

## “Law and Corpus Linguistics - Going Beyond Ordinary Meaning”

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### Abstract

The relationship between law and language is unique. While, as in other disciplines, language serves as a means of communication among legal professionals, what sets the relationship between law and language apart is its creative force: legal propositions in statutes or court orders are valid only insofar as language permits. In other words, the social reality created by the law highly depends on the meaning of words. This means that the determination of the law can be reconstructed as a linguistic enterprise best positioned within the subdisciplines of semantics and pragmatics.

In light of this unrivalled relationship between law and language, linguists have always had a special interest in the law and vice versa. However, practical applications of linguistic methods in the law have remained sparse, mainly because lawyers often felt they had little to gain. This has started to change recently following the introduction of Corpus Linguistics to legal questions. Accordingly, this talk introduces current trends within Legal Corpus Linguistics, focusing on the determination of so-called ordinary meaning in common law jurisdictions using general language corpora. Yet, further applications of Corpus Linguistics to legal questions are still scarce in both common law and civil law systems. Therefore, the talk then examines future applications, in particular concerning the determination of legal meaning using court-specific legal corpora. In this respect, several applications to common legal questions using frequency, concordance, collocations and keywords analysis will be presented.

### Short Bio

Adrian is a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Konstanz, Germany, where he is currently completing his habilitation thesis. He earned his doctorate with a thesis on overriding mandatory provisions in private international law. In 2021, he graduated from the University of Cambridge after finishing his German legal education with the First and Second State exams. He also holds an MA in Corpus Linguistics (2024) from the University of Lancaster, UK. He gained practical experience in Antitrust and International Commercial Law as well as at the German Embassy in Tirana, Albania. His research focuses on Private Law, Conflict of Laws, and data-driven methods, including Legal Corpus Linguistics.