

From Law to Language: Exploring the Colligation of Prepositions in Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973

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- Colligation of Preposition
- Quantitative Content Analysis
- Law
- Linguistics
- Legal Practitioners
- Bar Councils Act 1973

Abstract

This study explores the colligation of prepositions in the legal Act of Pakistan Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973. Legal language is characterized by having a complex language, specialized vocabulary, and frequent use of prepositions which makes a legal document difficult to comprehend. The research identifies three combinations of colligation of prepositions which are Verb + preposition, Noun + Preposition, Adjective + Preposition in the Act. A quantitative content analysis methodology is applied to this research to investigate the frequency of Colligation of Prepositions patterns in the legal Act by using MS Excel. The result shows that Verb + Preposition and Noun + Preposition combination were predominating by constituting 45.45 % whereas Adjective + Preposition was less frequent by 9.09%. The study highlights that legal drafter conveyed legal roles and responsibilities effectively by the usage of colligation of prepositions. The study contributes both to the field of Law and Linguistics and recommends that in the legal curriculum linguistics should also be included so that while drafting a legal document with the help of linguistics it will be effective as it will be understood by the legal professionals and the layman.

1- Introduction

The term law has different meaning in different contexts. Blacks' Law Dictionary defines Law as "A body of rules of action or conduct prescribed by controlling authority and having binding legal force which must be obeyed and followed by citizens subject to sanctions or legal consequence is a law" (Black's Law Dictionary, as cited in Saylor Academy, 2012)." According to Khanna (2022), The law performs various functions within a nation such as preserving peace and order, maintaining social framework, protecting individual and minorities rights, advancing social justice and facilitating progressive and structured social change. Law plays a vital role for giving justice to the people of the societies either they are old or modern. Law and justice are interlinked together to avoid confusion and chaos and it also controls peoples' actions to maintain a peaceful and orderly lives. Every society and culture have their own sets of laws which are amended according to the people's ideas and values.

(Admin, 2024), Legal language is a technical and a specialized language used in the field of Law and it is not commonly used in our daily conversation. It is used in court proceedings, acts, bills, and other legal documents. In addition, it has a complex sentence structure, technical terms, passive voice and archaic vocabulary that is often difficult for a layman to understand.

In specialized discourses particularly in legal discourse prepositions are the most important words though they are small. While structuring a sentence they often appear more than ten times. For a clear reason to make the text clear and free from ambiguities complex prepositional phrases and single word prepositions are used. Prepositions are common in legal writing which makes the sentences long having 50 words or more. The following is the example of the lengthy sentences which includes prepositions. The extract is taken from Contracts Act 1950

"Misrepresentations made, or frauds committed, /by agents acting / in the course / of their business / for their principals, have the same effect /on agreements made / by such agents as if such misrepresentations or frauds have been made or committed /by the principals; but misrepresentations made, or frauds committed, /by agents, / in matters which do not fall /within their authority, do not affect their principals."

This present study identified Colligations of Prepositions in the Act "Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973. Yunus, Awab, & Ab Rashid (2016), study shows that colligation of prepositions is the combinations of verbal, nominal or adjectival bases with prepositional collocutors Ben et al (1997). Following are the types of colligations of prepositions:

Noun + Preposition

Adjective + Preposition

Verb + Preposition

The Pakistan Bar Council is the main legal authority and it protects the rights, interests and benefits of the lawyers. It gives permission to the lawyers to present people to the High Court or Supreme Court. Moreover, it safeguards the lawyers from any harm done to them. It also gives guidance related to the profession to the lawyers and aids to any

changes happened in the legal system of Pakistan. It manages Provincial Bar Councils and improves legal education in the entire country. It has the authority to remove the recognition of any national and Supreme Court Bar Association. It also has the right to appoint any lawyer in the High Court or Lower Court. The Pakistan Bar Council Act was approved and passed by the National Assembly in 1973 in the tenure of the Presidency of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. (Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973)

Legal language due to its complex sentence structures, technical terms, jargons, archaic words make it difficult for a layman to understand the legal documents. One of the most significance part of the legal language is the use of prepositions which are used frequently sometimes more than ten times in a single sentence. Though their purpose is to avoid confusion and make the text transparent and easy to understand but their frequent and excessive use makes the legal documents hard to read. The Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973 is an example of such a legal language. This study focuses on identifying how prepositions (Colligation) are used in connection with nouns, verbs and adjectives.

