

## **The Dialogic Dimension of Teaching Legal English in the Digital Era**

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### **Abstract**

This paper investigates the dialogic dimension of teaching Legal English in the special circumstances imposed by the advent of the digital era, emphasising the transformative impact of digital tools on dialogic pedagogy in the case of this challenging specialised language. Its main objective is to explore how digital platforms and technologies can enhance dialogic teaching methodologies, facilitating more interactive and engaging learning experiences for students of Legal English. It argues that traditional monologic approaches, which often dominate legal education, are insufficient in developing the necessary communicative competence for legal professionals. Instead, it posits that a dialogic approach, underpinned by digital tools, can significantly improve students' linguistic and critical thinking skills. The study examines various digital platforms, such as virtual classrooms, discussion forums, and collaborative writing tools, which enable real-time interaction and feedback. These technologies support dialogic teaching practices like Socratic questioning, peer collaboration, and the analysis of real-life legal scenarios, thus fostering a more interactive and student-centred learning environment. The paper also addresses the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital era in implementing dialogic teaching, discussing the use of strategies for integrating digital tools into Legal English curricula, including the use of online case studies, virtual moot courts, and digital peer-review sessions. The conclusions show that leveraging digital technologies for dialogic teaching not only enhances linguistic competence but also better prepares students for the dynamic communicative demands of the modern legal profession. The study underscores the need for educators to adapt to the digital landscape to provide more effective and engaging legal education.

**Keywords:** dialogic approach, digitalisation, Legal English, communicative competence, interactivity

### **1. Introduction**

It has become common knowledge that the training of professionals in law, including the ability to speak in English, has grown in importance with the globalisation process, which demonstrates the challenges related to the curriculum, especially since the professional has to master a wide array of competences, not only work-related, but also socio-cultural, legal and linguistic ones. Hence, teachers are required to work simultaneously with the public and

private aspects of communication for professional use, with the assistance of the technological tools that are increasingly present in everyday life. It most certainly ensues that under these circumstances, there is a clear necessity for collective strategies, since the actors in the educational process are agents who constantly dialogue and influence the constitution of lay discourses.

In a period marked by deep changes in teaching and learning practices that are driven by technological advancement and institutional modernisation, the teaching of Legal English has also been affected by these new trends, requiring the teacher not only to meet the ever-increasing demands of connectivity but also to explore the various digital devices available. A possible solution to the challenges faced by teachers is the Dialogic Collaborative Model (DCM) as a methodological approach to support learning and teaching strategies in this field of study.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

The notion of dialogue holds a central place in teaching English for professional purposes in all areas of study, especially in Legal English, where discourse typology and communicational contexts and situations operate in a dialogic manner (witness questioning, jury selection, and so on). So, the ability to conduct a competent, professional dialogue is inherent in the professional process of developing a legal form of thought, legal knowledge, and legal activity. It is generally believed that working with legal concepts, legal categories in dialogue with others, is the formative basis of a legally significant perception and understanding of them. This function is especially important in the course of mastering foreign legal discourse. In this regard, oral and written forms of dialogue play a part, albeit auxiliary, in the process of mastering Legal English, which assists students linguistically and culturally in solving a variety of discursive tasks regularly.

In today's globalised, multimodal and pluri-voiced society, the dialogic nature of teaching Legal English gains more focus. It goes without saying that modern approaches are increasingly relying on the dialogue-based manner of English teaching and of learning academic subjects in general. In this case, a dialogue-based approach is seen as an indispensable condition for the formation and development of professional competences of law students, which naturally emerge from the ongoing dialogue with various legal objects. Obviously, the field of law studies encompasses not only the acquisition of legal theory and the practice of jurisprudence, but also the comprehensive study and comprehension of the English language, as the latter is the mere instrument granting access to a vast array of legal texts drafted and written in English. Consequently, throughout the process of teaching Legal English, the student and aspiring lawyer is no longer a mere consumer of pre-existing and readily available legal texts composed in English; instead, they actively participate in their creation, forging an intrinsic and significant connection to the materials. This aspect serves as the cornerstone for the development and implementation of various dialogue situations and scenarios, which are not only typical in the context of Legal English instruction but also applicable to the broader field of teaching foreign languages for specific purposes.

### **2.1. Dialogic Teaching and Learning**

On the student side, DCM activities provide important emotional and social support for learning, both individual and in a group setting, and can also be real opportunities for comprehension improvement for individual students, and for heightened motivation,

engagement, and self-reconstitution in the lesson. They afford all participants - those most reticent, as well as the more outgoing - equal airtime and encouragement, and by increasing their constructive contribution, students can help to guide classroom conversations or feedback given on even the highest-level work. These opportunities to present themselves clearly indicate to students that they play an important role in the classroom and their opinions matter in the educational setting. Large group discussion interactions can be enjoyable, as students face the challenge of putting words around their thoughts and listening critically to others in less personal ways, noting for example, the questions in others' monologues and asking if they can further accounts, or the problem that is being communicated in complex constructed responses and requesting clarification.

