

February 2020

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Recommended Citation

Sakakini, adel (2020) "FORENSIC LINGUISTICS: AN APPLIED THEORY," *BAU Journal - Society, Culture and Human Behavior*. Vol. 1 : Iss. 2 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.bau.edu.lb/schbjournal/vol1/iss2/2>

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FORENSIC LINGUISTICS: AN APPLIED THEORY

Abstract

This article demonstrates how forensic linguistics is a necessary means to most of the pathological fields of life. The theme of this article revolves around forensic linguistics and its applicability in academic research. Forensic linguistics is the systematic study of language latitudes in particular contexts for forensic purposes. As a new academic discipline, it holds the role of developing methodical linguistic standards in order to enhance not only English language, but also universal language. It provides language with aspects that help in solving linguistic problems. It also introduces language as a collective medium for better communication. Being a subfield of linguistics, it applies systematic theories on clusters of language preparing the acquired results to be utilized and accepted in the official, legal and judicial fields. This article formulates the pertinent difference between linguistics and systematic forensic linguistics, which extends the theoretical, experimental, informative and procedural scopes of academic research. The comprehensive purpose of this article is to appreciate forensic linguistics as an applied theory through examining its role and effect, and through identifying it as a young, but strong, cross-disciplinary generic style which widens the scope of linguistics in academic research methodology. Forensic linguistics involves more than one field of linguistics while investigating a certain word-based piece of evidence. Forensic linguistics banks on academic criticism, as the best research methodology in research engagements, which leads to achieve explanations of the foremost linguistic questions in the most controversial forensic cases. Applied forensic linguistics can be counted as dimensional since it extends the employment of investigative linguistic procedures, e.g. meta-linguistics and paralinguistic. Forensic linguistics contributes to the well-being of the modern societies as technology has invaded every aspect of life. Incessant technological advances are responding favorably to the linguistic needs and harmonizing with the academic fields. Technology, as such, is offering larger patterns of inquiry and comprehensive meadows of choice in the varied fields of forensic linguistics. Day after day, technology is enhancing the endeavors of linguistic application and helping in resolving unresolved cases and even, gradually, miscarriages of justice. There are many fissures which are not enclosed yet and still have to be scholastically investigated and systematically approached by means of experimentation and application through academic research.

Keywords

Forensic linguistics, legal and judicial fields, systematic forensic linguistics, metalinguistics, and paralinguistics.

1. INTRODUCTION

Forensic linguistics “is a subfield of linguistics that applies to language as used in the legal and judicial fields” (Fromkin, Rodman & Hyams, 2014, p. 518). Specifically, it is the systematic application of linguistic methodology for investigative purposes, legal contexts and judicial procedures. It encompasses authorship authenticity, legal terminology, courtroom language, trademark protection, speaker identity, text authenticity, plagiarism, word-based piracy, textual fraud and legitimacy of lip-reading.

Although it is a very new academic discipline, it is associated with a cluster of multidisciplinary language courses which serve different fields of academia. As a matter of fact, every academic research is related to linguistics in one way or another. The emergence of forensic linguistics as a fresh trend in the world of academe is significant since it works as a generic discipline involving several subareas which can be designated under the umbrella of applied linguistics such as sociolinguistics, phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse analysis. In the real world, forensic linguistics is an applied theory, which extends beyond solving crimes within forensic cases.

2. THE ROLE OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

The role of forensic linguistics is to develop theoretical and empirical linguistic standards which enhance not only English language, rather universal language providing it with key elements that help in solving linguistic problems and facilitate language as a gathering medium for better communication. The application of forensic linguistics requires more than one field of linguistics to investigate the recorded form and function. Forensic linguistics tries to solve the problem of the individual differences between language acquisition and usage through academic criticism, which is the best methodology in research engagements to achieve explanations of the main linguistic questions of the controversial forensic cases. Forensic linguistics revolves around diagnosing pieces and texts of language whether handwritten, texted, printed, gathered, spoken, seen or heard. It might even follow dimensional linguistic procedures such as metalinguistics and paralinguistics in order to change the available semiotic clues into clear linguistic data. It detects the identity of the author of a certain text and turns results into legal or scientific issues.

