



FORENSIC LINGUISTICS AND THE LEGAL PROCESS: A CONCEPTUAL STUDY OF LANGUAGE AS EVIDENCE IN LAW

¹Dr. Ruchira Chaturvedi and ²Dr. Vimal Kumar Vishwakarma

¹Assistant Professor of Law, Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur

²Assistant Professor of English, Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur

Abstract

All legal systems are dependent on language. Laws are written in words, legal reasoning and argumentation take place through language, and litigation proceeds through the use of language. Therefore, forensic linguistics becomes crucially important today because it looks at how language and the law are connected. In the last few years, the way people communicate online has changed how crimes are investigated. The police have to deal with things like messages from people and notes that could be fake. They also have to look at letters that threaten people and documents that are disputed. Thus, what people say and write is really important when it comes to figuring out what happened. This paper talks about how language helps the legal system make decisions. Forensic linguistics is really useful in legal cases. It explores the relationship between language and law and considers linguistics in legal investigations, courtroom discourse, and the interpretation of legal texts. It also examines how linguistic analysis supports forensic phonetics, discourse interpretation, and multilingual communication in criminal proceedings particularly in Indian context.

The study uses a qualitative and doctrinal research method and relies on secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles, forensic reports, and Indian case studies. It pays special attention to India's forensic environment, where multilingualism, transliteration, code-switching, and regional language diversity create both challenges and opportunities. Finally, the paper argues that courts in India should recognise forensic linguistics more widely because it helps analyse legal language, identify communication problems, and assess evidence effectively.

Keywords: Forensic Linguistics, Language and Law, Legal Discourse, Linguistic Evidence, Authorship Attribution

1. Introduction

Language is a part of every spoken and written word, every email, text, letter, recording and short video message, and even in visual signs, and there are indicators in the use of language about the speaker's identity, social background, intention, education, and mental state. In law and criminology language is often regarded as an object of evidence as well as a medium. The scientific study of linguistic evidence is called forensic linguistics.

Forensic Linguistics is language based research, analysis and writing which can be applied to legal disputes and investigations. This includes examination of the language used in disputed handwriting, threatening letters, confessions, courtroom exchanges, legal documents, police interviews and online communications. Discipline has been used to identify authorship, interpreting ambiguity, assessing witness testimony, and for inferring intent. Forensic linguistics has become an increasingly prominent part of the modern-day criminal justice system, especially as crime moves to cyberspace.

The term forensic derives from the Latin word *forensis*, meaning "of the forum", and by extension any public debate or discussion, or a judicial proceeding. Forensic linguistics is the application of linguistic knowledge or methods to forensic settings such as the judicial system or criminal investigations. Since the field of forensic linguistics was established as a formal discipline in the late twentieth century, it has become an advanced and technical field involving stylistics, pragmatics, phonetics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics and computational linguistics.

The proliferation of digital communications technology has further improved this role. For example, many anonymous emails, coercive emails, cyber harassment, online scams, texts, and phone calls requesting payment for extortion, ransom



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letters, and social media comments can be used as evidence in investigations. However, language is often the only artifact available to link an author to a crime. Factors including word choice, use of punctuation and spelling, syntactic order and discourse structure exist in written works, which may form a signature by which an author could be identified, called authorship attribution.

Forensic linguistics has special relevance in India as it is a linguistically diverse country. Code-switching, transliteration and translanguaging is commonly used in Indian electronic communication, and involves switching between Hindi, English and other vernacular regional languages and dialects, both in written and oral forms. Hindi and certain vernacular languages are commonly written in Roman script. These varieties of language, which require fluency in multiple languages, are useful forensic evidence but add complexity to interpretation.

Threats written partly in Hindi and partly in English can indicate the writer's regional and educational background, their habitual language choice, and their socio-cultural affiliations. Types of spelling deviations, repeated mistakes, and discourse markers can provide evidence of regional language characteristics and language transfer. They can be valuable in narrowing down suspect lists and identifying authors.

Forensic linguistics is an underdeveloped area of forensic science in India, and has not yet been officially adopted into criminal investigations and trials. While it may be used in limited cases for authorship analysis and disputed documents by forensic laboratories such as the Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL), it has not yet become a regular feature in the Indian legal landscape. Indian courts generally rely less upon linguistic evidence, treat its outcome as corroborative in nature and often depend upon other evidence.

