

Lawyers' Perceptions of Forensic Linguistic Evidence in Arab Countries: A Call for Collaboration

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Abstract

Although forensic linguists (FLs) are being increasingly used in various Western countries, the concept of lawyers in the Arab world hiring a FL has not found its way to the legal system yet. This exploratory study examines Arab lawyers' awareness of the work of FLs and gauges their perceptions towards the use of forensic linguistic evidence and its admissibility in courts in Arab countries. A survey, comprising 18 questions and designed via the Google Forms website, was used for data collection. Analysis of lawyers' responses shows that lawyers in Arab countries, albeit their readiness to use medical and other expert witnesses in courts to support their cases, are reluctant to use the services of language specialists, i.e. FLs; for they view this as an indication of a lawyer's incompetence in native language interpretation and professional weakness. It seems that lawyers, by refusing to seek support from FLs in what they believe to be 100 percent their playground, are reinforcing their peculiar understanding of their professional competence. Nevertheless, the findings of the investigation underscore a significant shift in lawyers' perceptions of the role of FLs after they have learned of how their counterparts in Western countries utilize the services of FLs and forensic speech analysts in support of their defense in courts. The research concludes with limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and some recommendations for spreading awareness and knowledge of the forensic linguistics field in the Arab world.*

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Introduction

The past three decades have witnessed an exponential increase in the number of forensic linguists (FLs) being hired by lawyers in Western countries and a rapid expansion in the

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forensic linguistics field as more lawyers are becoming aware of the potential use of forensic linguistic analysis and the expertise of linguists in courts (Coulthard, Johnson and Wright, 2017). According to Coulthard (2005), FLs are most frequently called in to help a court answer one or both of two questions: what does a given text say, and who is its author? In answering these questions, linguists draw on knowledge and techniques derived from one or more of the sub-areas of descriptive linguistics: phonetics and phonology, lexis, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, discourse and text analysis (p.1). Coulthard, Johnson and Wright (2017) add that the FL has available to him/her a toolkit comprising “phonetic and phonological, morphological, syntactic, lexical, discursal, textual and pragmatic” aspects of the language (p. 105). Along the same lines, Olsson (2004) defines forensic linguistics as an application of linguistics in the context of crime, court proceeding, or arguments in law. Therefore, the FL may be called upon to analyze a wide variety of documents, e.g. agreements relating to ancient territorial disputes, the quality of court interpreting, an allegation of verballing (claims by defendants that their statements were altered by police officers), a disputed will, a suicide note, a ransom demand, etc. Consequently, the work of a FL spans everything from plagiarism, insurance contracts, trademarks and patents to court procedures, confessions, hate crimes and murder. Thus, forensic linguistics augments legal analysis by applying rigorous, scientifically accepted principles of linguistic analysis to legal evidence. In other words, “forensic linguistic analysis can be of value in virtually any case in which language can be considered evidence” (Leonard, Ford & Christensen, 2017, p. 897).

It is worth noting here that FLs “offer specialized testimony at trial concerning aspects of evidence that may be beyond the knowledge of the ordinary juror or judge” (Butters, 2009, p. 238). Related to this is Shuy’s (2001) observation that the interpretation and application of the law are overwhelmingly about language. Hence, there are many situations in which the expertise of a linguist – someone trained in the precise description and analysis of language (but not necessarily a person who knows many languages) – can make substantial contributions to a case, providing evidence one way or the other or simply clarifying the linguistic principles, problems, and processes that the case involves. This view is corroborated in the sayings of law specialists that “Whatever problems in legal interpretation exist must have something to do with our inability to succeed completely in governing ourselves under a rule of law driven so heavily by language” (Solan & Dahmen, 2018, pp. 298-299). Thus, there are calls for increased collaboration between FLs, lawyers and other legal professionals (Chaski, 2013; Coulthard, Johnson and Wright, 2017; Ariani, Sajedi & Sajedi, 2014; Leonard, Ford & Christensen, 2017).

