# ENGLISH INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC LAW DISCOURSE: ITS MULTIDIMENSIONAL ANALYSIS

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*This paper is dedicated to International Economic Law Discourse. By now only one critical discourse analysis work covering this matter exists. Thus, there are no corpus-based researches concerning this type of discourse. At the same time the previous works in corpus-based discourse analysis were taken into account. All these researches study different types of discourse: diplomatic, media, academic, Biblical.*

*This work is a corpus-based research pertaining to the discourse quantitative analysis. The author compares International Economic Law Discourse with press reviews and academic prose. In particular, multidimensional analysis tool, MAT (Nini, 2019), created according to D. Biber's works (Biber, 1988; Biber, 1989; Biber, 2001) was used in this work to indicate main grammar and stylistic peculiarities of the International Economic Law Discourse in English as this corpus tool operates only with one target language. Furthermore, ANOVA test (Analysis of Variance) was used to interpret the MD analysis results.*

*As a result of this research, we can distinguish such basic grammatical and syntactic peculiarities of IEL discourse: common use of Present tense; second person pronouns, pro-verb do and subordinator **that** deletion omission; abundance of nominalisations; lack of adverbs; overwhelming use of modal verbs, especially predictive ones **(will, would, shall)** with a priority for **shall**; prepositional phrases prevalence; insignificant number of such syntactic constructions as **that** relative clauses on subject position, **WH** relative clauses on subject position, existential **there**; a high level of certainty to be understandable for all Member States representatives who are not, as a rule, English native speakers.*

***Key words:*** *corpus linguistics, international economic law discourse, Biber's works, multidimensional analysis, ANOVA test (Analysis of Variance).*

***Бутко Олександра. Дискурс міжнародного економічного права: його багатовимірний аналіз***

*Зазначена стаття присвячена дискурсу міжнародного економічного права. Дотепер тільки одна робота з критичного аналізу дискурсу відповідає цій темі. Таким чином, не існує корпусних досліджень, які стосуються цього типу дискурсу. Водночас минулі роботи з корпусного аналізу дискурсу були взяті до уваги. Усі ці дослідження вивчають різні типи дискурсу: дипломатичний, академічний, медійний, біблійний.*

*Ця робота є розробленим на аналізі корпусів текстів дослідженням, так званим кількісним аналізом дискурсу. Автор порівнює дискурс міжнародного економічного права з оглядами преси та академічною прозою. Зокрема, за допомогою інструменту багатовимірного аналізу корпусу (Nini, 2019), створеного відповідно до розробок Д. Байбера (Biber, 1988; Biber, 1989; Biber, 2001) були проведені дослідження англомовного корпусу текстів для того, щоб виявити головні граматичні та стилістичні особливості дискурсу міжнародного економічного права в англійській мові, тому що вона є єдиною цільовою мовою цього корпусного інструменту. Тест ANOVA (Analysis of Variance – аналіз варіативності) був використаний для того, щоб інтерпретувати результати багатовимірного аналізу.*

*У результаті дослідження ми виявили такі основні граматичні та синтаксичні особливості дискурсу міжнародного економічного права: широке використання Present tense; запобігання вживанню займенників у другій особі, **do** у якості присудка та видалення субординатора **that**; велика кількість номіналізацій; незначна частка прислівників; тенденція до використання модальних дієслів **(will, would, shall)** з пріоритетом для **shall**; незначна кількість таких синтаксичних конструкцій, як підрядні частини речення з **that/WH** на місці підмета, **there is/are**; високий рівень точності, щоб бути зрозумілим для всіх представників держав-членів, які, як правило, не є носіями англійської мови.*

***Ключові слова:*** *корпусна лінгвістика, дискурс міжнародного економічного права, роботи Байбера, багатовимірний аналіз, тест ANOVA (аналіз варіативності).*

**Introduction.** Nowadays corpus linguistics covers all possible areas of human activities. Although discourse studies derived from critical discourse analysis, corpus investigations started since the 1980s [1; 2; 3; 4]. At the same time some discourse types are still not explored.

International economic life is influenced by international economic organizations (World Trade Organization, World Bank, International Monetary Fund) as their agreements create the framework for interstate trade and finance. Thus, International Economic Law Discourse plays a pivotal role in our everyday lives.

**Materials and Methods.** This paper is dedicated to International Economic Law Discourse. By now only one critical discourse analysis work covering this matter exists

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*Слобожанський науковий вісник. Серія: Філологія, випуск 11, 2025*

[5]. Thus, there are no corpus-based researches concerning this type of discourse. At the same time the previous works in corpus-based discourse analysis were taken into account [6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12]. All these researches study different types of discourse: diplomatic [8, 12], media [10, 11], academic [6, 7], Biblical [9].

This work is a corpus-based research pertaining to the discourse quantitative analysis. In particular, multidimensional analysis tool, MAT [13], created according to D. Biber's works [14, 15, 16] was used in this work to indicate main grammar and stylistic peculiarities of the International Economic Law Discourse in English as this corpus tool deals only with one target language.