Other Indian forensic linguistics analysis cases include the Burari deaths case in 2018, where analysis of the victims' diaries was used to understand behaviours and reconstruct intentions. The Mahant Narendra Giri suicide note case (2021) was a test case for authorship attribution of suicide notes, and also underscored the importance of stylometric and other linguistic analysis in forensic linguistics. These developments mean that forensic linguistic analysis may play a critical role in cases of cybercrime, anonymous communication, suicide notes, extortion, and digital fraud in India.

This paper attempts to evaluate the sub-domains of forensic linguistics and the linguistic analysis processes in the Indian context of criminal investigation. By supporting theoretical explanation with realistic data from India, this paper seeks to show how linguistic evidence can prove effective in the crime investigation and courtroom setting.

2. Literature Review

The field of forensic linguistics has grown rapidly in the last few decades and can focus on areas such as authorship attribution, legal discourse, forensic phonetics, and analysis of electronic texts. The theoretical and methodological foundations of forensic linguistics were laid in the early work of scholars like John Olsson and Malcolm Coulthard.

As John Olsson wrote in 2008 (p. 8), forensic linguistics is the scientific study of language evidence in law. In this sense, language use is consistent across situations and, thus, via repeated use of certain words, grammar, and stylistic patterns, it is possible to identify a likely author. In Olsson's work, punctuation, spelling patterns, discourse structure and phraseology are of particular importance.

For example, Malcolm Coulthard and Alison Johnson (2010: 225) in their book *Linguistic Evidence in the Evaluation of Evidence*, discuss how stylistic variation, discourse markers, syntactic preferences and semantic consistency can shed considerable light on communicative intention, and authorship of disputed texts. The field of forensic linguistics in India has received comparatively less scholarly attention, although there has been increasing interest in examining diverse topics within the area, including disputed writing, suicide notes, cybercrime communication, and multilingual forensic linguistics.



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Research has shown that linguistic diversity found in India including the use of multiple languages, transliteration and code-switching behaviour, comes with certain challenges.

Research on the Burari deaths case and the Mahant Narendra Giri suicide note case has revealed the role of discourse analysis and the growing importance of stylometric analysis in the analysis of controversial written documents, with insights into lexical and grammatical universals, as well as narrative patterns that enable the identification of effects of behaviour conditioning and aspects of communicative intent. In addition, case work reports by Indian forensic laboratories suggest that linguistic analysis of disputed documents employs vocabulary choice, spelling choices, discourse structure and interpretation of context. However, there is no institutionally standardized framework for forensic linguistic analysis in India.

Research Gap

Whilst forensic linguistics has been developing internationally, there has been very little systematic study of the relationship between linguistic evidence and the investigative process in India, despite the existence of forensic linguistic literature in the country. Much of this literature is theoretical and does not map well onto the Indian legal system or to Indian sociolinguistics. Multilingualism, transliteration, and code-switching have rarely been studied as forensic indicators in the context of Indian criminal investigations.

This study attempts to bridge this gap by linking the theoretical framework of forensic linguistics to documented cases from India through understanding the role of language evidence in India's multilingual population.

3. Study Objectives

The present study thus attempts to achieve the following:

- 1.To examine the concept and scope of forensic linguistics.
- 2.To analyze the major forms and processes of forensic linguistic investigation.
3. To assess the role of linguistic evidence in relation to criminal investigation and prosecution.
- 4.To examine Indian forensic linguistics case studies of disputed authorship and discourse interpretation.
- 5.To assess the challenges and future potential of forensic linguistics in India.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative and doctrinal research methodology and has been designed to analyze the forms and modalities of forensic linguistics in the scope of criminal investigation and the interpretation of law in India. The study has been conducted largely based on secondary sources of data like books, peer-reviewed journals, forensic reports, observations made by the courts, government records, and documented case studies.

In this research, qualitative research methodology has been used as forensic linguistics, in the context of interpretation and analysis of linguistic patterns, structures of discourse, communicative functions, authorship identification, markers of identity etc., is not a quantitative exercise. Doctrinal research methodology has also been adopted to critique the doctrines of forensic linguistics in the legal and investigative systems.

