

# Language Features and Causes of Suicide Case from Forensic Linguistics Point of View

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**ABSTRACT** --*This study aims to describe the content, language features and the cause's factors of student's suicide notes. This study explores the power of linguistic variables to uncover the hidden meaning of suicide notes. This analysis uses computerized text analysis namely Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) program and forensic semantic analysis. Primary data source of this study is the student's suicide notes in the form of written texts. The stages of data analysis are analyzing the data, coding, trying to find themes derived from data and writing 'models' that are found based on the coding that has been completed. The focus of semantic analysis in a forensic context is the understanding and interpretation the hidden meaning of language. The contents of the linguistic forensic text of suicidal students' intentions are: use of unusual vocabulary in context, using and showing sad, angry, and negative emotion vocabulary, direct speech addressed to a person or his/her relations, mentioning something that is needed, desired, there is no doubt, the text between 50 to 300 words, the situational context is not clearly indicated. The factors that cause students to commit suicide are family, social environmental and economic factors.*

**Key words**-- *Forensic linguistics, suicide notes, psychology process, student, language features*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Deaths caused by suicide have increased worldwide. Data found in Indonesia that suicide is the second leading cause of death in the productive age of 15-29 years, and the average death due to suicide in Indonesia is one person every hour (Kompas, 8 September 2016). However, suicidal behavior does not only occur in adolescents or young people, but can occur in all age groups. This certainly encourages research on suicide in a forensic linguistic perspective. The discussion about suicide cannot be done in one single concept. O'Connor & Nock (2014) say that suicidal behavior refers to thoughts and behaviors related to individual intentions to end their own lives. Bridge et al., (2006) summarize some of the terminology that is often used in understanding the definition of suicide. The idea of suicide refers to thoughts about hurting or killing yourself. Attempted suicide is an act that is not fatal, self-inflicted with an explicit intention for death. An act of suicide is an act of self-harm that is fatal with an explicit intention to die.

Suicide by leaving a note for what was left among students has become a social phenomenon lately. More than 800,000 people died of suicide in 2012. According to WHO 11, 4% per 100,000 people are 15% men and 8% women. There is an indication of 20% of adults. They commit suicide because of family problems, friends, coworkers and the loss of loved ones. According to WHO estimates about 1,007,000 people died of suicide in 2030

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aged 15-29 years. Suicide countries 75% whose income per capita is lower-middle class and the second age range for suicide is 15-19 years (Bachmann, 2018).

Based on data from the Global School Based Student Health Survey (2015) in Indonesia, the idea of suicide among adolescent girls is 5.9 percent and men 4.3 percent. Suicide attempts in adolescent boys are higher than girls, which is 4.4 percent and girls 3.4 percent. In the ranking of suicide rates worldwide, Indonesia and Japan occupy the same position in ninth place. In Indonesia, the suicide rate is estimated annually 50 thousand people from 220 million total population of Indonesia (<https://m.tempco.co.>, Accessed April 14, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) has released statistics on world suicides (2014). The result, the highest case in the Country of Guyana, followed by North and South Korea. Guyana has the highest suicide rate, which is 44.2 out of every 100,000 people. About 75 percent of suicides occur in poor countries with low economic income. However, now high suicide rates also occur in developed countries, namely South Korea, with 28.9 out of 100,000 people. The United States, Australia, Spain and other European countries are on an average level of 10 to 14.9 percent of 100,000 people. Every 40 seconds, 1 person dies that way.

Therefore, the idea of suicide, threats, and attempted suicide is a serious matter that must be addressed immediately so that preventive measures are needed to reduce the number of events. The role of linguists, forensic linguists can accelerate the discovery of suicides. Linguists can trace the meanings of phrases, clauses and sentences in a will left by a suicide. Searching the meaning of each word through language features and language algorithms in the text can help police expedite the cause of suicide. The choice of words or diction that is not commonly used is the focus of attention in analyzing the texts of suicide wills so that the existence of a forensic linguist cannot be ignored in revealing every suicide case.

The problems in this study are: 1) What are the contents and linguistic elements of a suicide student's will; 2) What is the cause of student suicide based on linguistic forensic suicide wills.

## II. Review Literature

The assessment of the truth of a written or oral statement by a person who is a victim, witness, suspect is very important in an investigation that has an impact and implications in the criminal justice system. There are two techniques used in analyzing the truth of words, namely semantic and gramatic analysis of the language used and text analysis using computers to identify words used based on psychological functions and meanings without regard to linguistic characteristics and grammatical structures. The assessment of the truth of statements in the criminal justice system is influenced by sources including: oral statements from the suspect, witnesses, victims such as writing testimonials or videos. Statements originating from texts such as wills, letters of violence, or written, affidavits; audio is a threat (Hammond et al., 2017). Linguistic analysis covers all aspects of language, namely: vocabulary and morphology (Coulthard, 2010, 2013). Every person has a characteristic, 'idiosyncratic' in the text he made (Shuy, 2011).

Forensic linguistics is one of the branches of applied linguistics related to law. Linguistic levels which are closely related to forensic linguistics are acoustic phonetics, discourse analysis, semantics, pragmatics, and psycholinguistics. Its function is to identify speakers based on speech style, voice recording. Forensic linguistics is very much needed in its studies in various aspects relating to language and law, language and legal processes,

language as evidence, and research into the teaching of legal language. Language as evidence of cases includes messages or wills left by people in suicides and language as evidence in civil or criminal cases relating to defamation through SMS, social media, face books, twitters, instagram, e-mail, and others.