The goal of a linguist is to understand the units and the combinations of language, which determine how language is used in a particular community. Nevertheless, the role of the forensic linguist is to understand language and its usage in a narrower context, i.e. within the limitations of a specific forensic case. Forensic linguistics mostly follows a descriptive approach even though it tackles prescriptive domains of language. Descriptive forensic linguistics utilizes elements of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies within the same inquiry.

The role of systematic forensic linguistics, which widens the conceptual space of academic research, is informative, experimental and procedural. To the knowledge of the researcher, these scopes of forensic linguistics; informative, experimental and methodological, are not organized academically up till the moment of writing this article. The wide-ranging purpose of this article is to appreciate forensic linguistics as an applied theory through exploring its role and effect, and through detecting it as a young cross-disciplinary generic style, which extends the scopes of linguistics within academic research methodology.

3. VARIETIES IF ACADEMIC FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Forensic linguistics is a wide-ranged feature; it is used by parents, school teachers, university advisors, merchants, historians, critics and even doctors in their clinics. All of these different constituents become both forensic as well as linguistic practitioners. Thus, many research questions in forensic linguistics are based around one main important linguistic question, which is: How do people actually use language? Accordingly, the main question, which this article tackles, is: What role does forensic linguistics play upon its application within the boundaries of academic linguistics?

The subject of this article revolves around forensic linguistics and its applicability in academic research. Language is the main connection between forensics and academia. It transforms abstract notions into tangible data.

Methodical forensic linguistics plays a major role in widening the mental parallel space of academic research in association with the informative data, experimental applications and methodological scopes. The material investigated in this article is mainly based on books about forensic linguistics. The problem of this inquiry is based on the importance of academic criticism in dealing with different forensic cases to enhance academic research. Academic criticism highlights the role of forensic linguistics in developing theoretical and empirical linguistic standards, which enhance universal language and authorize it as a gathering medium for better communication. Theoretically, despite technological advances, forensic linguistics is an applied theory since the dawn of communal history. Traditionally, forensic linguistics was not based on technology rather on language experts, and therefore the modern realm of forensic linguistics will continue to bank on the collective expertise of the linguists who know language better than others.

4. VIEWS ON FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

McMenamin (2002) argues that “Forensic Linguistics is the scientific study of language as applied to forensic purposes and contexts” (p. 67). It is not purely based on traditional investigations of language, which might leave many cases open-ended. Statistics, subjective and objective points of view in addition to top-down and bottom-up approaches are all valid techniques in forensic linguistics as long as solid evidence and palpable results are achieved. Science as such, whether primary or advanced, is the substance of forensic linguistics since linguistics, in comprehensive terms, is considered to be the scientific study of language.

Shuy (2006) maintains; “There seems to be a growing tendency to teach college courses in various aspects of forensic linguistics” (p. 135). Forensic linguistics, increasingly, has become an academic trend which is significantly dependant on systematized language that enables students to communicate and express ideas successfully. In all cases, it is based on linguistics which is the scientific study of the stock of communicative features of language including the aspects of its knowledge systems.

Coulthard and Johnson (2010) consider that “forensic linguistics has now come of age as a discipline. It has its own professional association, The International Association of Forensic Linguistics, founded in 1993; its own journal, *International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law*, founded in 1994; and a biennial international conference” (p. 2). *The International Journal of Speech, Language, and the Law* is formerly known as *Journal of Forensic Linguistics*. The phrase “Forensic Linguistics” first appeared in 1968 in England when Jan Svartvik, a professor of linguistics, used it in an analysis of the statements of Timothy John Evans who was wrongly accused and executed for murdering his wife and his 13-month-old daughter. This case has caused considerable arguments and is branded as a serious miscarriage of justice. It is even one of the main disputes that caused the abolition of capital punishment in the United Kingdom in 1965. Oddly, the scope of the term “Forensic Linguistics” remains somewhat ambiguous; it needs more investigation and systematic academic research even though it is already thoroughly academized and comprised even in the higher levels of academic university courses. Olsson (2004) records that the superiors at “Nebraska Wesleyan University now include a course in Forensic Linguistics as part of their Masters of Forensic Science degree” (p. 7). This verifies that current university courses encompass forensic linguistics as any other genre of education.

