

A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SYNTACTICAL PATTERNS IN LEGAL ENGLISH

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Abstract

It is observed that Legal English has been assumed as a complex language. The research problem of the study is to explain how true the assumption that Legal English is complex. The present study investigates into the complexity of legal English by identifying the syntactical patterns in Legal English. The objective is to analyze the sentences using the modern theory of linguistics to study the complexity of legal language. Literature based on Sri Lankan Legal English is not available. However, with the accessible scholarly researches mainly done in America and U.K, the research had been carried out.

Data were collected from legal documents such as deeds and proxies and samples consisting of academic staff, students of the faculty of law, lecturers from the ELTU and legal draftsmen.

Data were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the analysis indicate that theoretically, attitudinally and policy wise, Legal English is complex and that Legal English needs to be simplified. However Legal professionals fear that Law will be jeopardized if it reaches the wrong persons. The findings further indicate that unless the State and lawyers change their attitude Legal English will remain complex.

Keywords

Embedding, Legal English, qualitatively, linguistically, syntactically