At the core of the teaching and learning process in DCM lies an intricate web of activities that encompass a multitude of aspects. These encompass thought-provoking exercises that challenge long-held beliefs and promote critical thinking. Through this, individuals gain the ability to form educated judgments by accessing various perspectives and drawing upon their own prior experiences. Moreover, the creation of a safe and trusting environment is crucial as it enables participants to engage in open discussions while listening attentively to others.

The participants involved in this process can take various forms, such as teachers and pupils, pupils among themselves, or a teacher and the students. Regardless of the configuration, they all share a collective responsibility for the effectiveness of their learning journey. To achieve this, they communicate with one another with the shared aim of constructing mutual understanding. Additionally, they may direct their attention towards achieving specific milestones or collaboratively developing overarching goals and metacognitive reflections. Planning the content and actions of a single lesson, a sequence of lessons, or even individual tasks is an integral part of this process. The teachers deliberately select strategic partners for certain lessons and opt for different groupings throughout the day. By doing so, they facilitate diverse types of dyadic or small group learning conversations. The value derived from these interactions may vary depending on the nature of the tasks at hand and the overarching learning objectives they seek to accomplish. By constantly adapting and tailoring the groupings, teachers can foster an environment conducive to effective learning experiences.

## **2.2. Legal English as a Specialised Language**

Legal English is a highly specialised field of language instruction that focuses on teaching law students and professionals the English language. However, it is not limited to these individuals and can also be extended to students studying various programs and disciplines, enabling them to gain a comprehensive understanding of legal principles within an English language context. The introduction of specialised Legal English classes in diverse disciplines offers numerous benefits, making it a necessity. The reasons for its need are vast and encompass multiple dimensions. Firstly, the inclusion of Legal English courses can greatly enhance law students' language proficiency, empowering them with effective communication skills. The effect on law students will be, besides developing their ability to understand and apply legal terminology accurately, the improvement of their overall language skills. Fluency in Legal English is vital for law students and professionals as it allows them to be effective in drafting and presenting their arguments and legal opinions in all situational contexts. Having strong communication skills in the legal field is crucial, as it enables lawyers, judges, and legal practitioners to convey their ideas in a clear and convincing manner, ultimately leading to successful outcomes. Moreover, these courses aid

in organizing and systematizing the teaching of law, solidifying students' comprehension and mastery of legal concepts.

The range of legal texts that law students are supposed to master is quite large, including statutes, case law, contracts, and legal opinions. Being exposed to such a diverse textual typology allows them to become more familiarized with the specific language and structure of legal documents, facilitating their ability to navigate complex legal materials confidently. In practice, Legal English courses often incorporate practical exercises and simulated legal scenarios, providing students with opportunities to apply their knowledge in a realistic setting.

Additionally, Legal English courses play a crucial role in equipping law students with the qualifications they aspire to achieve, enabling them to excel in their chosen legal careers. In today's globalised world, knowledge of Legal English is highly valued by law firms, multinational corporations, and international organisations. The ability to communicate proficiently in Legal English opens up a wide range of professional opportunities for law graduates, allowing them to work on international cases, participate in cross-border transactions, and engage in legal work involving foreign clients or businesses. Moreover, law students who possess strong Legal English skills are more likely to stand out in the competitive job market, as employers recognise the importance of language proficiency in the legal field, apparently one of the hardest to achieve even for post-graduates. Therefore, by enrolling in Legal English courses, law students can enhance their career prospects and increase their chances of securing desirable positions in prestigious law firms or legal departments. These various dimensions collectively form the fundamental basis for the dialogical approach in teaching Legal English. By embracing this approach, students engage in meaningful exchanges with their instructors and peers, fostering a collaborative and interactive learning environment. Dialogical methods, such as group discussions, debates, and case studies, promote critical thinking skills and encourage students to analyse legal issues from multiple perspectives. As stated above, this approach not only enhances students' language abilities but also deepens their general conceptual knowledge of the law. Through active participation in dialogical activities with the DCM, students develop their analytical skills, argumentation techniques, and legal reasoning, which are essential for success in the legal profession.

Due to their multifaceted benefits, Legal English courses are indispensable for law students and professionals striving to excel in their careers. By adopting a dialogical approach, students can engage in meaningful exchanges that enhance their language abilities, deepen their conceptual knowledge, and broaden their career prospects, thus reaching their communication objectives faster and more accurately. Therefore, the importance of Legal English cannot be understated, as it serves as a bridge between language fluency and legal expertise, enabling individuals to thrive in a globalised legal landscape.

