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# INTERDOMAIN TERMINOLOGY AND THE LEGAL TEXT

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The present article investigates the phenomenon of interdomain terminology within legal texts, focusing on terms that migrate from other disciplines into legal discourse and terms that operate simultaneously across legal and non-legal domains. The analysis examines these terms through the complementary lenses of *terminologization*, the process by which words acquire specialized meaning within a discipline and *determinologization,* the process by which specialized terms spread into general language. Through detailed case studies of terms, such as *prescription, delict, seizure, cumul, succession,* and *alibi*, the article demonstrates how legal terminology continuously evolves through borrowing from medicine, economics, management, and common language, while simultaneously contributing to general vocabulary. The research argues that understanding these semantic processes is essential for legislative clarity, judicial interpretation, and effective legal communication in an increasingly interconnected normative landscape.

***Keywords:*** *interdomain terminology, legal text, terminologization, determinologization, re-terminologization, semantic migration, legal discourse.*

## TERMINOLOGIA INTERDOMENIALĂ ȘI TEXTUL JURIDIC

Prezentul articol analizează fenomenul terminologiei *interdomeniale* în cadrul textelor juridice, cu accent pe termenii care migrează din alte discipline în discursul juridic, precum și pe termenii care funcționează simultan atât în domenii juridice, cât și nonjuridice. Analiza abordează acești termeni prin prisma complementară a terminologizării, procesul prin care cuvintele dobândesc sens specializat într-o disciplină și a determinologizării, procesul prin care termenii specializați pătrund în limbajul general. Prin intermediul unor studii de caz detaliate privind termeni precum *prescripție, delict, sechestru, cumul, succesiune și alibi*, articolul demonstrează modul în care terminologia juridică evoluează continuu prin împrumuturi din medicină, economie, management și din limbajul comun, contribuind totodată la îmbogățirea vocabularului general. Cercetarea susține că înțelegerea acestor procese semantice este esențială pentru claritatea actului normativ, interpretarea judiciară și eficiența comunicării juridice într-un peisaj normativ din ce în ce mai interconectat.

***Cuvinte-cheie:*** *terminologie interdomenială, text juridic, terminologizare, determinologizare, reterminologizare, migrare semantică, discurs juridic.*

### Introduction

Legal language does not exist in a isolation. Over time, legal terminology has borrowed a lot from other fields and from everyday speech. When words are borrowed into law, their meanings shift and change to fit what the legal system needs. At the same time, terms that start out in law often move the other way and end up being used by ordinary people. When this happens, they enrich the common vocabulary, but they also lose some of their precise legal meaning. This flow of terminology between law and other domains raises some important questions. How do terms from medicine, economics, or management end up with specialized legal meanings? What happens to legal terms when regular people start using them in daily conversation? And how should legal texts be interpreted when they contain words that mean different things in different contexts? This article tries to answer these questions by looking closely at how terms are used across different fields. It uses a theoretical framework developed by several experts, including M.T. Cabré, E. Mincu, I. Druță, A. Stoichițoiu-Ichim, and R. Zafiu, among others. [1, 2, 14, 15, 18, 20, 22], the analysis considers two main processes that work together: - how terms are used in different contexts and - how their meanings change as they are used in new areas. By studying these processes, we can better understand how terms are used and how their meanings evolve over time. This can help us to clarify the meanings of terms and to use them more effectively in our work. The article aims to provide a systematic analysis of these processes, drawing on the work of leading researchers in the field of terminological studies.

*Terminologization:* The transformation of words from general usage or from other specialized fields into legal terms of art, acquiring precise definitions within the juridical system.

*Determinologization:* The diffusion of legal terms beyond their original domain into general language, where they undergo semantic generalization and often lose technical specificity. Let's take a closer look at how legal language works. We are going to explore something called *reterminologization,* which is when terms are reused or redefined as they move between different specialized areas, rather than just from everyday language to a specific field. By studying some specific examples, we can see that terminology shared between domains is actually a key part of how law communicates, both with experts and the general public. This isn't just a minor aspect of legal language - it's a central feature that plays a big role in shaping how law is expressed and understood.

**Terminological Theoretical Framework**

To begin to understand the ways in which terms migrate between fields, we must explore how special languages interconnect with one another as well as with ordinary or "*everyday"* language. The Spanish termologist M. T. Cabré [1] has explained that special languages function somewhat as small subsystems that coexist and intersect with everyday language [p. 59]. Each discipline will develop its own vocabulary system; however, each subsystem is not isolated from others. Instead, they may borrow and adapt words, resulting in a dynamic relationship among the subsystems, thus allowing for the possibility that the linguistic structure of one subsystem may shape the linguistic structures of another subsystem. Therefore, by examining how subsystems functionally interface and interact with one another, researchers have the opportunity to obtain an understanding of how terms are used and how they function within their respective subsystems. It is significant to note that this understanding provides insight into how various disciplines convey ideas and concepts through language.

In addition, M. T. Cabré [1] identified three factors regarding special languages that significantly impact how terms migrate between fields. First, the characteristics of what differentiate special languages from one another do not exist independently of one another. Rather, there are interconnected sets of characteristics that include lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic elements. Second, the context of communication plays an extremely important role. Specialized language is developed to allow experts to communicate clearly and accurately with one another. Finally, the nature of each special language is determined by the domain it serves, the knowledge base of those using it, and the contexts in which it is utilized.