This paper will discuss three cases: The Burari deaths (2018), the Mahant Narendra Giri suicide note investigation (2021), and description of authorship examination tools and techniques utilized by CFSL and how these lend to the examination of disputed authorship, disputed attribution, discourse analysis, and forensic document examination, and the methodology and principles that support them. The research is based on literature from linguistics, criminology, forensic science, sociology



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and law. The book presents a holistic view of language as evidence, and describes multilingualism within the Indian context, focusing on code-switching between languages, transliteration, and regional language interference in communication in India.

The research does not involve fieldwork, interviews or experimental linguistic analysis but is a critical review of existing theories and body of knowledge, examining the role of forensic linguistics in India.

5. Forms and Processes of Forensic Linguistics

Forensic linguistics is a label for the linguistic analyses that can help investigators, lawyers and courts in interpreting language evidence, by identifying speakers in a piece of writing or speech, clarifying the meaning of language, inferring the purpose of speech and examining contested speech. Language is patterned, so it is assumed that a person will have a characteristic style that reveals important behavioural patterns.

The most common forms and processes of forensic linguistic investigation are:

5.1 Authorship Attribution

Authorship attribution is one of the most common branches of forensic linguistics. It is the forensic attempt to determine with a very high degree of certainty who wrote an anonymous or disputed text. It has been used in ransom notes, threatening letters, cyber bullying, suicide notes and disputed documents.

The premise that is followed in authorship attribution is that authors have a characteristic vocabulary style that they stick to even in different contexts. Examples of these are:

- Vocabulary preference
- Focus in sentence length and structure
- Spelling variation
- Punctuation style
- Lexical repetition
- Preferred phrases and collocations
- Discourse organisation
- Code-switching tendencies

Forensic linguists compare questioned material with previously known material written by suspects to find repeated patterns of stylistic variation. This provides the weight of probability, rather than a definitive forensic match.

In the Indian context, the field has relevance as digital communication is frequently used as evidence in cybercrime cases. Patterns of consistent language use found in mobile app messages, social media posts, emails, and online forum comments can help to identify anonymous authors in such cases.

The Mahant Narendra Giri suicide note case (2021) is an Indian case in which the authorship of a suicide note was disputed, leading to general discussion of the merits of stylometric and linguistic analysis for determining authorship. Several methods were employed in the case, including textual consistency analysis, structural and lexical analysis, discourse analysis and contextual coherence tests. The case served as an early example of applying forensic linguistic methodology to disputed documents.

Attribution of authorship becomes very important in India, because of rising cybercrimes, online abuse, digital fraud, and politically-sensitive speech.



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5.2 Forensic Stylistics

Forensic stylistics involves the study of an author or speaker's particular style of writing or speaking. Each person's language is different and individuals develop their own style determined by education, social class, occupation, region and familiar language.

Stylistic analysis generally examines:

- Lexical frequency
- Sentence complexity
- Grammar usage
- Punctuation habits
- Register and tone
- Discourse markers
- Repetition patterns

Stylistic consistency can connect disputed messages to known samples, helping criminal investigations.

These signatures can manifest in punctuation and capitalization errors, unorthodox abbreviation conventions, repeated misspellings, and preferred lexical items.

In India, stylistic analysis can be useful because people will often mix English with Hindi or other vernacular languages in their written communications, and such styles sometimes leave linguistic fingerprints.

5.3 Discourse Analysis in Criminal Investigation

Discourse analysis is another branch of forensic linguistics which is not necessarily focused on the structures of language. This branch seeks to understand how language is used to convey meaning in specific contexts, including communicative situations, power relations, repetition of phrases, persuasion, and aspects of social meaning, among other things.

Discourse analysis is most relevant to:

- Confession statements
- Police interrogations
- Witness testimony
- Threatening communication
- Suicide notes
- Legal interpretation
- Courtroom interaction

One of the most famous Indian cases is the Burari deaths case of 2018 in Delhi, when diaries and notebooks containing behavioural instructions and rituals of the family were found. The study of language of these diaries highlighted repetitive lexical items, ritualistic instructions, imperative and symbolic phrases.