At the time a great number of Western countries are striving to enhance the quality and use of forensic linguistic evidence in courts and strengthen the qualification requirements of FLs (Butters, 2009; Clarke, 2016; Clarke & Kredens, 2018; Coulthard, Johnson & Wright, 2017; Tiersma & Solan, 2002; etc.), the concept of lawyers in the Arab world hiring a FL has not found its way to the legal system yet. Although forensic linguistic courses, academic degrees in forensic linguistics (Clarke & Kredens, 2018) and forensic speech and acoustics labs (i.e. <https://www.jpffrench.com/>) are well recognized in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, and several other European countries, they are unknown and unheard of in the Arab world. Just as lawyers cannot diagnose and treat themselves when they fall ill and because persons are only experts in their fields, lawyers need the services of language specialists to help in the interpretation of legal texts and write expert reports for litigation purposes (McMenamin, Mistry, Morton & Yasuda, 2002; Udina, 2016) in the language(s) they are specialized in and draw on a host of other branches of language study to interpret texts. Furthermore, lawyers may not be knowledgeable of some academic practices, therefore; they need FLs to decide cases of academic plagiarism (Silva, 2013), the accuracy of the interpreters' renditions of non-native speakers' statements in foreign courts (Giordano, 2012), "the different strategies" used "to encapsulate defamatory meaning" (Nieto, 2020, p. 20), interpreters' preferences for renditions of voice and their consciousness of power asymmetry relations between lay-participants and legal professionals in courtrooms (Ng, 2011) and several other cases when language is the concern.

Therefore, it is the purpose of this exploratory study to report on the state-of-the-art of the field of forensic linguistics in the Arab world, to examine lawyers' awareness of the work of FLs and gauge their perceptions towards the use of forensic linguistic evidence and its admissibility in courts in Arab countries. More specifically, this exploratory research aims to find answers the following questions:

1. How aware are lawyers of the existence of the forensic linguistics field and the work of FLs?
2. Will they seek the services of FLs? If not, why not?
3. Do they think FLs' testimony will be accepted in courts?

Theoretical Bases

The lawyers' responses to the survey questions (see below) are analyzed within the theoretical framework of Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) concept of identity and Foucault's (1980) concept of "knowledge is power". For Bucholtz and Hall (2005), "identity is the social

positioning of self and other” (p. 586). The authors adopt a constructionist approach for the analysis of identity which hinges on the following principles: emergence, positionality, indexicality, relationality and partialness. The indexicality principle suggests that there are several means through which identity can be made manifest (Clarke & Kredens, 2018). In this regard, Li and Ran (2016) note that one’s professional self-image, which could be individual or collective, consists of such attributes as professional role, professional competence and professional ethics” (p. 48). In addition to these, Watson (2006) lists ‘professional knowledge’ as another component of professional identity. It entails a demonstration of superior knowledge (Sullivan, 2000). Along the same lines, Morris, Patel and Wearne (2000) argue that professions require a body of knowledge and competencies. Such attributes enable lawyers perform their work in the best manner possible. That is why Marra and Angouri (2011) see identity as something that people do and perform.

Methodology

This section describes the participants, the data collection tool and the data analysis procedures.

Participants

The target population for this study was all male and female lawyers in the Arab world, a nation of a total population of about 422 million inhabitants (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_world). Although the survey was open from February 2017 until October 2019, only 49 lawyers cooperated; a rather meager response which must be borne in mind when interpreting the findings of this study. Table 1 displays the respondents’ demographic details.

Survey

To pilot the survey, it was disseminated face-to-face to four volunteer lawyers residing and working in the United Arab Emirates. This was meant to determine and test the lawyers’ understanding of the survey items. Based on the lawyers’ responses and feedback on the piloted version of the questionnaire, some questions were revised and fine-tuned. The survey was also verified by an expert educationalist for accuracy. To get reliable and accurate feedback, the lawyers who participated in piloting the survey were excluded from the study. The survey*^[endnote] (see appendix) was originally written in English, but was presented to the respondents in Arabic to ensure that they understood each item on it. The Arabic version was compared with the original by two certified English-Arabic-Arabic-English translators to determine the equivalence between the two versions. The Google Forms site was used for

designing and posting the survey to prospective participants. It provides a fast way to create an online survey, with responses collected in an online spreadsheet.

