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Manifestations of Forensic Linguistics in the Works of Agatha Christie
The Novels (The A.B.C. Murders, The Witness for the Prosecution) as a Model

Achacha Soria

Faculty of Arabic Language and Literature and Oriental Languages, Department of Linguistics , University of Algiers 2, Algeria

Email: **soria.achacha@univ-alger2.dz**

Abstract:

This study examines the process of elucidating forensic linguistics, particularly the field of spoken discourse and what is also known as the voice print (speaker identification), as well as the analysis of linguistic evidence (author identification). This evidence consists of messages written by the killer in the novel The A.B.C. Murders and a single letter written by the main witness in the novel Witness for the Prosecution, which served as the decisive evidence in exonerating the accused. Both novels are by the icon of detective fiction, Agatha Christie. The study also identifies the most important terms included therein.

Keywords: Forensic linguistics, Agatha Christie, The A.B.C. Murders, Witness for the Prosecution.

Research Problem:

Forensic linguistics is considered a branch of applied linguistics; it is a field that employs language and its analyses in solving various criminal cases. Among the most famous novelists who gained wide recognition in the field of detective fiction is Agatha Christie, whose novels are based on analyzing dialogue exchanged between characters through the sequence of events, as well as speeches and witness testimonies recorded by the police and investigators. Based on this, the research problem of this study revolves around the following questions: Do the works of Agatha Christie contain features of forensic linguistics? And can these features be extracted from the two novels (The A.B.C. Murders, Witness for the Prosecution)?

Research Hypotheses:

-Agatha Christie employed forensic linguistics in her detective works.

-The two novels (The A.B.C. Murders, Witness for the Prosecution) include clear features of some fields of forensic linguistics.

Significance of the Study:

The importance of this research lies in the fact that it is one of the studies that addresses the theoretical aspect of forensic linguistics, a topic that has been discussed in some Arabic linguistic studies (the concept of forensic linguistics, its emergence, its fields, etc.). We attempt to present an applied study by exploring some manifestations of forensic linguistics in two important novels by the writer Agatha Christie, mentioned above.

1- Introduction:

Among the linguistic sciences, forensic linguistics is considered by some researchers modern forensic or judicial linguistics, which falls within applied linguistics. This field relies largely on the scientific and professional analysis of written and spoken texts by investigators specialized in this domain, and on using the results reached through study and analysis processes as evidence contributing to solving cases in which language plays a decisive and important role in their legal files. It is a modern interdisciplinary science that has contributed to opening wide horizons for employing language as an effective tool to uncover killers and criminals. It should be noted that forensic linguistics is intensively utilized in developed countries, where language in both its forms (spoken and written) is used in solving various crimes (verbal racism, theft, bribery, murder, etc.). However, it has not been well exploited in Arab countries and has not received its due importance or activation in the judicial reality of Arab society. What, then, is forensic linguistics? What are the circumstances of its emergence? What are its fields? And has it indeed been employed in the works of the English writer Agatha Christie through the two novels we selected and mentioned above?

2- Linguistics:

Before addressing the definition of linguistics, whose principles were laid down by the Swiss scholar Ferdinand de Saussure and which developed over time to become an independent science with its own terminology, concepts, cognitive characteristics, and scientific methods that distinguish it from other human sciences, we turn to defining the tongue as the instrument of expression and clarification in humans.

2-1- The Tongue:

Al-Sharif Al-Jurjani defines it as follows: "The tongue is the organ and its power," and in the phrase "And untie the knot from my tongue," the knot was not in the organ itself, but rather in its power, which is speech. Every tongue has a specific tone distinguished by hearing, just as it has a specific form distinguished by sight (Al-Jurjani, 1953, p. 192).

Al-Razi said of it: "It is the instrument for imparting knowledge; therefore, it must be the noblest of organs" (Al-Razi, 1981, p. 6).

It is narrated from Ibn Sidah that he said: "The tongue: the language, feminine only; and al-lisan with a kasra on the lam: the language; and the tongue: the message. Abu 'Amr related: every people has a lisan, that is, a language they speak" (Ibn Manzur, p. 386).

