

International and Discourse is in Our Name

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Abstract

This introductory article describes the journal's focus on "international" and "discourse," and introduces the articles in this issue.

Keywords: soft-genres, international, discourse, law, language

Focus on Diversity

Far too often journals are pigeon-holed into narrow fields of study, with readership limited to those who have already read extensively within that particular field. Other journals roam too broadly, accepting anything from everywhere, and readers never know what they may find (and here we are carefully avoiding the issue of the so-called "predatory press" that accept everything... for a price!). In the ideal case journals can accept interesting new work in fields related to the journal's core, yet still remain faithful to a few central themes. We believe at the *International Journal of Law, Language & Discourse* we have found a strong central theme that impacts scholars and practitioners across the globe. In the nutshell, that theme is "the nexus of law, language, and discourse" – though we need to consider those terms rather carefully, as we discussed last issue (Dickey, 2020, 5). In this brief introductory article I'd like to quickly explore two terms in our journal's title, "international" and "discourse," and how these assist the journal in offering diverse yet focused studies within our field.

International

While the term "international" is itself well-studied, we might consider some competing terminology, such as "global" and "transnational." While it is clear that both legal systems and the English language (and Spanish, and Chinese, and not a few others) have certainly crossed many borders, and might be considered "transnational," far fewer should be reckoned "global,"

or widely adopted across the globe. Leaving this armchair analysis to the side, let's examine the international footprint of the journal to date (as of this publishing) --

- Published articles from 31 countries (and a few more if you count both home country and country of work at the time of publications, see Table 1);
- Current editorial/advisory team from 18 countries, including six not in the contributors list (Brazil, Denmark, India, Indonesia, Ireland, and Zimbabwe);
- Website visitors in 2020 from 112 countries.

TABLE 1.

IJLLD Contributors' Countries, Issues 1.1 – 8.2

| | | |
|---|-------------|--------------|
| Austria | Iran | Russia |
| Australia | Israel | S. Africa |
| Belgium | Italy | Saudi Arabia |
| Canada | Japan | Spain |
| China (inclusive of Hong Kong and Macau) | Kenya | Sweden |
| Croatia | Lithuania | Sweden |
| Estonia | Netherlands | Tanzania |
| Finland | New Zealand | UAE |
| France | Nigeria | UK |
| Greece | Philippines | US |
| | Poland | |

This is a rather broad footprint, and we aspire to reach out further into lands less well included in the global scholarship community, particularly in Africa, western, central and southeast Asia, and South America. As scholars in these areas often face poor libraries, it is also our aim to make the scholarship of this journal most widely accessible. In this pursuit we seek partnerships with local academic groups, formal and informal. And in fact, for this issue, all three articles are from “non-native English speakers.”

“International,” too, suggests a rather light touch on the editorial keyboard. We certainly aren't adopting Prince Charles' conceptualization of (British) English as the international language (Kachru & Nelson, 2006, p. 11) – as an American, I take exception! Our ELE publisher supports the “World Englishes” movement, where the “author's voice” should prevail, even if it is in a form unlike our own. Comprehensibility and flow should be our key concerns, not spelling or word-choice.

Discourse

There are a number of quality journals in our field that focus on “language and law” or add aspects such as speech, linguistics, or interpretation. Our “discourse” mandate opens other paths of investigation without closing off the others. As mentioned last issue, we’ll accept a looser definition of discourse as “language in use” (Dickey, 2020, 6). We see this at work in articles such as last issue’s contributions by Mulundi (2020) and Conduit (2020), and this issue’s contribution by Marasigan and Ballesteros-Lintao (2020) and Mayrhofer (2020).

What may be particularly noticeable is that the journal is not wedded to the language and discourse of traditional “law language” topics tied closely to courts, statutes, or legal documents. We are mindful of the “soft genres” concept for law, suggested by Campos Pardillos (2007), yet extending his initial foray beyond “legal thrillers” such as John Grisham to analysis of the discourse involved with other areas associated with law. Again, viewing law expansively, we may consider citizens’ perceptions of discussions on proposed statutes, or law-related topics such as consumer product safety warning messages. The combination of law and language is pervasive in modern society, as are our discussions and understandings of such combinations... alongside analysis of legal interpretation/translation, choice of language in legal settings, and analysis of terminology in use.

In this Issue

We are pleased to present three very divergent studies, from different parts of the world, examining different language issues. First, from Austria, Monika Mayrhofer examines the linguistic framing of discussions on the global and transnational issue of climate change and migration, particularly through United Nations documents and international agreements. Michelle Anne A. Marasigan and Rachelle Ballesteros-Lintao then consider how the affected parties of proposed legislation in the Philippines interpret media reports. Finally, Anton Osminkin (a Russian living in France) dives deep into legal linguistics to consider how interpreters may best understand old forms of legalese, such as “herein,” “thereby,” and “wherefore.”

We hope you enjoy the issue. We welcome your comments, suggestions, and contributions. Find us at <http://ijlld.com>, or write to editor@ijlld.com

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