TABLE 1.

Participants' Demographics

Place of work	Gender		Age in years				Work experience in years		
	Females	Males	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 +	4-8	9-15	16 +
Africa	1	34	3	11	16	5	17	8	12
Asia	0	14	4	7	2	1	7	2	3
Total	49		49				49		

The survey comprised an introduction and 18 questions. The introduction clearly stated that participating in this study was voluntary, and all participants had the right to withdraw from it at any point of time they wanted to. Also, it included a brief description of the study and the significance to the field. Furthermore, it guaranteed the participants that any collected data would only be used for scientific research and anonymous references would be used at all times (Cohen et al., 2017; Creswell, 2013). The first 7 questions requested simple demographic details about the participants' gender, nationality, place of work, years of experience and their first language, the language used in courts. Question 8 asked the participants to rate their competence of the language they use in courts. Then, questions from 9 to 11 asked them about what they would do if they faced language interpretation difficulties and whether they would have recourse to a qualified language expert or not. Question 12 introduced six authentic forensic linguistic cases that have been carefully selected from previous studies to represent a wide spectrum of the kind of work FLs carry out. This particular question fell half way through the survey and its inclusion marked a significant shift in the respondents' answers before and after it. The rest of the questions, 14 through 17 asked the respondents whether they would use language evidence the same way it was used in the sample cases presented to them. Question 18 presented a hypothetical case of a suicide note and asked the lawyers whether they would interpret it themselves or seek help from a FL.

Procedures

Lawyers Associations in the twenty-two Arab countries were contacted in February 2017 through their online websites and briefed on the context and contents of the study. It was agreed that the researcher would send them a Google survey link and, they, in turn, would share the

link with all member lawyers, inviting them to participate in the study. However, fourteen Lawyers Associations either did not respond to the various email messages sent to them, or declined to help with this research on the pretext that they had no control over their community members. Since there was no guarantee that all Lawyers Associations would help forward the survey link to all their members, the researcher, in an attempt to collect as many responses to the survey questions as possible, had to join various lawyers' closed Facebook groups, in which case, the researcher posted the link to the survey on these sites for the members to click on it and fill in the survey, if they wished. The survey could be accessed from any web browser - including mobile smartphones and tablet browsers.

Ethical Considerations

All survey responses were compiled anonymously from the responses provided by the Google Forms and decimals were rounded up to the nearest whole. Before proceeding with the study, permission to conduct this research was obtained from the American University of Sharjah's Institutional Review Board (IRB) Committee.

Analysis

The participants' choices regarding their own perceptions of their native language competence indicate that 61 % of the lawyers consider their command of the Arabic language as excellent, 33% as very good, and 6 % as good. When asked if they had ever consulted a language expert regarding some linguistic issue(s), answers show that only 31% responded with 'yes', whereas the rest (69%) chose 'no. Yet, they all failed to give examples of such consultations when asked to do so. When asked if they had encountered any language interpretation problems in their legal career, the responses were 'yes' (68%) and 'no' (32%). Although 68% reported facing language interpretation problems, they all, with the exception of one, failed to provide examples of such cases. The only example given was of a phrase in an employment contract that says: "*At the end of the contract, the second party (worker) is paid three months' salary*". The problem was in the interpretation of the phrase "three months' salary'. Does this mean the basic salary or the salary with all the other benefits included in it? Yet, those lawyers who admitted coming across interpretation problems indicated that they would personally try to interpret them. When asked about the reason(s) for not seeking expert opinion on linguistic issues, 40% of the respondents considered this as "a lawyer not doing his/her work", whereas 33% viewed this as "a weakness in the lawyer". The total percentages for lawyers not doing their work and lawyers' weakness, amounted to 73%. In spite of this and

regardless of the lawyers' perception that the use of forensic evidence in court depends on judges' conviction (Q17), the lawyers still viewed the use of FLs' services as helpful, as displayed in Figure 1 below.