1.1 Research Gap

Even though previous studies have investigated prepositional colligations in legal discourse but there is a limited study on examining their frequency distribution in Pakistani legal documents. However, Legal practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973 has not been identified from the lens of prepositional colligation. This current study addresses this gap through a quantitative analysis of colligational patterns in the Act.

1.2 Research Objective

The purpose of the study is to investigate and quantify the existing of the colligation patterns which includes Verb + Prepositions, Noun + Prepositions and Adjective + Prepositions in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973.

1.3 Research Question

How are the frequencies of Colligations of Prepositions in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973 distributed?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it helps us to comprehend why legal discourse is difficult to understand. We can learn how legal language can work by studying the use of prepositions in Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973. The findings of the study can help an ordinary citizen to better understand about the legal documents. In addition, it will help in improving legal writing to make it clear and easy to everyone.

2. Literature Review

Previously, some studies were conducted on the colligation of prepositions. Yunus et al; (2016) in their study stated that colligation of prepositions are the fundamental features of the legal discourse due to semantic and pragmatic functions. They suggested that law students should be taught colligation explicitly. Similarly, another research conducted by the same researchers Yunus and Awab in the same year (2016), wanted to find out the knowledge and usage of colligation of prepositions among the Malaysian undergraduate law students. They took 40 students out of which 11 were male and 29 were females from Semester III from FLAIR UniSZA. The data was collected through interview and essay writing test. For interview, 8 students participated in it whereas for essay test all the students participated in it a week later. The result of interview was manually analyzed while for evaluating essay test Dulay et al's (1982) Surface Structure Taxonomy was applied to check the students' pattern of prepositions. The result presented that the students were ignorant of the prepositions and their patterns because of inter lingual and intralingual interference and drilling method which they used in schools. Need analysis which is also known as gap analysis or need assessment should be conducted in law for benefitting the students along with checking their lexico- grammatical competency and design course accordingly.

Moreover, a study on colligation of prepositions was investigated by Bashir and Yunus in (2020), the main purpose of the study was to identify the role of colligation of prepositions in Nigerian legal texts and to compare it with the British legal and general English corpora. The methodology applied was quantitative corpus-based approach. A new corpus with 546,313 words were compiled from Nigerian Law Corpus and compared to the British National corpus of Law (BNCL, 2.2 million words) and the British National Corpus of General written English (BNCW, 1 million words) using AntConc (v3.5.7), Lextutor (v8.3) and Rayson's Log-likelihood calculator. The result depicted that preposition colligations were underrepresented in the NLC compared to BNCL (NLC: 3,619 occurrences, relative frequency 0.66; BNCL: 17,923, relative frequency 0.81; Log-likelihood = 134.82) but overrepresented in the NLC compared to BNCW (NLC: 3,619, relative frequency 0.66; BNCW: 3,939, relative frequency 0.39; Log-likelihood = 500.43).

Collectively, these studies demonstrate that prepositions play an important role in legal phraseology.

3- Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study applied quantitative content analysis design to examine, classify and count the occurrences of prepositional colligations in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973.

3.2 Population

The population comprised of all the linguistics patterns present in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973.

3.3 Sample

The sample consisted all the identified patterns Verb + Prepositions, Noun + Prepositions and Adjective + Prepositions in the Act.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Selective sampling was used by selecting the legal document *Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973* as it is the significant document and its legal language can be analyzed.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The Act was read thoroughly by the researcher and manually identified Colligations of Preposition Patterns by using BBI Dictionary by Benson, Benson and Illson (2010).

3.6 Data Analysis Procedure

The identified Colligations of Prepositions were organized according to Verb + Prepositions, Noun + Prepositions and Adjective + Prepositions. To calculate the frequencies and percentages Microsoft Excel was used and the results were tabulated and analyzed statistically.

