

Language and Legal Practice

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Virtually every aspect of the legal system is constructed by, analyzed by, recorded by, and informed by language. As such, linguistic practices define, manage, and determine what happens all throughout the legal process. As scholars whose main interests are language and linguistics, we need to better understand what we can contribute to the complex and ever-changing legal arena. For instance, as societies become increasingly diverse, issues involving language variability will become more and more prominent. The ubiquity of recording devices means that audio data is more likely to be evidence in criminal and civil trials. And legal jargon remains as opaque as ever – already the subject of considerable linguistic analysis.

We welcome contributions to this focus stream on any and all of these potential interactions, including but not limited to forensic linguistics, language variation, legal jargon, courtroom interaction, and even earlier stages of interaction, such as seizures, arrests, and interrogations.