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The frequency of commands and behavioural instructions also offered information about how to psychologically manipulate and how to communicate with people. The case illustrates how forensic discourse analysis can offer different perspectives on behavioural meaning in the context of criminal investigation.

The Burari case shows the potential of the written word, including linguistic repetition and discourse structure, for establishing motive, intention, and psychological orientation.

5.4 Forensic Phonetics

Forensic phonetics is the scientific study and use of voice in criminal investigation. Applications include comparing voice samples, identifying speakers, transcribing recorded speech and examining pronunciation.

Forensic linguistics of this sort is especially relevant when:

- Threatening phone calls
- Abduction and ransom demands
- Terrorist communication
- Extortion cases
- Audio surveillance evidence

Phonetics can be concerned with:

- Accent and pronunciation
- Speech rhythm
- Intonation patterns
- Voice quality
- Regional language influence
- Code-switching in speech

The high level of linguistic diversity in India makes forensic phonetics highly applicable, as accents are good indicators of geographical and social origin.

Certain features under influence from Hindi, Gujarati, Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi, or Marathi may imply the origin of the speaker's mother tongue.

However, forensic phonetics, in India, is still in its infancy due to the lack of technology, training, and institutions.

5.5 Legal Language and Courtroom Discourse

Forensic linguistics also concerns itself with the language used in legal institutions and their products: statutes, contracts, police evidence, judicial reasoning, witness examination, and courtroom discourse.

Because legal language is criticized as being too complex and unclear, linguistic analysis aids in:

- Clarifying ambiguous legal language
- Interpreting disputed statements
- Examining coercive questioning
- Evaluating witness reliability
- Simplifying legal communication

Studies of courtroom discourse have illustrated the power imbalance between legal professionals and lay people. Witnesses struggle to comprehend questions, become victims of linguistic manipulation, and produce misleading answers.



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In multilingual societies like India, interpretation issues are exacerbated by the need to translate between English, Hindi and one of several dozen regional languages.

Translation or misinterpretation could change the meaning or implication of any evidence.

5.6 Cyber Forensic Linguistics

Another branch of forensic linguistics that has arisen with the increased use of computers in online spaces is cyber forensic linguistics.

Cyber forensic linguistic analysis may examine:

- Anonymous emails
- Online harassment
- Cyberbullying
- Fake identities
- Online fraud
- Threat messages
- Hate speech

Digital communication often produces these markers, such as the use of abbreviations, emoji, punctuation styles, typing speed, spelling, and code-mixing/switching.

With the rise of internet usage in India, criminal investigation processes have come to rely on cyber forensic linguistics.

Since many Indian users perform code-switching between Hindi and English in Roman script, this is how they might type:

“Kal milte hain, but don’t tell anyone.”

These patterns of code-switching can be used as linguistic markers.

5.7 Sociolinguistic Profiling

Sociolinguistic profiling refers to attempts to determine a speaker's or writer's characteristics based on language.

Language offers clues to identity:

- Education level
- Age group
- Social class
- Regional identity
- Professional background
- Cultural affiliation

In cases where the perpetrator cannot be identified, forensic linguists can narrow down suspects.

The multilingual and dialectal context of Indian society can ease sociolinguistic profiling.

Different sets of lexical items or sentence structures may identify a speaker as being from a Hindi, Gujarati, or South Indian environment.



Together these different strategies and approaches show that language can be a key source of evidence in the investigation of crime. Whether through authorship attribution, discourse analysis, forensic phonetics or cyber linguistics, forensic linguistic analysis can shed light on matters that customary forensic investigations find more difficult.

6. Analysis and Discussion: The case studies in Indian Forensic Linguistics

The role of theory in applied forensic linguistics can only be fully appreciated when it is made real by working on actual cases. Although the field of forensic linguistics in India is still in its infancy, a few published case studies illustrate the role played by linguistic evidence in the analysis of disputed communication, author identification, reconstruction of communicative intention and behaviour.

The aim of this section is to map prominent forms and processes of forensic linguistics through the use of some Indian case studies, especially the application of linguistic evidence to crime.