When a term moves from one field to another, it carries some of its original meaning along with it. But it also changes to fit the new context and to help people communicate in that new area. In other words, the term does not just get copied exactly as it was. Instead, it gets adapted to serve new purposes and to fit in with the language and ideas that already exist in the new field. As it settles into its new home, the term takes on a new life - shaped by its past, but reshaped by its present.

**Terminologization: Common to Legal Fields**

*Terminologization* is basically when words that people use every day start to mean something more specific in a particular field. This happens when a word's meaning changes as it becomes a specialized term. At first, the word might have a broad meaning, but as it is used more in a specific area, its meaning gets narrower and more precise [3, p. 111]. For example, a word that can mean lots of things in everyday conversation might only mean one thing in a specialized field. This process is like a transformation, where the word's meaning is modified and reinterpreted to fit the needs of that field. As a result, the word becomes a specialized lexical unit with a unique meaning that's different from its original meaning in common language.

The mechanisms of *terminologization* include:

*Semantic narrowing*: The range of possible meanings is restricted to those relevant to the specialized domain.

*Definitional precision:* The term receives an explicit definition within the specialized discourse, often through legislative or doctrinal formulation.

*Systematic integration:* The term enters into structured relationships with other terms within the specialized field, acquiring a place in a conceptual network. In legal contexts, terminologization often occurs through legislative definition, judicial interpretation, or doctrinal elaboration [6]. When a statute defines a term, it performs an act of *terminologization,* fixing the term's meaning for purposes of that legal text.

**Determinologization: From Legal to Common Fields**

When special words are used in everyday talk, they can lose some of their special meaning. This is called *determinologization.* It's like when a word from a specific field, like *science* or *law*, starts being used by people in general. The word still keeps its main idea, but it's not as technical as it used to be. For example, the researcher L. Cepraga said that *determinologization* happens when words are used in different ways and become more general [4, p. 89]. This means the word becomes simpler and can be used in more situations, even if it's not as precise as it was before.

Researcher G. Chivu [5] notes that *determinologization* is connected to a bigger idea - "*general knowledge terminology*". This is when terms from specialized fields become part of everyday language because people use them so much. As a result, the people who create dictionaries have a hard job keeping track of both the specialized and general meanings of these terms. They have to figure out how to document them in a way that makes sense for everyone, not just experts in a particular field. This can be, because the same term can have different meanings in different contexts. For example, a term might have a very specific meaning in a scientific field, but a more general meaning in everyday conversation. The dictionary creators have to navigate these different meanings and decide how to present them in a clear and useful way.

The mechanisms of *determinologization* include:

*Semantic broadening:* The term's meaning expands beyond its original technical application. *Metaphorical extension:* The term is applied figuratively to contexts distant from its original domain.

*Loss of technical precision:* Distinctions essential within the specialized field may be collapsed or ignored in general usage.

**Implications for Legal Communication**

In the legal area, something important happens when legal words become part of everyday language (*determinologization)*. On one hand, these words become easier for people to understand. On the other hand, they can be misinterpreted more easily. The scholar R. Zafiu [22] showed this in her study of how words change meaning when they move from a specialized field to a more general one. She found that when legal terms enter common language, their meanings can shift in complex ways, affecting how non-experts understand them. This can significantly change how people think about these terms, often in ways that are different from what legal experts intend. As a result, the meaning of a legal term can become distorted as it becomes more widely used, leading to potential misunderstandings about the law.

**Reterminologization: Between Specialized Fields**

*Reterminologization* constitutes a special case of *terminologization* involving transfer between specialized fields rather than from common language to specialization. The linguist E. Mincu [2] establishes a tripartite framework for understanding how terminological systems are constructed and transformed. She argues that the *"modeling"* of a terminological system occurs at three distinct but interconnected levels:

a) The linguistic level: examining the word and its meaning, as well as lexical interaction within the system;

b) The extralinguistic level: investigating the conceptualization of the world, the theory of knowledge, and the structuring and organization of concepts;

c) The level of representations means analyzing how ideas are mentally represented and used in discourse [2, p. 145].

This involves understanding how concepts are formed and applied in different contexts, and how they are presented and communicated through language. This framework is really important for understanding how terms change and get new meanings. It's called *reterminologization*, and it's a special case of *terminologization.* The researcher E. Mincu says that *reterminologization,* along with *terminologization and determinologization*, helps keep the system of terms alive and vibrant [2, p. 150]. Her work shows that these processes are not minor, but rather key to how specialized language evolves over time. Mincu's framework is especially useful for understanding *reterminologization* because it looks at how terms change in both language and beyond language. For example, when a term like *"seizure"* moves from medicine to law, it is not just the word that changes, but also the idea behind it. The term has to fit into a new way of thinking,

with different principles and relationships between concepts. This process involves more than just changing the word – it is about reconceptualizing the idea itself.

