A Forensic Linguistic Analysis of a Suicide Note: Examining Authenticity, Cultural Context and Institutional Influence

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Abstract

This paper aims to determine through forensic linguistic means the authenticity of a suicide note of Muhammad Afzal Mehmood, an English literature lecturer accused of harassment. The study follows a qualitative approach in grammatical structure, lexical choices, emotive tone and contextual relevance. The present study will attempt to determine whether the note in question fits the established patterns of genuine suicide notes by comparing the linguistic features of the note against the corpus of genuine and fabricated notes documented in prior forensic studies. This research embeds a socio-cultural and institutional context reflecting upon how societal and institutional dynamics impact the authenticity and interpretation of such notes. It points, especially to the influence of social media and supportive institutions, the lack of such accusations on the individuals. These findings identify that though Afzal received public support, the absence of formal institutional exoneration certainly contributed to lingering despair, as his note identifying dates makes clear. The work at this moment represents a contribution to forensic linguistics because it insists on adopting culturally sensitive methodologies and further refines ways in which the broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts may be taken into consideration so that suicide note analysis becomes more reliable and valid for legal investigation purposes.

Keywords: Forensic linguistics, Suicide note authenticity, Cultural context in forensic analysis

Introduction

Written document analysis in crime and psychological investigations has reached a point where a suicide note can mean the difference between prosecution and acquittal. Forensic linguistics is a scientific approach lying at the juncture between linguistic theory and legal processes. This is important in the uncovering of meaning through the language, structure, and context of documents that help determine authenticity and provide insight into case circumstances. Given the high stakes likely distinguishing actual suicide from potential foul play, for example, forensic linguistics has become an indispensable tool in both law enforcement and legal circles. The forensic linguistic study of a suicide note written by an accused harasser is currently being conducted. The suicide note constitutes a critical piece of evidence. The authenticity and mental state are scrutinised and validated. This research will analyse the note from a forensic linguistic perspective, investigating its dichotomy: whether linguistic and stylistic features align with or deviate from typical characteristics of suicide notes, aiming at clarifying the note's authenticity and the individual's psychological condition.

1.1 Background of the Study

Forensic linguistics is a fusion between linguistics and the law that, over time, has become quite important in criminal investigations, especially when a determination has to be made on whether a suicide note was actually written by its supposed author. A suicide note is one of the most important pieces of evidence used both legally and psychologically as it may afford insight into the last thoughts, motives, and state of mind of the victim (Ioannou & Debowska, 2014). However, the real challenge for forensic experts lies in distinguishing between the case when a note is indeed written by the deceased and when it is fabricated in order to camouflage foul play. For such cases,

forensic linguistic analysis becomes an important tool in distinguishing between genuine from fabricated notes.

Linguistic features assessed when analyzing suicide notes for consistency with authentic notes include syntax, lexical choice, punctuation, and emotional tone (Lee & Joh, 2019). In fact, a series of research has suggested that in genuine notes, there are noticed preponderant themes that include expressions of distress, personal reflections, and emotional reasoning amenable to orderly forensic linguistic analysis (Fata et al., 2021). This work uses such approaches to analyze one case of a suicide note left by a person who was accused of harassment in order to try and validate if, as a matter of fact, the note was written by the accused.

1.2 Problem Statement

Despite advancements in forensic linguistics, language analysis cannot guarantee the authenticity of a text as a suicide note. This is due to the challenge of distinguishing between genuine and counterfeit notes, as their linguistic characteristics may occasionally converge, complicating the establishment of a definitive criterion for validity. In the case analysed, the suicide note is connected with an accusation of harassment; therefore, one may question its cogency and whether it could have been written under pressure. The ability to conduct an effective document verification process is the need of prime eminence since the documents in question have direct implications on the legal outcome and the quest for justice.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To analyse the linguistic and stylistic features of the suicide note using forensic linguistic methods and determine whether these features align with those documented in genuine cases.
- To validate the authenticity of the suicide, note and assess if it reflects genuine distress or if there is evidence of fabrication or manipulation.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge by refining forensic linguistic techniques, making them more adaptable for different cultural and contextual scenarios.

1.4 Research Questions

The research addresses the following questions:

1. What linguistic and stylistic features are present in the analysed suicide note, and how do they compare with those found in forensic linguistic literature?
2. To what extent do these features suggest the authenticity of the note and the individual's state of mind?
3. How can forensic linguistic methods be improved or refined to enhance the reliability of suicide note analysis in legal investigations?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This will be an important study in so far as it can further the field of forensic linguistics, which aims to achieve precision and consistency in suicide note analysis. After all, proper identification of true suicidal notes is sometimes crucial in legal contexts, especially for the purpose of distinguishing between self-inflicted injury and possible foul play. This project applies and refines the best methods from existing forensic linguistic research to arrive at a holistic understanding of the linguistic pattern in suicide notes. It also seeks to refine the processes of investigation using this knowledge. At an even more important level, this study points to cultural and situational factors to be taken into account in analysing linguistic evidence for making forensic techniques robust and adaptable across diverse situations.