6.1 The Burari Deaths Case (2018): Discourse Analysis and Behavioural Interpretation

A prominent Indian case for forensic discourse analysis is the mass suicide of a family of eleven members in Burari, Delhi, in 2018, the Burari deaths.

Diaries, notes and instructions for behaviour were found, indicating the family had been performing the rituals for several years. Initially, there were inquiries into coercion, conspiracy to murder and mind control. The writings that were salvaged also provided linguistic and behavioural information that contextualized the events.

From a forensic linguistic perspective, the case is prominent for its example of discourse analysis, particularly with regard to recurrence, communicative intent, and behaviour prescription in language.

The recovered writings contain several linguistic features:

(a) Repetition of Lexical Items

Common themes throughout the texts were ritual, obedience, protection and salvation, as well as family behaviour, with repeated use of certain words and phrases suggesting the reinforcement of morals and practices.

For instance, the wide-ranging discussion of obedience and ritualistic performance shows continuity of discourse intention rather than spontaneity and fragmentation.

In forensic linguistics, lexical repetition is commonly used as an indicator of cognitive consistency and behavioural reinforcement.

(b) Imperative Sentence Structures

Many of the recovered writings are imperative constructions, or commands, to family members to perform activities such as eating and drinking.

Such markers included commands telling participants to sit down, perform, determine the timing of the ritual, or be silent.

The repetition of orders suggested behaviour could be conditioned.

By far the most important use of this evidence was to distinguish between random scribbles and writing that exhibits controlled thinking.



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(c) Narrative Consistency and Discourse Organisation

Throughout the diaries, the recurring themes, the sequential ordering of the narrative and the use of language.

- sentence organisation,
- lexical preference,
- discourse markers,
- ritual terminology,
- structural sequencing.

This lowered the chances that those authors would shift styles indicating a shared ideology.

The Burari case is an example of the forensic use of language, as behavioural evidence rather than merely documentary evidence, and of the usefulness of discourse analysis in establishing motive, psychological pressure, and intent.

Thus, the Burari case provides powerful evidence for the idea that forensic linguistics, though often focused on author identification, has important implications in behavioural interpretation and discourse reconstruction.

6.2 The Mahant Narendra Giri Suicide Note Case (2021): Who wrote the note? Textual authenticity

Mahant Narendra Giri's death in 2021 resulted in scrutiny of the authenticity and validity of the purported suicide note that was produced and taken by the police during the investigation.

The main forensic question was whether the note had been written by the deceased or whether it had been tampered with or forged. This case was a prime example of the forensic linguistic method of authorship attribution: does the disputed communication match the known linguistic behaviour of the alleged culprit?

Language patterns can indicate authorship.

Forensic stylometric reasoning can usually be constructed as:

- lexical consistency
- sentence construction
- punctuation patterns
- discourse coherence
- preferred phraseology
- orthographic behaviour
- thematic consistency

In the Narendra Giri case, linguistic and forensic analysis was intended to determine whether the note exhibited natural continuity with the deceased's linguistic style.

The analysis considered whether:

- the language reflected habitual writing behaviour
- lexical choices stayed internally consistent
- emotional tone aligned with situational context, and
- discourse organisation appeared spontaneous or externally influenced.

From a forensic linguistic perspective, suicide notes often have features at the emotional, grammatical, and discourse levels.



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For example, some authentic notes contain:

- emotionally personalized language,
- direct reference to relationships,
- fragmented emotional discourse,
- self-referential expressions,
- psychologically consistent narrative flow.

Where textual discontinuity appears, questions arise about the text's authenticity.

However, forensic linguistics alone cannot definitively establish authorship. The Narendra Giri case illustrates the role of linguistic evidence in disputed document examination with forensic, circumstantial, and digital evidence. It also reinforces the concept that language is a behavioural signature, helping investigative reasoning about language.

6.3 Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) and Authorship Attribution in India

The CFSL has often been consulted to analyse disputed documents, anonymous letters, extortion and fraud communications as well as digital evidence.

No forensic linguistic system has been established in India, but forensic research has been carried out, with an increasing emphasis on linguistic analysis.

In authorship attribution cases, investigators compare:

(a) Lexical Preferences

Writers have a tendency to repeat.