From these definitions, we conclude that the tongue is the organ through which we express ourselves and by means of which knowledge and sciences are transmitted, enabling communication among humans. Its importance lies in the fact that it is the noblest of organs and the most influential and dangerous in the lives of individuals and societies. It is also a distinguishing organ in differentiating people from one another, as they are distinguished by their voices and their manner of pronunciation (a reference to the voice print), just as they are distinguished by their physical forms and physiological features.

2-2- Linguistics:

Most linguists and researchers in this field agree that the emergence of linguistics constituted a real cognitive leap, such that "it became the link between the human sciences on the one hand and the exact sciences on the other, and linguistics is now considered closer to the latter than to the former" (Abdel Aziz, 1991, p. 13). Others view this revolution in linguistics as having "transformed it into a science that transcends all disciplines and fields of knowledge, from mathematics, informatics, artificial intelligence, biology, and neuroscience to environment, society, communication, psychology, cognitive sciences, history, philosophy, economics, education, and teaching" (A group of researchers, 2016, p. 32).

It is agreed that modern linguistics began with Ferdinand de Saussure, who examined the nature of language as an object of scientific research. Language, in his view, is an organized system with a specific social function (Mujahid, 2015, p. 16). Several schools emerged under Saussurean structuralism until the transformational–generative theory appeared at the hands of the linguist Noam Chomsky, who viewed language differently from structuralism. From the outset, he focused on the creative capacity of human language, linking his interest to the human mind that enables individuals

to produce and understand an unlimited number of sentences. One of the most prominent linguistic sciences that emerged in this context is applied linguistics, which proved its existence as an independent discipline in 1946, when it was adopted as a field of study at the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan. Its fields have expanded and diversified, including language planning, lexicography, language teaching, translation, computational linguistics, forensic linguistics, and others.

3- Forensic Linguistics:

This concept has been known by several terms in Arabic, including forensic or legal linguistics, legal linguistics, and judicial linguistics, corresponding to the term Forensic Linguistics. Kobusov defined it as "the science concerned with the study of written and spoken texts related to crimes, legal disputes, or issues connected with litigation procedures, or matters related to the language of law, its clarity, and ways of reforming it and making it accessible for understanding by both laypersons and specialists alike" (Omar, 2008, p. 276).

Christopher Hall and his colleague defined it as "the discipline that studies and interprets language use starting from the crime scene, event, or incident, then police investigation, followed by pleadings and disputes in court, and finally the issuance of judgment, using applied linguistic analysis or critical discourse analysis" (Al-Rashoudi, 2022, p. 211). Munir Baalbaki defined it in his Dictionary of Linguistic Terms as "a branch of linguistics that uses linguistic tools in criminal investigation of crimes in which language use constitutes part of the evidence" (Nader, 2019).

The subject matter of forensic linguistics is embodied in three axes:

a- Language as a tool for uncovering crime.

b- Crime as an act that should be uncovered.

c- Law as a tool for achieving justice.

Accordingly, forensic linguistics can be said to be concerned with studying language through investigation or judicial trial between two or more parties. This study takes the form of analyzing various written texts (letters, documents, records) and audio recordings by investigators and specialists in this field. Linguists who cooperate with the police in handling various crimes especially murder cases seek to employ language by understanding the language of written law, understanding linguistic use in forensic medical reports and judicial investigations, and then providing linguistic evidence that may effectively contribute to solving these cases.

3-1- The Emergence of Forensic Linguistics:

The stages of the emergence of this science can be traced chronologically as follows. First, linguists claim that early indications of the use of this science appear in the Bible, in the Book of Genesis, where the Holy Scripture recounts how Jacob, the younger son of Isaac, obtained the right of primogeniture by presenting himself to his father while imitating the voice of his elder brother Esau, and thus his father granted him this right (Omar, p. 278). Through this incident, Western scholars cite voice tone as a unique means of identifying personality.

Others trace the earliest origins of this science back to the Greeks and Romans, when those civilizations engaged in disputes over proving the authenticity of attributing certain literary and theatrical works to their authors, who often accused one another of forgery and literary theft, as later occurred with accusations against the famous English poet and playwright Shakespeare that he stole some of his works from his contemporaries. Islamic civilization was not devoid of such issues, particularly among hadith scholars, who used methods resembling those of this science to verify the attribution of Prophetic hadiths to the Prophet, peace be upon him.