Simpson and Mayr (2010) claims that “the academic interests of forensic linguistics are served by two important associations whose web pages are easily accessible: the International Association of Forensic Linguistics (IAFL) and the International Association for Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics (IAFPA). The key Journal in this area is the *International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law* which, until 2003, was known as *Forensic Linguistics*. Johnson, and Coulthard (2014) has recently suggested a programme in historical forensic linguistics” (p. 226). Simpson and Mayr’s (2010) notification shows that forensic linguistics, as a comprehensive field, has started to take shape and construct its own realm with all its programmes, facilities and constituents.

Shuy (2006) believes that “the field of forensic linguistics has only begun to flex its crossdisciplinary muscles in college and university settings” (p. 136). This is due to the increasing interest in its functionality and, as well, due to the need of its systematic resolutions. Forensic Journals are the direct evidence of its growth. Olsson (2004) argues that “the discipline’s main journal, *Forensic Linguistics*, has now been established for some years, but continues to be fresh and exciting

in its approach. The whole area is ripe with debate and argument, and there is a healthy interest in new techniques and methods, although most universities have yet to commit major resources to research” (p. 7). Resources has to be presented to the wide field of forensic linguistics otherwise it wouldn't be effective. It cannot be based merely on inherited experience, outdated competence or traditional technology which associates with the past century. It has to bank on advanced expertise, associate with the future and realate to our post-modern age of technology.

Simpson and Mayr (2010) shed light on the contemporary rapid and expressive development of forensic linguistics, they maintain that “the last decade and a half has witnessed a marked growth in work in forensic linguistics, evidenced by the formation of international academic associations, the publication of a dedicated academic journal along with numerous book-length publications, and the provision of higher degree courses in Forensic linguistics in many universities around the world. Out of this work a number of key international practitioners have emerged, among whom are Malcolm Coulthard in Great Britain, John Gibbons in Australia, and Roger Shuy, Lawrence Solan and Peter Tiersma in the United States. The published work of these and other seminal figures often details the ‘hands on’ experience of the professional linguist working in legal context” (p. 30).

Olsson (2004) emphasizes that “the science is young and new; nothing is yet cast in a stone. Universities around the world are beginning to offer programmes in the field” (p. 7). Forensic linguistics holds significant importance based on its everyday usage in real life. Accordingly, awareness is set forth. Universities, specialized associations and professional journals endeavour to invest the outcomes of forensic linguistics in academic research. Many governmental departments and judicial bodies are gaining sharp awareness of its significance. Even though “law enforcement agencies are beginning to see the importance of forensic linguistics” (p. 7).

5. BREAKING THE LIMITATIONS

Branches of academic forensic linguistics are not gathered under one umbrella. Labors in the domain are not allied together, leaving wide gaps that need to be examined thouroughly. “Within the science itself, many new developments are in the air” (p. 7). Efforts around forensic linguistics are not well organized yet, therefore, as a disciplinary science, forensic linguistics does not invite introduces to its well-established academic realms. On the other hand, “forensic linguistics has grown exponentially, both in the number of people with an interest in practising it and in the number of disciplines and sub-disciplines within its ambit” (p. 3). The academic teaching of forensic linguistics which is based on systematic research methodology tackles “rich examples that law cases can provide to core linguistic courses, such as phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, speech acts, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, lexicography, and language assessment” (Shuy, 2006, p. 135). The fields of forensic linguistics are multidimensional and are subject to rapid and continuous development due to further and advanced research investigation.

Shuy (2006) suggests that “Colleges and universities that are not afraid to reach out across conventional disciplinary lines may take advantage of the fact that forensic linguistic work is closely related to programs in criminology, business, psychology, sociology, and, of course, law. Many forensic linguists today have managed such cross-disciplinary relationships” (p. 135) for they serve in fields beyond mere linguistics. Currently, anumber of academic forensic linguists work in such academic subfileds. Their job is based on teaching, instructing, lecturing and advising in humaniterian courses.