For example, people use the same greetings, terms, abbreviations, or discourse markers.

Consequently, the repetition of certain lexical features may identify the author.

(b) Orthographic Habits

Spelling behaviour is influenced by education, regional language use and writing habits.

Examples include:

- unusual capitalisation,
- recurring spelling mistakes,
- transliteration tendencies,
- abbreviation usage.

For example, when a Hindi-speaker writes in English, they may transfer Hindi phonetic features onto the spelling.

(c) Punctuation Style

Punctuation may be consistent across contexts.

Some people overuse ellipses (...), while others might make liberal use of the comma, dash, or exclamation mark.

Recurring stylistic tendencies have been used to identify authorship.



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(d) Code-Mixing and Transliteration

The Indian linguistic environment is still relatively unique, mainly with a code-mixing of Hindi and English.

These digital messages are often in the form of hybrid:

“Mujhe pata hai tum kya kar rahe ho, don’t lie.”

Bilingual communication may have identifiable behavioural tendencies.

In many cybercrime and anonymous-message cases, transliterated Hindi written in Roman script can provide a linguistic fingerprint. The common use of mobile communication channels has substantially increased the value of forensic linguistic evidence in India.

6.4 Multilingualism and code-switching as forensic linguistic evidence in India

Multilingualism is one of the chief features of Indian forensic linguistics.

In India, for example, those languages are usually in use in tandem.

Code-switching is the process of changing languages while speaking and transliteration is writing one language in the script of another language.

For example:

Meeting cancel ho gayi, please inform everyone.

Here it shows English-Hindi switching within a single utterance.

From a forensic standpoint, this bilingual behaviour may indicate:

- educational background,
- regional identity,
- linguistic competence,
- socio-cultural affiliation,
- habitual communicative style.

Some speakers are characterized by identifiable switching patterns.

As an example, Hindi may be used to express emotion whereas English may be used to express authority or formally. These patterns are often distinctive authorship markers. In instances of cyber harassment, extortion, fake social accounts, and anonymous chats, multilingual linguistic styles can limit the suspect list. Thus, India's linguistic diversity is both a complexity and an opportunity for forensic practice.

6.5 Linguistic Evidence as Corroborative Proof in India

Despite its growing importance, forensic linguistics in India is, in general, used only as corroborative evidence.

These factors are generally followed by Indian courts:

- digital evidence,
- forensic handwriting analysis,
- witness testimony,



- electronic records,
- circumstantial evidence.

Linguistic data are often cited as evidence for the conclusion reached during investigation.

However,, in cases such as that of Narendra Giri, textual evidence is sometimes more compelling when combined with other forensic evidence. Similar to other forms of anonymous communication, authorship conclusions rely on technical evidence such as device tracing, analyses of metadata, or digital identification and recovery. Thus, forensic linguistics may be understood as additional to these other investigative techniques and approaches.

7. Findings

The researcher has analysed the data to generate the study's objectives which identify the forms and processes of forensic linguistic practice.

1. Language Functions as Behavioural Evidence

These signature-like characteristics, once established, form indirect evidence of the author's style of behaviour. Word choice, spelling, punctuation, sentence structure, and organization are usually similar across communicative situations.

2. India, A Multilingual Country, Offers Forensic Possibilities

Code-switching, transliteration, and regional features are all used as forensic markers. Hybrid Hindi-English speech is often characterized by recognizable language behaviours or communicative patterns.

3. Discourse Analysis Assists Behavioural Interpretation

The Burari deaths case acts as a case study in behavioural intention, psychological influence and communicative consistency in forensic linguistics.

4. Authorship Attribution is an Emerging Research Topic in India

The increase in cybercrime and online fraud means forensic authorship analysis is becoming more relevant.

5. Institutional Development Remains Limited

Forensic linguistics remains an underdeveloped field in India. Greater collaboration between linguists, forensic professionals, and legal institutions is needed.

6. Linguistic Evidence Remains Corroborative

Forensic linguistic evidence is treated as corroborative evidence in Indian courts of law.