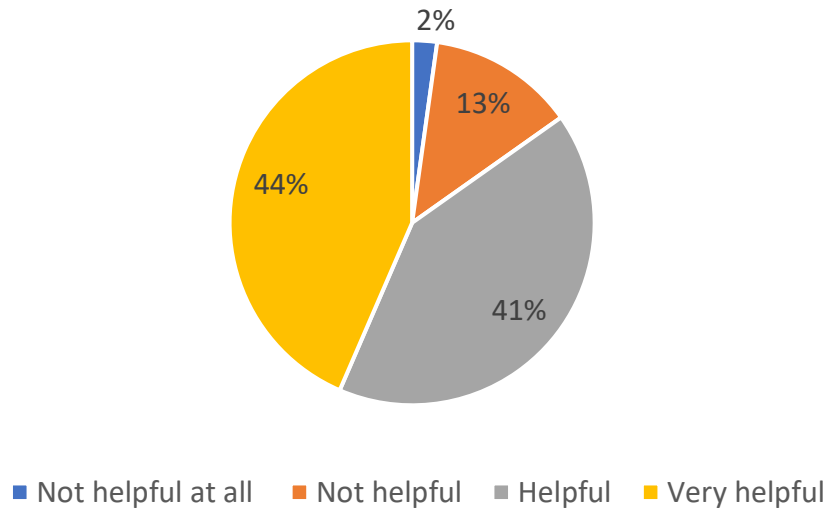


FIGURE 1. Lawyers' views on the usefulness of using the services of FLs.

Combining the two options, 'very helpful' and 'helpful', together; gives a total of 85%. This high percentage represents a positive change in the lawyers' perceptions of the services of FLs. These responses correlate with the responses (see Fig. 2) given to the hypothetical suicide case question posed in Q.18.

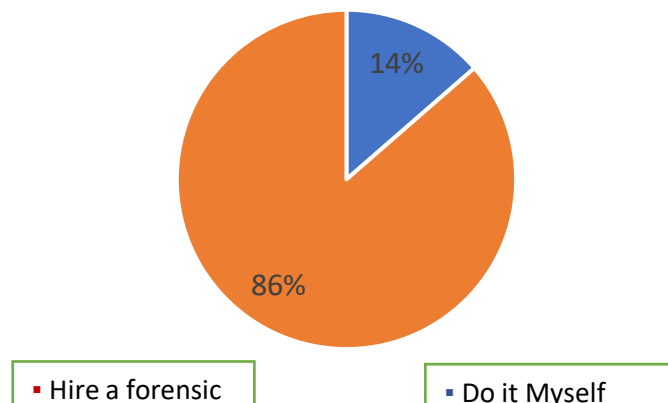


FIGURE 2. Responses to the hypothetical suicide case question.

Here, in spite of the small percentages for the other option, we notice a clear shift towards the use of FLs' services, which may have been brought about by presenting the sample forensic linguistic cases given in question 12 and the hypothetical suicide case presented in question 18.

It seems that this last question (18) has put the lawyers in a difficult situation because the whole case is based on linguistic evidence. Thus, 86% opted for the use of a FL's services.

Discussion

Although FLs' services are being increasingly used in various Western countries (Ainsworth, 2006, 2009; Clarke, 2016; Clarke & Kredens, 2018; Coulthard & Johnson, 2010; Coulthard, Johnson & Wright, 2017; Grant, 2010, 2013; Jordan, 2002; Olsson, 2004, 2013; Rajamanickam & Abdul Rahim, 2013; Shuy, 2002, 2006, 2007), preliminary evidence from the current study shows that lawyers in Arab countries, albeit their readiness to use medical and other types of evidence in courts (Jordan, 2002) to support their cases, are reluctant to use the services of language specialists, i.e. FLs; for they view this as an indication of a lawyer's incompetence in native language interpretation. The lawyers' reluctance to use the services of FLs may also be viewed as demonstrations of one's identity. That is to say, lawyers view bringing into the scene the professional knowledge and expertise of others as damaging to the concept of their "professional role, professional competence and professional ethics" (Li and Ran, 2016, p.48).

