

La traduzione giuridico-economica nell'era dell'Intelligenza Artificiale: tecnologie, strumenti e competenze



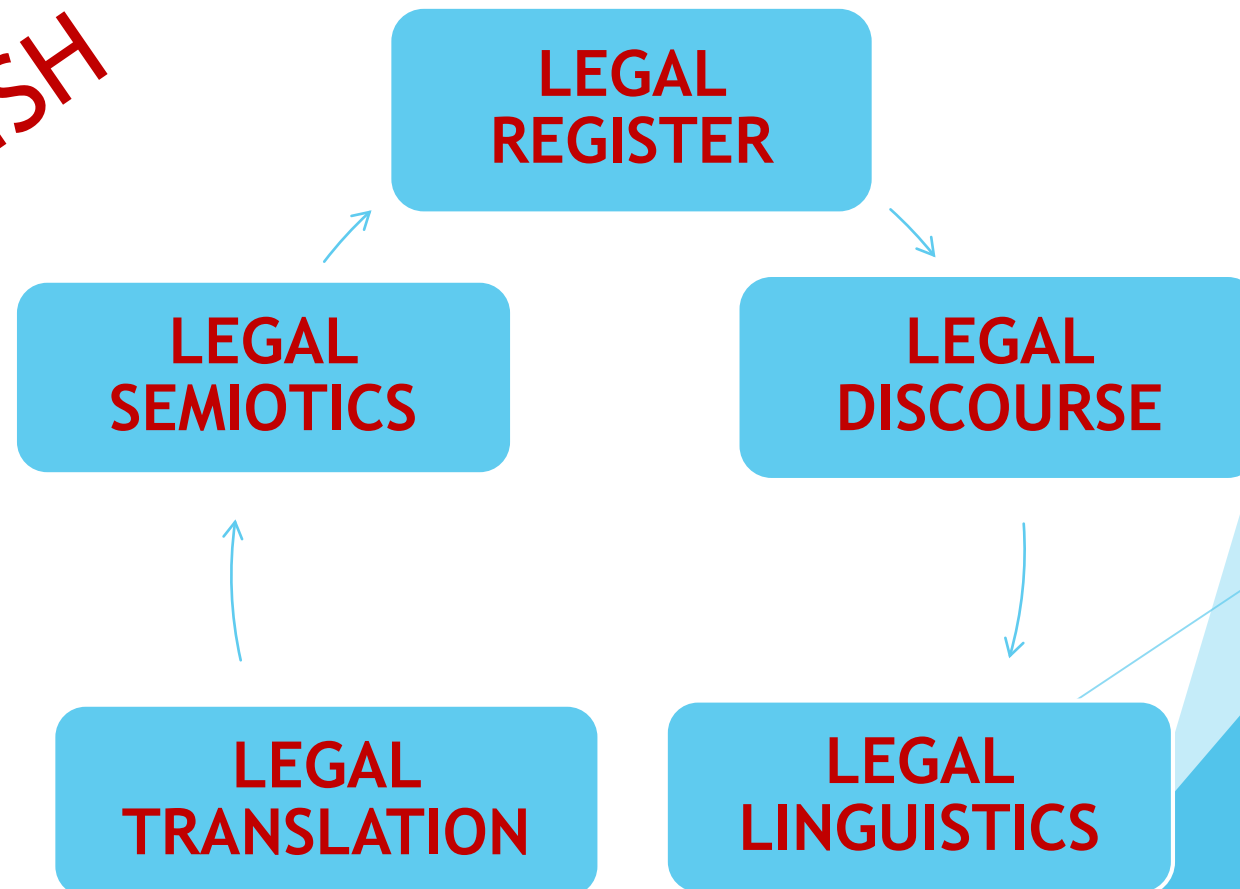
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THE LEGAL LANGUAGE = A LANGUAGE FOR SPECIAL PURPOSES (LSP)

