

Research article: Evidentiality in the Interrogator's Persuasion

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Abstract

Forensic Linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that began its work in the US and European courts in 1997. Since then, linguists have been able to expedite the processing of many cases by analyzing linguistic tools. Forensic Linguistics, which is one of the new trends in applied linguistics, aims to spread and achieve justice in the community, widely used in all areas of linguistics, such as Discourse Analysis, Syntax, Semantics, Phonology, Dialectics, Phonetics, and Stylistics. The approach taken by Fairclough (1989:5) for language analysis is called Critical Language Study (henceforth CLS). This critical approach pursues the specific purpose of revealing the connection between language, power, and ideology that is hidden to the people. In his view (1995:555), the purpose of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) is to formulate the link between the features of texts and discursive interactions and the cultural-social characteristics of the contexts in which they are used.

The importance of examining the defendants' discourse is such that the judge issues the final verdict based on the evidence in the case and the analysis of the truth of their defense. Language is a means of communication that humans owe their survival to. Moreover, the knowledge of linguistic tools helps to appreciate each other.

Evidentiality is a linguistic tool to specify information source as well as speaker or writer performance in order to make clear their speech in a way that news validity has a greater impact on the audience. Studies show that different texts can be divided into separate categories.

Forensic Linguistics as a new science which has started its work since 1997 in judicial courts of America and England can accelerate the process of handling judicial cases and help judge and interrogator in judgment. The use and significance of evidential structures are determined when an accused person attempted to swear

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by any means, except for an accident, etc., from the charge of a crime, show the truth of his speech and convince the judge or interrogator.

So, the aim of the current research is to investigate the effect of the verbal application of evidentiality used in judge or interrogator's persuasion. In this research, we analyzed the statements of two accused of murder (a man and a woman) in two criminal cases based on Forensic Linguistics and linguistic tools.

The findings of this research showed that the accused individuals use evidentiality as a linguistic tool to persuade the interrogator and then deny the accusation. Also, the results of the current research showed that the accused individuals use simple past tense, reported structures, evidential verbs like seeing, as a sensory verb, evidential words and swearing for a greater impact, increasing credibility of their speech and persuading the interrogator. The authors of this study seek to answer the question of whether using evidential constructions as a linguistic tool can persuade a judge or interrogator to do something or prevent him or her from doing something and how the accused individuals use these constructions as the discourse strategy in order to persuade the judge and the interrogator to absolve themselves from the accusation of committing the crime.

Evidentiality is a grammatical category whose primary meaning is the source of the news. This category covers the way information is acquired without being related to the degree of certainty of the speaker's statements and their correctness and incorrectness (Aikhenvald, 2004:3). He also said that about one fourth of the world languages have evidentiality as grammatical categories whose role is to represent the source of information. For example, in a language, such as the Jarawara language (including the Amazonian languages in which evidentiality is observed readily, and is used as a grammatical category), in the south of the Amazon, it introduces what the speaker observes as the first-hand evidentiality. He uses a non-first-hand evidentiality of what he does not observe. The results showed that the accused individuals attempted to make use of evidential verbs, perceptual verbs, and evidential words such as general, numbers, demonstratives, spatial and temporal markers, and oaths to show the truth of their speech. Also, the findings showed that they attempted to deceive the interrogator and absolve themselves of accusations by using these evidential constructions.

The present study consists of four sections. In the first section, we introduce the field of Forensic Linguistics and the use of evidential constructions in the analysis of forensic discourse comprising speech or written. Then we will introduce a number of done researches in the field of Forensic Linguistics. Also, we will explain the nature of the methodology of this study, and provide a brief description of the trend of the two case studies which are analyzed during this study. In the next section, we will focus on the theoretical foundations used in data analysis. In the third section, we will analyze and examine the statements of the accused individuals by providing examples of two real cases based on the above mentioned theoretical grounds. And in the closing section, we will provide a brief description of the findings of the present study.

Key words: Forensic Linguistics, Evidential Constructions, Persuasion, Judge or Interrogator