8. Conclusion

There are several forms and functions of forensic linguistics discussed in the study on their roles in the investigation and trial in the Indian context. The study shows that language can be an important source of evidence and can play a role in criminal investigation, disputed authorship identification, discourse analysis, behaviour analysis and legal analysis. Forensic linguistics is intrinsically a hybrid discipline combining the theoretical aspects of linguistic theory with the practical aspects of legal and forensic investigation as it is applied in contemporary criminal justice systems. Forensic linguistics has evolved from focusing exclusively on the language of the law to include a scientific description of the use of language in the context of criminal investigations. Sub-disciplines include but are not limited to: authorship attribution,



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forensic stylistics, discourse analysis, forensic phonetics, sociolinguistic profiling and cyber forensic linguistics. These applications are more commonly seen in anonymous communications, extortion notes, cyber bullying, suicide notes, disputed documents, and threatening letters.

Contrary to the challenges of multilingualism and multiculturalism, there are promising opportunities for forensic linguistics in India as spoken communication typically features code-switching, transliterated scripts, regional dialects, and mixed languages that are not present in less diverse societies. These features can be thought of as behavioural signatures that help investigators focus on suspects and identify the likely author.

The Burari deaths case (2018) illustrates how discourse analysis can improve our understanding of behavioural intention, communicative consistency, and the use of formulaic language by recognizing patterns of lexis, imperatives, and narrative continuity in written statements and instructions. The Mahant Narendra Giri suicide note case (2021) highlights the growing importance of authorship attribution and text integrity in the field of questioned document examination. In particular, the lexical, orthographical, punctuation and discourse patterning practices of the CFSL writers, reflect the growing acceptance of the linguistic approach to comparison included in this type of forensic analysis. Institutional and technical limitations for forensic linguistics exist as in order to be admissible, linguistic evidence needs to be corroborated by other forms of evidence, such as digital forensics, forensic handwriting examination, witness testimony and circumstantial evidence. The discipline is not supported by dedicated forensic linguistic units, academic training, institutional recognition or standardized methodology. With the increasing development of online communication, cybercrime, anonymous communication, and multilingual communication, the field of forensic linguistics is expected to gain prominence in India. It's expected to gain more importance as more investigative techniques are needed for linguistic communication-related issues such as anonymous online threats, cyber fraud, misinformation, hate speech, impersonation, and digital extortion.

Overall the study shows that forensic linguistics can make an important contribution to criminal investigations and the judicial process in India. More collaboration between linguists, forensic scientists, cybercrime investigators and judicial officers can give greater acceptance and greater weight to linguistic evidence. With further research, professional training, and policy recognition, forensic linguistics could become a more common and legitimate practice in India's criminal justice system.

9. Limitations of the Study

The current study has some limitations.

Firstly, all of the work thus far has been based on secondary sources such as journal articles, case studies, and published discussions of the linguistic issues which forensic linguists have encountered.

Secondly, it largely relies on specific Indian case studies, as there is no national database of forensic linguistic investigations in India. This is largely because the forensic reports, as well as judgments, are not openly available to the public, thus obscuring many investigations from researchers.

Thirdly, forensic linguistics in India remains an emerging discipline with limited India-cantered academic literature and institutional documentation for reference.

Tied to this is the focus on written and textual media, which excludes computational linguistic approaches to authorship attribution, the application of artificial intelligence, and the development of forensic phonetic models. Notwithstanding the limitations, it contributes to an understanding of the role of forensic linguistics in the Indian legal and investigative framework.

10. Scope for Future Research

Future research in forensic linguistics may expand in several important directions.



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First, large-scale empirical studies may be conducted to examine authorship attribution patterns in multilingual Indian communication involving Hindi, English, Gujarati, Marathi, Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, and other regional languages.

Second, scholars may investigate the role of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and computational stylometry in forensic linguistic investigation, particularly in relation to cybercrime and anonymous digital communication.

Third, future studies may examine judicial attitudes towards linguistic evidence and evaluate the admissibility of forensic linguistic findings within Indian courts.

Fourth, specialised research may focus upon social media discourse, cyber harassment, online impersonation, hate speech, and misinformation, all of which increasingly involve linguistic evidence.

Finally, interdisciplinary collaboration between linguistics, forensic science, law, criminology, and cyber investigation may significantly enhance methodological standardisation in India.

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