

TEACHING LEGAL ENGLISH THROUGH DETECTIVE FICTION AND FILMS

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Summary

The article emphasizes legal English, focusing on law and language teaching through reading detective fiction and watching detective films. This leads to the communicative use of legal English and independent learning. The article analyzes the use of detective fiction and detective films as resource material in English for Law classes to promote students' motivation to learn legal English in their subject domain.

Moreover, through reading and watching, students become familiar with English legal terminology, cultural contexts, and the various speech patterns used by native English-speaking lawyers in specific legal scenarios.

They also develop skills in identifying non-equivalent vocabulary and using the internet to research relevant information. Group and independent reading and film-watching support self-directed learning and research, enabling students to effectively compare English and Armenian legal realities. Moreover, a bilateral focus on learning and learners creates a more holistic educational experience: learning is student-oriented, providing real communication in class and prioritizing fluency rather than accuracy. Law school students become motivated and ready to take responsibility for their learning, which leads to better language acquisition and communication.

Keywords: *Education, Legal English, Detective Fiction, Detective Films, Communicative Approach, Motivation*

The aim of the research: to substantiate the incorporation of detective fiction and films into legal English classes as a means to enhance student motivation, communicative skills, and both group and independent learning abilities.

The research covers several objectives:

1. To explore the educational value of detective fiction and films in enhancing law English classes: Investigate how detective stories, with their intricate plots and legal themes, can improve students' understanding of legal English, critical thinking, and analytical skills.
2. To analyze the main types of detective genres and their relevance in legal education: Categorize and assess different subgenres of detective fiction (e.g., classic whodunits, hard-boiled detective stories, etc.) and their specific application in a legal English curriculum.
3. To study the difficulties of translating legal terms within detective fiction: Identify and analyze challenges in translating specific legal terms and concepts found in detective fiction, focusing on how these challenges impact comprehension and legal education.
4. To examine the development of communicative use of legal English through detective fiction and films: Explore how detective narratives can facilitate the practical and communicative application of legal English in classroom settings.
5. To develop strategies for increasing student motivation and independent learning through detective fiction, thus incorporating detective fiction and films into the legal English curriculum.

The analysis of current research and publications related to the problem:

This research is grounded in theories on the peculiarities of Legal English and its intricate vocabulary [10], theories focusing on English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners, particularly concerning motivation and subject matter [2], theories on the beneficial use of reading and watching detectives in ESP class [9], as well as theories on communicative methodology [8]. These frameworks collectively served as the theoretical and methodological bases for this

research. Tying together the different theoretical perspectives helped me to explore how detective fiction and films can be effectively integrated into legal English classes to enhance student engagement, language acquisition, and learning outcomes.

The Novelty of the research:

The research identifies and analyzes the unique aspects of incorporating detective fiction and films into legal English classes, for this approach effectively raises Law school students' motivation to become successful communicators and learners.

Thus, engaging with detective fiction helps law students develop a firm grasp of English legal terminology, understand different language patterns in legal contexts, and gain insights into various legal realities. Beyond providing aesthetic enjoyment, detective literature helps students overcome cultural, legal, and psychological stereotypes. Exploring various subgenres of detective and adventure fiction broadens students' perspectives, fosters a professional reading culture, and improves their ability to recognize and use legal and non-legal vocabulary. Independent reading supports self-directed learning and research, enabling students to compare Armenian and English legal realities effectively.

Methodology

An anonymous questionnaire survey was conducted for the study among sixty law school students using a quantitative research method. Several questions were intended to determine the characteristics of an independent student (a list of activities they did/did not do alone was given). Some questions referred to students' study habits and more specific questions related to their motivation.

The answers were analyzed.

A comparative approach among the sixty first-year Law School students was exercised. The calculation of the results showed that almost forty students out of sixty uncovered some of their learning aspects and became more motivated to read and watch detectives in English, enrich their vocabulary, discuss material in pairs and in groups, and exercise Law English.

The main body of the article

Traditionally, in professional English courses, much space is devoted to learning the terminology of the given professional sublanguage. However, it is difficult to imagine a legal, legal, judicial English sub-language at the level of learning only legal terms. It is complex, multi-functional, and multi-layered. The teaching of the legal English sublanguage can be carried out at a satisfactory level if we take into account its characteristic features.

Different educators, ESP teachers, and linguists studied Legal English teaching peculiarities, faced the diversity of teaching methods and approaches, and shared their valuable experience and ideas on these issues.