The first appearance of the term linking language to crime occurred in a report by the applied linguistics professor Jan Svartvik in 1968, when he wrote: "The emergence of this relatively unpolished field (forensic linguistics) was interesting for several reasons… First, it provided the linguist with one of those rare opportunities to make a contribution that could be directly useful to society" (Johnson & Malcolm Wright, 2019, p. 301). His analyses resonated widely, especially his analysis of the statements of Timothy John Evans, who was the main suspect in the murder of his wife and daughter. He was convicted and sentenced to hanging, and the sentence was carried out. However, Svartvik later proved the judgment to be erroneous after reviewing and studying the records of the suspect's and his neighbor's statements, revealing that the latter was the actual killer and had a criminal record. This incident marked the first real impetus for the emergence of forensic linguistics.

Nevertheless, the studies of Roger Shuy and his colleagues among American linguists in the early 1980s established the initial foundations of forensic linguistics. Their studies addressed many aspects of criminal fields and disputes in which language constitutes an important part of the available data. In the mid-1990s, several academic centers specializing in this field were established, leading to the emergence of the International Association for Forensic and Legal Linguistics (IAFLL), headquartered in the United States, whose members include linguists and legal professionals, as well as the International Association for Forensic Phonetics (IAFP), based in the United Kingdom. In addition, several specialized journals and periodicals appeared (Omar, pp. 278–279). According to

The International Journal of Speech, a scientific periodical issued by the international association, forensic linguistics is growing day by day in step with theoretical cognitive developments in the human sciences related to security and criminal justice, and it is concerned with combating crimes in all their forms (Al-Otaibi, 2018, p. 221).

Accordingly, forensic linguistics can be said to be concerned with studying language through investigation or judicial trial between two or more parties. It is a relatively recent discipline in Arab countries, whereas in the West it has received great attention, with the establishment of specialized academies and the development of laboratories equipped with the latest technological tools, such as the International Association for Forensic Phonetics in Britain and the International Association for Forensic Linguistics in the United States.

3-2- Fields of Forensic Linguistics:

Forensic linguistics is a branch of applied linguistics that studies language and its applications in judicial and criminal investigations. This science has branched out to address several fields, the most important of which are as follows:

3-2-1- Linguistic Fingerprint:

The linguistic fingerprint is an idea proposed by some scholars, suggesting that every individual uses language differently, and that this difference among people can be easily and clearly observed like a fingerprint. According to this view, the linguistic fingerprint is a set of markers that constitute the speaker's or writer's unique imprint. This is inferred from Al-Sharif Al-Jurjani's definition of the tongue. To illustrate the importance and effectiveness of this field, we cite the statement of the German scholar Raymond Drommel, one of the experts in forensic linguistics: "In many cases, a sample of linguistic evidence is sufficient to open a case against a suspect, such as a person's accent, or the suspect's use of a certain type of words, expressions, or a particular linguistic structure" (Nader, p. 11).

It should be noted that John Olson, in his book Forensic Linguistics, holds a different view regarding the linguistic fingerprint. He states: "The concept that individuals have a linguistic fingerprint is widespread in journals and across the internet, and unfortunately, some academic branches also cite these unproven ideas." He continues: "No one has yet proven the existence of such a thing called a linguistic fingerprint. How can people write in such an uncritical way, as if it were a fact in the judicial field?" (John, 2008, p. 38). In response to this opinion, it can nonetheless be affirmed that most human

voices differ in tone or resonance, which allows listeners to identify their owners regardless of the terminology used, and that voice study and analysis make it possible to identify the speaker.

3-2-2- Speaker Identification:

Speaker identification is one of the most widely used fields of this science. It employs theories and applications of forensic applied phonetics to identify a person through their voice (Omar, p. 281). Speaker identity may be recognized through ordinary hearing, and more recently through the use of highly advanced laboratory devices for filtering and analyzing sound to determine its source. In this field, the phonetician Professor Henry Sweet became renowned for his ability, based on his knowledge of phonetics, to classify any person in London and determine their place of residence with precision (ibid., p. 284). It is noteworthy that through the use of spectrograms, researchers developed what came to be known as the concept of the voice print. This technique began to be used during World War II, when sound waves were converted into graphical representations that could be used to identify speakers.