**Neosemy and Terminological Migration**

The idea of neosemy, which has been explored by writers like I. Druță and E. Mincu [14], is really important for understanding how words and phrases get new meanings when they are used in different areas. They say that terminological neosemy is what happens when old words start being used in new, specialized ways, but still keep their original meanings [14, p. 171]. This is a key phenomenon to understand when it comes to legal language, because it shows how legal terms can stay connected to where they came from, while also changing to fit new ideas and needs.

The defining characteristic of *reterminologization* is that, the term can have a new meaning in a different field, but it can still do its old meaning in its original field. This means the term can be used in different areas of study at the same time, and it's still recognizable because it keeps some of its original meaning [3, p. 113]. This process allows terms to be borrowed and used in new ways, while still making sense to people who already know what the term means. It is a way for terms to take on new specialized meanings, and it helps connect different fields of study by sharing words and ideas.

Law uses everyday language, but it also needs to make it more precise. This is crucial for the legal system to work as it has to be able to communicate with people in a way that makes sense to them, while also being exact enough to be applied consistently [6]. The linguist, A. Stoichițoiu-Ichim [20] has shown that legal language and ordinary language are always influencing each other. She found that legal terms are often borrowed from everyday language, adapted, and given new meanings. This process helps law stay connected to the people it affects, while also becoming more specialized and precise. It's a balance between being understandable and being exact, and it's essential for the legal system to function properly.

The *terminologization* of common words in legal contexts involves several characteristic transformations [13]:

*Definitional fixation:* The meaning of the term is established authoritatively through legislative definition or judicial interpretation.

Contextual specification: The meaning of the term is determined by its placement within a structured system of legal concepts.

*Operationalization:* The term is connected to legal consequences - rights, obligations, powers, immunities - that give it practical effect.

**Case Studies in Terminologization**

The word "*prescription”* is a great example of how a term from everyday language, especially medicine, can take on a new meaning in the legal world. Normally, when we think of a prescription, we think of a doctor's written order for medicine, telling us what to do in the future. This idea comes from the Latin phrase "*praescriptio”,* which means *“a writing before”*or *“an order”,* and it implies that someone in charge is giving directions [11]. Following *terminologization* in legal texts, prescription acquires a fundamentally different meaning: *the extinction of a right or the obligation to execute a penalty after the passage of a statutory period* [13]. Legal prescription does not involve ordering someone to do something but rather extinguishes legal effects through the passage of time. The semantic transformation can be represented as follows:

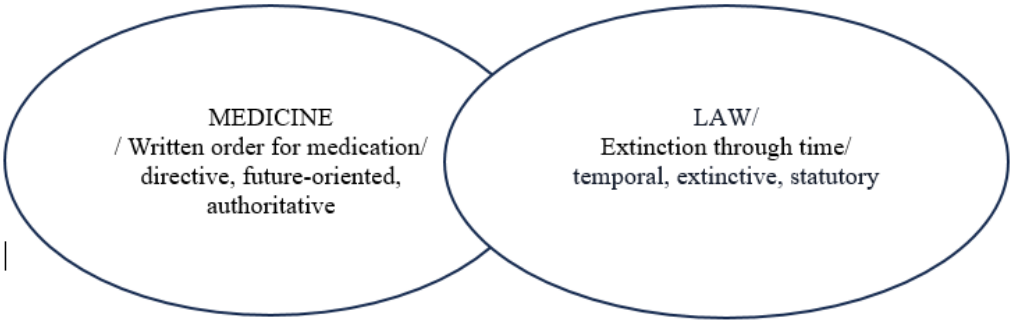



**Figure 1. Semantic Variation: *“Prescription”* across medical and legal fields**

This transformation exemplifies how terminologization can completely readjust semantic content. This change shows how using different words can completely change what we mean. The basic idea - that time and authority are involved - stays the same, but what happens because of them is opposite.

The concept of *succession* is a great example of how a word with multiple meanings in different fields can be narrowed down to a specific meaning for legal use. In biology, succession refers to the way species change over time. In math, it is about a sequence of numbers that follow a logical order. And in everyday language, succession usually means a series of events that happen one after another. But when we talk about succession in a legal sense, we are focusing on a specific idea that is different from these other meanings. This process of taking a word with many meanings and selecting one specific concept for legal purposes is called *terminologization.* It is like filtering out the other meanings to get to the one that is relevant for legal use [11].

*Legal terminologization* selects the core notion of *"following after"* and specifies it within the framework of patrimonial transmission. As provided in the MoldovanCivil Code [9]: *"Succession is the transmission of the patrimony of a deceased natural person to one or more living persons"* (Article 953).

The legal meaning adds specific features absent from general usage:

- The legal meaning adds specific features absent from general usage:
- The predecessor must be deceased;
- The object of transmission is the patrimony (*assets and liabilities*);
- The transmission occurs according to statutory rules or testamentary provisions;
- The recipients (*heirs*) have a specific legal status.
- This specification transforms a general concept of temporal sequence into a precise legal institution with defined operational rules.

**Delict: From Latin Misdeed to Civil Liability**

The word *"delict"* is a good example of how a term from everyday Latin became a specialized word in law. It comes from the Latin word *"delictum",* which means *"fault"* or *"misdeed"*. In law, *"delict"* refers to a wrongful act that leads to legal liability. In countries with civil law systems, like the Republic of Moldova [9] a delict is an unlawful act that causes harm to someone, and the person who did it has to make things right. The Civil Code of the Republic of Moldova [9] says that a delict is an act that causes prejudice and leads to an obligation to repair the damage.