According to V. Yeago, legal English is not the language of jurisprudence that is in accordance with the common law of the world. It includes vocabulary and phrases related to the law itself and idioms that are indirectly related to it when communicating [10]. ESP educators Liuolienė and Metiūnienė cited Lee's ideas on Legal English: "Legal English is characterized by complex vocabulary, long sentences, multiple clauses, abstract ideas, and a non-specialist needs to understand the content of documents. [6, 56]

It is important to go beyond just professional-legal literature and include a variety of texts such as documentary and fiction as well as detective films in both native and English languages. In that sense, reading adventure and detective literature and watching detective films across different subgenres can be practically beneficial as each subgenre introduces distinct vocabulary and thematic elements. Diagram 1 illustrates several subgenres to be considered and incorporated into the study materials.

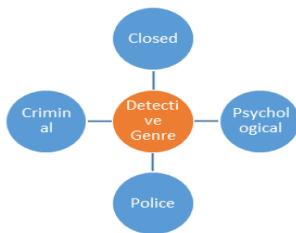


Diagram 1.

Subgenres of Detective Fiction:

As is well known, adventure literature is fiction characterized by a fascinating plot, a rapid, often improbable development of events and actions, and an unexpected conclusion. Adventure literature is closely related to science fiction and detective genres.

Consider the word detective:

"Detective (English: detective, Latin: *detego* from the word to discover, to investigate) genre of literature and cinematography. The works of this genre describe the process of uncovering mysterious facts, as a result of which all the circumstances of the event become clear. Usually, the basis for developing such a plot is some crime, and the detective describes the process of describing the culprits. In works of this genre, the conflict is created between justice and injustice and ends with the victory of justice" [5, 17-20]

The use of detective fiction for educational purposes is justified because detective literature is characterized by the discovery of complex and mysterious crime stories and the unexpected conclusion of the investigation. In the initial training period, it is necessary to familiarize students with the history of detective literature, if possible, in English. They should learn about pioneers like Edgar Poe, known for works like "Murder in the Rue Morgue" and "The Golden Bug", and Arthur Conan Doyle, whose Sherlock Holmes stories brought him fame. Agatha Christie continued Doyle's traditions with her own detective novels such as "Poirot Investigates," etc.

We recognize the importance of comparing the development trends of this genre formed within the framework of English and Armenian literature. It is noteworthy that Armenian-speaking lawyers become aware that "the founder of adventure-detective literature in Armenian literature is Yervand Otyan, whose historical-adventure-detective novels "Aptyul Hamit and Sherlock Holmes" and "Saliha Hanum or the army against the tyrant" have a unique place in Armenian fiction.: Adventure novels and novels were written by Raffi ("Memorial of the Cross Thief"), Vakhtang Ananyan ("On the Banks of Sevan," "Prisoners of Hovazadzor"). [3]

In learning the legal sublanguage of English, it is important to study legal terminology and explore scientific, literary, and psychological terms related to the legal field. While incorporating the reading of detective literature into the curriculum, students should be introduced to the terms and concepts associated with the history of the origin and development of various genres and subgenres because such an approach makes the learning process more targeted and interesting and helps create a well-rounded motivational foundation.

Future lawyers should be familiar with classic and contemporary detective and crime fiction. Relying solely on legal texts and documents can be monotonous. Moreover, it does not fully represent the legal sublanguage nor develop students' reflective and critical thinking skills.

At the beginning stages of learning, the translation of literary terms presents a great difficulty because they were formed in a different legal-literary-cultural-mental field. For example, in English, the terms "mystery fiction," "detective fiction," and "crime fiction" refer to a novel or novel in which a professional or amateur detective investigates and solves a crime. Armenian-speaking students have difficulty translating the whodunit "who+(has)+done+it?" The term is translated as an adventure novel, film, or program and is often found in the colloquial, informal vocabulary style. It is obvious what difficulties translating any text or phrase related to that term can cause. Similarly, the term "hardboiled detective stories" does not have a direct equivalent in Armenian and can be translated as "anti-hero or heroic detective." So, providing the English interpretation or definition of such terms is often more effective in helping students grasp their meaning. For example,

Definition: A hard-boiled detective novel is a gritty detective story with a street-smart professional investigator at its core. Hard-boiled realistic novels are generally set in a world where violence and corruption are common.

