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INCREASING METAPHOR AWARENESS IN LEGAL ENGLISH TEACHING

Abstract

In legal language, metaphors are a fundamental way to express and apprehend abstract notions. For instance, responsibility is perceived as WEIGHT (“the burden of proof”), falsehood or unacceptability as a DECAYING LIVING BEING (“the fruit of the rotten tree”) or the law can be used as a WEAPON (“take the law into your own hands”, “use the law as a sword and not as a shield”). This has now been accepted by the academic community, which not only recognizes the value of metaphors in legal language, but has started to pay due attention to the way they operate, as witness the interesting contributions made in the field. However, this has not yet led to metaphors being incorporated as an important component of legal ESP. In our paper, we shall argue for the inclusion of metaphors in the teaching of Legal English and suggest a few sample exercises based on our teaching practice. Our intention is to prove the usefulness of this component within a complicated variety of ESP, where metaphors may both provide relief from other more intricate areas and also help learners to understand the concepts underlying such metaphors.

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Key words

metaphors, English for Legal Purposes, legal terminology.

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