3-2-3- Author Identification:

This applies to written texts in the handwriting of the accused or even the witness. It is carried out by comparing the handwriting of the text presented in the trial as forensic linguistic evidence with another sample from the same person, in order to match the handwriting and confirm that both texts were written by the same author. This process includes observing stylistic similarities between the two texts, determining the date and place of writing, the postal center from which it was sent, and DNA evidence if available. It also involves analyzing written texts such as letters, emails, and threats, and is used in cases such as forgery, ransom notes, anonymous letters, and others.

3-2-4- Discourse Analysis:

This procedure is based on analyzing written or spoken texts, which are often investigative materials produced by competent authorities through questioning aimed at collecting the largest possible amount of information. Through analyzing this information, the linguist can identify the perpetrator or criminal.

3-2-5- Dialectology:

Knowledge of dialects is considered one of the important procedures in the fields of forensic linguistics, as it can indicate the place to which a person belongs or their social background. For example, if a criminal attempts to conceal their identity, they may resort to speaking in an unnatural

dialect or pronunciation style for camouflage, which can be detected through the study of pronunciation.

4- Study of Agatha Christie's Two Novels (The A.B.C. Murders, Witness for the Prosecution):

4-1- The Writer Agatha Christie:

She is a pioneer of detective fiction, as the sales of her novels broke record numbers, reaching a total of sixty-six novels. She was born in Torquay, England, and began writing short stories at an early age. In her youth, she visited several Arab countries such as Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. She married Colonel Archibald Christie, from whom she took her famous surname. She worked as a pharmacist and learned a great deal about poisons, chemicals, and drug manufacturing, which helped her use these substances in the murders she depicted in her works. Among the most famous characters in her novels are the Belgian detective Hercule Poirot and the investigator Miss Marple. Among her most famous novels, some of which were adapted into films, are (And Then There Were None), (Murder on the Orient Express), (The Double Clue), and others. Guinness classified her among the best-selling authors in the world.

4-2- Summary of The A.B.C. Murders:

The idea of the novel is no less impressive than the way it is plotted. It revolves around a madman who commits his crimes according to the alphabetical order of his victims' names, beginning with Mrs. Ascher in Andover, then Betty Barnard on the beach at Bexhill. As for the letter C, the victim is Mr. Carmichael Clarke from Churston, and the final victim is George Earlsfield. As a distinctive signature, the killer leaves beside each body an alphabetical railway guide indicating the letter with which the victim's name begins and the location where the murder occurred. Like most criminals, he eventually falls into the hands of justice to face retribution.

4-3- Analysis of the Novel from the Perspective of Forensic Linguistics:

In analyzing this novel (The A.B.C. Murders), we will rely on the dialogue and written messages authored by the criminal, attempting to explore the features of forensic linguistics within them. In criminal investigations, dialogue plays an effective role in uncovering the hidden aspects of killers and criminals. In addition, interrogation enhances understanding of what suspects or witnesses say and how they use language in an attempt to defend themselves, conceal the truth, or manipulate it. This is further supported by contradictions in confessions that may occur, and when these are recorded and studied, the forensic linguist can detect their falsehood and lack of truthfulness.

Thus, as previously indicated, this novel considered a distinguished work in the field of detective fiction in uncovering the circumstances of the murders that unfold throughout its events and identifying their perpetrator relies on the unique analysis by the investigator Poirot of the statements of individuals directly connected to the murder cases, without neglecting the written messages sent by the killer and attempts to determine their distinguishing features.

The main speaker in this novel is Captain Hastings, the friend of detective Poirot and the narrator of events, who is considered a linguistic witness conveying the course of events to the reader. In the light of forensic linguistics, he is part of the linguistic study aimed at understanding evidence through the analysis of language and discourse. The central character of the novel is the investigator Poirot, who is skilled in controlling the course of dialogue so as not to allow suspects or witnesses to manipulate questions. He also has a distinctive method of making interviewees trust him, which makes them feel more at ease when providing their confessions.

1- Author Identification:

This is represented in the text of a letter sent to Poirot by someone informing him of their intention to commit murder. Its content is as follows: "Mr. Hercule Poirot, you consider yourself capable of unraveling mysteries that the slow-witted members of the British police find difficult to handle, do you not? Then show us, clever Poirot, the extent of your intelligence. You may find this knot difficult to untie. Prepare yourself for Andover on the 21st of this month. Yours faithfully, A.B.C."