This concept is important in understanding how laws work in different countries and how they deal with wrongful acts. *Everyone has a responsibility to follow the rules that are set by law or by local customs.* This means we should behave in a way that respects the rights and interests of others, without hurting them or taking away what's rightfully theirs. The idea of delict is based on a general duty, and it sets out the conditions under which breaking this duty can lead to liability. These conditions are fault, damage, and a causal connection between the two. When we look at how delict has been defined and developed over time, we can see how a broad concept of wrongdoing has become more specific and detailed within the framework of civil liability.

The *terminologization* of common words serves crucial functions for legal systems. This is different from criminal offenses, but it still keeps the central idea of fault that has legal significance. In other words, delict shows us how a general notion of doing something wrong can be refined and specified in the context of civil law, while still maintaining its core focus on fault. The use of everyday words in a specific way is important for legal systems. When lawmakers and judges define what these words mean, it helps people understand the law clearly. This is known as legal certainty, which means that people should be able to know what they can and can't do without being confused. But using special meanings for common words can also cause problems. When people who are not lawyers read legal documents, they might not understand what the words mean because they have different meanings in everyday life. This can lead to misunderstandings about what the law says they can and cannot do. This issue is a big concern for people who study how language is used in law and for those who write laws, because they want to make sure the law is clear and easy to understand, but also precise and accurate [6, 13].

**Case Studies in Reterminologization**

*Reterminologization* is when words and phrases move from one specialized area to another, like from medicine to law. Each field has its own way of understanding things and its own set of terms. This is really important for legal terminology because laws affect almost every part of life, including the economy, healthcare, technology, and social issues. So, the law has to be able to use and understand terms from these other areas. This means that legal vocabulary has to be able to work with concepts that come from other fields. As a result, legal terminology is always changing and adapting to include new words and ideas from other areas. This helps the law stay relevant and effective in regulating all the different aspects of human activity.

When a *term* is taken from one area and used in law,it undergoes *reterminologization* into law, it usually keeps some of its original meaning, but it also gets new legal details. The law area takes the term and makes it fit its own needs, often adding ways to carry out and fix problems that were not part of where the *term* came from. This helps the term work in its new legal context.

According to the Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române [11], the word *“cumul”* originally meant holding multiple jobs or roles at the same time, and getting paid for them. This idea is mainly used in labor law and human resources. For example, the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova [7] uses this term to describe when someone has more than one job or responsibility. According to the Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române, this is what *“cumul”* initially meant. It is an important concept in understanding how labor laws work, especially in places like the Republic of Moldova. When an employee takes on extra work, it is considered cumulation. This means they do their regular job, plus other work, either permanent or temporary, outside their normal hours. And they do this extra work based on a separate employment contract, which is just for that specific job. In simple terms, *“cumul”* is about legally combining different jobs, with rules in place to manage working hours, pay, and potential conflicts between these jobs. (Article 267(1)).

The *term* later moved into criminal law and took on a new meaning, specifically in deciding penalties. This is shown in the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova [8]:

*“If recidivism combines with the cumulation of sentences, the penalty based on the final sentence must be established taking into account the provisions of Article 82(2) of the Criminal Code.”*

This means looking at how all the sentences add up and figuring out the right penalty based on that. The goal is to make sure the punishment fits the total crime, not just the last one. In this new situation, *“cumul”* doesn’t mean having many jobs at the same time. Instead, it is about adding up punishments for crimes. The idea of *“adding up”* is still the core, but now it is used in the context of criminal sentencing. The term is also used in the phrase *“cumul of offenses”*, which means when one action leads to many crimes being committed. You can see the verb form of “cumul” in phrases like *“cumulation of complementary penalties*”, which is used a lot in different contexts. This shows how the meaning of *“cumul”* has changed over time to fit the specific ideas of criminal law.

The *reterminologization* of cumul demonstrates several important features of interdisciplinary borrowing:

*Semantic core preservation:* The basic idea of *“accumulation”* stays the same no matter where it is used.

*Contextual specification:* Each domain adds specific features relevant to its conceptual framework (employment relationships in labor law, penalties in criminal law).

*Systematic integration:* In each domain, the term enters into structured relationships with other domain-specific terms.

The term *seizure* (French *saisie,* Romanian *sechestru)* illustrates particularly complex reterminologization across medical, technical, and legal domains.

*Medical domain:* A seizure is when your brain suddenly doesn›t work right, and it›s usually because of weird electrical activity. This can happen to people with epilepsy, and it is like a big shock to their system. When someone has a seizure, they might act strange or feel really weird, and it is because of what is going on in their brain. Doctors have seen this happen a lot, and they have written about it in studies [11] and [19].

*Technical domain*: When machines get stuck, it is called a seizure. This happens when parts lock up or jam, like when a car engine stops working because it did not have enough oil or got too hot.