This study attempts to establish the genuineness of a suicide note attributed to harassment with the help of forensic linguistic analysis. This research, therefore, tries to improve the cavity in the methodology at present and further enhances the reliability of linguistic profiling so that this branch becomes strong in the sphere of forensic investigation to safeguard justice and truth.

2.0 Literature Review

This section reviews the key literature and developments relating to forensic linguistics, especially with regard to the analysis of suicide notes. *Forensic Linguistics* is an applied discipline that connects language to law. In a criminal investigation in which the authenticity of a written document, like a suicide note, for example, is questioned, forensic linguistics is of utmost importance. Authenticating the suicide note will determine whether it is a real self-inflicted death or whether foul play is concerned. This literature review identifies the linguistic characteristics that distinguish genuine from fabricated suicide notes, challenges encountered in differentiating these, and methodological approaches which are being pursued by forensic analysis. Furthermore, it probes into issues of cultural and contextual influences on the language of suicide notes that call for adaptive frameworks. It concludes the review with recent advances in technology and some future directions of research, placing great emphasis on the continuous evolution and refinement that are necessary if forensic linguistics is to remain effectively applied in criminal investigations.

2.1 Introduction to Forensic Linguistics and Suicide Notes

Forensic linguistics is an applied field that bridges linguistics and legal matters, especially in criminal investigations, where the authenticity and authorship of written documents are contested. The branch, therefore, helps the course of criminal investigations in such aspects as determining who may have prepared some suicide notes that are critical evidence in forensic cases and offer insight into an individual's state of mind and his motivations (Coulthard, 2010). Authentication of such notes will help in determining whether the death is actually a suicide or a homicide masked as a suicide (Shapero, 2011). This paper reviews the literature on developing and applying forensic linguistic methods to analyse suicide notes, with a focus on recent developments and challenges in differentiating genuine from fabricated notes.

2.2 Features of Genuine Suicide Notes

Research has consistently documented specific linguistic and stylistic features of genuine suicide notes that distinguish them from those that are fabricated. Ioannou and Debowska (2014) noted that themes of *"escape," "self-blame,"* and *"purposelessness"* in authentic notes were indicative of great emotional pain. These are characterized by the frequent use of personal pronouns and emotive reasoning when constructing a narrative that is at once personal and reflective. These linguistic features have been further explored by Fata et al. (2021), who underlined the fact that authentic notes are more internally coherent and candidly descriptive of the state of mind of the writer, suggesting that these aspects carry more valid markers of authenticity.

Lee and Joh (2019) have conducted a study that has the potential to advance forensic analysis significantly. By adopting a combined forensic-linguistic and machine-learning approach in classifying suicidally performed notes, they have revealed the high incidence of first-person singular pronoun "I" and hopeless sentences as characteristic markers of authentic notes. Their research has shown that linguistic analysis combined with machine learning can significantly improve the accuracy in discriminating between real and simulated notes, thereby opening up new avenues for development in forensic analysis.

2.3 Challenges in Distinguishing Authentic and Fabricated Notes

While some linguistic patterns may confirm truthfulness, the problem facing forensic linguists rests in the fact that there is some overlapping from the authentic to the fabricated suicide notes. As pointed out by Grundlingh (2020), this has given rise to the need for the development of a clear-cut criterion to differentiate between the two note types, mainly since fabricated notes also make use of genuine patterns, for example, the use of personal pronouns or declarations of distress. Thirdly, cultural contextual factors explain the more or less convincing language and form in suicide notes; Abaalkhail (2020) states that *"what is regarded as authentic in one cultural context may or may not pertain to another."*.

Nick (2022) also pointed out that false positives can occur since genuine notes can be wrongly understood as hoaxes because of the subjective understanding of linguistic markers. He emphasised that for reliable analyses, both criteria and methods must be standardised with the incorporation of detailed knowledge, for example, on the suspect's cultural background and psychological history.

2.4 Methodological Approaches in Forensic Linguistic Analysis

A range of different methodological approaches has been developed that serve to enhance validity in suicide note analysis. Corpus-based analysis, for instance, allows researchers to compare hundreds of suicide notes to search for common linguistic patterns (Shapero, 2011). In this respect, such an approach has indeed been able to distinguish statistically between authentic and fabricated notes, particularly in those cases combined with genre theory, which focuses on the structural elements and rhetorical moves within a text (Marcińczuk & Zaśko-Zielińska, 2011).

It has also been used in forensic linguistics to try and fine-tune the analysis of suicide notes. Lee and Joh (2019) applied machine learning algorithms to classify the notes based on linguistic features. They demonstrated higher accuracy rates compared to manual analysis. This method allows for predictive models that can be trained on large datasets of suicide notes, further bolstering the reliability of finding those patterns indicative of authenticity.