3.7 Sources of data

Primary Sources of data: Ajayi (2023) states that primary source is the data when the researcher collects for the first time. In addition, its purpose is to get the results of the problems. Surveys, observations, experiments, questionnaires, and personal interviews are considered as a primary source of data. For this study Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act is used as a primary source of data and the text is downloaded from the website <http://pakistanbarcouncil.org/act/>.

Secondary Sources Data: Taherdoost (2021), in his study presents secondary data as the data collected from the already published sources. In this research study for the secondary sources of data books, journal articles, general websites, and published electronic sources and e-Journals will be used to support the analysis.

3.8 Theoretical Framework

Waldt (2024) theoretical framework serves as a basic structure in the social sciences that backs research and interprets complex issues more effectively. This study identified colligation of prepositions in the legal document Legal practitioners and Bar Councils, 1973. Benson et al. (2010) in their study shows that colligation of prepositions is the combination of verbal, nominal or adjectives with prepositions (as cited in Yunus 2016). Following are the categories of colligation of prepositions: -

Noun + Preposition

Adjective +Preposition

Verb + Preposition

4. Data Analysis

This section results of the colligation of prepositions used in the legal document “*Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973*”. The term colligation in grammar means how words appear together. This study identified how prepositions are used with the Nouns, Verbs, and adjectives. These combinations are structured as Verb + Preposition, Noun + Preposition and Adjective + Preposition. And it gives clarity to the legal discourse in the Act. In this Act 132 examples of these combinations were found. The result is shown in the table given below:

Table 1:

Frequency Distribution of Colligation Patterns in the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973

Colligation of Preposition	Usage	Count Frequency (%)
Verb + Preposition	60	45.45%
Noun + Preposition	60	45.45%
Adjective + Preposition	12	9.09%
Total Colligations	132	100%

The results in Table 1 shows that Verb + Prepositions and Noun + Prepositions Colligations are the most used about 60 having the count frequency 45.45% whereas Adjective + Preposition combination of colligations is less in usage about 12 having 9.09% frequency.

Following is the Verb + Preposition combination from the Act in the table given below:

Table 2:

Verb + Preposition Combinations with Chapter References

VERB + PREPOSITION COMBINATION FROM THE ACT	
1. constituted under (Chapter I)	2. proposes to (Chapter I)

3. power to (Chapter II)	4. beginning on (Chapter II)	5. writing under (Chapter III)
6. addressed to (Chapter III)	7. referred to (Chapter III)	8. filling of (Chapter III)
9. required for (Chapter III)	10. removed from (Chapter III)	11. convicted for (Chapter III)
12. appointed to (Chapter III)	13. commencement of (Chapter III)	14. practice under (Chapter III)
15. conclude on (Chapter III)	16. called in (Chapter III)	17. question on (Chapter III)
18. functions of (Chapter III)	19. misconduct against (Chapter III)	20. conferred on (Chapter III)
21. consisting of (Chapter III)	22. dispensations of (Chapter IV)	23. dispose of (Chapter IV)
24. arising under (Chapter IV)	25. allowed to (Chapter VI)	26. appear for (Chapter VI)
27. undertaking to (Chapter VI)	28. laid down (Chapter VI)	29. comprised within (Chapter VI)
30. examination after (Chapter VI)	31. exempt from (Chapter VI)	32. practiced as (Chapter VI)
33. permitted to (Chapter VI)	34. returned to (Chapter VI)	35. circulate to (Chapter VI)
36. paid to (Chapter VI)	37. struck off (Chapter VI)	38. except upon (Chapter VI)
39. prepared under (Chapter VI)	40. proceed against (Chapter VI)	41. made to (Chapter VII)
42. made at (Chapter VII)	43. debarred from (Chapter VII)	44. passed under (Chapter VII)
45. enter against (Chapter VII)	46. contained in (Chapter VII)	47. withdraw from (Chapter VII)