The literary genre of hardboiled (or hard-boiled) fiction shares the setting with crime fiction and detective stories. Although deriving from a romantic tradition, which emphasized the emotions of apprehension, horror, terror, and awe, the hardboiled fiction deviates from the tradition in the detective's cynical attitude towards those emotions. The attitude is conveyed through the detective's self-talk, describing to the reader (or - in the film - to the viewer) what he is doing and feeling. The genre's typical protagonist was a detective who daily witnessed the violence of organized crime that flourished during Prohibition while dealing with a legal system that had become as corrupt as the organized crime itself. Rendered cynical by this cycle of violence, the detectives of hardboiled fiction are classic antiheroes. [1]

The same applies to the term “cozy crime.” The term “cozy crime,” literally translated as “comfortable crime,” does not have a direct equivalent in Armenian. To understand this term, here is an English explanation:

Cozy crime novels are popular and usually set in a middle-class environment. They often revolve around a murder solved by a friendly police or private detective, with his dopey side-kick or an amateur sleuth. These stories avoid graphic descriptions of the crime or gruesome details of the murder. Once the crime is solved, everyone can return to their cozy lives, knowing the killer has been caught.

Another term to be considered is “locked room mystery.” This term refers to a crime that occurs under an impossible set of circumstances, such as when it seems impossible for anyone to have entered or left a locked room.

Then, students are offered some examples of works in these genres: "Murder Will Speak" by B. K. Stevens, "Stimulus Money" by Dan Warthman, etc.

Introducing students to subgenres of detective fiction serves multiple purposes. It helps them learn new terms and concepts, even if these are not directly related to the legal field. Acquiring a new concept or a term enables students to conduct more effective searches online or in libraries. Another goal is for students to realize the necessity, usefulness, and effectiveness of such reading.

Reading a detective story, an adventure story, or a novel written in English or Armenian also contributes to the acquisition of the legal sublanguage because

1. reading detective stories in any language develops students' background knowledge,
2. reading in the native language helps to learn many legal concepts and cultural lacunae,
3. It lays the groundwork for transitioning to reading in English .

Using dictionaries effectively also requires developing an appropriate strategy. Offering Armenian and English versions of the same text can turn reading into a valuable text-analysis exercise. This approach should be accompanied by a list of questions and tasks such as identifying legal terms and concepts, understanding sayings and various expressions, evaluating the quality of translation, etc.

It seems that students can easily translate the term "courtroom drama". However, when trying to translate that term, difficulties arise because the translation "*դատավանի դրամա*" does not fully represent the explanation of the term. So, we refer to the dictionary explanation of the term. Here it is:

Courtroom drama revolves around the courtroom procedure related to the crime. Inevitably, the reader knows the main suspects as they are in the dock, and the details of the crime are revealed as the court case proceeds.

However, the term “caper story” is less familiar and does not have a direct equivalent in Armenian. To explain it, consider the etymology of that term first, and then try to translate or transcribe: The verb to caper means to leap in a frolicsome way and probably derives from capriole, which derives from the Latin for goat (note: *Capra* (genus)). The noun caper means a frolicsome leap, a capricious escapade, or an illegal or questionable act. [1].

Watching Caper movies can make up for the lack of reading time. Here is a list of modern movies that could be effective for students: The Italian Job, Ocean's Eleven, The Thomas Crown Affair, etc.

The term "Caper" can be translated as "crazy" or "adventurous, adventurous stories." However, it is clear that we are dealing with a cultural term, and we can understand it by reading a story of the same genre or watching an "adventure" movie.

Law students may have watched numerous police detective and read police detective stories or novels, but it is crucial that they first understand the specific terms for various subgenres, starting with their English interpretations. For example, many students might not realize that the English equivalent of the term "նոնիկանական դենտիկանի" is police procedural.

Police procedural – this subgenre focuses on the work of the police to identify the perpetrator. It often includes detailed descriptions of crime detection, interviews, and forensic techniques. The main character is usually a detective or policeman.

Understanding this term allows students to conduct quick searches online, find relevant stories or movies, read or watch, and compile vocabulary related to the genre, etc.

Another interesting subgenre is "noir," which falls under the hardboiled genre but has distinct characteristics. In noir fiction, the central figure is often someone who directly participated in the crime, such as the criminal or the victim, rather than the detective or investigator.

This genre is considered cheap literature and is considered by some critics to be a product of American fiction that masterfully touches on acute social issues while emphasizing brutality. [1]

The French first coined the term noir in the 18th century to classify English novels. In 1946, in France, it was applied to specific genre films. In America, the name noir was first used in 1968 by film critics for films of the 1940s. In 1984, it was first used in literature when novels began to be reprinted in the 1920s. Those authors were forgotten in the US but were quite popular in France [4, 49-50].