This letter (linguistic evidence no. 1), which was typed in printed letters on thick paper using a typewriter, carries a set of linguistic indicators:

- At first glance, it appears to have been written by a madman and is of unknown origin, bearing the signature A.B.C.
- Its typing on a typewriter makes the attempt to identify its author through handwriting examination difficult.
- It is addressed to the detective Poirot in the form of a challenge and contains mockery of the capabilities of British police officers.
- It includes the specification of the place and date on which the murder will occur.
- These pieces of information seem unimportant at first.

On page 32, there is a brief description of a man with a strange name, "Alexander Bonaparte Cust," who played an important and vital role in the novel despite the insignificance of his character and his limited appearance in its events.

The Andover Crime:

Mrs. Ascher was found murdered at this location, and the first suspect was her husband, a German national and a dissolute alcoholic. When Poirot received the news, he remarked that this was only the beginning (meaning the expectation of further murders), which was a logical conclusion.

The Police's Study of the Letter and Their Conclusions:

The police inspector asked Poirot to examine the letter sent to him by the killer. Upon reading it, he became convinced that the husband was not the author for several reasons, including that Ascher did not appear to write in this style. Secondly, he doubted that he would use a term such as "our British police." His hands were trembling, and he could not write letters with such clarity. The good quality of the paper and ink was also noted. It is worth mentioning that the local inspector of the Andover area informed Poirot that they had found a railway guide at the crime scene and that someone had been examining train schedules. This alphabetical guide appeared with every murder, as if it were the killer's signature.

Poirot's Conclusion from the Letter:

He said, when speaking about one of the suspects, that "his nature is entirely different from that of the writer of the (A.B.C.) letter," and that pride, self-confidence, and boldness are traits we must look for an extraction from the letter of important characteristics that shape the killer's personality.

Author Identification 2:

The arrival of the second letter to Poirot, the text of which is as follows: "My dear Mr. Poirot… Well, what do you think? I believe this is my first match. The Andover affair was most entertaining, was it not? But this is only the beginning of the fun. Allow me to draw your attention to the beach at Bexhill. The date is the twenty-fifth of the current month. What a delightful time we are having together.

Yours faithfully: A.B.C."

Conclusions of the Police and Poirot Regarding the Letter:

- Both letters were written by the same person, who is responsible for the Andover crime.

- They contain an explicit warning of the occurrence of a second crime, with the place and date clearly specified.

Indeed, on the specified date, the young woman Betty Barnard was strangled to death on the beach at Bexhill. The murder weapon was the belt of her dress, which according to the narrator Hastings reveals the extent of the killer's brutality and recklessness.

3- Author Identification:

- The arrival of the letter from the criminal, dubbed the Alphabet Killer, to Poirot, which contained the following text: "Poor Mr. Poirot… You are not as capable in these simple matters as you once thought yourself to be, are you? Perhaps your days of youth are gone? Let us see whether you can do something better this time. This time it will be difficult. Our appointment is at Churston on the thirtieth of this month. Do try to do something, Poirot; I am growing bored of doing whatever I please, as you know.

I wish you a successful investigation. Yours sincerely, A.B.C."

The Police and Poirot's Study and Analysis of the Letter:

- The killer mocks Poirot's abilities and attempts to provoke him by repeatedly posing the question "are you not?" and by ridiculing him.

- The letter arrived three days after it was written, unlike the previous crimes, where the letters arrived several days before the crime. The third letter arrived on the very day the crime was to be committed, that is, on the thirtieth of the month.

- Poirot and Hastings inferred the reason for this delay by examining Poirot's address written on the envelope, which was written as follows: "Mr. Hercule Poirot, Whitehorse Mansions," with a note written on one corner: "If not known at Whitehorse Mansions, E.C.1, nor at Whitehorse Court try Whitehaven Mansions."

Indeed, Mr. Carmichael Clarke was killed. He was a retired physician who enjoyed collecting Chinese porcelain and ceramics, and the owner of a large fortune inherited from his uncle. This is mentioned alongside the events involving the sick man of weak and introverted character, Alexander Bonaparte Cust.

