

PREFACE

The demand to know and use English for law becomes increasingly serious nowadays. Practitioners find themselves confronted with cases containing all sorts of foreign elements while Several years after our accession to the European Union many young, legally qualified people do hope to find rewarding and challenging jobs in foreign or international companies. They realize the need to use English not only for everyday communication but also in their work.

It is an extremely difficult task to write, at least to a certain extent, bilingual book not only because the two systems of law are so divergent but due to the absolutely unique characteristics of English vocabulary. English is one of the languages with the richest vocabulary all over the world so, even in everyday English, it happens impossible to find the exact Polish equivalent and the only way to translate such words into Polish is the explanation of their meanings.

The aim of this book is not the presentation and explanation of the complicated rules of the English legal system although it was inevitable to show some of its aspects. In this sphere I would like students to realize that different areas of English law such as common law, statutory law and the Law of Equity overlap and complement one another. Apart from that, the two systems of law, English and Polish, are not as divergent as it might seem as they both aim at achieving substantial justice while custom is perceived as the original source of law, no matter if it is expressed in codes or by judicial decisions. I would rather intend to present how legal English functions in professional texts.

Acquiring mastery and fluency in using English for law seems impossible to me but to approach it I would personally recommend careful and detailed studies of professional texts. This does not need to be monotonous and boring as many students believe. Professional legal texts appear difficult for many reasons such as complex and long sentences, although not as long and intricate as these of "Ulysses", as well as unknown words. One of the main characteristics of legal language is the use of terms of art, i. e. words which have precise legal definition; they thus convey a clear meaning to a lawyer, but not a lay person. Someone who is not legally qualified may recognize the word "tort" as being a legal one, although

a Polish student will associate it rather with a birthday cake on the ground of false friends, but he is unlikely to know that it can be defined as a civil wrong independent of contract.

Many terms which are regularly used by lawyers are not sufficiently precise to be classed as terms of art, but nevertheless being recognizable as being specific to the legal community. They are referred to as argot, i. e. a language or jargon that members of a particular group use to communicate with one another. The advantage of such terms is that they can be used to avoid lengthy explanation. Thus, every lawyer knows that Blackacre and Whiteacre refer to fictitious pieces of land, which are used in order to avoid reference to actual property. A further characteristic of the language of law is that ordinary words can have a different meaning in a legal context. A party is therefore not a celebration, but a person who has entered into a contract or is involved in a law suit.

Thus, English legal texts might be exciting and challenging as discovering new things always is. Some of them are even funny. I feel real satisfaction when I tell my students that an expression "in camera" has nothing to do with taking photographs but means "in private", or a phrase "in concert" is not connected with listening to music but carries the meaning of the word "together". Just to encourage you I would like to add that for me, as a lay person, English legal texts seem far easier and clear than Polish ones.

However, I hope that those who do not have enough time, patience, or willingness to study English legal texts and elicit all the useful expressions themselves will find this book a little helpful at least. It consists of two parts: a textbook and a workbook. The textbook aims to be a source of legal vocabulary. Moreover, I have tried to turn your attention not only to legal terminology and definitions, but to the contexts they are used in as well. That is why also collocations have been written in bold.

The workbook aims to provide a variety of language material for law students or practicing lawyers who want to acquire the ability to cope with everyday, practical tasks in English when working in a legal office or studying the law faculty of a UK or US University.

The book is also designed to help learners to prepare for the "Test of Legal English Skills" (TOLES) exam which was developed to meet the demand from law firms, companies, legal institutions, lawyers and law students for an accurate method of assessing of an individual's legal English. It is available at three levels: foundation, higher and advanced.

The workbook meets the requirements of the advanced students, but with some assistance from teachers may as well be used with success by intermediate students.

I wish you good luck and success.

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