This interpretation may also be corroborated by the fact that the survey was posted on several Lawyers Associations' websites as well as various legal Facebook websites run and managed by lawyers for lawyers for over two and a half years, and only attracted 49 lawyers' responses. In other words, the survey may have not appealed to lawyers and attracted a big number of them because of their being unaware of the existence of the forensic linguistics field, or because of being unconvinced about the proposition of having recourse to the services of qualified language experts. Another support for this reluctance is Tiersma's (2009, p. 19) observation that although "linguistic knowledge can also be helpful in understanding the substance or content of the law", "the legal profession seems slow to recognize the point" (p.19).

Also, worth noting here are the concerns that some lawyers raised regarding the admissibility of forensic linguistic evidence in courts and the restrictions the law enforces on lawyers and judges concerning what type of evidence to use and exhibit in courts. Perhaps, their reluctance is also due to their knowledge of what judges may accept as evidence. In this context, Coulthard, Johnson and Wright (2017) cite the following incident:

indeed one judge in the US explicitly refused to admit the linguist Ellen Prince as an expert on the grounds that it is the function of the court to decide on meaning. Certainly, it is more difficult when the texts involved

are legal texts, because lawyers and judges usually see themselves as the guardians of and adjudicators on such meaning (p. 108).

Furthermore, it is sometimes argued that everybody who speaks a language knows pretty much how to interpret this language. That is why some lawyers, judges and members of the jury may view recruiting an expert on language as simply unnecessary (Butters, 2009. p. 239).

From the aforementioned, it seems that lawyers showcase their identity by refusing to accept any interference from others in what they believe to be 100 percent their playground on the pretext that accepting the work of a FL confirms their professional weakness and acknowledges that a FL, because of having the linguistic knowledge, is more powerful than the hiring lawyer. which may be a display of Foucault's (1980) concept 'knowledge is power'. That being said, the 86% responses to question 18 (Fig. 2) show a clear and positive shift in the respondents' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of the FLs' services, which may have been brought about by presenting the sample forensic linguistic cases given in question 12. This significant change may be increased through educating lawyers and all the legal profession personnel on the role FLs can play in legal proceedings (Ariani, Sajedi & Sajedi, 2014); Chaski, 2013). Yet, lawyers are still doubtful about the admissibility of such kind of evidence in courts in Arab countries, which calls for collaboration between proponents of forensic linguistic evidence and legislators. More specifically, the legal system in Arab countries needs to show how responsive and flexible it is by including language evidence in the list of evidences they accept and endorse. This, nowadays, becomes a must as a result of technological advancements that have produced evidence types that were not there before, such as emails, WhatsApp messages, fraud, identity theft, defamation messages, etc. This hinges on the proper understanding of Bucholtz and Hall's (2005, p. 598) principles of "relationality" and "partialness", in whose lights humans should have complementary relations to reach informed configurations of self and other, to overcome the partialness of knowledge. In the end, lawyers need to be told that FL are not forced on them, but are called upon by the lawyers (Rajamanickam & Abdul Rahim, 2013) who know what the language evidence might be, but they require the professional competence and academic credentials of the specialist language expert to gain this evidence more weight in court.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the above, forensic linguistics refers to the process of applying knowledge and theories of linguistics to legal documents and crimes including ransom notes, threatening and defamatory messages, extortion letters or other crime-related communications. Regardless of

whether the communication is typed, handwritten, electronic, or verbal, forensic linguists use the style, tone, and other linguistic elements as criminal profiling tools to see inside the mind of the document's creator. Even the briefest of texting and Twitter threats can be analyzed using forensic linguistic methods (Grant, 2013). Henceforth, it is undeniable that forensic linguistics plays a significant role in selecting the most relevant evidence and in making the information much more comprehensible to lawyers, judges and the courts. This research represents a modest attempt from the author to spread knowledge on the meaning and uses of forensic linguistic evidence, the exponentially expanding forensic linguistics field and the services FLs and forensic speech analysts could offer lawyers in the Arab world in an attempt to enhance justice and human rights. Although this study demonstrates positive shifts in the lawyers' perceptions of the employment of forensic linguistic evidence, the results should be cautiously interpreted because of the very low number of respondents. Thus, future researchers may personally approach lawyers, judges, law enforcement personnel and, most importantly, legislators to check and verify their viewpoints regarding the subject. That said, the researcher proposes the following to spread more awareness and knowledge of the forensic linguistics field in Arab countries and others with similar contexts:

- Educating legal professionals on the nature of forensic linguistics and the role of FLs in language interpretation.
- Hosting and offering seminars/conferences for all interested parties and hosting renowned FLs and forensic speech analysts in the field (Gold & French, 2011).
- Lawyers, judges, and all legal professionals need to be assured that a forensic linguist is only a language expert witness, or in Selinker's (1979) words, "a specialist informant", whose work should be perceived as assisting the court in reaching a decision and achieving justice (Ainsworth, 2009; Ariani, Sajedi & Sajedi, 2014; Coulthard, 2010; Clarke, 2018; Clarke & Kredens, 2018; Grant 2013).
- Setting up forensic linguistics centres and university degrees for those interested in the field (Anjum, 2017).
- Planning and offering professional development programmes on forensic linguistics for police officers, lawyers, judges, the legal profession staff, and the interested public.
- Campaigning for the inclusion of forensic linguistic evidence in courts through the various media outlets and promoting that if the evidence is relevant, then it is admissible to court (Rajamanickam & Abdul Rahim, 2013).

- Importing and building on forensic linguistic rules Western countries have developed.
- Continuing the hard work on enhancing and improving the quality of forensic linguistic evidence.
- Considering the formation and appointment in courts of what Edmond and Roberts (2011, p. 292) have termed “an independent multidisciplinary advisory panel” to examine expert opinion evidence and advise judges on their accuracy and admissibility.
- Translating seminal books and academic articles in the field into Arabic to make the knowledge and information they contain available to speakers of the Arabic language.

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Appendix

Lawyers' Perceptions of Forensic Linguistic Evidence and its Admissibility in Courts

This questionnaire aims to collect information about lawyers' attitudes towards and perceptions of the work of forensic linguists (i.e. specialized and qualified language experts), and the admissibility of language evidence in courts. I would appreciate your help by answering the following questions. Your honest and sincere responses are highly valued. The questionnaire is anonymous and you do not need to provide your name. It is designed on a voluntary basis. It will take you around ten minutes to fill it in. All collected responses will be used for the purposes of this study only. Thank you very much for your help.

I. Kindly complete the following:

1. Gender:

a) Male

b) Female

2. Age

a) 21-29

b) 30-39

c) 40- 49

d)50+

3. Nationality:

4. How long have you been working as a lawyer?

a. 0- 4

b) 5-8

c) 9-15

d) 16+

5. Name of country where you work: -----

6. What is your first language? -----

7. Is it the same language you use in court(s)?

Yes

No

8. How good do you think is your command of this language?

Perfect

Reasonable

9. Did you ever experience any cases in which the interpretation of language (i.e. articles, clauses, contracts, wills etc.) was the main concern?

Yes

No

10. What do you normally do in such cases?

-I interpret the intended meaning myself

-I use a language specialist to correctly interpret the intended meaning, and write a report that I can use in court as evidence

11. Would you please provide examples of any cases where language ambiguity was an issue? Please write in the space provided below.

12. Examples of litigation cases where forensic linguists'/phoneticians' opinions have been used.

Case One

In 1998 the UK Court of Appeal pardoned Derek Bently for his role in the murder of a police officer. Linguistic evidence contributed to the successful appeal as an English Forensic Linguist Prof. Malcolm Coulthard was able to show that the written confession was more likely to be in the language of the police officers than the language of Derek Bently.

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples.