4- Author Identification:

- This is the text of the fourth letter received by Poirot, which reads as follows: "So far you have achieved no success? Shame, shame. What is the police doing? Is it not amusing? And where shall we go next, my dear? Poor Poirot, how sorry I feel for you. If at first you do not succeed, then you must try again, and again, and again.

We still have a long road to travel together. Trabridge? No that will come later, when we reach the letter 'T.'

Our next little incident will take place in Doncaster on the eleventh of September.

Goodbye.

'A.B.C.'"

The Police and Poirot's Investigation of the Letter:

As in every previous instance, the police, together with the skilled detective who possesses a high ability to notice fine linguistic details used by the suspect, examined the letter.

- The letter, like the others, was typed on a typewriter, which deprived investigators of the opportunity to analyze the killer's handwriting.

- The specification of the place and date of the upcoming crime constitutes a challenge to the police and to the famous detective.

As confirmed by the killer, the fourth victim was stabbed in Doncaster. The sole paradox is that the victim's name was George Earlsfield, which contradicts the alphabetical order that the killer had followed in his other crimes.

5- Author Identification:

This is represented by an excerpt from a letter read by Franklin Clarke, the brother of the victim Dr. Carmichael, to Poirot. Franklin Clarke is an attractive man with a dominant personality and great boldness, characterized by a strong spirit of adventure. The letter concerns his beautiful secretary, Miss Gray, who assisted him in organizing his appointments and trips for purchasing ceramics and porcelain. Its text is as follows: "Everything here is proceeding as usual. Charlotte has recovered reasonably well from the pain. I wish I could say more than that. You may remember Thora Gray? She is dear to me and provides me with comfort beyond my ability to describe to you. Without her, I would not know how to endure this difficult time. Her kindness and care never wane. She possesses refined taste and a high sensitivity toward beautiful things, and she shares my love for the art of ceramics. How fortunate I have been to find a girl like her. A daughter could not surpass her as a compassionate companion. Her life was difficult and not a happy one, but I am glad that she feels genuine love and that she has a home."

Thus, from this excerpt of the letter, the linguistic analyst can infer that its author is deeply sympathetic toward this young woman, who, through her skill and by adopting the character of a devoted and selfless employee who endured many hardships in her life, succeeded in earning the affection and goodwill of her employer, who has a wife suffering from cancer and is constantly complaining and in pain.

 Discourse Analysis (Speaker Identification) in The A.B.C. Murders:

Before addressing the analysis of some answers given by individuals during their interrogation by the police or by Poirot those closely connected to the victims of the Alphabet Killer we mention the main active characters in the novel (Mary, the daughter of Mrs. Ascher; Miss Megan, Betty Barnard's sister; Franklin, the brother of Mr. Carmichael; Alexander Bonaparte Cust).

Poirot answers his friend and partner Captain Hastings when he asks him: How can one reach the correct facts?

Through dialogue, through speech. This statement carries an implicit indication of the dangerous role played by language and speech in uncovering facts.

As the events of the novel escalate, the killer (Alexander Bonaparte Cust, A.B.C.) turns himself in to the police after it is proven that he was present near all the places where the victims were killed this being orchestrated by the clever and unscrupulous killer.

Among the most important dialogues and interrogations that contributed to identifying the killer are the following:

Poirot, when speaking to his friend Hastings about the danger of dialogue, says: "Language is a weapon for uncovering facts I assure you, Hastings, that it is more dangerous for anyone who has something to hide than dialogue. Every time he speaks, he reveals the secrets of his own self." This is an indication of language as an effective tool in revealing the depths of the human psyche.

Analysis of the discourse that took place between Poirot and Alexander Bonaparte Cust led to the following main conclusions:

- ✓ His ignorance of Poirot's personality (which rules out that he was the one who wrote the letters).
- ✓ His failure to remember writing the letters, even though the typewriter on which they were written was found among his belongings, along with a collection of railway guides.

- From his answer to the question posed to him "Do you know the reason why you committed these crimes?" "No, I do not know" it was concluded that this confused man could not be the perpetrator of these crimes.