Hyland (2011) debates that “the field of forensic discourse analysis is becoming well-served by a growing body of researchers who are applying fundamental linguistic knowledge and skills in order to bring all areas of language and the law under the microscope. This is evidently a healthy field of linguistic endeavour” (p. 259). Reserchers in the field of forensic discourse analysis focus on language as the main medium which facilitates activity in forensic cases. Language is the common meadow and the connecting bridge between suspects, law enforcement agences, courts, lawyers and most of the compiled evidences. To be a successful forensic linguist, one has, first of all, to master linguistics. Mastering linguistics, however, is not attainable to every language practitioner. It is both a gift and a skill that can be aquired through hard working and firm ability. One cannot forcefully become a poet, even though one wants to, if needed talents do not reach the standard. As well, one cannot forcefully become a forensic linguist if one's primary requirements of linguistics do not match the needed ones. It is a talent which raises those elite linguists to the stage of advanced

comprehensibility. The faculty of forensic linguistics, in a nutshell, can seem to be so entertaining. Yet, it can be so damageable if used improperly. In addition to the wide-range of linguistic knowledge, the forensic linguist has to be decent and subjective. Cases should be built on standardized criteria, reliable knowledge and consistent science. Ultimately, forensic endeavors has to be published in one way or another. These publications will be debated and lectured in academic institutions. Therefore, academic criticism is the best procedure in forensic research engagements to reach to elucidations concerning the main linguistic questions which are raised in divisive forensic cases.

Shuy (2006) disputes that “a good way to test a potential of a publishable book or article is first to give a presentation on it at academic meetings such as the International Association of Forensic Linguistics, the Linguistic Society of America, the American Dialect Society, the American Association of Applied Linguistics, the International Pragmatics Association, and many others. Conference papers beget journal articles, and clusters of journal articles on the same theme beget books. The more your curriculum vitae displays peer-reviewed and accepted articles on forensic linguistics, the more you are considered an expert forensic linguist” (p. 123).

Communication failure is one of the problems that face communicators. If it happens at large, it could be solved by the help of academic skills and even pragmatics, which is concerned in the ways people produce and comprehend meaning through language. However, if it occurs within two formal communicators then it raises methodological questions that need to be answered. Currently, there is a state of communication failure between forensic linguists and lawyers, keeping in mind that not every lawyer is a linguist. Coulthard and Johnson (2010) believe that “the solution to the communication failure might well involve forensic linguists reaching out towards lawyers more than they do at present. Colloborative research between linguists and lawyers in academic institutions would be valuable. Forensic linguists could submit papers for publication in legal journals, instead of restricting them to journals ciruclating among linguists. Similarly, the submission of papers for presentation to legal conferences would be a way in which many lawyers could be introduced to the notion that there are people who study a wide verietly of aspects of language use in the legal system” (p. 595).

Professional linguists have sufficient ability to understand the laws of the legal systems since these laws are written texts and linguists are dedicated to language. Therefore, they have more ability to understand written texts and even express the intended laws in a better language. Shuy (2006) considers that to be a good forensic linguist, one must first work hard to be an excellent linguist since “expertise in linguistics will make you acceptable as an expert witness” (p. 131). Hence, qualified forensic linguists are eligible to apply the scopes of linguistics on specific types of problematic forensic cases. Shuy (2006) marks that “forensic linguistics is fairly wide open to approaches that apply linguistics to specific types of cases” (p. 132). Since language is the basic tool between communicators, it is related to all sorts of judicial cases. The communicator has to elucidate the proposed message otherwise recipients are not going to receive it favorably regarless of the topic being chemistry, physics, biology, medicine or art. Language is the center which allows addressers to express properly and addressees to interpret systemitically. Language is the feather which pushes deceivers and swindlers to fall down in a linguistic trap due to their deception which is not always expected. Even those who practice language under the claim of seeking the integrity of law can fall into fatal miscarriages of justice and finally get caught by means of forensic linguists.

Forensic linguistics, as Olsson (2004) discusses, “is a discipline which is driven by the requirements of legal evidence” (p. 14). It is a necessary and systematic implementation of language drills which are needed for the sake of unveiling what is apparently concealed within language texts. Olsson (2004) considers that “forensic linguistics is an application of linguistics. Perhaps then we should begin by asking what linguistics is. Linguistics is the scientific study of language. There are many branches within linguistics, and the linguist might specialize in anything from language acquisition to grammar, language and society or – as in the present case – language, crime and the law” (p. 3). Nonetheless, Olsson (2004) claims that “any text or item of spoken language is potentially a forensic text. If a text is somehow implicated in a legal or criminal context then it is a forensic text. A parking ticket could become a forensic text, a will, a letter, a book, an essay, a contract, a health department letter, a thesis – almost anything” (p. 5). It is evident also that if a certain item is not considered a forensic text at a certain period of time, it might be considered so later on. Many crimes are not tackled directly after being committed, rather after long periods of time that vary according to the case. Some cases, however, might have been extended to several decades or even centuries. For

example, Shakespeare's language in several texts can be tested forensically to prove or negate his authorship on it.