### **3. Digital Tools and Platforms in Legal English Education**

It goes without saying that the 'one size fits all' style of teaching, which has been in practice for a long time, is increasingly becoming irrelevant in today's diverse and increasingly digital society. As teachers, we should start from the premise that every student has something unique to contribute to the material being taught in a lesson. All students have a wide range of abilities, skills, and aptitudes. Their ability to prepare, their propensity to conceptualise and internalise new learning, and their willingness to collaborate are all proof

of this new thing. The operative word, in order to educate students adequately, is a teaching method that is, in fact, collaboratively oriented towards the students, especially in the field of law, where students should be encouraged to operate autonomously and speak up for their own mind in a variety of settings.

In the digital age, learners can have unprecedented access to a vast array of materials, learning opportunities, and valuable resources that were once inaccessible to them. The classrooms of the 21st century can no longer be devoid of life, their silence filled only with the authoritative sound of a single voice, the voice of the teacher, seen as the only source of knowledge and accuracy. These classrooms, remnants of an era characterised by conformity and quiet compliance, have been replaced by a whole new world of possibilities. Nowadays, learners have the privilege of being part of an ever-expanding realm of knowledge and connectivity. They can engage with a variety of voices, not just that of their teacher, through innovative learning programs that bring forth narrators from different backgrounds and expertise. These narrators guide students through an immersive learning experience, providing unique insights and perspectives.

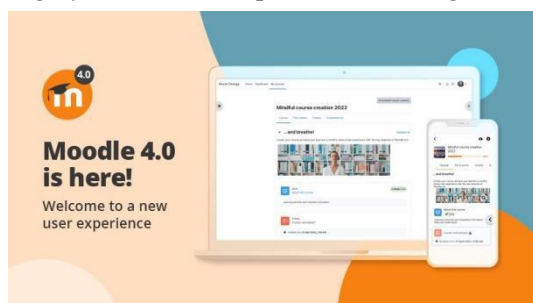
Additionally, learners can benefit from the informative dialogues of key company representatives who share their expertise as valuable partners in DCM. Beyond these enriching experiences, learners can also find themselves captivated by local, as well as foreign language programs which present current events and timely information directly to their screens, in the comfort of their own home. They no longer have to suffer the limitations of a handful of local channel stations; now, a multitude of news stations reach learners, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive understanding of the world, sometimes even in real-time streaming.

The digital age has truly revolutionised education, transforming it into a seamless journey of exploration and discovery. Students can now immerse themselves in an expansive world of knowledge, where boundaries are non-existent, opportunities are endless, and growth knows no limits. The power of information rests in their hands, and with it, they can shape their own destiny, enrich their minds, and forge a path towards a better future.

### 3.1. Online Learning Management Systems

According to specialised literature (Osadcha et al., 2021) and personal observations, students respond best to what is termed 'modified classes', i.e. adaptations in teaching methods to incorporate technological advancements, allowing courses to become multimodal and hence more captivating and easier to internalise. In this respect, the teachers may resort to both physical and online resources in order to provide a varied and constantly updated curriculum.

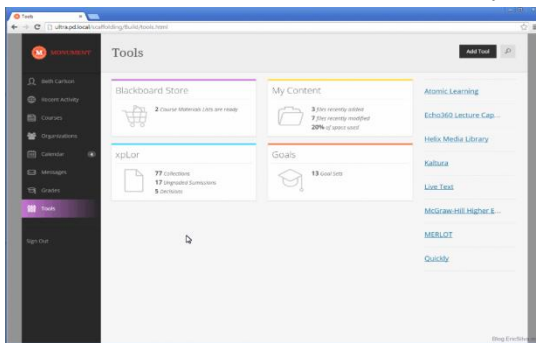
In managing online content, the usage of Content Management Systems (CMS) has proved highly effective and practical. Among the various CMS options available, one of the most



popular systems is Moodle - the acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. Moodle stands out for its exceptional features and benefits. It is the preferred platform for long-distance education programs in universities nowadays, as it is completely free and boasts a vast and supportive community. This means that whenever you face any

challenges or difficulties, you can always find a quick and efficient solution with the help of the community. Moreover, Moodle has gained recognition for its outstanding reliability and top-notch security measures. It has even been praised by critics, further confirming its worth as a reliable and high-quality program. Moodle's interactive dimension is one of its key strengths, fostering engagement, collaboration, and active learning. As an open-source learning management system (LMS), Moodle offers a variety of interactive tools, such as discussion forums, real-time chats, wikis, and quizzes, enabling learners to participate actively in their educational journey. Teachers can create dynamic activities like peer assessments, gamified learning experiences, and adaptive quizzes that provide immediate feedback, enhancing student comprehension. Moodle's integration of multimedia elements—such as videos, podcasts, and interactive lessons—further enriches learning experiences. Its collaborative features, including group projects and workshop modules, promote knowledge sharing, making learning more engaging and community-driven.