Poirot Reveals the Killer:

Poirot gathers all the individuals connected to the victims in one place to reveal the killer, using all the evidence available to him, including written letters, interrogations, railway guides, and all the circumstances surrounding these incidents in which innocent people were killed, following these steps:

- He deduced from the letters that the killer's thinking is based on crimes arranged according to alphabetical order.
- He has no particular taste in choosing his victims (there is no obsession with gender or age).
- Arresting the unfortunate Alexander Bonaparte Cust as the criminal is illogical, despite his presence in three of the locations where the crimes occurred except for Bexhill because his traits, including instability, confusion, and suffering from epileptic seizures that cause him to forget many events in his life, do not qualify him to be a cold-blooded criminal. Moreover, he is easily influenced, which the killer exploited to turn him into another victim.
- Poirot says: "I studied the letters once again and it became clear to me that their author is a rational and balanced person, not a mad killer as they led us to believe."
- Poirot also concluded, after careful thought and reflection on the letters, that their purpose was to focus attention on a series of crimes.
- He reached the conclusion that the killer is highly intelligent, reckless, bold, and a gambler qualities that do not apply to Mr. Cust, a man of childish nature (as reflected in the playful tone of the letters and the railway guide).
- Poirot identified the killer as none other than the attractive and handsome man who loves adventure and does not hesitate to gamble without any moral restraint Franklin Clarke.
- As is always the case with crimes, there is a motive for murder, except in the case of serial killers who kill for pleasure. The motive behind all these crimes was inferred by Poirot from his analysis of the excerpt from the letter read to him by Franklin.
- Franklin's fear that his brother Clarke would marry his secretary, whom he realized he loved after the death of his dying wife, and have children with her who would deprive him of the fortune he hoped to inherit after his brother's death.

✓ Poirot deduced the motive behind the delay in the arrival of the third letter and the reason for sending these letters to him personally: the murder of Carmichael was, for the killer Franklin, the essential crime, and the purpose of committing a series of crimes was to divert attention from it. He addressed his letters to Poirot so that he could deliberately write his address incorrectly something he could not have done had he written to Scotland Yard thus enabling him to kill his brother safely.

Thus, Poirot succeeded in solving the mystery of these crimes committed by a greedy individual who used deception to conceal his primary crime, through the study of the most important forensic linguistic evidence (the letters written by the killer, police investigations, Poirot's interrogations of witnesses, and all those connected to the victims).

4-5- Study and Analysis of Witness for the Prosecution from the Perspective of Forensic Linguistics:

Witness for the Prosecution is a detective novel whose events revolve around the murder of a wealthy elderly woman. The accused is a young, bankrupt, cheerful, and pleasant man named Leonard, who turns out, after her death, to be the sole heir to her fortune. The date and time of the crime play a very important role, and the novel is essentially built on the statements of the accused, witnesses, the judge, and the prosecution and defense lawyers in court.

The novel begins with an indication that truth in legal judgments is known through language; therefore, precision must be exercised in choosing appropriate words. This is reflected in the reproach addressed by the assistant defense lawyer who performs brilliantly in defending the accused to exonerate him from the charge of murdering the old woman to the secretary for omitting a single word in one of the legal contracts. He said: "The word you omitted is the word 'not,' and omitting it completely changes the meaning." This is an indication of the danger of legal terminology and its effectiveness in changing the course of events if due care and precision are not exercised in drafting and writing it.

As previously indicated, in our study of this novel whose events revolve around the character of the accused's wife as the sole witness for the prosecution in the murder case we will address two fields of forensic linguistics as linguistic forensic evidence that played a decisive role in resolving the ambiguity of this case: speaker identification, represented by the voice print and witness statements, and author identification, represented by a letter written by the accused's wife.

The novel informs us that a wealthy old woman was murdered on October 14. According to forensic medicine, death occurred between 9:30 and 10:00. The accused Leonard visited her and stated that he left her house at 9:25.

Speaker Identification 1:

The maid testified that she returned home from her friend's house at 9:25 and heard her mistress speaking to someone whose voice she recognized as that of the accused Leonard. To emphasize her testimony, she said: "One can recognize a person's voice without distinguishing their words." Thus, the maid confirmed in her testimony that it is possible to identify a speaker whose voice one is accustomed to hearing and to distinguish it even without seeing them, thereby revealing that the accused lied in his statements.

Speaker Identification 2:

The wife refuted her husband's statements in her testimony in court, stating that he had left around 7:30 and returned at 10:10. This testimony constituted incriminating evidence against the accused for the charge of murder.