Simpson (2011) maintains that "forensic linguistics is so new that its history is still being written and so diverse that this history has been traced from several directions" (p. 139) such as texts arising from miscarriages of legal justice or even debates about social settings. As long as the texts are documented officially, forensic linguists can bring these texts under linguistic examinations within the walls of linguistic courts.

6. LINGUISTICS VS. FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Forensic linguistics cannot be dealt with except through linguistic documents that are mostly written. Therefore, linguistics is a key pillar for forensic linguistics which deals, basically, with a small and specific number of texts. According to Olsson (2004), "in practice, however, forensic linguists have mostly confined their attention to a small number of text types" (p. 6). Due to shortage of specific examples in the field, forensic linguists "use statistics to measure *probability*. Actually all sciences base their results on probability. No science 'proves' or attempts to prove anything" (p. 18).

Simpson (2011) perceives that "the term *forensic linguistics* is hotly debated. For some, it denotes only the work of those who provide expert evidence on language for police investigations or court hearings. For these terminological purists, the forensic linguist is essentially a consultant for hire. For others, the term has a wider meaning which extends to examining courtrooms, particularly criminal ones, by analysing talk from lawyers and witnesses. Finally, increasingly the term is coming to have a wider application to denote research on all areas of legal activity from the language of legislation through police stations and even into prisons and out into the worlds of consumers, families and corporations" (p. 139). It is well known that we use forensic linguistics in low levels in our everyday life. We check our receipts and bills which are written in brief letters and numbers, we reply, by using language, to those short text messages that reach us after interpreting them linguistically, we turn failing traffic signs and odd drivers' behaviors into meanings that can be labeled linguistically. We even sue thieves and raise charges against reckless drivers by turning their actions into linguistic lines and texts that can be negated and debated through forensic linguistics. We even interpret natural catastrophes in words, lines, books, volumes and academic courses in order to reach to convincing resolutions. Since most of the intellectual joints of our lives are associated with language and forensic linguistics, humans need expert forensic linguists.

Simpson (2011) decides that "the term *forensic linguistics* is hotly debated. For some, it denotes only the work of those who provide expert evidence on language for police investigations or court hearings. For these terminological purists, the forensic linguist is essentially a consultant for hire. For others, the term has a wider meaning, which extends to examining courtrooms, particularly criminal ones, by analyzing talk from lawyers and witnesses. Finally, increasingly the term is coming to have a wider application to denote research on all areas of legal activity from the language of legislation through police stations and even into prisons and out into the worlds of consumers, families and corporations" (p. 139). As a matter of fact, the more specialized and dedicated forensic discourse analysis becomes, the more it turns to be an encompassing "umbrella term for all forms of language-based research on matters legal. No doubt the exact scope of the area will continue to shift as scholars pursue new foci and new alignments with the forensic linguistics label" (p. 139).

One of the most particularizing discussions of forensic linguistics is held by John Olsson. His discussion sheds light on the role of forensic linguists in their application of linguistics in real life. Olsson (2004) argues that "a forensic linguist is sometimes a general practitioner, and sometimes a specialist in any in a number of sub-areas within the science. For example, if you are a Shakespeare scholar, questions of authorship might interest you. If your interest is in phonetics, then voice identification may appeal. A conversational analyst might be interested in the detection of emergency hoax calls, while a dictation specialist may wish to analyse text for mode (speech, dictation, writing). Someone with a background in psychology, however, could be interested in discovering what it is that separates genuine from simulated text. A specialist in a foreign language, on the other hand, may be required to analyse English-language forensic text produced by speakers of that foreign language. A police officer with an interest in forensic linguistics could seek to study the question of veracity in language. A judge might take an interest in courtroom language. A rehabilitated offender could study the language of prison life. A doctor might investigate the use of language and crime in the medical

context. Child language experts might study how children respond to questions from adults, what their answers mean and their reliability as witnesses. Specialists in reading and interpreting handwritten manuscripts could investigate forensic textual criticism” (p. 5).