DIFFERENT KINDS OF LEGAL DISCOURSE

**HOW TO APPROACH
LEGAL ENGLISH**



THE LEGAL DISCOURSE: A VARIETY OF TEXTS AND GENRES

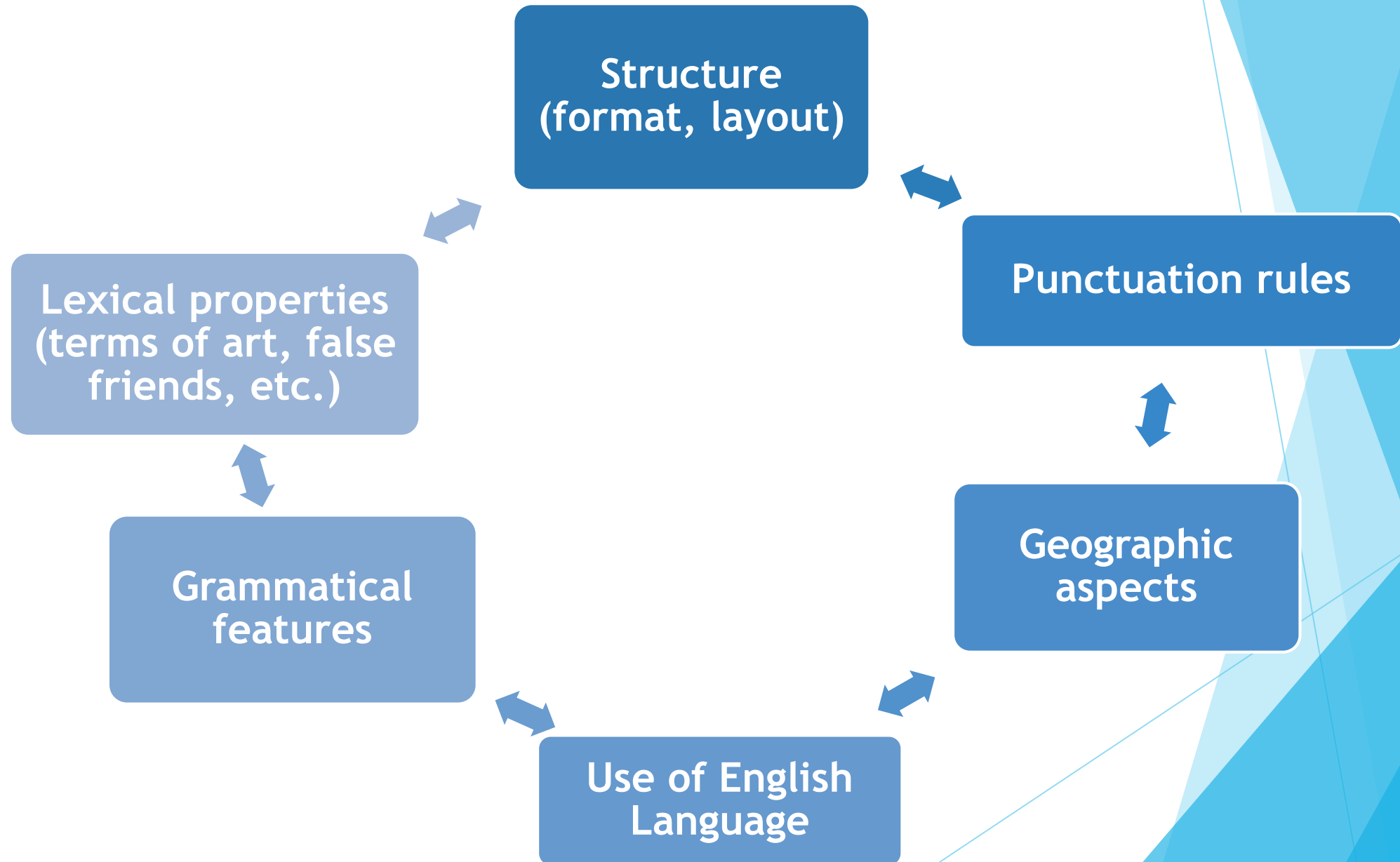
- Legislative texts
- Judicial texts
- Private legal documents
- Texts used in court systems
- Texts used outside court systems
- Media texts
- Academic texts

FUNCTIONS OF LEGAL TEXTS AND GENRES

Functional properties (binding and non-binding documents)

- Operative / prescriptive function
- Descriptive function
- Performative function

FEATURES OF LEGAL TEXTS



LEXICAL PROPERTIES

- Technical terms (used only for legal language)
- Advanced vocabulary and Legal English vocabulary

Case:

damage - damages

Example 1: After the car accident, the damage included a broken windshield, two flat tires, and a broken fender.

Example 2: The judge was unmoved by the plaintiff's argument and only awarded damages in the amount of £1!

LEXICAL PROPERTIES

➤ Legalese vs. Plain English

Plain English Movement (70s)

Aims: reader-friendly legal texts; clarity; simplicity; precision

Tools:

- Plain English Campaign (UK)
- Plain Language and Legislation (Scotland)
- Federal Plain Language Guidelines (USA)
- Plain English Manual (Australia)
- English Style Guide (European Union - Commission)
- Plain English Europe

“To succeed in the profession of law, you must seek to cultivate command of language. Words are the lawyer’s tools of trade” [Lord Denning (1979); English Judge and Master of the Rolls]

[“The most valuable talent is that of never using two words when one will do”, Thomas Jefferson]

PLAIN ENGLISH

Other Plain English suggestions + examples:

- Avoid ambiguous plurals or mistakes using singular and plural form.