Statistical prediction rules are another latest method that is gaining limelight in the forensic study of linguistics. Jones and Bennell (2007) constructed a model based on coded linguistic features that included content structure and emotional expressions, which were identified as genuine from simulated notes. As the research presented states, if statistical models complement linguistic analysis, then the likelihood of a note falling just right of its identification regarding its authenticity is extremely high. Successively, this approach has been further validated, with recent contributions including data from a variety of cultural contexts and, hence, showing its adaptability and robustness (Fata et al., 2021).

2.5 Cultural and Contextual Considerations

Suicide note modelling, therefore, applying forensic linguistics to such is indeed very limited, especially when differing cultures and contexts are realized. For instance, Abaalkhail (2020) has remarked that linguistic markers indicative of authenticity can vary significantly across cultures. For example, themes of honour and shame might be considered highly important in some cultural contexts and, therefore, more saliently present in authentic notes emanating from such cultural backgrounds. Kanyama (2023) studied Namibian suicide notes for their themes and concluded with 508 findings that they had been dominated by such culturally particular themes as family obligation and community honour; hence, there is a need to consider analytical frameworks that can accommodate such variables.

Maulida et al. (2023) further reinforced this view in their study of linguistic features of suicide notes within an Indonesian context. Their research demonstrated how local sociocultural factors influence the language of self-destruction. They argued that forensic linguistics must adapt to

different cultural contexts and consider other cultural narratives. Only by doing so can the field ensure the relevance and precision of its analyses across cultures.

2.6 Steps Forward and Integration of Technology into Forensic Linguistics

The integration of technology has really gone a long way in enhancing the capacity of forensic linguistics to deal with complicated cases of suicide notes. Machine learning, as applied by Lee and Joh (2019), has increased the precision of the analyses; similarly, corpus-based approaches enable the recognition of big patterns that enhance the credibility of its findings (Marcińczuk & Zaśko-Zielińska, 2011). This shows an increasing tendency toward the qualitative-quantitative combination method to get more accurate and viable results.

The application of predictive models to the forensic domain, such as those suggested by Ioannou and Debowska (2014), allows for an amendment of existing frameworks so that their applicability is extended. By incorporating a wide array of diverse datasets and cultural contexts, these models can be adapted to various forensic scenarios, which would make them needed and necessary for investigations and applications in law enforcement and the judicial system (Maulida et al., 2023).

2.7 Research Gap

While machine learning and statistical models sound so promising, the need for standardised selection criteria and variation of linguistic markers because of cultural differences pose continuous challenges. Nick (2022) and Grundlingh (2020) highlighted the necessity of establishing universal standards that integrate both linguistic and contextual components. This would provide a more comprehensive approach to examining suicide notes. Future research should expand their datasets to encompass diverse cultures and languages, hence facilitating the generalization of results. The integration of psychological profiling and a linguistic approach would provide profound insights into the motivational factors and emotional patterns present in suicide notes, hence improving the precision of forensic studies.

2.8 Conclusion

Forensic linguistics provides a number of the fundamental tools that are required to distinguish between false and authentic suicide notes, ensuring that legal works are accomplished and judgments truly carried out. Further, because methodologies are pressed by challenges about cultural variability and the transfer of linguistic markers, further refinement is recommended. Forensic linguistics can be even stronger and more specific if it adopts technological advances, extends research to different contexts, and comes up with standardized criteria so that criminal investigations related to suicide notes ensure justice and accuracy.

3.0 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This study is grounded in Genre Theory, as it is particularly suitable for forensic linguistic analysis of suicide notes. Genre Theory provides a systematic framework for understanding the rules and patterns that characterize different kinds of communication, including suicide notes. The theory befits this study and is thus appropriate for it since it systematically gives the means of identifying whether the linguistic and rhetorical features of a suicide note concur or not with those conventionally observed in genuine suicide notes, thereby helping assess its authenticity.

3.1 Genre Theory

Swales (1990) developed the genre theory that *"texts represent socially recognized forms of communication, the structures of which are conventionally used to realize particular communicative functions."* As a genre, suicide notes more often display typical linguistic and rhetorical patterns, including expressions of despair, apology, and explanations for the writer's decision.

While it is essentially a linguistic pattern, it is equally allied to the social and dynamic purposes that the notes are supposed to serve. This paper effectively applies Genre Theory to find out if the note under consideration meets the typical structure and emotional tone for an authentic suicide note. The study carries out a systematic exercise in genre theory, considering the linguistic and structural features of the note with respect to the use of personal pronouns and emotive expressions, the organization of the text against patterns from genuine suicide notes in previous studies. This theory now enables the analysis to indicate whether the note fits these established patterns or does not fit them in a way which may suggest fabrication.