7. THE FOCUS OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Halliday and Webster (2009) point that forensic linguistics focus on the notion of enabling which denotes two things; regulating texts in linguistic discourses of the law and reporting them in the courtrooms. It also focuses on texts that are used in investigative purposes, as in the linguistic investigations of authorship (p. 38). According to Cook (2003), forensic linguistics is “the deployment of linguistic evidence in criminal and other legal investigations, for example, to establish the authorship of a document, or a profile of a speaker from a tape-recording” (p. 128). Simpson (2011) decides that “one cannot investigate language in any setting or system without first understanding significant and sufficient aspects of phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, discourse and so on and without being willing to push the boundaries of one’s knowledge according to the challenges presented by the data and contexts encountered” (p. 148).

O’Keeffe and McCarthy (2010) record, “In an age of computerization, the use of corpora in many types of forensic linguistic analysis is becoming increasingly commonplace. In fact, there are certain areas such as authorship, where corpus linguistics is seen as the way forward for identification and elimination of candidate authors” (p. 578). Several turn-in programs are available in the technological linguistic market. The role of these packages is to determine whether or not a specific writing is initiated by a specific writer. These programmes are used nowadays at large especially in social and academic associations such as publishing of a book and defense of a thesis or a dissertation. Olsson (2004) maintains; “You should consider authorship to be one of the cornerstones of forensic linguistics. A grasp of authorship will enable you to progress to the other areas of the discipline” (p. 8).

Questioned document examination is basically built upon linguistic analysis. R. Bartol and M. Bartol (2015) see that forensic document examination “analyzes handwriting, print fonts, the authenticity of signatures, alterations in documents, charred or water-damaged paper, the significance of inks and papers, photocopying processes, writing instruments, sequence of writing, and other elements of a document to establish authorship and authenticity” (p. 5).

Life is full of bias, prejudice and miscarriages of justice. Olsson (2012) believes that “forensic linguistics began life as an instrument to correct miscarriages of justice” (p. 5). It is not intended to be with one party against the other, rather intended to correct criminal as well as judicial mistakes. It is not only crime scenes and court pleadings. Olsson (2012) comments that “forensic linguistics is not all hate mail cases. Every day brings a unique enquiry: the father who wants to know if the letter he has received from his daughter is really in her style, the mother who is concerned her teenager’s writing is becoming influenced by ‘gang speak’, the insurance company trying to identify a fraudster’s voice from among several possible clients, the police detective trying to interpret a coded letter from a prisoner to an accomplice, the prisoner who claims innocence, the solicitor working on an appeal for her client, the employee who feels his bosses are trying to frame him by saying he wrote an anonymous email” (p. 4).

Coulthard and Johnson (2010) consider that “forensic linguistics encompasses applications of linguistic analysis to forensic contexts, for example, voice analysis, translation and interpretation, dialect identification, discourse analysis, and authorship identification, to name a few. Linguistics study the habitual variation represented by any given speaker/writer by observing samples of their spoken and written language. The constellation of the pattered uses of language of an individual can be described as a unique set and thereby used to identify the language of that writer” (p. 492). Authorship identification in forensic cases is one of the most significant key terms. Authorship identification is always the bulk of debates within the forensic linguistics which is based on science; “so, forensic science stands as one of the guardians of justice and liberty” (Olsson, 2012, p. 5).

8. THE SCOPE OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Olsson and Luchjenbroers (2013) widen the scope of forensic linguistics and determine that “forensic linguistics is not a single science or study, but an umbrella discipline composed of many

facets. Thus, any forensic linguistic inquiry or investigation can draw upon any branch of theoretical or applied linguistics in order to analyse the language of some area of human life which has relevance to the law, whether criminal or civil. The discipline is mainly populated by academics, there being few full-time practitioners. Forensic linguists are consulted by lawyers ... Sometimes, rarely, a judge will seek an opinion on a forensic linguistic matter and the linguist will be appointed by the court" (p. xvi).