Data vs. Information

- Limit the use of shall [*“The language of law must not be foreign to the ears of those who are to obey it”*, Learned Hand, US Judge]
- Respect style rules and format (for examples dates and numbers)
- Avoid ambiguities:

Regulating sanctions can be confusing (Syntactic Ambiguity - word meaning mistake)

She told her lawyer that she was late (Excessive use of indefinite pronouns)

The experience of the law students was important (Confusing nominalisation)

Two interns drafted a memo on the probability of antitrust approval (Confusing plurals)

The judge stated on Thursday he would publish his decision (Word order mistake)

The offer is valid from June 12 to June 19 (Confusing date ranges)

The professor left the study in the study (Semantic ambiguity)

LEXICAL PROPERTIES

- Foreign words (Latin or French origin / transliteration or direct borrowing process)

Examples of Latin words and phrases:

ab initio (from the beginning) - The jury was against her *ab initio*.

ad hoc (for this specific purpose) - They have to hire an *ad hoc* attorney.

ad litem (for the suit) - The *ad litem* judges shall be elected by the General Assembly.

de facto (actual; in reality) - We are examining a *de facto* complex language.

de jure (by right) - We have a *de jure* power to vote.

pro tempore (temporary) - The company appointed its President *pro tempore*.

Examples of French words and phrases:

acquis communautaire

force majeure (Acts of God)

jury (group of citizens sworn for a common purpose)

defendant (party against whom a civil case is brought)

LEXICAL PROPERTIES

- Archaic compound adverbs and prepositional phrases

Examples:

Aforementioned (above) - The aforementioned clause provides for a new accounting process.

Devise (give) - I devise my property to the person named in my will.

Forthwith (immediately) - The parties sign the agreement forthwith with no further modifications.

In witness thereof, the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands and seals. (Signed by the parties as a deed)

These presents (this agreement, deed) - All the terms and conditions in these presents are modified.

Witnesseth (to witness, to take notice of) - I do hereby witnesseth the signing of this contract.

LEXICAL PROPERTIES

- Pleonasms (strings of synonyms) - doublets, triplets, binomials for rhetorical effects.
- Ritualized word forms.
- Antique phrases and clichés.
- Tautologies.
- Complex and unfamiliar words and phrases.
- Nominalization.
- Long and complex sentences, with several subordinating clauses (for example: *“In witness whereof, the said parties have caused these presents to be duly executed”*).
- Redundant and compound words.

LEXICAL PROPERTIES

- Performative verbs.
- Vague words.
- Impersonal constructions; passive voice and multiple negations.
- Complex conditionals and hypothetical phrases.
- False friends.
- Artfully use of the language.
- Correct use of synonyms.
- Italian legal terms of art with different translations in English.

GRAMMAR AND PUNCTUATION FEATURES

- Frequent constructions
- Verb + preposition and phrasal verbs
- Punctuation (apostrophe; comma; semicolon; colon; brackets (UK); parentheses (USA); dash; hyphen; square brackets; ellipses)

“Judges and jurists have written more nonsense about punctuation than any other facet of the language” B. Garner (1995)

COMMA: *“Men’s lives may depend upon a comma”, Bryan A. Garner*



USE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE: STYLE AND TONE OF VOICE

Explanatory legal documents

(“Whoever tells the best story wins.”, J. Q. Adams)

Interpretive legal documents

Persuasive legal documents

GEOGRAPHIC ASPECTS

- English as a Global Language?
- English as an International Language?
- Several language varieties!
- English as “Lingua franca”?
- English as European Union Language?



ONLINE VOCABULARIES AND RESOURCES

- ✓ Dictionaries
- ✓ Web-corpora
- ✓ AI
- ✓ Books, articles, academic papers, etc.



ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

From CAT Tools to AI Tools: An Evolution in Legal Translation

- Early reliance on *Computer-Assisted Translation (CAT)* tools (e.g. Trados, MemoQ, Wordfast).
- **Core principles:** translation memory, termbases, segmentation, alignment.
- **Current shift:** *AI-driven translation environments* integrating neural MT, LLMs, and adaptive systems.
- **Transition from *automation* to *cognitive augmentation*.**

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The Role of Neural and Generative AI

- Neural Machine Translation (**NMT**): contextual and idiomatic improvements.
- Large Language Models (**LLMs**): contextual reasoning and discourse coherence.
- Generative AI: beyond translation → reasoning, rephrasing, summarization.
- Capabilities: *pre-editing, draft generation, post-editing, revision, localization.*

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI in Legal Translation Workflows

- **Pre-editing:** simplifying source texts to optimize AI translation.
- **Translation generation:** LLMs as dynamic, context-aware engines.
- **Post-editing:** refining AI output with legal and stylistic accuracy.
- **Revision & localization:** ensuring jurisdictional equivalence and pragmatic adequacy.
- Integration with *terminological databases, parallel corpora, and domain ontologies*.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Prompting vs. Fine-Tuning

- ❑ **Prompting:** guiding the model through instructions in natural language.
 - ❑ Flexible, immediate, and cost-effective.
 - ❑ Depends on the user's expertise and context clarity.
- ❑ **Fine-tuning:** training the model on domain-specific data.
 - ❑ Enhances accuracy and consistency for specific legal corpora.
 - ❑ Requires curated, high-quality parallel data and legal supervision.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Academic Perspectives and Ethical Dimensions

- Questions of *authorship*, *accountability*, and *data provenance*.
- Risk of *hallucinations* and *legal misinterpretations*.
- Need for *expert-in-the-loop* validation.
- Implications for translator education: critical AI literacy and ethical awareness.

Thank you for your attention