

**LANGUAGE AS EVIDENCE: LINGUISTIC APPROACHES TO LEGAL
INTERPRETATION AND JUSTICE****Shaxriniso Davlatova**

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Abstract: The legal system is inherently dependent on language, as laws are drafted, interpreted, and enforced through linguistic means. Any ambiguity or misinterpretation in legal language may lead to serious judicial consequences. This article examines the interdisciplinary relationship between linguistics and law, focusing on the contribution of linguistic theory and methodology to legal interpretation, forensic investigation, and the protection of language rights. By applying semantic, pragmatic, and discourse-analytical approaches to legal texts, the study demonstrates that linguistic expertise plays a crucial role in ensuring accuracy, fairness, and justice within legal processes.

Keywords: linguistics; law; forensic linguistics; legal discourse; statutory interpretation; language rights

1. Introduction

Language constitutes the foundation of legal systems worldwide. Statutes, contracts, judicial decisions, and courtroom interactions are all constructed and mediated through language. Consequently, legal outcomes are often determined not only by factual circumstances but also by how those facts are linguistically formulated and interpreted. Linguistics, as a scientific discipline, provides analytical tools for examining meaning, structure, and context in legal communication. This article aims to explore the role of linguistics in legal interpretation and judicial practice, emphasizing its growing relevance in contemporary legal systems.

2. Linguistic Characteristics of Legal Language

Legal language is traditionally associated with formality, precision, and institutional authority. From a linguistic perspective, it is characterized by complex syntactic structures, specialized terminology, and conservative stylistic conventions. While these features are intended to ensure legal certainty, they often result in semantic ambiguity and pragmatic opacity. Linguistic analysis allows for the systematic identification of vague expressions, syntactic ambiguity, and contextual implicatures that may affect legal interpretation.

3. Forensic Linguistics as an Applied Discipline

Forensic linguistics represents one of the most prominent applications of linguistic knowledge within the legal domain. It involves the use of linguistic methods to address legal issues such as authorship attribution, analysis of confessions, examination of threatening communications, and evaluation of witness statements. By analyzing lexical choices, grammatical patterns, and discourse structures,

forensic linguists provide expert insights that can support evidentiary assessment in judicial proceedings.

4. Linguistic Interpretation of Legal Texts

Legal interpretation relies heavily on linguistic reasoning. Courts frequently encounter disputes arising from the wording of statutes and contractual clauses. Semantic analysis assists in determining literal meaning, while pragmatic analysis accounts for contextual intention and implied meaning. Discourse analysis further contributes by examining coherence and textual organization. In multilingual legal systems, linguistic expertise is particularly crucial, as translation inaccuracies may compromise legal equality and consistency.

5. Language Rights and Access to Justice

The protection of language rights constitutes a fundamental aspect of procedural justice. Individuals who lack sufficient proficiency in the language of legal proceedings may experience unequal treatment.

Linguistic research supports the development of effective legal interpreting and translation practices, as well as plain-language initiatives aimed at improving public access to legal information. Ensuring linguistic accessibility is essential for maintaining fairness and transparency within the justice system.

6. Conclusion

The interdisciplinary relationship between linguistics and law is both theoretically significant and practically indispensable. Linguistic analysis enhances clarity in legal drafting, supports accurate interpretation, and strengthens the evaluation of linguistic evidence. As legal systems continue to evolve in increasingly multilingual and complex societies, the integration of linguistic expertise into legal practice is essential for the effective administration of justice.

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