Gibbons and Turell (2008) state that "forensic linguistics, in its now widely accepted broader definition, has many aspects. Major areas of study include: the written language of the law, particularly the language of legislation; spoken legal discourse, particularly the language of court proceedings and police questioning; the social justice issues that emerge from the written and spoken language of the law; the provision of linguistic evidence, which can be divided into evidence on identity/authorship, and evidence on communication; the teaching and learning of spoken and written legal language; and legal translation and interpreting" (p. 1). Forensic linguistics, thus, is concerned with the inner characteristics of language-related texts, such as grammar, vocabulary and phraseology to determine the identity of the author.

9. THE CASE OF TIMOTHY JOHN EVANS: A CORNERSTONE IN THE ACADEMIC FIELD OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

The case of Timothy John Evans is one of the miscarriages of justice that still sheds light on forensic evidence up till now. It even enhances the systematic role of forensic linguistics through widening the conceptual space of academic research in regard of information, experimentation and procedures. Forcefully, as a discipline, forensic linguistics has bloomed significantly after the deliberate publications of Jan Svartvik's linguistic study of the changed police statements in regards to Evans case. Evans was wrongly blamed for murdering his wife and his 13-month-old daughter and was executed for that. This case has caused extensive discussions and debates because it was considered as a grave miscarriage of justice. Considerably, it is one of the main arguments that initiated the elimination of capital punishment in the United Kingdom in 1965. The pillars which clarified this case and shed light again on it were related to linguistics. Professor Svartvik, who can be entitled "as the father of forensic linguistics" (Seppänen, 2013), was the first person who clearly used the term "Forensic Linguistics" in his study; "The Evans Statements: A Case For Forensic Linguistics", which was published in 1968. Even though "this case was not an authorship study as such: its importance lies in Svartvik's pioneering technique in analyzing textual alteration, and his name for the new science, *forensic linguistics*" (Olsson, 2004, p. 15).

Evans "made four statements to the police altogether, all of which, though detailed, contradicted each other" (Seppänen, 2013). The Swedish linguist Jan Svartvik thoroughly examined the forensic statements that were previously considered evidence which condemned Evans and led him to the gallows. "In his analysis, Svartvik demonstrated the presence of two very different registers in Evan's statements" (Olsson, 2012, p. 2). These different styles in language, "which were written in what is known as policeman's register" (p. 2), shed light on one of the gravest miscarriages of justice. "The statements had supposedly been transcribed word-for-word from Evans's oral accounts to the police. However, Svartvik was able to point out clear differences in grammatical usage in different sections of the statements, thus establishing that they had been produced by more than one person. Specifically, the sections of text which most clearly incriminated Evans were different in style from the rest of the texts. Svartvik's findings were submitted to a public enquiry into the case in 1965 and 1966, and Evans was posthumously pardoned" (Seppänen, 2013).

10. THE FUTURE OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

Eventually, this article banks on the extended quotations of contemporary forensic linguists, rather than on drawn-out interpretations. It demonstrates how forensic linguists are interested in the application of forensic linguistics as a standard genre in the world of academe, and as an experimental system in the various unreasonable fields of life. Forensic linguistics has already reserved its own academic place in the open book of linguistics. Forensic linguists as well as forensic practitioners cannot perform their forensic work successfully without considering the minutest details of

linguistics. Researchers in the field has proved the effectivity of linguistic techniques in forensic cases. Svartvik's study on the case of Evans heavily emphasizes that forensic linguistics "has provided the linguist with one of those rare opportunities of making a contribution that might be directly useful to society" (Svartvik, 1968, p. i.v.). Forensic linguistics is gaining more respect not only in legal classifications but also in the academic world. The number of forensic linguists is considerably increasing every year. Language acquisition has a greater importance than merely living inside books. As a matter of fact, "it is good for the linguist to know that he can be useful, and that applied linguistics need not be identical with language teaching or machine translation" (p. i.v.). Continuous technological advances are responding to linguistic needs and according with the academic fields. Technology is offering greater schemes and broder scopes in the fields of forensic linguistics. Nevertheless, there are many gaps that are not covered yet and still have to be investigated and applied through academic research. Svartvik concludes that forensic linguistics "has highlighted our present inadequate knowledge of how language is used in various situations" (p. i.v.).

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