*Legal domain:* Seizure denotes a precautionary measure by which certain goods are removed from commerce or rendered unavailable pending judicial resolution. Article 587 of the Code of Civil Procedure of the Republic of Moldova [10] states:

*"(1) Seizure consists in the indisponibilization of movable or immovable property belonging to the debtor, for the purpose of realizing the creditor's claim.*

*(2) Seizure may be applied only if there is a reasonable fear that the debtor may hide, destroy, damage, or alienate the property before the judgment is executed."*

When it comes to *seizure,* it is only allowed if there's a good reason to think the debtor might try to hide, destroy, damage, or get rid of the property before the court's decision is carried out. The legal meaning builds on the common thread of *"taking hold of*" or *"stopping"* that runs through all three domains. In medicine, the seizure *"takes hold"* of the person's neurological function; in mechanics, the engine *"takes hold"* and stops moving; in law, the court *"takes hold"* of property to prevent its disposition.

The concept has become more specific in the field of law, leading to the creation of various related terms that identify different kinds of seizure based on their role in legal procedures. For instance, there's precautionary *seizure,* which is used to prevent something from happening, and executory seizure, which is used to enforce a decision. Additionally, there are terms like *seizure of goods, seizure of documents, and conservatory seizure*, each with its own distinct purpose in the legal process.

The term *eviction* demonstrates *reterminologization* from Latin general usage to a highly specific legal concept. Originating from Latin evincere *(to conquer, overcome*), the term entered legal terminology with a meaning quite different from its common language associations with removal from property. In law, eviction refers to the loss of a right, particularly in the context of sales. As provided in the Civil Code of the Republic of Moldova [9]: *"The seller is obliged to warrant the buyer that the thing sold is not subject to eviction, in whole or in part, by a third party based on a right that existed prior to the conclusion of the contract or arose from a cause existing at that time."* (Article 759(1))

When you buy something, the seller promises that nobody else can take it away from you because they had a right to it before the sale happened. This means the seller is saying that as far as they know, nobody else has a claim to the thing being sold that would let them take it away, either now or in the future, based on something that happened before the sale. When someone buys a property, but then someone else comes along with a better claim to it, that's called a legal eviction. This does not mean the buyer is physically kicked out, but rather that their right to the property is beaten by someone with a stronger claim.

The word *"eviction"* originally meant to conquer or overcome, and in law, it means the buyer's claim is defeated by a superior right. This is different from what most people think of as eviction, which is when a landlord makes someone leave a property. In law, it is all about who has the best title and right to the property, not just who is living there. The way words are used in law is changing a lot, especially now that there are many different legal systems that work together. Laws from the European Union, international treaties, and other global legal systems are all connected, so words and ideas are moving between different areas of law and even between different countries. For example, words like *"proportionality", "legitimate expectations"* and *"good faith"* are being used in new ways as they move from one country's laws to international law to European Union law. Even though they are being used in new ways, they still mean basically the same thing. This is an important area to study, because it can help us understand how laws are changing and how they are affecting people. As laws from different countries and systems interact, the meanings of these words are shifting, but their core ideas are staying the same. This is something that needs to be looked at more closely in the future.

**Case Studies in Determinologization**

When legal words become part of everyday language, it is called *determinologization.* This is what happens when special terms used by lawyers and judges start being used by regular people in non legal situations. As these words become more common, they lose some of their specific meanings, but they still keep a basic idea that can be applied to lots of things. This process can be really important for how people understand and talk about the law. When legal words become part of general language, they can be used by more people, but they can also be misunderstood because their original meanings might get watered down

or changed. For example, people might use a legal term in a way that's different from how a lawyer would use it, which can cause confusion. Overall, *determinologization* can make legal concepts more accessible, but it also requires careful consideration of how words are used and understood in different contexts.

The term *alibi* provides the classic illustration of determinologization from legal terminology to general language [12].

*Legal meaning*: An *alibi* is a way to defend yourself in court by showing you were somewhere else when a crime was committed. This means you could not have done it. The word *"alibi"* comes from Latin, meaning *"elsewhere".* If you can prove you were elsewhere, it can be a strong defense. In criminal cases, having an alibi can make a big difference - if you can show you were somewhere else, it's hard to say you did the crime.

*General meaning after determinologization:* Any excuse or justification for absence or for an action. In common usage, one might ask "What›s your alibi for missing the meeting?" or offer "I have no alibi for my poor performance."

The semantic transformation involves:

a) Loss of the criminal procedural context;

b) Loss of the burden-of-proof implications;

c) Broadening from *"being elsewhere*" to "*having any explanation";*

d) Application to non-criminal and even trivial contexts.

This transformation exemplifies how *determinologization* enables specialized terms to enrich general vocabulary while undergoing semantic simplification. The word *"boycott"* is a great example of how a person's name can become a common term used in everyday language [12]. *Origin:* The term derives from Captain Charles Boycott, a British land agent in Ireland, back in 1880. He was treated unfairly by the Irish Land League, who refused to work with him or sell him anything. The Irish Land League's actions against him were so successful that soon people started using his name as a verb, meaning to exclude someone or something from social or economic activities. Over time, the term *boycott* has become a part of our general language, used in all sorts of situations, from politics to social issues. It is interesting to see how a person's name can take on a new meaning and become a powerful symbol of protest or disagreement. A *boycott* is when a group of people decide not to do business or interact with someone, a company, or a country. This can be done for different reasons and can be legal or illegal, depending on why it is being done and how it's carried out. In the eyes of international law, the legality of a boycott depends on its purpose and how it is implemented. When people say they are going to boycott something, they usually mean they are not going to participate or engage with it anymore. This can be because they are unhappy with the way something is being done, like a restaurant with slow service, or they might disagree with the content of a TV show. It is often used in a exaggerated way, but the basic idea is that they're choosing not to support or take part in something. The journey of the term from proper name to specialized term to general vocabulary illustrates the complex pathways through which words enter and exit specialized domains.