The multidimensional (MD) analysis covers six dimensions that define any discourse stylistic peculiarities and depend on intrinsic morphological and syntactic quantitative indicators (number of nouns, adjectives, certain verb forms, syntactic constructions, etc.).

These six dimensions include as follows: Involved and Informational discourse; Narrative and Non-Narrative Concerns; Context-Independent Discourse and Context-Dependent Discourse; Overt Expression of Persuasion; Abstract and Non-Abstract Information; On-line Informational Elaboration.

As a result of the MD analysis, any text or group of texts can be classified to one of the following types:

− Intimate Interpersonal Interaction – telephone conversations between personal friends.

− Informational Interaction – face-to-face interactions, telephone conversations, spontaneous speeches, personal letters.

− Scientific Exposition – academic prose, official documents.

− Learned Exposition – official documents, press reviews, academic prose.

− Imaginative Narrative – romance fiction, general fiction, prepared speeches.

− General Narrative Exposition – press reportage, press editorials, biographies, non-sports broadcasts, science fiction.

− Situated Reportage – sports broadcasts.

− Involved Persuasion – spontaneous speeches, professional letters, interviews.

All the MAT means are given per 100 words of the text or corpus. Due to its availability and simplicity MAT is often used as a primary tool for many researches. For instance, R. Xiao (2009) applied it to study five types of Englishes, their five corpora, i.e. five International Corpus of English components for Great Britain (ICE-GB), Hong Kong (ICE-HK), India (ICE-IN), the Philippines (ICE-PH) and Singapore (ICE-SG) [17]. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2023) selected it in order to compare Chinese diplomatic discourse with American one [12].

Five main agreements constituting this discourse and consisting of 94074 tokens (Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, 1994; Articles of Agreement of the International Monetary Fund, 1944 (2016); General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, 1947; General Agreement on Trade in Services, 1994; Interna-

tional Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) Articles of Agreement, 1945 (2012)) were selected to achieve this aim [18, 19, 20, 21, 22].

ANOVA test (Analysis of Variance) was used to interpret the MD analysis results. It is applied when it is necessary to compare three groups means and a t-test does not meet this task requirements [23].

**Results and Discussion.** According to the MD analysis results international economic law discourse belongs to the learned exposition. Nevertheless, we think it is worth considering each dimension of this analysis separately because this type of discourse doesn't meet all the requirements to be a learned exposition example.

First of all we should take into account the fact that under the traditional stylistic classification international economic law (IEL) discourse is an intrinsic part of official documents. At the same time official documents, as we remember, are covered by two MD analysis types – Learned Exposition and Scientific Exposition. Thus, we can compare IEL discourse quantitative variables with press reviews and academic prose ones that also belong to the Learned Exposition. However, Learned Exposition always comprises only press reviews when academic prose as well as official documents can be classified either to the Learned Exposition or Scientific Exposition. The variables of the three registers (press reviews, academic prose, IEL discourse) can be found in the Table 1.

Table 1

**Text type multidimensional comparison**

| Text type name | D1 | D2 | D3 | D4 | D5 | D6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Press reviews | -12.45 | -0.74 | 5.38 | -2.32 | 0.36 | -1.01 |
| Academic prose | -12.16 | -2.16 | 5.38 | -0.02 | 5.14 | 0.23 |
| IEL discourse | -19.32 | -4.50 | 10.02 | 2.75 | 2.06 | 0.52 |

According to the ANOVA test F-statistic equals 0.039 and P-value is 0.96185.

Thus, as the p-value is above a predefined threshold (commonly 0.05), we can accept the null hypothesis and conclude that all three registers have relatively similar means although as we have already mentioned academic prose as well as official documents

that also consist of IEL discourse can belong to two different text types – Learned Exposition and Scientific Exposition whereas press reviews are classified as Learned Exposition [23, 24]. Therefore, the difference between Learned Exposition and Scientific Exposition is blurred enough and can be found only with the help of MD analysis. The Table 1 indicates this vague difference.

Table 2

**Dimension 1**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Private verbs (PRIV) | 0.91 |
| 2. | Subordinator *that* deletion (THATD) | 0.06 |
| 3. | Present tense (VPRT) | 2.13 |
| 4. | Second person pronouns (SPP2) | 0.00 |
| 5. | Pro-verb *do* (PROD) | 0.00 |

Dimension 1 fully meets official documents criteria as we can see from the abovementioned table: only Present tense is often used in IEL discourse when second person pronouns, pro-verb *do* and subordinator *that* deletion are completely omitted as they are necessary for more informal registers in order to simplify communicative mutual understanding. All these criteria are found in the Table 2.

Table 3

**Dimension 3**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Total adverbs (RB) | 1.30 |
| 2. | Place adverbials (PLACE) | 0.23 |
| 3. | Time adverbials (TIME) | 0.07 |
| 4. | Nominalizations (NOMZ) | 7.13 |
| 5. | Phrasal coordination (PHC) | 0.84 |
| 6. | WH relative clauses on subject position (WHSUB) | 0.27 |
| 7. | WH relative clauses on object position (WHOBJ) | 0.11 |
| 8. | Pied-piping relative clauses (PIRE) | 0.26 |

IEL discourse as well as official documents can be characterised by a great number of nominalisations and lack of adverbs. It is not only because IEL discourse is context-independent but it can be explained by a wide use of terminology most of which is a kind of nominalisations. These peculiarities are mentioned in the Table 3.