The term *tartan noir* can be translated as "black detective". In terms of content, it is not new, but the study of this genre also contributes to the development of students' intercultural communicative abilities, because through their acquisition, students learn many legal and cultural concepts.

Tartan noir – a relatively new genre of crime fiction with a Scottish heritage. They are hard-boiled with the main characters having anti-hero traits. They usually suffer from personal crises during the course of the story, and the crises form a major part of the story¹.

Studying tartan noir can enhance students' intercultural and communicative skills as they learn about both legal and cultural aspects through this genre. English-speaking lawyers are well-versed in various types of detective fiction, whereas Armenian-speaking students might have only a general understanding of the genre. As they study the specific vocabulary and subgenres, they gain a deeper insight into how Anglo-Saxon law is represented today. Both independent and

¹ The term originates from the stories describing the atmosphere during the Prohibition-period in America that were written by hardboiled writers in the early 1940s, that were adapted for screen in Film noir by the Austro-German[a] film-making emigrants in Hollywood who fled the similarly corrupt system in Europe which allowed for the Nazi movement to gain the power.[3] Mark Bould (2005-12-15). Film Noir: From Berlin to Sin City. Wallflower Press. p. 24. ISBN 978-1-904764-50-2.

classroom activities, such as reading and movie-watching, are precious for students. These activities enhance cognitive motivation, foster a stronger foundation for professional training, and help students build their legal vocabulary.

Reading is vital for vocabulary acquisition. Activities such as multiple-choice questions, fill-in-the-blanks, matching exercises, definitions, crosswords, and word searches effectively support this. These tasks aid in learning legal terms and their applications.

Detective fiction and films offer both entertainment and practical value in legal education. Law students enjoy watching films, expecting to learn how lawyers, judges, and other legal professionals work and how they apply their theoretical knowledge in real-life situations. Diagram 2 illustrates how students enhance their language acquisition and fluency while watching these



films.

Diagram 2.

Key Skills Developed Through Legal Studies:

After watching the films, students discuss the ideas presented and the relationship between truth and justice. English is the working language in these discussions. In my class, students watched several legal films, including "Witness," "To Kill a Mocking Bird," Legally Blonde," "Kramer Vs. Kramer" and "12 Angry Men." The film "Witness" is a noir crime drama that explores themes of truth, justice, and cultural contrast.

It follows a police detective who protects a young Amish boy who accidentally witnesses a murder. As the detective shields the boy and his mother, a corrupt cop targets them, adding tension to the story. The film highlights the differences between the Amish way of life and that of the outside world, particularly in their approaches to justice and violence.

Having watched the film, students discussed the intersection of these contrasting cultures, especially how justice is exercised in different communities. They also reflected on the Amish tradition of non-violence and other cultural practices. The conversation touched on cultural stereotypes and how the role of law is perceived and applied in different societies. Moreover, the students enriched their vocabulary with new terms and concepts, such as "perpetrator," "seizure of chemicals," "black market," "tight-knit community," "assault," "corrupt cop," "summon," etc.

After completing a unit on the jury system during this academic year, students were assigned to watch "12 Angry Men" independently, in pairs or groups. (Last year, we watched it in class). The task was completed with promising results: fifty out of sixty students watched the film and submitted a group report on the jury system, along with an analysis of the film. This assignment helped reinforce their understanding of the jury system while encouraging collaborative learning and critical analysis. The theoretical knowledge they gained about the jury system, juror selection, and the dos and don'ts for jurors helped them better understand the film. Additionally, they learned numerous legal terms and concepts, such as "beyond a reasonable doubt," "prejudice," "breaking point," "testimony," "testifying under oath," and "unanimous verdict of guilty," etc.

The students gained insights into the jury system, the role of jurors, and the significant responsibility jurors bear in contributing to justice in society. They also observed the influence of social class, prejudice, and stereotypes, recognizing lower-class citizens' challenges in obtaining justice in a system dominated by middle- and upper-class professionals like judges and lawyers. While reading detective fiction and watching detective films, students learn to: understand the motives behind crimes, analyze situations, consider and evaluate facts, differentiate between facts and opinions, identify patterns in criminal actions, develop critical thinking skills.

Conclusion: Engaging with detective fiction and films helps law students develop a solid background in English legal terminology, understand different language patterns in legal contexts,

and gain insight into various legal realities. Exploring various subgenres of detective and adventure fiction broadens students' perspectives, cultivates a professional reading culture, provides aesthetic pleasure, and improves their ability to recognize and use legal and non-legal vocabulary. Importantly, independent activities of reading and film-watching and classroom-similar activities support self-directed learning and research, effectively allowing students to compare Armenian and English legal realities. Overall, integrating detective fiction and films into legal English teaching seems to be a creative and effective way to engage students, making the learning process more dynamic and enjoyable.

