

Rechtslinguistik als angewandte Typologie - Skopus, Determiner und Koordinator vs. gleiches Recht für alle

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European Legal Linguistics is applied linguistics, doing typological-functional contrastive research on the official languages of the European Union, which belong to several Indo-European subfamilies, the Finno-Ugric family and the Semitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic family.

From the legal point of view, legal acts (“laws”) of the European Union are issued in 24 language versions which constitute one original text and are all equally legally binding (cf. Sobotta 2015). This demands a very elevated level of semantic convergence of the version texts despite the different grammatical structures of the languages involved (cf. Burr 2013). Clarity is a basic demand of legal language, and details can make all the difference, e.g. when meeting a deadline hinges upon the lexically inherent actional class of *report* / *übermitteln* / *communiquer* / *jelenteni*.

For instance, reference tracking is accomplished by very different structures, such as personal and demonstrative pronouns, articles and determiners, long and short forms of attributive adjectives, differential subject/object marking and word order in the languages in question. Scope ambiguity, modality, coordinators (cf. Mattissen 2019), word formation, lexical semantics and the three interwoven layers of terminology constitute further critical issues.

When it comes to drafting or interpreting the provisions of legal acts, legal professionals up to the Court of Justice of the European Union need detailed grammatical insights into the official languages as well as into linguistic methods to understand and describe grammatical structures.

This opens up opportunities for linguists to develop linguistic instruments for practitioners, as is currently done by European legal linguists at the University of Cologne, e.g. with the help of an annotated corpus of classified divergences and pseudo-convergences of multilingual legal texts. The poster will present examples of what can be implemented with a view to contribute to equal law in the Member States of the European Union.

References

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