Table 4

**Dimension 4**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Infinitives (TO) | 1.49 |
| 2. | Predictive modals (PRMD) | 2.00 |
| 3. | Suasive verbs (SUAV) | 0.67 |
| 4. | Conditional adverbial subordinators (COND) | 0.34 |
| 5. | Necessity modals (NEMD) | 0.04 |
| 6. | Possibility modals (POMD) | 0.64 |
| 7. | Split auxiliaries (SPAU) | 0.17 |

A high degree of persuasion that is compared with personal letters is achieved through overwhelming use of modal verbs, especially predictive ones (*will, would, shall*). Nevertheless, such a peculiarity is common for the legal discourse. In particular, nowadays *shall* is mostly used only in official documents and is archaic for all other registers. These features can be found in the Table 4.

Table 5

**Dimension 6**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | *That* verb complements (THVC) | 0.21 |
| 2. | *That* adjective complements (THAC) | 0.00 |
| 3. | *That* relative clauses on subject position (TSUB) | 0.12 |
| 4. | WH relative clauses on subject position (WHSUB) | 0.27 |

| 5. | Existential *there* (EX) | 0.05 |
| 6. | Demonstratives (DEMO) | 1.38 |
| 7. | Demonstrative pronouns (DEMP) | 0.14 |
| 8. | Total prepositional phrases (PIN) | 15.56 |
| 9. | Phrasal coordination (PHC) | 0.84 |

Dimension 6 complies with academic prose because IEL discourse is full of prepositional phrases as it needs no corrections and clarifications. At the same time a number of such syntactic constructions as *that* relative clauses on subject position, WH relative clauses on subject position, existential *there* is virtually insignificant. These peculiarities are mentioned in the Table 5.

Table 6

**Dimension 2**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Past tense (VBD) | 0.53 |
| 2. | Perfect aspect (PEAS) | 0.30 |
| 3. | Third person pronouns (TPP3) | 0.46 |
| 4. | Word length (AWL) | 5.09 |
| 5. | Present tense (VPRT) | 2.13 |
| 6. | Attributive adjectives (JJ) | 6.79 |
| 7. | Present participial clauses (PRESP) | 0.11 |
| 8. | Past participial WHIZ deletion relatives (WZPAST) | 0.59 |
| 9. | Public verbs (PUBV) | 0.27 |
| 10. | Synthetic negation (SYNE) | 0.12 |

Table 7

**Dimension 5**

| № | Linguistic Features | Mean per 100 words |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Conjuncts (CONJ) | 0.25 |
| 2. | Agentless passives (PASS) | 1.41 |
| 3. | Past participial clauses (PASTP) | 0.05 |
| 4. | By-passives (BYPA) | 0.21 |
| 5. | Past participial WHIZ deletion relatives (WZPAST) | 0.59 |
| 6. | Other adverbial subordinators (OSUB) | 0.04 |
| 7. | Predicative adjectives (PRED) | 0.43 |

Despite the fact that the majority of dimensions IEL discourse belongs to Learned Exposition Dimensions 2 and 5 results deny this tendency, as for both these Dimensions IEL discourse is a part of General Narrative Exposition. In particular, Dimension 2 (Narrative and Non-Narrative Concerns) classifies it as broadcasts and Dimension 5 (Abstract and Non-Abstract Information) assigns it to the press reportage. It is a direct consequence of IEL discourse formation procedure: its language must be understandable for all Member States representatives who are not, as a rule, English native speakers. The above-mentioned Tables 6 and 7 show these features.

As a result of this research, we can distinguish such basic grammatical and syntactic peculiarities of IEL discourse for the first time:

– Common use of Present tense.

– Second person pronouns, pro-verb *do* and subordinator *that* deletion omission.

– Abundance of nominalisations.

– Lack of adverbs.

– Overwhelming use of modal verbs, especially predictive ones (*will, would, shall*) with a priority for *shall*.

– Prepositional phrases prevalence.

– Insignificant number of such syntactic constructions as *that* relative clauses on subject position, WH relative clauses on subject position, existential *there*.

– A high level of certainty to be understandable for all Member States representatives who are not, as a rule, English native speakers.

As we can see, MAT is a state-of-the-art and useful tool but we cannot trust it completely. When we study any type of discourse, we should use all possible methods to get valid and objective results. We think that quantitative and qualitative methods need to complement each other in any linguistic area. When critical discourse analysis (CDA) can be used to indicate main stylistic characteristics of any discourse, corpus tools help us detect its fundamental grammar and syntactic peculiarities. In this research grammar and syntactic features of IEL discourse were explored for the first time. The uniqueness of this article is in comparing IEL discourse with other text types (press reviews, academic prose). The aforementioned allows us to conclude that international economic law discourse is to be investigated from all possible points of view (cognitive, semantic, sociolinguistic, etc.).

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