3.1.1 Application of Genre Theory in the Study

In the context of this study, Genre Theory is used to:

3.1.1.1 Typical Characteristics Identification

The study looks back at the suicide note for typical features that usually insist on genuine suicide notes, such as personal reflection, emotional appeal, and hopelessness. These elements are critical in establishing whether the note fits the rhetorical pattern common to genuine cases. The note is then compared to established patterns: features of the note are systematically compared to the corpus of authentic suicide notes. This would establish whether the note was in line with the genre or if it presented inconsistencies that may suggest fabrication or manipulation. Contextualise the Note: Genre Theory also focuses on contextualism. The research combines the cultural and situational context of the note and, hence, makes the analysis sensitive to see how cultural conventions and societal expectations may impact the language used. For example, the use of spiritual beliefs and society-based notions of honour may differ across cultures and should be considered when testing the authenticity of the letter. This research, therefore, located within Genre Theory, offers a systematised and valid approach to the analysis of suicide notes, drawing its negotiation in general conventions of the genre. This will allow checking linguistic and structural features of the note in as much detail as possible against features existing in genuine suicide notes; hence, it provides sound ground upon which to conduct a forensic assessment.

3.2 Methodology

In this study, the methodology will adopt a qualitative approach to forensic linguistics that shall analyse the authenticity of the lecturer's alleged harassment through the suicide note. This approach focuses on the syntax, lexical choices, and emotional tone of the note, as well as the structural elements. In this paper, an attempt has been made through the application of stylistic profiling in order to find indicators commonly found in genuine suicide notes, such as pronouns, words of distress, and emotive language. These linguistic features were analysed within a larger sociocultural context in order to establish whether there was consistency with known patterns or deviations that might indicate falsification. It will also involve a comparative review with a corpus of authentic and fabricated suicide notes from previous forensic studies, validating findings. This would then combine linguistic profiling with contextual analysis to ensure that an investigation is both culturally sensitive and comprehensive, setting it to international forensic linguistic standards.

3.2.1 Research Design

This paper presents a qualitative forensic linguistic examination to establish the authenticity of the alleged lecturer's suicide note accused of harassment. The stylistic and linguistic profiling approaches, syntax, and lexical choices are applied, in addition to punctuation and emotional tone, as markers either of genuineness or of fabrication (Ioannou & Debowska, 2014; Shapero, 2011). In this regard, forensic linguistic analysis has to be done to find the writer's intention and emotional state, which are considered important factors during authenticity evaluation.

3.2.2 Data collection

In this study, the suicide note per se stands as the source of primary data. The linguistic elements to be analysed involve the use of personal pronouns such as "I" and "me", emotionally charged language, and sentence structure, indices widely recognised in the literature as authentic suicide notes. Authentic notes most often include expressions of hopelessness, distress, or regret in a consistent and personal account-a narrative that reflects the inner world of the writer. Fata et al. (2021) and Lee & Joh (2019) state that consistency is critical in distinguishing genuine notes from fabricated ones, which are usually less emotionally deep or show a pattern different from what would be expected of the genuine suffering mind.

3.2.3 Data analysis

The analysis in the present study is employed by a comparative component, with the study of a corpus of documented notes left around the time of suicide. The corpus was created through real and constructed instances from prior forensic linguistic work. The research finds similarities in light of the linguistic patterns identified in the analysed note against the ones represented in the corpus and discrepancies which give substance to a full-fledged comparative framework. (Marcińczuk & Zaśko-Zielińska 2011; Nick 2022). Such a comparison is useful in confirming the qualitative observations when searching for patterns that are statistically significant in authentic notes.

It also encompasses the situational and sociocultural background of the individual concerned in the analysis. Realising that cultural contexts bear important implications for language expression; the study ensures that these are taken into consideration during the evaluation. This context-sensitive approach is most important in forensic cases of varied populations because it enhances the possibility of greater accuracy and a culturally sensitive judgment in the assessment of whether or not the note is authentic.

To ensure that any analysis is valid and reliable, measures of inter-coder reliability are enacted. Several forensic experts will, independently of one another, analyse the note based on the same linguistic criteria set forth. This diminishes subjective bias as well as provides consistency among the various ratings and assessments (Jones & Bennell, 2007). Furthermore, to ensure the results of the stylistic analysis are reliable and the conclusions reached warrant the result, the findings are cross-validated against the corpus data to maximise, reducing the opportunity for false positives or inconsistencies.

3.2.4 Ethical consideration

This is very sensitive research on the notes left behind by people who have committed suicide, so ethical issues must be considered. The research will not disclose the identity of any individual who participated. In order to conduct secondary data analysis, information is sourced from ethically cleared sources. In this way, the research hopes to add to the forensic linguistic field an accurate and culturally sensitive means by which suicide notes can be analyzed in an ethically appropriate manner in order to further justice and the truth.

This integrated approach to investigation grounds itself in the methodology of forensic linguistics and contextual analyses, ensuring that professional and rigorous means are followed in light of international academic standards and best practices for forensic research.