The term *"moot"* has changed a lot over time, from having a very specific meaning in law to being used more broadly in everyday language, and interestingly, its meaning has also been somewhat reversed [12]. In law schools, they have something called a moot court. It is like a pretend court case where students get to argue made-up cases. The name *"moot court"* comes from Old English, where *"mot"* meant a gathering or meeting. In legal education*, "mooting"* is just a fancy way of saying that students practice arguing fake cases to learn how to be good lawyers. In everyday talk, when we say a question is *"moot",* we mean it's not really important or relevant anymore. It is like a hypothetical situation that does not really matter in the real world. This is different from how lawyers use the term, where it has a more specific meaning. In regular conversation, saying something is moot implies that it is no longer worth discussing or considering, because it is not going to make a difference either way. The meaning of something can change in a subtle but important way, from being a hypothetical idea used to make a point, to being seen as hypothetical and therefore not relevant. This shift in meaning can be significant, even if it is not immediately obvious.

The phrase *"statute of limitations"* has become more widely used and not just limited to legal language [12]. It now has a broader meaning that people use in everyday conversation. Legal meaning: A

statute prescribing the time period within which legal proceedings must be commenced. After the period expires, claims are time-barred. Its general meaning is an any time limit on action or response. One might speak of the *"statute of limitations"* on filing a complaint with a company, pursuing a grievance, or even on social expectations. The basic idea still involves a time limit, but it no longer follows the exact rules of preventing repeated claims and procedural barriers. When legal words become part of everyday language, it can have a big impact on how easily people can understand and navigate the legal system. This can be a good thing, as it makes legal concepts more familiar to people who are not lawyers or legal experts. But, at the same time, it can also lead to confusion if the everyday meaning of a word is different from its technical legal meaning. This is because the process of making legal terms more accessible can also water down their precise meaning, which is important in a legal context. As a result, people may think they understand a legal concept when they actually do not, which can cause problems when they are trying to deal with the legal system. This tension shows how important it is for legal professionals to have what is called *"juridical competence"*. This means they need to be able to switch between special and general meanings of words in a legal setting. They have to know what words mean in a legal sense, and also what they mean to the general public. Legal professionals must be aware of both the terminologized meanings of terms within the legal system and their determinologized meanings in public discourse [13]. As scientist R. Zafiu [22] pointed out, things like who is speaking, the context, and what the audience is expecting can all affect how words are understood in different situations. This is a crucial part of communicating effectively in legal contexts.

**A Typological Framework of Terminological Processes**

The three processes examined: *terminologization, reterminologization, and determinologization*, can be understood as different directions of semantic migration across the continuum between general language and specialized domains.

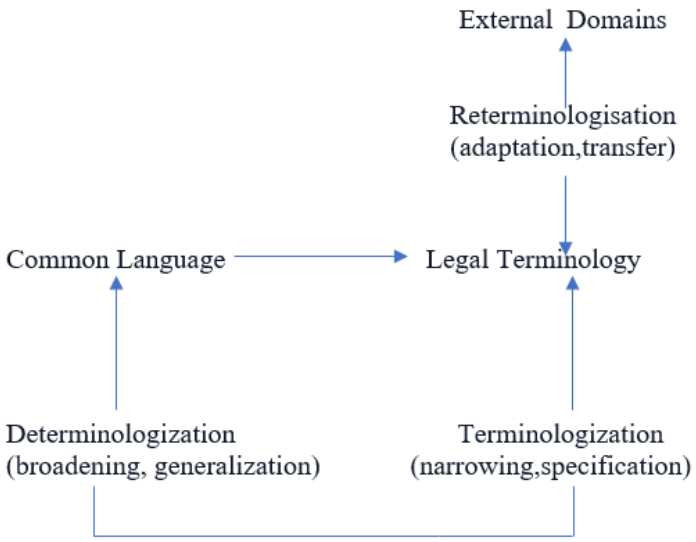



**Figure 2. The Concept of Legal Terminology Process**

This typology shows that legal words and phrases take and give meaning to and from everyday language and other fields of study. They take words from common language and make them more specific, and they also take words from other areas and make them part of the law. At the same time, legal language gives words and meanings back to general language, making it richer. This back-and-forth movement is what researcher A. Stoichițoiu-Ichim [20] calls a balance between special and general words in how people speak and write today in Romanian. This balance is always changing, with legal language influencing and being influenced by the language people use every day. Some words are used in many different areas at the same time, and they can have different meanings in each one, even though they look like the same word. This can cause problems when trying to understand what they mean in a legal document, because their meaning might be affected by how they are used in other areas.