In addition to Moodle, another CMS that has proven its worth is Blackboard. Just like Moodle, Blackboard offers a user-friendly and intuitive interface. Although its design may seem somewhat conservative, with primarily monochrome aesthetics, it is an incredibly functional and versatile system. It is very helpful in creating a wide range of courses and educational materials in any specific field. Furthermore, Blackboard also allows for conducting statistical research, enhancing the overall learning experience for both students and instructors. Both Moodle and Blackboard provide a solid foundation for managing



online educational content. Whether you choose Moodle or Blackboard, you can expect a reliable and efficient system that empowers you to create engaging and interactive courses.

Access to all materials, including law texts, helps law students better understand legal principles and procedures, prepares legal professionals for discussing cases during lectures, or for using these examples in research projects. Some law departments have an online platform, which assists students by giving them an extensive range of study materials, distributing tasks, explaining those tasks meticulously, and communicating effectively with the students. This invaluable resource amplifies the potential for a more immersive and comprehensive learning experience, ultimately making the process customized to each student's needs and considerably more engaging.

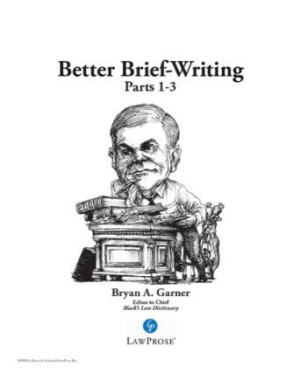
### 3.2. Virtual Classrooms and Webinars

In the present digital era, the benefits of the internet are invaluable for all students, and particularly Law students that may benefit from the easy access of updated legislative corpuses, as well as the ready availability of specialized platforms like the Legisplus or Intralegis where they can instantly find bilingual (Romanian and English) legislative resources like CEDO or UE documents, caselaw archives, and so on. In addition, such platforms usually provide the possibility to switch languages between English and Romanian, thus allowing the parallel comparison of materials in both the source and the target language.

Another really useful tool for students in any field is webinars; these are videoconferences on specific subjects that are conducted in closed or open environments dealing with a variety of issues that students may find of interest. In the legal domain, there are plenty of specialised webinars providing both valuable information in the legal field, and models of genuine expression in the target language, thus allowing students to increase their professional and linguistic competence at the same time.



One notable example is the British Legal Centre, which mainly focuses on legal document drafting and Legal English proficiency. Participants can attend live sessions or access recorded webinars at their convenience. One plus from the dialogic perspective is that the platform provides interactive features, allowing direct communication with instructors during sessions, and even with peers in certain cases.



Another case in point is LawProse's Legal Writing in Plain English Webinar, taught by Professor Bryan A. Garner; this webinar series delves into effective legal writing techniques. Spanning ten hour-long sessions, it covers topics like structuring analytical and persuasive writing, choosing precise legal vocabulary, and framing thoughts coherently. Being more oriented towards the written than the oral register, it is less important for the students to have direct live communication with the teacher; instead, they should follow the train of thought and try to understand the inner mechanisms and "tricks" of producing legal documents accurately and in a suitable style.

Closely connected to webinars, virtual classes transfer the learning process from the physical setting to the virtual one; in addition to their novelty and ease of access, they may help promote the development of critical thinking among college students, despite previous fears that students would only be entertained and lose focus.

Such virtual classes may be classified into synchronous or asynchronous. In the case of synchronous classes, the interaction between the teacher and students takes place in real-time, in the form of videoconferences or conference calls without the use of presentation resources. Asynchronous classes, on the other hand, do not involve real-time interpersonal communication, which makes them less attractive for DCM. Instead, the entire work is carried out through electronically shared resources, such as discussion forums or blogs, where the teacher and students exchange information or complete training activities according to their availability.

#### 4. Pedagogical Strategies for Dialogic Teaching in Legal English

One feasible approach to teaching Legal English in the digital era is to teach students to interrogate and analyse the multifaceted meanings constructed and proposed through various technological sources. In this rapidly evolving landscape, we are currently experiencing a profound paradigm shift in the way we engage with online content. This shift encompasses a transition from mere passive consumption of information to active and dynamic content

production, transforming individuals from mere receivers into both creators and receivers. This newfound ability to generate content requires students to become proficient listeners (or receivers of information), as well as valuable members of knowledge communities, empowered to evaluate and endorse, or even challenge the presented content. Within this context, the teacher is constantly involved in the intricate process of shaping purposeful pedagogical tools that foster and cultivate these indispensable abilities among students, especially when dealing with a complex subject matter as Legal English. It is believed that all subjects centred around the content orientation in DCM demand meticulous nurturing and refinement of critical-compassionate skills, equipping students with the capacity to comprehend, interpret, and envision the creation of meaningful social practices of knowledge construction.