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

Case Two

Another occasion where dialectic variation gave information about the suspect's identity was the case of a ransom note analyzed by Professor Roger Shuy in the States in 2001. Although the suspect included misspellings of words such as daughter for daughter or kops for cops, his correct spelling of more difficult words such as precious, diaper or watching led Prof. Shuy to believe that the author of the note was trying to appear less educated than he was. However, what really helped determine the writer of the note was the uncommon use of devil strip, a term denoting the strip of grass between the sidewalk and the curb that is only used in the area surrounding Akron, Ohio. As there was only one educated man from Akron in the suspect list, the police did not take long to find other clues that also incriminated him.

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples. -----

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

Case Three

Telephone text messages (SMSs) are another type of linguistic evidence that has increasingly been used in courts. For example, in 2008 a UK Criminal Court heard

evidence from a forensic linguist Prof. Tim Grant in a case of murder. Prof. Grant was able to show that the text messages that provided an alibi for the main suspect were written by the suspect and not his wife, even though they were sent from the wife's phone.

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples.

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

Case Four

One famous example of forensic speaker identification is the Prinzivalli case in the States in 1994. Prinzivalli was an employee of Pan American Airlines suspected of making telephone bomb threats to his employer in Los Angeles because: a) he was known to be an unhappy employee, and b) he was a New Yorker (the caller making the threat was believed to have a New York accent). Prof. Labov was given a tape with the original threat and another one with samples produced by the suspect. Based on the distribution of certain vowels, he determined that the person who issued the threat was actually from Eastern New England and not from New York City (Prinzivalli was acquitted).

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples. -----

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

Case Five

In November 2014 a hoax call was made to West Midlands Police about a car containing a firearm. The call was made from the mobile phone of the suspect, Mr Sadiq. Prof. Rhodes was instructed by Birmingham Magistrates Court to compare the voice of Mr Sadiq with the hoax caller. By making a reference recording of Mr. Sadiq's voice over the telephone, he was able to show very significant differences between the two voices, to the extent that the possibility of Mr. Sadiq being the caller could effectively be ruled out. The Judge Magistrate in the case acknowledged that

without the voice evidence, Mr. Sadiq would have been wrongly convicted of the offence.

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples. -----

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

Case Six

In 2006 in the States Prof. Ronald R. Butters, in a trademark litigation case, was hired by the defence to give his expert opinion concerning the possible confusion between Aventis and Advancis,. The presiding Judge was persuaded by the forensic linguist's arguments that the two marks were confusingly similar. And this view in turn formed a fundamental basis for the Judge's decision in favor of the plaintiff.

-Do you know of any cases in your jurisdiction that have used linguistic evidence in this way?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide examples. -----

-Do you think this sort of linguistic evidence could ever be admitted in your jurisdiction?

Yes

No

If no, kindly say why? -----

13. Regardless of your responses to the above questions, what will make you resort to a forensic linguist?

-To have an objective opinion that may support my defense in court

-Because my knowledge of the grammar and structure of the language is not that perfect

14. Did you ever use/consult with a forensic linguist regarding any linguistic issues?

Yes

No

15. Do you consider using the services of a forensic linguist to help in the interpretation of any linguistic issues as a sign of a lawyer's confidence in him/herself?

Yes

No

If no, why? Please tick one or all that apply.

- The lawyer is not doing his/her work
- This is a weakness in the lawyer

16. In your opinion, how helpful is it for lawyers to use forensic linguists in the cases of language related issues?

- a) not helpful at all b) not helpful c) helpful d) very helpful

17. Do you think that such a practice enhances a lawyer's chances of winning legal cases?

- Yes No Not sure

18. If you get a case for someone who committed suicide, and left behind a typed suicide note in which he tells the family why he did this, but the family strongly believes that he was killed by a friend; and that this friend is the one who wrote the suicide note.

-Will you consider using the services of a forensic linguist to determine

the author of this suicide note, or try to do this yourself?

- Hire a forensic linguist
- Do it myself

If you decide to do it yourself, what will you do? -----

Thank you for your time and cooperation!

* The researcher expresses his gratitude to Prof. Dr. Tim Grant, Director of the Centre for Forensic Linguistics at Aston University in the UK, for giving feedback on an earlier version of this survey and for suggesting the addition of some forensic linguistic cases to it.