

REVIEW

for the dissertation research of Rakhiya Toxanbayeva Kuantkanovna on "Linguo-Semantic and Cognitive Characteristics of Legal Discourse (on the materials of the English language)" submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "8D023006 – Foreign Philology"

The dissertation of Rakhiya Toxanbayeva Kuantkanovna represents a methodologically rigorous and theoretically significant scholarly work that examines legal discourse through integrated linguistic, semantic, and cognitive approaches. The researcher addresses fundamental questions concerning how meaning is constructed, interpreted, and negotiated within legal texts, with particular emphasis on the phenomena of vagueness and polysemy in statutory language across English and Kazakh legal systems. The study uniquely combines theoretical insights from critical discourse analysis, legal linguistics, and cognitive science with empirical evidence from legislative acts of the United Kingdom and Kazakhstan, offering valuable cross-linguistic and cross-system perspectives.

The researcher establishes a robust theoretical foundation by positioning legal discourse as a specialized institutional discourse deeply embedded in power relations, ideological structures, and communicative conventions. Building on seminal works by M. Foucault, N. Fairclough, T. van Dijk, and P. Tiersma, the author convincingly argues that legal language functions beyond mere rule transmission, serving as an active instrument in shaping institutional authority and distributing interpretive power. The dissertation demonstrates that legal texts operate both constitutively and performatively, prescribing rights, imposing duties, and authorizing decisions within complex socio-legal frameworks.

The researcher employs an innovative integrated methodological approach that combines discourse analysis, semantic analysis, and cognitive linguistic interpretation within a unified research design. This interdisciplinary framework draws systematically on Frame Semantics, Prototype Theory, Barsalou's conceptual simulation, and H.L.A. Hart's theory of open texture. The methodology is strengthened by corpus-based quantitative examination of polysemous terms across multiple legal acts, combined with qualitative discourse analysis and empirical survey data from legal professionals, creating a comprehensive triangulation of evidence.

One of the dissertation's primary analytical contributions lies in its systematic treatment of vagueness as a structural and functional element of legal language. The researcher conducts detailed analysis of statutory provisions from the Criminal Justice Act 2003, the Employment Rights Act 1996, and the Consumer Rights Act 2015, identifying and categorizing indeterminate expressions such as "reasonable", "substantial", "sufficient", and "important" alongside generalizing clauses like "any other" and "such other".

The researcher's exploration of polysemy significantly enriches understanding of how ordinary language terms acquire specialized legal meanings through context-dependent cognitive processes. Through systematic application of Frame Semantics and Prototype Theory, the dissertation illuminates meaning construction mechanisms for common legal terms such as "action", "duty", "charge", and "claim" in British statutory contexts. The researcher demonstrates that polysemy in legal discourse operates systematically and functionally, with meaning shifts influenced by grammatical form, statutory context, co-occurrence patterns, and pragmatic requirements. The research extends this analysis to Kazakh legal texts, where the adaptation of everyday vocabulary for legal purposes, as well as the influence of Russian and the increasing use of Anglicisms, results in a higher degree of polysemy and context-dependence compared to the more differentiated legal lexicon of English. The socio-linguistic survey conducted among legal professionals in Kazakhstan provides empirical support for these observations, revealing both the pragmatic motivations for adopting Anglicisms and the challenges they pose for legal clarity and translation.

The scientific novelty of the dissertation lies in its systematic integration of cognitive linguistic theory with legal discourse analysis, combined with its innovative comparative English-Kazakh perspective. The researcher successfully reframes vagueness and polysemy as essential rather than problematic features of legal language, contributing significantly to ongoing theoretical debates about determinacy and judicial discretion in legal interpretation.

The research demonstrates both theoretical significance for legal and cognitive linguistics and substantial practical relevance. The findings offer important guidance for developing legal discourse curricula, creating bilingual legal dictionaries, standardizing legal terminology, and training legal professionals in cross-linguistic communication. The implications are particularly valuable for Kazakhstan's ongoing legal system modernization efforts while navigating multilingual legal landscape complexities.

The dissertation research of Rakhiya Toxanbayeva Kuantkanovna entitled «Linguo-Semantic and Cognitive Characteristics of Legal Discourse (on the materials of the English language)» is marked by its scholarly rigor, theoretical innovation, and practical relevance. The work exhibits methodological sophistication through its interdisciplinary approach and comprehensive analytical framework. The research makes significant contributions to legal linguistics, comparative law, and foreign philology, offering both substantive scholarly value and practical applications for legal education and practice.

In conclusion, the researcher R. Toxanbayeva has fully achieved the objectives set forth in her dissertation work, producing a completed, comprehensive study that has reached its intended goals. I consider that the dissertation complies with the requirements of Section 2 of the "Regulations for Awarding Academic Degrees" of the Committee for Control in Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and I believe that its author, Toxanbayeva Rakhiya Kuantkanovna, fully deserves to be awarded the academic degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty "8D023006 – Foreign Philology."

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