#### **4.1. Socratic Dialogue**

The critical potential of Socratic dialogue, an ancient practice that is still in use today, will be revealed to the full extent when its cognitive and communicative aspects are realized. The forms of using the teaching dialogue are determined also by the peculiarities of the considered sphere of learning. In law studies, in classes focusing on Legal English, students are involved in learning linguistic matters by means of solving practical sets of translation tasks faced by legal professionals in their daily activity. The tasks are worked out in the forms of short communicative situations with English-speaking participants, helping students to get the best results in professional communication. It is strongly believed that the comprehensive selection of meticulously curated and thought-provoking examples has the potential to ignite immense creativity, not only in the training of both teachers and students, but also in the broader pedagogical landscape of the DCM. These examples, carefully chosen for their relevance and applicability, have the extraordinary power to foster and nurture bilingualism within the classroom setting (Murray, 2020), thereby unlocking doors to unexplored linguistic horizons and creating an atmosphere of cultural exchange and understanding.

#### **4.2. Role-Playing Activities**

Role-playing also represents a highly valuable and effective technique for teaching Legal English. By engaging in a myriad of captivating courtroom dramas or captivating business negotiations through immersive role-playing exercises, learners are able to enhance their practical communication skills, as well as to increase their general education and knowledge of the world. Role-playing serves as a catalyst for students to effectively collaborate in teams, indulge in consistent practice of their public speaking prowess and advocacy abilities, facilitate critical analysis of complex legal issues, and foster the development of their sense of empathy and understanding of diverse points of view. It is quite clear that role-playing exercises fulfil a paramount psycho-pedagogical aspect - fulfilling the innate desire of students for interactive participation, which not only motivates and engages learners, but also incorporates a diverse range of communication skills that transcend beyond traditional boundaries and ignite adult-like formal and motivational strategies. Moreover, this methodology seamlessly intertwines reality with theoretical messages, effectively establishing profound personal relationships among participants. The vast pool of knowledge generated through immersive role-playing exercises in DCM serves a dual



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purpose: propelling the ongoing discussion forward and encouraging reflective contemplation upon the invaluable lessons learned throughout the process.

### **4.3. Global Collaborative Projects and Virtual Exchanges**

Modern law students, who often are digital natives, have expectations as to their educational process. They are keen to actively participate in discussions and enthusiastically share ideas, efficiently collaborate with peers on various learning activities, and wholeheartedly engage in program content provided by a vast array of web resources.

In this regard, Lim and Aryadoust (2022) highlighted the beneficial impact of integrating technologies such as synchronous computer-mediated communication, multimedia, telecollaboration, digital games, blogs, wikis, and podcasts in language learning. Undoubtedly, these digital resources can be specifically tailored to suit the needs of law students, to incorporate the necessary specialised language acquisition through dynamic, real-time exchanges.

In keeping with the same idea, Alshahrani (2023) investigates how AI-powered tools like the easily accessible ChatGPT can enhance learning outcomes, engagement, and accessibility in modern educational settings. The dialogic component is visible in its AI-driven interactivity, which allows students to engage in deeper discussions, practice language skills, and receive quick contextualised feedback. The study highlights that learners using ChatGPT tend to demonstrate greater motivation due to its conversational and responsive nature.

Thus, it is obvious that today's standard types of classroom activities have undergone exceptional transformations thanks to cutting-edge emerging technologies that fully support the dynamic and interactive nature of teaching and learning. The remarkably advanced emerging technologies effectively promote seamless and fruitful collaboration, expedite efficient idea sharing, and enable students, teachers, and peers from all corners of the globe to actively participate, contribute, and thrive in the ever-evolving learning process. It allows for the unparalleled and immersive use of a foreign language, ultimately leading to the comprehensive mastery of this invaluable skill that transcends boundaries and enriches the lives of countless individuals from diverse backgrounds.

## **5. Assessment Methods for Dialogic Teaching in Legal English**

Considering the diverse array of functions that dialogic teaching should fulfil in the domain of teaching Legal English to aspiring lawyers, it becomes imperative to have a wide range of assessment methodologies that can effectively boost the teaching and learning process using constructive feedback mechanisms.

To facilitate the continuous formative feedback throughout the instructional cycle and enable assessment-informed teaching practices within the DCM, a comprehensive approach can be adopted by incorporating a combination of quizzes that encourage brief, low-stake written responses, a continuous feedback loop, as well as more substantial assessment components that provide opportunities for low-stake peer feedback and computer-generated feedback utilizing specially designed rubrics.

The final purpose of integrating these multifaceted assessment strategies is to provide a comprehensive educational experience for future lawyers as they navigate the intricacies of Legal English. By harnessing the power of these evaluation approaches, the teacher is able

to empower learners to deepen their understanding, while constantly honing their communicative skills.