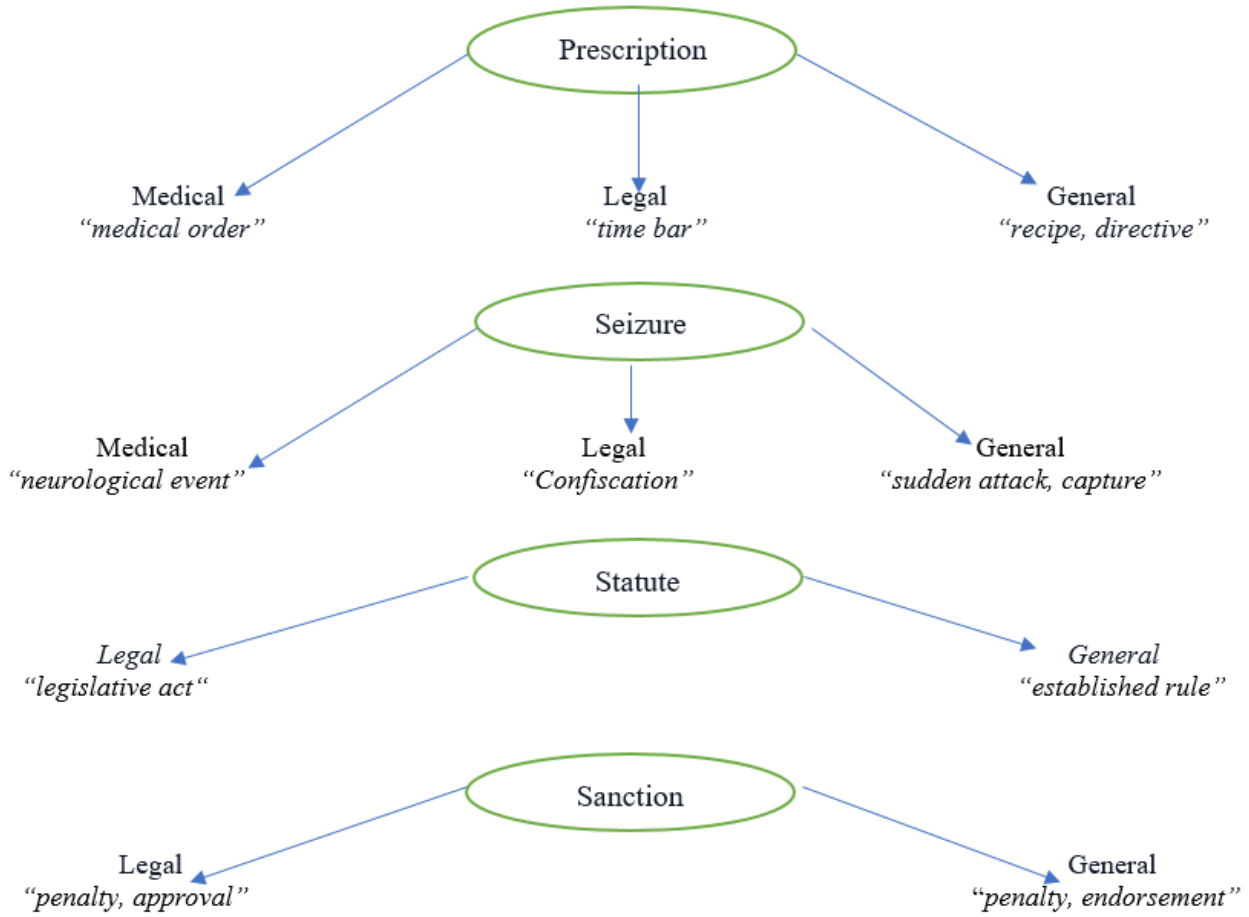



**Figure 3. Semantic variation of specialized and common language terms**

The coexistence of multiple meanings across domains creates potential for ambiguity that must be resolved through contextual interpretation.

**Cognitive Mechanisms of Semantic Transfer**

These changes happen because of how our minds work, and we can see exactly how it works through certain mental processes [1, 2, 13, 15].

*Metaphors* help us connect ideas by finding similarities between them. For example, the legal idea of a *“prescription”* - which is like a time limit - is connected to the medical idea of a *“prescription”* - which is a doctor’s order. Both ideas involve someone in authority making a decision. Even though they work in different ways, they share this common thread. The linguist I. Druță [15] has shown that this way of thinking is crucial in creating special words and phrases used in different fields. It is a basic tool that helps us create new terms by linking them to ideas we already understand.

*Metonymy* is a way of transferring meaning between things that are connected. For example, in law, the word *“bench”* is used to refer to judges, not just the physical seat they sit on. This is because the judges are closely associated with the bench, so the word *“bench”* comes to represent the people who use it.

Specification narrows meaning by adding semantic features. When succession enters legal terminology, it acquires specific features (*transmission of patrimony, death of decedent, statutory rules*) absent from general usage.

Generalization broadens meaning by removing semantic features. When alibi undergoes *determinologization,* it loses its specific procedural features while retaining the core notion of alternative explanation.

The semantic processes examined have profound implications for legislative drafting. Drafters must be aware of the multiple meanings that terms may carry across different contexts and must take care to ensure terminological consistency within legal texts [6, 13].

