**Lecture No 1: legal translation and its feature**

**Legal translation**

It is the [translation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Translation) of texts within the field of [law](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law). As law is a culture-dependent subject field, legal translation is not necessarily [linguistically transparent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transparency_(linguistic)). Intransparency in translation can be avoided somewhat by use of Latin legal terminology, where possible.

Intransparency can lead to expensive misunderstandings in terms of a [contract](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contract), for example, resulting in avoidable [lawsuits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lawsuit). Legal translation is thus usually done by specialized law translators. Conflicts over the legal impact of a translation can be avoided by indicating that the text is "authentic" i.e. legally operative on its own terms or instead is merely a "convenience translation", which itself is not legally operative. Courts only apply authentic texts and do not rely on "convenience" translations in adjudicating rights and duties of litigants.

Correspondingly, legal language is a distinct language easy to some extent to those familiar with it, but to whom with which are unfamiliar is of certain difficulty. In other words, Legal language is characterised by a specific language and therefore a specific terminology. So, the would-be translator of this particular type of language must add to his or her knowledge some lexical features of English legal language.

***Requirements of a legal translator***

**1.**Basic knowledge of the legal systems of both SL and TL

2.Familiarity with relevant legal terminology in SL and TL

3.Competence in TL legal writing style

***Lexical and syntactic Features*** of legal text

Translators need to be careful because not all terms/expressions have equivalents in the TL. The vocabulary of legal language is complex and unique. It is a universal feature of all legal languages. For example:

•Archaic words (e.g., hereby, thereby, aforesaid, hereof, said)

•Foreign words (e.g., lesser, lessee, bona fide, ipso facto, court, evidence, jury, property)

•Formal usage (e.g., shall, may, your honor, His Royal Highness, I solemnly swear….)

•Formulaic expressions

•Very specific and precise wording

•Special use of capitalization

**Syntactic Features**

Translators need to be aware of the special syntactic features of legal language because they may create comprehension barriers.

Legal language is formal, impersonal, complex, and lengthy. Sentences are usually longer in legal texts compared to other types of texts. For example:

•Nominalization –using a noun instead of its verb

•Long and complex sentences

•Subordination and coordination (e.g., and, as, so as to, that, which)

•Passivization–to emphasize the formal, impersonal style of legal writing.