### **5.1. Oral Presentations and Debates**

Since orality and dialogism seem to be closely connected in students' skills development, they should be showcased, especially in the teaching of Legal English to law students whose verbal competencies need to be highly refined. A valuable way of stimulating student participation is through oral presentations or debates. Such activities can provide invaluable opportunities for reflection, knowledge construction, respect, and empathy through public oral practice.

Oral presentations are a common and classic form of expression of public speaking or lecture in many disciplines, typically consisting of the presentation of an argument, an opinion, or a report to an audience. Although oral presentations are associated with students and the academic context, they play a fundamental role in the professional format of many legal activities and are an effective method for assessing student learning. Considering that a large part of assessment practices in law classes is quite traditional, several concerns have arisen advocating for the development of activities that stimulate critical thought, reflection, problem-solving, experimentation, creativity, cooperation, and responsibility. By incorporating activities that encourage critical thinking and collaboration, students can enhance their analytical skills, learn to navigate complex legal issues, and develop the ability to communicate with clients, colleagues, and other stakeholders in a highly effective manner. What is more, fostering creativity and experimentation in the context of oral presentations can promote innovation in the legal field and lead to the development of new approaches, strategies, and solutions.

By embracing these diverse elements in their oral presentations, students can demonstrate not only their knowledge of the subject matter but also their ability to think critically, solve problems, and collaborate effectively. Furthermore, the inclusion of cooperative activities promotes teamwork and engenders a sense of responsibility among students, preparing them for the collaborative nature of legal practice. Through cooperative work, students can learn to work together, leverage each other's strengths, and contribute to the success of a common goal.

Debates also play a crucial role in the dialogic teaching of Legal English, fostering critical thinking, argumentation skills, and precise language use in legal contexts. Through structured debates on carefully chosen topics, students engage in active discussions, presenting and defending legal arguments while responding to opposing viewpoints in a sort of mock trial. This interactive approach enhances their ability to analyse legal concepts, construct persuasive arguments, and develop confidence in public speaking—essential skills for legal professionals. Moreover, debates encourage collaborative learning, exposing students to diverse perspectives and improving their ability to navigate complex communication situations. By simulating real-world legal scenarios, debates prepare students for courtroom advocacy, negotiations, and legal reasoning, making them an invaluable tool in Legal English instruction within the DCM.

Overall, expanding the focus of oral presentations and debates to incorporate critical thought, reflection, problem-solving, experimentation, creativity, cooperation, and responsibility can enrich the learning experience for students and better prepare them for the challenges and opportunities they will encounter in their future legal careers.

## 5.2. Written Assignments and Reflections

In an ordinary legal class, the students' opinions are derived from the opinions of others, which are readily presented in a palatable format; they are not opponents in an intellectual contest, fighting vehemently for their own unique perspectives and beliefs. They are merely passive receivers of information that has already been tailored for them to accept as is, without questioning the authority of the authors and/or teachers. It may undoubtedly be claimed that students, having spent the past decade as passive recipients of authoritative teachers' monologues, have subconsciously internalised this culture of docility and have gradually lost their innate inclination to engage in spirited debates and challenging discussions. Furthermore, another poignant argument is that students' relentless focus on their final grades has inevitably stifled their intrinsic motivation to truly and authentically learn. Students unequivocally believe that there is nothing inherently pleasurable or enjoyable about the pursuit of knowledge and the educational process – unless there exists an alluring external reward system, be it monetary compensation, high grades, or elevated status within their academic community.

Therefore, it is imperative for the current educational practices to be scrutinised, for they may be inadvertently perpetuating a culture of intellectual passivity and suppressing the intellectual curiosity of future generations. Students should be offered the opportunity to express themselves fully and exercise critical thinking, in a safe and criticism-free environment, generally through written assignments that are individually assessed and given private feedback, in keeping with the latest GDPR directives. When performing writing tasks, legal students are more likely to “speak their own mind” in a more relaxed manner than in the classroom, being able to take their time in reflecting upon fundamental issues in the learning process.

## 6. Case Studies and Best Practices

The innovative methods and technology of teaching technical students in the digital environment of business simulations, webinars, and videoconferences, online platforms, and individual professional work serve as a solid foundation for the Legal English class. These innovative practices provide an unprecedented opportunity for a teacher not only to utilise them in preparing comprehensive and dynamic digital materials, but also to let students embrace their creativity as they complete, formalise and present their work as individuals or collaboratively as teams, all in an engaging and interactive digital format that transcends traditional boundaries. These new methods and tools give rise to a favourable dialogical learning environment, providing digital interactivity in and out of the class, self-improvement, motivation, and participation in the knowledge generation that is readily available to everybody involved, making it a truly inclusive learning setting where all students are given a chance to achieve success.