Before the trial resumed, a woman arrived at the office of the defense lawyer, covering most of her face with locks of her hair, speaking in a deep, hoarse voice and laughing obscenely like a fallen woman. This strange woman came to negotiate a deal: she would give the lawyer a letter written by the accused's wife in her own handwriting in exchange for a substantial sum of money. The lawyer then insisted on consulting a handwriting expert to examine the letter in order to establish the author's identity so that it could be accepted by the court.

Author Identification:

The letter, which is forensic linguistic evidence, was written by the wife in her own handwriting, as confirmed by comparing it with other texts she had written and that were obtained from her home. It was addressed to a man she loved, informing him of details that would exonerate the accused. The defense lawyer read it aloud before the judge and jurors. Its text reads: "My beloved Max,

Something extraordinary has happened, and I believe our troubles will soon be over and that I shall meet you afterward without fear. The old lady I told you about has been killed, and I believe the police suspect Leonard. He visited her on the night of the crime, and the police will surely find his fingerprints everywhere. I believe the crime was committed at half past nine, and Leonard was with me at home at that time but there is no one who can prove this except me. Do you understand? There

is no one but me who can say that he was far from the scene of the crime at the time it occurred. I can even go further and say that he confessed the crime to me."

Study and Analysis of the Wife's Letter:

The most important evidence contained in this letter whose authorship (the wife) was confirmed and which the court relied upon in acquitting the accused of the murder charge and directing the charge of perjury against the wife is as follows:

- The letter sent to the wife's lover is dated October 17, that is, three days after the crime.

- "I believe the crime was committed at half past nine, and Leonard was with me at home at that time," meaning that he was not present at the victim's house when she was killed.

- "There is no one who can prove this except me and I can go even further and say that he confessed the crime to me" (a statement declaring the accused's innocence while giving false testimony against him).

At the end of the novel, Agatha Christie surprises us when the wife tells the lawyer who had become proud of the acquittal verdict obtained for his client that she was the one who exonerated her husband. To prove this to him, she changes her normal voice tone into that deep, hoarse voice used by the woman who had visited him in his office and handed him the letter that she herself had written. When he asks her why she did all this while her husband was innocent, she replies with a smile: "I did this because I was certain that he was the killer, and I was afraid that the police might investigate further and discover that."

5- Conclusion:

We conclude this study, through which we attempted to trace the fields of forensic linguistics in the novels of Agatha Christie (The A.B.C. Murders and Witness for the Prosecution) as models. It should be noted that this writer, who gained worldwide fame in writing this genre, did not derive the events of her detective novels from police or court records as other authors of this genre do, nor was she a forensic linguist in the academic sense. Nevertheless, she employed certain fields related to forensic linguistics in her novels, a fact we reached through our study and analysis of the two aforementioned works in an intelligent and innovative manner. It is known that forensic linguistics examines cases in which language is used to uncover perpetrators and solve incidents of murder, forgery, kidnapping, and others, through the analysis of linguistic patterns in written and spoken texts. This was manifested in Agatha Christie's novels in the following aspects:

- The analysis of testimonies, as in Witness for the Prosecution, where the wife's testimony was full of contradiction and manipulation of the court, leading to the charge being established against her husband, and then she later exonerated him through her testimony and through the written discourse she produced.

- The maid's testimony, in which she recognized the speaker's voice and confirmed that it was the same person she heard speaking with her mistress on the night of the crime (identification through voice print).

- Poirot's analysis of witness testimonies and the killer's letters in The A.B.C. Murders, through which he succeeded in identifying the killer and the true motive behind committing these crimes.

Accordingly, we reached an important conclusion: although Agatha Christie did not intend to employ forensic linguistics when writing her novels, some specific fields of this science (author identification and speaker identification "voice print") appeared in her works in a skillful and unintentional manner.

Among the proposals we put forward in this regard are the following:

- Providing proper introduction to this science and clarifying its importance in contributing to the resolution of certain criminal cases.

- Conducting research on how the cultural and social environment affects linguistic patterns related to crime.

- Given that the world today is experiencing technological development accompanied by diverse and dangerous cybercrimes, there is a need to focus on developing methods for analyzing the language used on various social media platforms.

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