48. send to (Chapter IX)	49. proved to (Chapter IX)	50. excluded from (Chapter IX)
51. acts as (Chapter IX)	52. extend to (Chapter IX)	53. ordered to (Chapter IX)
54. connected with (Chapter IX)	55. recognized for (Chapter VIII)	56. arrange for (Chapter IX)
57. apply to (Chapter IX)	58. paid under (Chapter IX)	59. borne on (Chapter IX)
60. called in (Chapter IX)		

The high frequency of Verb + Preposition colligations presents that the Act primarily focuses on legal proceedings, processes, responsibilities and regulatory procedures. For instance, in Chapter IX *apply to*, in Chapter VI *proceed against*, in Chapter IV *disposed of* and in Chapter IX *extent to* shows how legal proceedings are presented clearly through these patterns. Following is the Noun + Preposition combination from the Act given in the table given below:

Table 3:
Noun + Preposition Combinations with Chapter References

NOUN + PREPOSITION COMBINATION FROM THE ACT

1. An Act to (Overview)
 2. expedient to (Overview)
 3. roll under (Chapter I)
 4. Pakistan Bar Council under (Chapter I)
 5. Chairman thereof (Chapter I)
 6. accordance with (Chapter II)
 7. a Bar Council for (Chapter II)
 8. common seal with (Chapter II)
 9. the number of (Chapter III)
 10. district under (Chapter III)
 11. candidate for (Chapter III)
 12. candidate to (Chapter III)
 13. Council for (Chapter III)
 14. Council from (Chapter III)
 15. election to (Chapter III)
 16. subject to (Chapter III)
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17. advocates of (*Chapter III*)
 18. limits of (*Chapter III*)
 19. funds at (*Chapter III*)
 20. disposal for (*Chapter III*)
 21. necessary for (*Chapter III*)
 22. the Attorney General for (*Chapter IV*)
 23. standards of (*Chapter IV*)
 24. meetings for (*Chapter IV*)
 25. conditions for (*Chapter IV*)
 26. Islamabad Bar Council under (*Chapter IV*)
 27. the High Court under (*Chapter VI*)
 28. citizen of (*Chapter VI*)
 29. national from (*Chapter VI*)
 30. statutory corporation on (*Chapter VI*)
 31. application for (*Chapter VI*)
 32. Committee on (*Chapter VI*)
 33. jurisdiction in (*Chapter VII*)
 34. inquiry before (*Chapter VII*)
 35. case under (*Chapter VII*)
 36. make under (*Chapter VII*)
 37. reference to (*Chapter VII*)
 38. professional misconduct (*Chapter VII*)
 39. relation to (*Chapter VII*)
 40. notification in (*Chapter VIII*)
 41. procedure to (*Chapter VIII*)
 42. matter under (*Chapter VIII*)
 43. premium for (*Chapter IX*)
 44. premia under (*Chapter IX*)
 45. relief to (*Chapter IX*)
 46. contributions to (*Chapter IX*)
 47. majority of (*Chapter IX*)
 48. desires to (*Chapter IX*)
 49. an offence under (*Chapter IX*)
 50. fee for enrolment (*Chapter IX*)
 51. group insurance for (*Chapter IX*)
 52. fund after (*Chapter IX*)
 53. of his application (*Chapter IX*)
 54. penalty of (*Chapter IX*)
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- 55. prosecution under (*Chapter IX*)
 - 56. Bar Council under (*Chapter IX*)
 - 57. premium of (*Chapter IX*)
 - 58. procedure for (*Chapter IX*)
 - 59. matter of (*Chapter IX*)
 - 60. council for (*Chapter IX*)
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Likewise, Noun + Preposition is frequently used combinations. It showcases the significance of judicial institutions, rights-and-duties relationships and administrative frameworks in the Act. Examples such as in Chapter VI *application for*, in Chapter III *election to*, in Chapter VI *citizen of*, and in Chapter IX *procedure for* demonstrates how legal notions and institutional relationships are created through these patterns.