Neither professionals working in the law nor legal education institutions are generally interested in academic information with no practical application. The case studies and samples of the most common legal instruments conducted by experienced practitioners might introduce a dialogic element in a Legal English class. Students should not only translate the texts of the cases, statutes or memoranda, but also comprehend, analyse, critique, and synthesise the information presented, communicate, and solve a problem-

centred task. The designed pedagogy of the respective classes develops the students' professional skills, which is exactly what real-life legal professions demand.

### **6.1. Successful Implementation of Dialogic Teaching in Legal English Courses**

As previously stated, dialogic teaching, a mode of teaching that is constructivist in nature, enables active student participation, fosters a challenging learning environment, and promotes critical thinking skills. By incorporating various approaches to collaborative and inquiry-based learning, dialogic teaching not only emphasises dialogue and discussion but also integrates collaborative approaches, enquiry approaches, and constructivist approaches to ensure a comprehensive learning experience. Moreover, dialogic teaching as materialised in DCMs aligns with the principles of communication-oriented language teaching, further enhancing the students' communicative abilities through the collaboration between law and language specialists. As a result, dialogic legal education holds substantial value in the skills training of students, equipping them with effective communication skills and facilitating their overall development.

A strong foundation of legal knowledge and a high level of English proficiency are essential to achieve success in the teaching of Legal English because gaining communicative competence and cultural understanding is a dual process of developing both language and legal systems. As law has a significant cultural influence and is being considered a tool for achieving economic growth, prosperity, stability, inclusion, equity, universal access to justice, and innovation in an increasingly interdependent and multicultural world, legal concepts and knowledge have gained a much wider audience.

### **6.2. Continuous Alumni Participation in Educational Activities**

In order to ensure the continued growth and impact of educational activities, it is crucial to foster connections with alumni and sustain their engagement. By creating a strong network of alumni, educational institutions can tap into a valuable resource that not only benefits current students but also creates a sense of belonging and pride among former students. The fostered connections between alumni and educational institutions serve as a foundation for ongoing collaboration and support, since the former have a wealth of knowledge, experience, and expertise that can be shared with current students through mentoring programs, guest lectures, or career development initiatives. By engaging alumni in educational activities, institutions can provide students with valuable insights and guidance, enhancing their learning experiences and preparing them for successful careers. Furthermore, sustained engagement with alumni contributes to the growth and impact of educational activities. Alumni who feel connected to their alma mater are more likely to contribute financially, volunteer their time, or serve as advocates for the institution. Their support can help fund scholarships, research projects, or infrastructure improvements, creating a positive cycle of continuous improvement and innovation. Moreover, alumni engagement can extend beyond traditional educational activities. Educational institutions can organise reunions, networking events, or professional development opportunities specifically tailored to alumni. By providing platforms for alumni to connect, institutions can create a sense of community and promote lifelong learning and personal growth.

In the legal profession, extracurricular activities involving the alumni of law schools who have become accomplished professionals—lawyers, judges, notaries, legal experts of any

sort— can share their practical expertise with the current law students, fostering engaging dialogues, contributing to the dissemination of examples of good practices. The alumni may benefit from these exchanges as well, by recruiting new hires or future trainees in their own legal firms. In conclusion, continuity of alumni participation in educational activities is essential for fostering connections, sustaining engagement, and achieving continued growth and impact. By harnessing the knowledge and support of alumni, educational institutions, especially law schools, can create a vibrant and dynamic learning environment that benefits both current and future students.

## **7. Challenges and Solutions in Implementing Dialogic Teaching in Legal English Courses**

### **7.1. Lack of Technological Infrastructure**

**Lack of Technological Infrastructure:** This is a very real drawback to the introduction of technology-based and computer-mediated learning to the education system. The lack of awareness and the reluctance of many teachers to introduce ICT to the classroom, as well as the lack of information and support given by administrative staff, both at institutional and national levels, can lead to educational environments that are not digitally friendly. Hence, even if educational authorities have encouraged the use of ICT in the educational system, creating strategic plans for its implementation, this is not accessible to all the teachers, since most of the colleges and private centres do not have the material resources or have very old and outdated computers to bring these tools into their classrooms.

In addition, some teachers do not have much of a grasp of the technological knowledge that goes hand-in-hand with the use of ICT, and such skills are mostly left in the care of the staff in charge of the computer room, if available. The use of websites which support texts and the listening and reading practice do not require the teacher to have great technical skills, but most of the teachers are reluctant and still prefer to hand out and collect paper-based exercises. Additionally, they tend to rely on traditional teaching methods rather than incorporating innovative technological tools into their lessons, especially in law schools, where tradition and even conservatism still hold a central place. However, it is crucial to acknowledge the importance and potential benefits of the technological infrastructure, efforts have been made to provide teachers with the necessary fonts of ICT knowledge, enabling them to enhance their skills and become attractive models for their students. It is not a rare occurrence that students that are more digitally inclined assist their teachers in implementing ICT in the classroom, thus fostering a dialogic environment in all the possible aspects related to the classroom activities.