When lawmakers use a word that has a special meaning in everyday language, they need to think about whether its legal meaning is clear enough or if it needs to be defined in the law. If a law uses a word that is used in many different areas of expertise, the people writing the law must make sure that its meaning is not confusing in a legal sense. This is important because words can have different meanings in different contexts, and lawmakers want to avoid misunderstandings. They should consider defining the word clearly so that everyone knows what it means in the context of the law. By doing this, lawmakers can help ensure that the law is applied consistently and fairly. When lawmakers define words in a specific way, it helps keep their meaning clear and consistent within the legal system. But the people writing these laws have to find a balance between being precise and making sure the language is easy for everyone to understand, including those who are not experts in law. This is important because legal texts need to be accessible to the people they affect, so they can know their rights and responsibilities. By getting this balance right, lawmakers can create laws that are both clear and fair.

Courts regularly confront questions of terminological meaning that require attention to the processes examined here. When interpreting statutory language, judges must determine whether terms carry their ordinary *(common language*) meanings, their specialized legal meanings, or meanings derived from other disciplines.

The interpretation of terms that operate across multiple domains requires particular care. In such cases, courts must determine the intended meaning based on context, legislative purpose, and the overall structure of the legal text. The translation of legal texts presents particular challenges related to *terminologization and determinologization* [1, 12, 16]. As writer I. Druță [16] demonstrates in her comprehensive study of the dynamics of Romanian terminology under the impact of translation, the transfer of terms between languages and legal systems involves complex processes of adaptation and semantic negotiation.

When translating a legal term, the translator must determine:

a) Has the term been given a specific meaning in its original language?

b) Is there a similar term in the target language that has gone through the same changes?

c) How the term's meaning may have been shaped by reterminologization from other disciplines;

d) Whether the term has undergone determinologization that might affect its interpretation by target-language readers.

Translating legal documents requires both linguistic competence and juridical competence: the ability to navigate the terminological complexities of legal discourse across languages and legal systems. This competence is particularly important given the increasing interconnectedness of legal orders through European Union law and international treaties.

Legal education needs to teach students about how words and meanings in law are created and changed over time [13, 21]. Understanding that legal terms are not fixed essences but evolve through ongoing processes of migration and adaptation enables students to approach legal texts with greater sophistication. As researcher E. Mincu [21] demonstrates in her work on medical terminology, the ability to recognize and analyze terminological processes is essential for professionals across all specialized domains.

Courses in legal language and terminology should address:

a) The processes of terminologization and determinologization;

b) The migration of terms between law and other disciplines;

c) The interpretation of terms with multiple meanings across domains;

d) The implications of terminological change for legal practice.

**Conclusion**

This article has examined the phenomena of *terminologization, reterminologization, and determinologization* as they operate in legal texts, focusing on terms that migrate from other disciplines into legal language and terms that operate simultaneously across multiple domains. Several conclusions emerge from this investigation:

First, legal terminology like medicine, economics, and business, and gives them new meanings that fit its own needs. This is not just something that happens occasionally, but is actually a key part of how law

works, allowing it to cover a wide range of human activities. By taking words from other areas and adapting them, law can create its own unique language that is tailored to its specific purposes. This process of borrowing and transforming words is essential to law's ability to regulate different aspects of society. As a result, legal terminology is inherently interdisciplinary, drawing on a broad range of sources to create a distinct and specialized vocabulary.

Second, the semantic transformations involved in *terminologization* and *reterminologization* operate through identifiable cognitive mechanisms specification, metaphor, metonymy, that enable meaning transfer while maintaining sufficient continuity for recognition and productivityl. Researchers like Inga Druță and Eugenia Mincu have shown that these challenges, such as being specific, using metaphors, and making connections, are key to how terms change and grow in dynamic evolution of terminological systems across all specialized domains. This helps us understand how terms can evolve over time and still be recognizable and useful. By using these cognitive shortcuts, we can transfer meaning from one concept to another and create new terms that are connected to the old ones, making it easier to communicate complex ideas.

Third, *determinologization* spreads legal terms into general language, enriching common vocabulary while subjecting legal concepts to semantic simplification. This process has significant implications for public understanding of law and access to justice. The work of researchers A. Stoichițoiu-Ichim [20] and R. Zafiu [22] provides valuable insights into how these processes unfold in contemporary Romanian discourse.

Fourth, understanding these processes is essential for legal practice. Legislative drafters must achieve terminological consistency while maintaining accessibility; judges must interpret terms with awareness of their multiple potential meanings; translators must navigate terminological differences across languages and legal systems; and legal educators must prepare students for engagement with evolving legal vocabulary. When we look at how law uses language across different areas, we are really asking some big questions.

By studying the words and terms used in law, we can better understand law as a system of rules and as a way that people communicate with each other. This helps us see law as something that is both complex and accessible, and that affects us all in different ways. Future studies could take this analysis in a few different directions. For example, they could compare how different legal systems and languages use and change terms. They could also look at how specific terms move from one area to another over time. Another approach could be to think about how to make legal terms clearer while still allowing the law to adapt to new situations. This could involve looking at how to balance the need for clear definitions with the need for flexibility in the law. By exploring these different directions, researchers could gain a better understanding of how legal terms are used and how they can be improved.

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