4. Analysis: Detailed Analysis of the Suicide Note

4.0 Introduction

The present chapter conducts a detailed forensic linguistic analysis of Muhammad Afzal Mehmood's suicide note, who was a professor of English literature and allegedly harassed a

student. The following analysis draws on the tone of the in-note language, emotion, and linguistic features to garner points of inconsistency and consistency with his personal and social context in order to reach a judgment about the authenticity of the note being the work of the accused. This chapter applies forensic standards to assess how well the note matches known patterns of genuine suicide notes. Supporting evidence integrated in this analysis includes social media posts and other communications. The analysis aims to embed the note within the broader societal and institutional influences on the writer to gain a full understanding of the motivations and state of mind reflected in the note.

4.1An Overview of the History of Suicide Note

The note that Muhammad Afzal Mehmood left behind showed the strength of feeling regarding injustice and the hopelessness of life. In his short note (figure 1), he appealed to divine justice: ***"I leave the matter in the court of Allah.". "The police are requested not to investigate and bother anybody."*** The invocation of spiritual authority instead of making any legal move reflects the feeling of disappointment that he had in institutional and societal mechanisms, as he felt abandoned despite being exonerated by the inquiry. The shortness and tone of the note conform to the findings in actual suicide notes, where the amount of core emotional problems are discussed with the criminal, considering their decision to be final (Express Tribune, 2019).

The case received a lot of media attention and many public personas were vocal about the ***#MeToo*** movement getting abused when there was no investigation into the allegations. A public discussion like this underscored the fact that unless social discourses are tamed, the ruthless stories they spread have obvious potent implications for the destruction of lives if the allegations might, in fact, prove the accused innocent later on. This sort of public advocacy notwithstanding, Afzal was hard hit by such institutional silence, and further shows how negligence of a social and institutional nature proved deadly in sensitive cases (Dunya News, 2019).

This incident of tragedy, reported by The Current on October 29, 2019, resulted in institutional consequences, including the eventual removal of the principal of the college. The publication underlined that this administrative action was related to the college's failure to provide the necessary support and official documentation to clear Afzal's name. Media plays a very important role in amplifying this story both in support and against Afzal in pointing toward the complex intersection between social media influence and formal institutional procedures.

4.2 Analysis of the Suicide Note

Muhammad Afzal Mehmood's suicide note, which he left behind, serves as crucial evidence for reconstructing the sequence of events that led to his tragic death. In this regard, forensic linguistic analysis will provide a strong method of investigation wherein questions can be raised concerning the structure, language, and content of the note, where one is able to establish its authenticity and examine its alignment with life events in detail. This is done in accordance with the stipulated international forensic standards, which require the analysis of linguistic features, emotional tone, and coherence of the context in which a note was written. It integrates all evidence, like posts on social media and communications, that support the findings and conclusions of the interpretation and analysis.

The suicide note is short, consisting of only a few sentences: ***"I leave the matter in the court of Allah. The police are requested not to investigate and bother anybody."*** This brevity of the note is indeed one of the characteristic features of genuine suicide notes, as researchers denote that usually, in their notes, the main denotation is made, and nothing extra is said. This brevity suggests resignation and finality, consistent with the profound emotional distress that has left one no longer concerned with caring about external events or feeling any need to justify one's acts.

In this regard, forensic linguistic analysis prescribes that authentic suicide notes focus on the mental state of the writer and emotions; there is no detailing or justification. Also, the letter by Afzal suggests divine justice: *"I leave the matter in the court of Allah"* as an apparent expression of disillusionment with societal and institutional mechanisms. The fact that he would invoke spiritual authority and not legal recourse shows a deep-seated loss of faith in human institutions' ability to provide a semblance of justice. As Lee & Joh state, *"The statement is remarkably undefensive; more accurately, it sounds like Afzal resigned to his fate, having exhausted other means of seeking justice".*

This is also supported by evidence from his social context. Although charges against him were unsubstantiated according to the college inquiry, they were never cleared, so he could not completely clear his name. It caused great stress and character damage. From a forensic linguistic point of view, one may say that no closure and ongoing distress do fit the tone and content of his note. The note does not defend or justify his actions but rather appeals to a higher power for mercy a common theme among authentic suicide notes when the writer feels forsaken by systems in society.

Contextually, the consistency of Afzal's note further lends to its authenticity. His note reflects frustration with an institutional support system that has let him down. Inquiry notwithstanding, the college did not provide him with an official exoneration letter, thereby leaving his character in question and causing significant psychological anxiety. In one such letter written to Dr. Aalia Rehman, inquiry officer, Afzal had been demanding a formal letter at the official level stating he was innocent and that not having such a letter continued to keep him distressed and disgraced. The lack of institutional action and social stigma he faced agree with the note of despair.

Social media posts by public figures like Hamid Mir and Ali Zafar also condemn the misapplication of the #Metoo movement, further contextualising Afzal's situation. A tweet by Hamid Mir reflects a case wherein false accusations have brought destruction into lived lives, which advocates the visible emotional turmoil in Afzal's note. While the online support for Afzal was enormous, it did not translate into institutional support, as very well reflected in the isolation and desperation of the individual. The dichotomy between this public support versus institutional response reflects a view of the complexity that individuals face navigating the public accusations-legal systems dilemma.

