

*Аббасов Г.,*

здобувач ступеня вищої освіти  
бакалавра Національної академії  
внутрішніх справ

*Консультант з мови: Зубенко В.*

## THE ROLE OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS IN CRIME INVESTIGATION

Forensic linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of applied linguistics that includes the study, analysis and measurement of languages in the context of conflicts in crime, judicial proceedings or law as a new sub-field of forensic science. The interface between language, crime and law can be detected, for example, in the analysis of court discourse, court interpretation and translation, the comprehensiveness of legal documents, the comprehensiveness of police attention issued to suspects, and the attribution of authors.

From my point of view, the basis of the topic The Role of Forensic Linguistics in Crime Investigation constitute four points:

1. Forensic Linguistics: Some Areas of Application (Forensic Phonetics)

2. Authorship Attribution

3. Forensic Text Types

4. Can Forensic Linguistics Establish Guilt or Innocence?

Forensic Linguistics: Some Areas of Application (Forensic Phonetics).

Phonetic techniques are primarily used in the analysis of the voice as applied in criminal investigation. This comprises technical voice comparisons, lay voice recognition, transcription of spoken language, speech signal enhancement, and the authentication of recordings. Forensic phoneticians conduct speaker identifications, resolve disputed content recordings, and transcribe spoken texts. They are also involved in the setting up of so-called voice line-ups or parades in which not eye- but earwitnesses are asked to take part in order to identify a suspect [1].

But the fundamental problem with the voice line-up is that, nevertheless, the fact that, in a threatening situation, we might be able to store more features, generally speaking, our memory for the voice fades rapidly comparison with our memory for the face. So voice identification needs to be carried out without delay and treated with great care.

For forensic records, the spoken text must be transcribed in writing, such as interviews, oral statements and interrogations, and problems often arise because some information may be missing or the nuances of the oral text may be incorrectly relayed (partly due to the lack of contextual information and paralinguistic features).

#### Authorship Attribution

Authorship analysis has over the years been increasingly used in forensic linguistic applications by linguists due to its ability to do language processing. The questions “why might have written this text” triggered computer scientists to invent software with the capacity to detect the possible author of a particular text from a group of suspected individuals. As one of the branches of forensic linguistics, authorship analysis involves a keen and detailed analysis of a particular quoted text, often questionable, with a sole focus to identify the most probable author [2].

In most cases, forensic linguists use authorship analysis to identify, from two or more suspects, the author of a written text in the face of uncertainty and anonymity on a piece of writing’s author. The technique is mostly used by relevant experts when solving cases related to disputed authorship in cases such as malicious texts, abusive and threatening cases among others. Forensic linguists often use authorship identification in legal proceedings to correctly try identifying whether a particular suspected individual wrote or said a given text through a thorough and expert analysis of significant language aspects such as idiolect and specific patterns associated with language use including grammar, spelling, collocations, vocabulary, and pronunciation [3].

#### Forensic Text Types

A forensic text is any kind of text, a written document or an audio or video recording, which is the subject of police investigation or of criminal procedure. The investigative linguist may be called upon to analyse a variety of documents. The text types may include emergency calls, ransom demands and other threats, such as hate mail, aimed at victimising others. In this case the genuine or false nature of the call has to be determined to detect or eliminate a hoax, for example. The same differentiation applies to suicide notes or letters [4].

On the other hand, if a death row inmate decides to utter the last word, the last statement could shed light on the guilt or innocence of the convicted person.

For example: Well, I don’t have anything to say. I am just sorry about what I did to Mr. Peters. That’s all.

A death row statement can (explicitly or implicitly) confirm or deny a criminal commitment and leave the impression of innocence. They may also accuse witnesses of dishonesty or criticize law enforcement agencies as corrupt.

#### Can Forensic Linguistics Establish Guilt or Innocence?

By meeting scientific forensic standards and presenting compelling linguistic evidence in court, forensic linguists can certainly contribute to pronouncing an innocent person. They can also prompt admittance of guilt.

Forensic linguists may be asked to investigate recorded police interrogations to decipher whether or not a person knowingly admitted guilt, underwent just interrogation or understood the conversation conducted throughout the interview. Since recorded interviews can be admitted in court as evidence, dialogue analysis may be carried out to (dis)prove guilt and determine potential inconsistencies in the interviewing process, making recordings inadmissible in court. The defence can therefore show that the recorded language does not necessarily indicate the defendant's guilt [5].

#### *Список використаних джерел*

1. Danielewicz-Betz A. The role of forensic linguistics in crime investigation. In *Language Studies: Stretching the Boundaries*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012.

2. Krassa S. I. First roundtable on practices and standards in forensic authorship analysis, overview 1. *Political Linguistics*, 6, 2020. P.174–187. URL: <https://doi.org/10.26170/pl20-06-19>.

3. Ariani, M. G., Sajedi, F., & Sajedi, M. Forensic Linguistics: A Brief Overview of the Key Elements. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 158, P. 222–225, 2014. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.12.078>.

4. Olsson, J. *Word Crime: Solving Crime through Forensic Linguistics*. New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2008. *Forensic Linguistics*. New York and London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009.

5. Correa, M. Forensic Linguistics: An Overview of the Intersection and Interaction of Language and Law. *Studies about Languages*, 0(23), 2013. URL: <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.sal.0.23.5020>.