

ENGLISH FOR LAW



The English language of law is an obstacle for second language learners, even for native speakers. In the following parts, I will briefly discuss some reasons and solutions for us to remove this disturbing obstacle.

1, understand the legal English according to their literal meaning

Theories in Chinese law are quite different from general civil law, besides laws and regulations in China are needed to be further improved. Therefore, some terms in legal English cannot be found accurately in Chinese, such as “unjust enrichment” can be directly translated as “不当得利”.

However, its legal meaning are far more than “不当得利” in *General Principles of Civil Law*. In fact, “unjust enrichment” has included “不当得利” (Art.92), “不当得利” (Art.93) in *General Principles of Civil Law*, as well as benefits from violation of fiduciary duty (不当得利) and other intellectual rights.

Additionally, “agreement” and “contract” can be translated as “协议” and “合同” which seems no difference in Chinese. However, a commitment or promise can simply be an “agreement” according to general civil law.

Actually an “agreement” only has legal force until it comes into a “contract” with the support of deed and consideration. Similar examples are far more to illustrate. So we must understand the legal English according to their literal meaning.

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2. learn legal English based on regular law learning

One of the reasons for Chinese legal English learners are blindly self studying without master basic conceptions and categories. As all the other crafts, law has its own regular — from the surface to the deep inside and the simplest to the hardest.

Core subjects are set in America, Britain and France law school. Students have to finish core subjects before they study other laws. We should acquire the basic conceptions in law, otherwise it would create a confusion in understanding.

3. general English and professional English

The level a language is equals to the rate of repletion. Therefore, for language learners, the process of learning must be focus at one point instead of scattered learning. Thus, once we have determined to master legal English, we should focus at this subject and use related words or terms in highly frequencies.

In a nutshell, to learn legal English we have to acquire the simplest and basic rules and principles in law. This is the most import part in our process of learning legal English.

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