Following is the Adjective + Preposition combination from the Act given in the table given below:

Table 4:
Adjective + Preposition Combinations with Chapter References

ADJECTIVE + PREPOSITION COMBINATION FROM THE ACT

- 1. subordinate to (*Chapter I*)
 - 2. the first day of (*Chapter II*)
 - 3. the number of (*Chapter III*)
 - 4. eligible for (*Chapter V*)
 - 5. qualified to (*Chapter VI*)
 - 6. practiced as (*Chapter VI*)
 - 7. disqualified for (*Chapter VI*)
 - 8. senior to (*Chapter VI*)
 - 9. vacant during (*Chapter V*)
 - 10. entitled to (*Chapter VI*)
 - 11. permitted to (*Chapter VI*)
 - 12. three months after (*Chapter VII*)
-

In contrast, Adjective + Prepositions patterns were less frequent. For example, in the Chapter V *eligible for*, Chapter VI *qualified to*, Chapter VI *entitled to* and in Chapter I *subordinate to* explain qualifications, rights, status and conditions linked to legal practice.

5. Discussion

The result depicts that colligation of prepositions in the legal discourse plays a major role. The same frequency of the colligation patterns Verb + Preposition and Noun + Prepositions

presents that legal discourse depends on actions and legal entities. Secondly, these patterns identify power, responsibilities, procedures and relationships with the legal system.

The high frequency of Verb + Preposition patterns contributes to the legal document form which often reflects actions that must be performed, rights should be implemented and the procedures should be pursued. These combinations make legal discourse instructions clearer and avoid ambiguity. In the same way, Noun + Preposition being high in frequency demonstrates legal institutions, offices, positions and legal notions precisely and accurately to make clear linkage between legal entities and administrative power.

On the contrary, Adjective + Preposition combinations being low in frequency showcases that the Act focuses less on the description and more on the actions and institutional links. Moreover, Adjective + Prepositions present eligibility, qualifications or legal status which are significant but not through the aspect of the Act.

The results are coherent with the previous studies conducted by Yunus et al. (2016) and Bashir and Yunus (2020), indicating that colligation of prepositions are significant features of legal discourse. Moreover, the current study shows that prepositions are used in systematic grammatical patterns that lead to the formality of legal language.

On the whole, the findings demonstrate that the *Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act, 1973* depends on Verb + Preposition and Noun + Preposition patterns to communicate legal procedures, institutional functions and legal relationships. These patterns can help the readers, legal studies students and legal practitioners to understand the texts more effectively without any vagueness and ambiguities.

5.1. Limitation of the Study

This study has certain limitations as it is only focused on a legal document of Pakistan “Legal practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973”. Only three types of Colligations of Prepositions were identified which are Verb + Preposition, Noun + Preposition, and Adjective + Preposition. The data analysis was conducted manually using MS Excel and focused on the frequency distribution without analyzing semantic and pragmatic elements.

6. Conclusion

This study investigated the colligation of prepositions from the Act “Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973” particularly focused on the Noun + Preposition, Verb + Preposition and Adjective + Preposition combinations. The findings showed that verb and noun colligation patterns were dominated by 45.45 % while Adjective + Preposition colligation appeared less frequent 9.09%. The analysis showed that different chapters in the Act had different preposition patterns. Chapter I to III focused on the use of Verb + Preposition and Noun + Preposition because of the definitions, structures and procedures, Chapter IV to VI includes more Adjective + Preposition patterns to discuss eligibility and qualifications. In addition, Chapter VII to IX focuses on penalties and administrative matters so they have more Verb + Preposition combinations to show actions and consequences like “debarred from” or “proceed against”. This demonstrates that each type of the colligation of preposition is used according to the topic of the chapters and have a specific link to the content and purpose of each chapter.

This shows that while drafting a legal document they strategically used verbs and nouns for clarity despite of being a complexed language. Understanding the grammatical patterns can help both legal professionals and a layman in interpreting the legal documents with clarity. Moreover, this study contributes to enhance legal literacy and suggests that teaching grammar particularly prepositions should be paid more focused on as the legal texts heavily relay on it. It is recommended that in the legal curriculum colligation of prepositions should be implemented.

Secondly, it is suggested to incorporate applied linguistics in the legal curriculum to make it practical when using and drafting legal documents. Moreover, this integration would be beneficial for both linguists and the legal professionals.

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