Forensic linguistic analysis also points to the fact that Afzal's note does not contain any defensive note. As such, Coulthard (2005) points out that a forged suicide note would have greater details or even contain some defensive language for the purpose of explaining oneself. The simplicity of Afzal's note, with just divine justice and a request for non-investigation, substantiates the fact that the note is indeed an authentic expression of his feelings. The lack of even an attempt to explain or justify his actions would lend credence to the fact that he accepted the futility of defending himself from those perceived institutional and societally instituted forces that failed him.

The impact of social media on Afzal's judgment cannot be underestimated. Social media can amplify the voices of victims with incredible ease, which, of course, can be very useful if the complaints are valid but terrifying if the allegations are either false or unproven. In Afzal's case, even though the inquiry had cleared him, the damage to his reputation had already been carried out. The suicide note reflects that reality when it focuses on how public perception can suck all the hope out of a situation, given the lack of official support. This is more relevant in modern times, as often social media statements eclipse formal court judgments.

Public figures like Ali Zafar have come forward to condemn the misapplication of social justice movements publicly. From the content of his tweet, one would have brought into question the

accountability of those who make false allegations and brought up the serious consequences such an action has on the accused. His tweet is complementary to Afzal's note since it points out how public figures and social media personalities build up their narratives, which more often than not run in tandem with formal institutional findings.

Afzal's case, dramatized on social media, was a reflection of deeper societal issues regarding gender and the vulnerability of men when an allegation of harassment is pointed at them. Though the *#MeToo* movement has been effective in giving a voice to the victim, it has also brought into practice wide cases of blind acceptance of an allegation. This leads to wide prejudice within society at times, which may make men 'guilty until proven innocent', as was readily seen in the case of Afzal. His note reflects the futility that one feels when one believes that they have been wrongly accused and then abandoned by the very institutions that should have come to their aid.

4.3 Linguistic Analysis

The following is the linguistic analysis of the suicide note and other figures.

Conciseness and Precision

The suicide letter is short, just a couple of sentences: *"I leave the matter in the court of Allah. The police are requested not to investigate and bother anybody."* Typical for a real suicidal note, as in a forensic study, central issues for the genuine ones are presented in minimal elaboration. The brevity would suggest resignation and finality, consistent with someone in a state of emotional distress who no longer desires to engage in external matters or defend their actions.

Supporting Evidence

Figure 1 shows how short and simple the suicide note is. The fact that the note focuses more on divine justice rather than human intervention suggests that the writer has lost confidence in institutional justice and clings to spiritual reality.

Emotional Tone and Language Use

The note carries a note of resignation and an element of loss of faith in human institutions, as manifested by the use of the phrase *"I leave the matter in the court of Allah."* An appeal to divine justice as against human law itself manifests a strong degree of despair and disillusion with support mechanisms both at the social and institutional level. The lack of defensive language or efforts to explain the events that preceded the decision suggests that the writer was past the point of seeking understanding or vindication, and it further corroborates the authenticity of this note.

Supporting Evidence

Figure 5 is a tweet by Hamid Mir, where he has underlined the *#MeToo* movement's misapplication and how this can destroy the life of an individual when false accusations are hurled. The tone which was carried in Afzal's note gets corroboration from this tweet, and how all public discourses may not align with what an individual goes through when one pursues justice.

Contextual Consistency

Authentic suicide notes depend on the broader context of the life and recent experiences of the individual. Afzal's note, which pleads for non-investigation and is illustrative of frustration with regard to institutional support, correlates with documented stress of and lack of official clearance by, the inquiry committee despite allegations of being found baseless. The inquiry officer, Dr Aalia Rehman, has confirmed the inquiry cleared Afzal's name, yet he was still feeling the stress of this as there was an alleged lack of an official exoneration letter, see train Figure 4 for a letter sent to Dr Rehman. This congruence between the documented events and the mood and content of the suicide note asserts its authenticity Nick, 2022. Evidence that Supports

Figure 4 shows the letter Afzal sent to Dr. Aalia Rehman, asking for a formal exoneration. The letter further captures how distressed he was and the institutional failures that compounded his despair since this letter is fearlessly conveyed in the emotional tone and demands of his suicide note.

Comparative and Forensic Analysis

Suicide notes, according to forensic standards, are usually straightforward, without elaboration of complex narratives and minute details. Afzal's note follows this rule as it includes no explanation or justification but only a short statement with a request. A forged note may include much information, probably defensive language, in an attempt to explain or justify the incident (Coulthard, 2005). The lack of such language in Afzal's note supports the fact that this author expressed real resignation and despair, traits common in suicide notes of actual authors. Supporting Evidence

As in Figure 6, the Tweet by Ali Zafar in support of the present analysis, when public figures themselves showed awareness of Afzal's case and highlighted how movements can be misused to ruin innocent lives. His tweet, therefore, reflects the gravity of losses incurred due to false accusations and resonates well with the despairing thoughts of the note.

