



## THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF FORENSIC LINGUISTICS

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### ABSTRACT

*This article discusses scholars who have studied forensic linguistics and their works. It also highlights the importance and role of forensic linguistics within the field of linguistics. The article emphasizes that studying and researching forensic linguistics is beneficial for both linguists and professionals in the legal field. Forensic linguistics is considered a small but emerging subfield within modern linguistics and legal studies.*

### Introduction

In contemporary linguistic studies, there is a growing demand for the exploration of specialized subfields. In response to ongoing advancements and scholarly inquiries in other disciplines, the necessity to investigate forensic linguistics has become increasingly evident. Given that this field remains largely under-researched and underdeveloped, the present article adopts a scientific and practical approach to examining forensic linguistics and contributing to its theoretical and methodological development.

In Uzbekistan, forensic linguistics is emerging as a rapidly developing field, characterized by the introduction of new terminology and alignment with the international legal system. Undoubtedly, the development of forensic linguistics is guided by international legal documents, sources, and methodological approaches, which serve as practical references for local researchers and practitioners.

The study of forensic linguistics has a more extensive history abroad. For instance, the 2007 monograph *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics* by Malcolm Coulthard and Alison Johnson is regarded as one of the foundational works in the field. The monograph explores the interrelation between linguistics and law, the analysis of speech in investigative and courtroom settings, the role of language in identifying suspects, and the significance of language used during investigations.

Additionally, in Gibbons' book *Forensic Linguistics*, the role of language in courtroom interactions—particularly in questions and answers among participants is examined, with a focus on how language influences fairness in legal proceedings. In the second edition of Olson's *Forensic Linguistics*, specialized analytical methods in the field are discussed, including techniques for suspect identification and linguistic analysis of written statements.

In our country, the number of academic studies conducted in the field of forensic linguistics remains limited. Nevertheless, the dissertation by Q. Muydinov titled *"The Lexicon of Uzbek Courtroom Speech"* can be cited as an example. This research provides an in-depth



analysis of speech used during court proceedings. Similarly, in his dissertation *"The Role and Importance of Legal Linguistics in Legislative Drafting"*, Kh. Hayitov presents comprehensive reflections on the significance of legal linguistics in the process of lawmaking.

Furthermore, S. Juraev's article *"Linguistic Features of Uzbek Legal Texts"* analyzes the syntactic structures of such texts. Sh. Gulomov, on the other hand, investigates the linguistic characteristics of investigative statements. These studies collectively play a vital scientific and practical role in the formation and development of forensic linguistics in Uzbekistan.

## **Materials and methods**

Research and studies in the field of forensic linguistics largely rely on foreign sources, literature, and academic investigations. The linguistic analysis of courtroom dialogues, official procedural documents, and evidentiary materials is considered a novel approach in modern linguistics.

The study of forensic linguistics began relatively recently, initiated by several scholars. While it is not possible to comprehensively cover all stages of development and international transformations in the field, some of the most significant milestones can be identified. In 1985, Levi and Walker organized and coordinated a conference on language in legal proceedings at Georgetown University and later published their work titled *Language and the Law* (Levi, J. N. and Graffam Walker, 1990). In 1995, Dumas launched an electronic newsletter entitled *Language at the Judicial Process*, which aimed to disseminate information on bibliographies, organizations, academic courses and programs, as well as legal matters (Dumas, 1998). These events marked the initial stages of the development of forensic linguistics as an academic discipline.

During this period and thereafter, academic courses on forensic linguistics were developed and introduced across the globe. For instance, at the University of Tennessee, Dumas offered a course on language and law, covering topics such as legal language, interpretation, courtroom discourse, plain English, pragmatics, jury instructions, legal contexts, courtroom communication, and the language of consumer product warnings. These courses were made available to scholars and legal professionals alike. Similar programs were developed at various universities, including Bangor University (Wales), the University of Birmingham, the University of Cambridge, the University of New South Wales, the University of Melbourne, Georgetown University, Montclair State University, and the University of California, San Diego.

The description of forensic linguistics categorizes the subfields within this discipline and draws on relevant bibliographic references. Although variations in classification paradigms are to be expected, overlaps among the diverse research directions in forensic linguistics are virtually unavoidable. Moreover, the scope of this article does not allow for the inclusion of a comprehensive bibliography. Instead, every effort has been made to include representative works for each category of linguistic research and application within the field of forensic linguistics.

The classification of subfields within forensic linguistics continues to evolve alongside the development of the discipline itself. Typically, existing classifications serve as a foundation for cataloging current and potential topics related to the structure and function of language. However, in some cases, even more specific categorization is required. For example, research in forensic phonetics may involve one or all of three distinct approaches to phonetic analysis:



acoustic, auditory, and articulatory. In certain instances, forensic studies draw on a broad range of analytical tools from overlapping subfields of linguistics, making structured categorization decisions particularly challenging. For instance, the study of intelligibility is primarily concerned with spoken or written language but may simultaneously rely on one or more linguistic domains such as morphology, syntax, semantics, discourse, or pragmatics (Gerald R. McMenamin, 2002).

Addressing the issue of classification allows forensic linguists to define the field more precisely and thereby contribute to the development of its taxonomy. When there are similarities among subfields, efforts should be made to include the research under multiple relevant categories to ensure comprehensive representation. Therefore, the organizational structure of forensic linguistics presented here reflects actual research and practice within the discipline. In particular, the scope, volume, and quality of research conducted over the past 8 to 10 years demonstrate a growing interest and increasing activity in the field. Based on the expanding bibliography, the linguistic analysis is progressively being transformed into a practical tool of expertise, reinforcing the role of linguistics in forensic applications.

### Results

Within modern linguistics, the study of forensic linguistics is still regarded as a relatively new development. This is because many other fields have already been extensively examined by scholars through a linguistic lens in the context of international linguistics, with numerous analyses and research studies conducted. However, the study of courtroom discourse exploring the communicative dynamics within legal settings, accurately describing legal language, ensuring its proper use, and simplifying the speech of courtroom participants has become increasingly important. In the courtroom, the primary speakers include witnesses, lawyers, and judges. Notably, research focusing on courtroom speech and its pragmatic use has turned this area into one of the most promising subfields of forensic linguistics, with substantial potential to influence real-world legal outcomes.

It has been observed that courtroom discourse is characterized by the frequent use of foreign-derived terminology, improper use of standard literary language, and a high occurrence of errors in written legal documents.

### Discussion

The study of forensic linguistics by foreign scholars is considered a relatively new development for legal professionals. However, the direct adoption of information recommended by foreign researchers into the Uzbek language may lead to linguistic inaccuracies. A thorough investigation and linguistic analysis conducted by domestic linguists would not only contribute to the advancement of modern Uzbek linguistics but also be recognized as a significant achievement for professionals within the legal field.

### Conclusion

The primary objective of studying forensic linguistics is to ensure the correct use of the Uzbek language as the main form of communication in judicial processes, to promote the use of appropriate alternatives to foreign-derived legal terms, and to establish proper usage of international legal terminology.



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