and lawyers

To our research held in World languages university, we selected 10 volunteers from linguistic university and 10

from law university. We had experience over them into 4 categories including communication skills, terminology, working with legal texts, searching skills.



These charts compare lawyers and linguists in terms of four different skills.

According to our research, Linguists are better at working with terms which are most important in legal English, compared to lawyers 41% and 16% respectively. However, in searching sources, lawyers have a significant result with 47% while in this category, linguists were noticeably lower, 9%. Moreover, although working with legal texts appeals more to lawyers, result shows us slightly opposite former being 35%, latter 22%. Unlike other skills, communication is the same with 15%.

Thus, we witnessed that both university students' schedules include all subjects related to communication, searching skills and working with legal context, terminology as well. Nevertheless, lawyers are good at all of them, linguists who spend more years to learn languages and new words make them easily adapt to all situations.

CONCLUSION

In a globalized environment where international law increasingly relies on multilingual communication, the partnership between lawyers and linguists has become essential. While attorneys hold the legal knowledge needed to interpret and execute the law, linguists contribute advanced abilities in language analysis,

translation, and cultural adaptation, which are vital for achieving clarity and equivalence in legal texts. The rise of lawyer-linguists fills gaps present in both fields, facilitating more precise and effective legal communication across languages. Research comparing linguistic and law students demonstrates that each group excels in specific skills, reinforcing the necessity for integrated education and collaboration. Acknowledging the importance of linguists in the sphere of international law will ultimately enhance the quality of legal processes and foster fairness in global legal interactions

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