Implications of Social Media Influence

It goes without saying that social media is greatly responsible for framing public perception. These tweets by Ali Zafar and Hamid Mir highlight how the false claimant will be affected when the allegation goes public; this is shown in Figures 5 and 6. While Afzal did find support among the two, the leakage had already taken place. This support, however, translated into something other than institutional action. Afzal's note reflects a final acceptance of his fate due to a lack of formal justice or retribution.

Additional Evidence

Figures 2 and 3 represent some of the social media posts about other public accusations that have occurred, depicting what effect such postings can have on the public reputations and mental conditions of the people concerned. Forensic linguistic analysis of Muhammad Afzal Mehmood's suicide note shows conciseness of text, emotional tone, and contextual congruence with life events associated with authentic suicide notes.

The brevity of the note and the direct appeal for divine justice, rather than institutional mechanisms, speak of a state of resignation and deep despair, implying thereby that Afzal had lost faith in societal structures. The supporting evidence, meanwhile, is social media posts and communications contextualizing the writer's distress and bringing about community and institutional challenges for those accused of misconduct. While receiving public support, the institutional action still reverberated loud in Afzal's voice with overtones of hopelessness in the note. The analysis, therefore, suggests that understanding the authenticity and motivational level of suicide notes cannot be done without embedding them within their broader social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

5. Conclusion

It constituted a broad forensic linguistic examination of the structure, linguistic features and contextual elements of Muhammad Afzal Mehmood's suicide note as authentic or otherwise. The research cited several critical patterns consistent with authentic suicide notes, including conciseness of the note, emotional tone, and spiritual invocation rather than legal or social defence. These findings are in tune with the already established literature on the analysis of suicide notes,

thus giving further credence to the authenticity of the note and the state of Afzal's psychology and motivations while writing the note. The note was contextualised within the broader societal and institutional setup that framed Afzal's actions. The lack of defensive language and the appeal to divine justice and not to institutional redress are indicative of his disappointment with the systems in society. Though public support from prominent figures and social media platforms indicated his innocence, the lack of formal institutional action furthered his feelings of hopelessness a recurring theme in suicidal notes determined to be authentic. This context-sensitive approach highlights how social media stories and institutional reactions can greatly affect an individual who may have committed some misconduct shaping their state of mind and behaviour.

Another important point emphasized was that forensic linguistic approaches must capture the cultural and situational elements. The research has shown that studying the religious and sociocultural connotations contained in the note can illustrate that culturally specific expressions are the only way to valid and pertinent conclusions. For example, the appeal to divine justice reflects Afzal's state of mind and draws on cultural roles in Pakistan, where religious sentiment has a soothing effect.

This study again emphasizes the need for contextualistically framed approaches within the forensic linguistic domain and the support given by technological tools like social media analysis to take a holistic view of suicide notes. It points, however, to the number of continuing difficulties with respect to distinguishing between genuine notes and fabrications, thus reinforcing the need for standardized methods that allow for cultural diversity and may be adjusted to different forensic scenarios. In conclusion, such findings from this research have mixed implications for the development of forensic linguistic techniques that especially in improving the reliability and accuracy of suicide note analysis should become increasingly important. This study emphasizes cultural, social and institutional contexts to ensure that forensic reviews are not only accurate but also ethically and contextually suitable. With more refinements and adaptations, these techniques will further establish forensic linguistics as an important discipline in the conduct of legal investigations and the pursuit of justice and truth with deeper insight into individual and social factors.