### **7.2. Resistance to Change**

Reluctance to embrace the changes needed in implementing technology and adjusting Legal English and general pedagogical approaches is another constraint, which may come from educators themselves, students, or even education administration bodies. Educators still lack the necessary expertise to use many of the available digital tools. Even where attempts are made to include them in their lessons, concrete practical issues may undermine the teachers' efforts to employ such devices as classroom response systems ('clickers'), overhead projectors, smart blackboards, etc., and to ensure that the computer applications work seamlessly, to name just a few. The real anxiety some instructors experience when first exposed to technology arises from their lack of awareness of what role they will perform in

the process, and a fear arises over the control of the classroom data. It goes without saying that most of them could change their assumptions by sharing information, taking training courses, and generally experimenting with and discussing on all these challenges with peers and experts, thus coming to see technology and digitalization as a normal facet of their teaching routine (Ramírez-Montoya et al., 2021).

In recent years, especially in the wake of post-pandemic developments, educational policies around the world are investing heavily in new classroom technologies, despite this reluctance of many educators to harness their full potential. It has now become clear that teachers need to be in the classroom in their multifaceted role as instructor, mentor, facilitator, assistant, etc., and its role is only enhanced using digital instruments and techniques. In this light, educational technology research poses deeper questions about the essence of what a 'teacher' is, by advancing a deeper understanding of educational professionals in digital environments, as well as the structures within which they work. Ideological resistance to technology might be traced back to different assumptions education professionals hold about the world than those held by those who design the technology. Yet, the digital era is telling educators, in a multitude of ways, how they should ride the wave of the digital evolution in their teaching and acquire as much digital competency as fast as possible in order to keep up with the evolution of our society as a whole.

In their comprehensive report for the British Council, Edmett et al (2023) address challenges associated with AI integration, such as data privacy concerns, the need for teacher training in AI tools, and the potential for reduced human interaction in language learning environments, emphasizing this increased need for balancing technological advancements with the irreplaceable value of human educators in fostering language acquisition and cultural understanding. Their report concludes by urging educational institutions and policymakers to proactively adapt to the evolving landscape of AI in ELT, ensuring that both teachers and students are equipped to leverage these technologies effectively while maintaining the essential, irreplaceable human elements of education, an idea that seems to particularly hold true for Legal English studies, so deeply influenced by specific cultural norms and traditions.

## **Conclusions**

In the digital era, technology plays an enormous role in virtually every facet of life, encompassing education as well. The profound impact of the new era extends to language teaching, particularly in the realm of specialized languages, among which Legal English holds a central place due to its complexity and difficulty level. The present paper argues that digitalization has the potential to transform Legal English education by enhancing interactivity, autonomy, and collaborative learning.

Focusing on the dialogic component of the educational process, Digital Communication Methods (DCM) provide students with emotional and social support, enhancing comprehension and motivation; through structured discussions, students refine their arguments, articulate their thoughts, and engage in meaningful conversations, reinforcing the importance of their contributions in the learning process. Since the traditional "one-size-fits-all" teaching methods are increasingly ineffective, digital tools empower students to access diverse perspectives, fostering individual agency and active participation. Online resources, company representatives, and multilingual legal databases enhance students' understanding of legal discourse. Emerging technologies, including AI and online platforms (like Moodle and Blackboard, to name just a few), facilitate dialogic engagement, critical

thinking, and multilingual competence. Virtual classrooms and webinars offer real-world applications of Legal English, enhancing linguistic and professional competencies.

Among the most effective pedagogical strategies used in teaching Legal English, the paper focuses on the Socratic dialogue (engaging students in analytical discussions on topics of interest), role-playing (simulating legal scenarios, such as courtroom proceedings), and global collaborative projects and virtual exchanges as a means to facilitate synchronous knowledge sharing and engagement.

In addition, interactivity and collaboration are visible in the methods employed in assessing the dialogic teaching of Legal English, viz. oral presentations and debates (for the oral mode) and written assignments and reflections (for the written mode).

The integration of structured discussions, role-playing, and digital resources prepares students for the complexities of legal discourse in the modern world. Despite the inherent drawbacks and obstacles, like the lack of technological infrastructure and the educators' resistance to change and potential lack of computer skills, the future of teaching and learning is definitely going to rely on the efficient use of these new digital instruments.

Teaching Legal English can be engaging, exciting, and satisfying through dialogue and collaboration between tutors and students who are encouraged to be active members of the learning community. Even better results can be achieved when a combination of innovative methodologies (like the Direct Collaborative Model) and technological tools are used carefully in order to develop students' legal reasoning skills, not just their language skills.

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