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Ուսանական Անսահիտ
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Ամփոփում

Հոդվածը դիտարկում է իրավագիտության անգլերենի՝ իրավունքի ու լեզվի փոխապահցված ուսուցման մեջ դետեկտիվ գրականության և դետեկտիվ ֆիլմերի դերը զարգացնելու իրավական անգլերենի հաղորդակցությունը: Դետեկտիվ գեղարվեստական գրականության և դետեկտիվ ֆիլմերի կիրառումը որպես անգլերենի ուսուցողական նորություն իրավագիտության դասերի համար խթանում է ուսանողների մոտիվացիան՝ ստվրելու իրավական անգլերեն իրենց առարկայական տիրություն:

Իրավաբանական անգլերենի ուսուցման համար դետեկտիվ գեղարվեստական գրականության ու ֆիլմերի օգտագործումը կարող է արդյունավետորեն զարգացնել ուսանողների իրավական գիտելիքները և լեզվական հմտությունները: Ավելին, կարդալու և դիտելու միջոցով ուսանողները ծանոթանում են անգլերենի իրավական տերմինաբանությանը, մշակութային համարտեքստերին և խոսրի տարրեր ձևերին, որոնք կիրառվում են բնիկ անգլիախոս իրավաբանների կողմից կոնկրետ իրավական իրադրություններում:

Ավելին, ուսանողները նաև հմտանում են բացահայտելու ոչ համարժեք բառապաշարը և կատարում են առօսանց որոնողական աշխատանք՝ հասկանալու այն: Թե՛ խմբակային, թե՛ ինքնուրույն ընթերցանությունը և ֆիլմ դիտելը նպաստում են, որ ուսանողները կատարեն ինքնուրույն աշխատանք, հետազոտություն, համեմատեն անգլերենի ու հայերենի իրավական իրադրությունները: Ուսանողակենտրոն ուսուցումը խթանում է անգլերեն իրավական հաղորդակցության զարգացմանը՝ կարևորելով խոսրի սահունությունը ճշգրտությունից:

Սույնիվացված և իր ստվրելու համար պատասխանառու ուսանողը կարող է ապահովել լեզվի յուրացման ու հաղորդակցման առավել լավ արդյունքներ:

Բանալի բառեր՝ կրթություն, իրավական անգլերեն, դետեկտիվ գեղարվեստական գրականություն, դետեկտիվ ֆիլմեր, հաղորդակցական մուտեցում, մոտիվացիա:

ОБУЧЕНИЕ ЮРИДИЧЕСКОМУ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ПОДЪЯЗЫКУ ПОСРЕДСТВОМ ДЕТЕКТИВНОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ И ФИЛЬМОВ

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Аннотация

В статье особое внимание уделяется обучению юридического английского языка с упором на преподавание права и языка как посредством чтения детективной литературы, так и просмотром детективных фильмов, что приводит к коммуникативному использованию юридического английского

языка и самостоятельному обучению. В статье анализируется использование детективной литературы и детективных фильмов на английском языке в качестве справочного материала на уроках права для повышения мотивации студентов к изучению юридического английского языка в своей предметной области.

Использование детективной литературы и фильмов для преподавания юридического английского языка может эффективно улучшить юридические знания и языковые навыки учащихся. Более того, благодаря чтению и просмотру видеоматериалов студенты знакомятся с английской юридической терминологией, культурным контекстом и различными речевыми моделями, используемыми англоговорящими юристами в конкретных юридических ситуациях.

Они также развиваются навыки выявления неэквивалентной лексики и использования интернета для поиска соответствующей информации. Как групповое, так и самостоятельное чтение, и просмотр фильмов способствуют самостоятельному обучению, позволяя студентам эффективно сравнивать английские и армянские правовые реалии. Более того, подобное обучение позволяет учащимся приобрести более целостный образовательный опыт: обучение ориентировано на учащихся, обеспечивает реальное общение в аудитории, отдавая приоритет беглости, а не точности. Учащийся мотивирован и берет на себя ответственность за собственное обучение. Это может привести к лучшим результатам с точки зрения овладения языком и общения.

Ключевые слова: образование, юридический английский, детективная литература, детективные фильмы, коммуникативный подход, мотивация.

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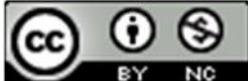
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