Appendix

Figure 1 The Suicide Note Left by Muhammad Afzal Mehmood
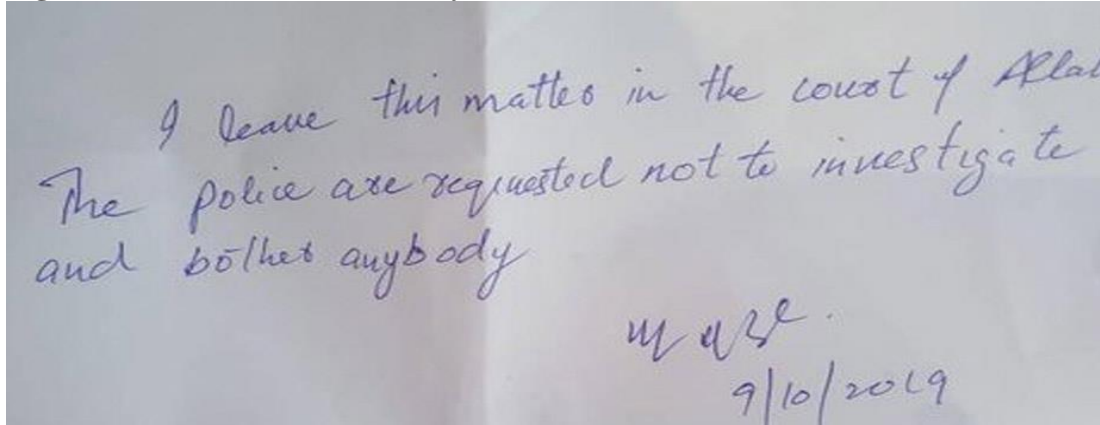
Figures 2 and 3
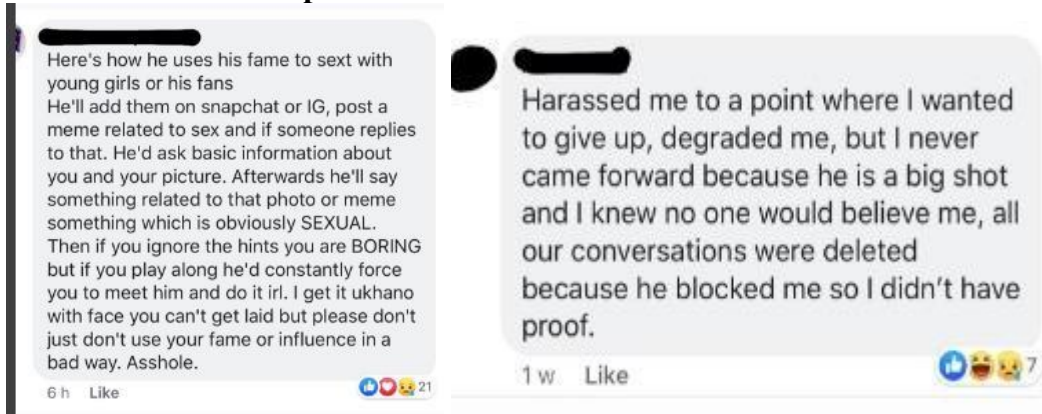
Another social media post on the accusation

Figure 4

Afzal Letter to Dr.Alia Rehman

Professor Dr Aalia Rehman

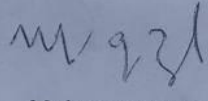Enquiry Officer, Harassment Case against Muhammad Afzal, Lecturer in English, Govt M.A.O College Lahore.

Madam,

You are my colleague and friend first and enquiry officer later. You told me that I have been cleared of the harassment allegations but I am still under extreme stress as the news of the case is known by the whole college and until the administration gives me in writing that the allegations were baseless, I will always be considered a person with bad moral character. I get hints from different sources that any day the same enquiry will be restarted. I have no proof that I am innocent.

I beg you to please re-open the enquiry and ask the administration to rusticate Roll # 18444, BS Mass Com on the basis of putting false allegations against a professor. This is the only way to clear me from harassment allegation. It will also help other professors from getting similar allegations when they are strict with students and give marks according to performance and not due to pressure. My fault was also this only.

My family life is disturbed by the allegation and my wife has left me today accusing me of being immoral. I have now nothing in my life to look forward to. I am an immoral person at college and at home. I feel pain in my heart and brain all the time. If and when I die, I request you as a friend to take care that my salary goes to my mother and she is given a good character certificate in my name from the college Principal.

I beg you again to get my name and reputation at college cleared as you are a senior Professor and can influence our college administration for this.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely

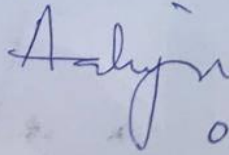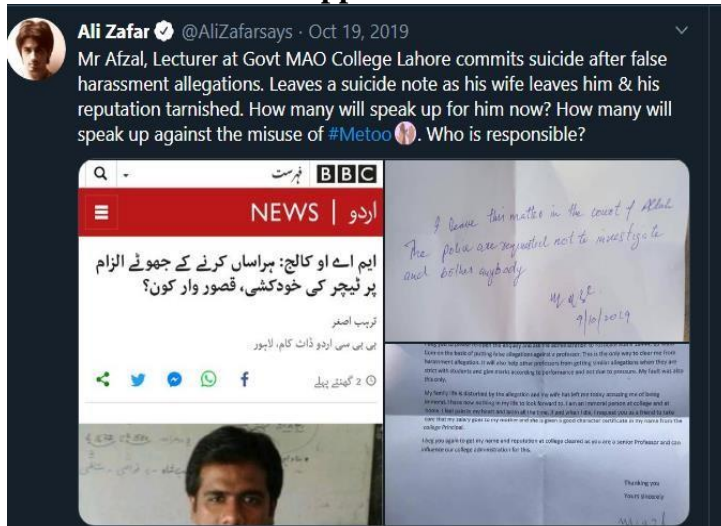Muhammad Afzal

Lecturer in English
Govt M.A.O College
Lahore

Recieved

08.10.2019

Figure 5
Mir Hamza's Tweet Supporting Azal

Figure 6
Ali Zafar's Tweet in support of Afzal's situation

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