Forensic linguistics is divided into two areas, namely specifically handling litigation and individual legal cases (Gerald R, 2002). Forensic texts are used as material for investigation by the police and judicial processes such as personal letters and diaries. The focus of semantic analysis in a forensic context is the understanding and interpretation of languages that are difficult to understand (Amato et al., 2018). The context of the situation is the main key in the case of forensic linguistics (Coulthard, 2010).

Forensic linguistics is the science that connects language, crime and law. Language is related to law in 3 ways, namely; language as a communication tool between the law and the authorities and the witness / witness; 2) legal language a case; the construction of the Criminal Code language is difficult to digest and understand; 3) forensic linguists form a corpus, a collection of texts from people who call emegendsi, people who record, people who carry out extortion, anonymous letters, anonymous phone calls, text messages, confession statements, last messages from suicide, minutes of police examinations, and evidence of language others (Correa, 2013).

Suicide letters are short texts, no more than 300 words. This text is very thematic aimed at someone who has a relationship with the author / perpetrator, implying a sentence stating why and how the author committed suicide. The contents of a suicide will are intended to make the recipient of the message suffer or feel guilty (Kristianto, 2015).

Semantic analysis to examine the reasons for suicide in a suicide will, Kurt Cobain, guitarist of the band Nirvana. One of the aims of this research is to identify the reasons for suicide by focusing on the choice of words, the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. In conclusion Kurt committed suicide because he always received complaints from people around him and this musician was unhappy for a long time, did not want to continue his life (Sudjana & Fitri, 2013). Choice of words in a suicide will using particle, preposition, pronominal, first person pronouns, mostly teenagers, there are widowers or widows and they act emotionally. A will made by women is longer, emotional, denial, first person with past and future verbs (Fernández-Cabanaa et al., 2015).

The linguistic elements contained in a suicide notes are: No doubt, apparently the use of vocabulary with the matching word, strange diction, unusual; conducted alone, communication in the form of a suicide note; disclosure of propositions in brief, thematic a clause in a sentence or complex clause, expressed directly to the address and according to the relationship, the level of familiarity of the author with the address; stating what needs to be made or done by the address of the matter desired by the person committing suicide, the author of the suicide note does not hesitate. People who commit suicide see and realize that of course the action taken is not good; length of a will no more than 300 words; and the situational context of suicide note is unclear (Danielewicz-Betz, 2012).

They want to die because of prestige, dignity or kindness in various things. They have committed suicide because they believe: admit the crime and try to experience, testimony with open disclosure; denying crimes and trying to be witnesses by revealing their position as innocent; blaming death as a series of inhumane or ineffective processes and this is a concern or distraction or confusion is sourced from the things that hurt their events; or testimony, denounce / report as the implementation of dishonest laws such as corruption and also describe as innocent victims (Leo, 2013).

Bullying, violence and harassment at school or workplace are factors that cause a person to commit suicide. This situation makes the cause due to threats, violence around him, his environment. Events that cause trauma such as sexual abuse, beatings, rape and physical violence are very influential on the fragile mentality that makes a person commit suicide (Hobson et al., 2018). Violence cannot be separated from the essence of violence rooted in human culture. Essence refers to the essence that still guarantees the essence of something. The essence of violence does not lie in the essence itself but the setting that opens up space for him (Piliang, 2013).

Teenagers commit suicide due to depression. It stands out that makes teens commit suicide because of depression. Many cases as symptoms of depression are part of a seeping pattern, causes, emotions, personal problems, problems at school, substance of violence, and physical health (Mehlum et al., 2016).

Activity in this context is an orientation goal and is forbidden by coercion and assumptions implicitly as a consequence of someone interacting. This context is oriented towards their activities to institutional tasks, namely answering questions and according to them part of institutional behavior and norms, such interactions give a formal character (Gnisci & Pace, 2016). Inter-discursive and intertextual relations between reality in facts, decisions and legal reasons as depicted in a legal case and an ideal world on the rules, regulations and regulations that make up the legislative text (Hartig, 2016).

Forensics involves four things, namely: 1) analysis of the series of words used in communication. This analysis involves sound, words, grammar, and discourse and their interactions in certain social contexts. 2) analysis of the possible meanings of these linguistic forms. 3) confirming the language skills of the participants; 4) aspects of the context in which the event took place: include graphonology, transcription, lexical, morphology, syntax, discourse, pragmatics, and sociolinguistics (Gibbons & Turrel, 2008). They were asked to describe the last record of someone who committed suicide. The meaning in the last note of the suicide perpetrator can be revealed by looking at the context of the situation.

### **III. Methodology**

This research is a qualitative descriptive using computerized text analysis methods (Santoso & Apriyanto, 2020). Ten (10) student's suicide notes in this analysis were taken from search engine with the keywords "Indonesian Student Suicide Notes" in the form of written data. Then the analysis step is carried out, that is, first, to obtain the extraction of the language dimension from suicide notes, the text is entered into the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) Program (Pennebaker et al., 2015; Pennebaker & King, 1999; Pennebaker & Lay, 2002). The program reads the text given and calculates the percentage of words that reflect various dimensions. Next, the suicide note was analyzed with semantic forensic theory (Amato et al., 2018; Dagher & Fung, 2013). Finally, Olsson's suicide note theory will be linked to the results from the LIWC analysis and semantic analysis.

### **IV. Result and Discussion**

Computerized text analysis, namely Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) investigation will be elaborated with the forensic semantic theory from sources of student's suicide notes. Text analysis of suicide by using computerized text analysis has been conducted by forensic linguists (Lester, 2014). Sometimes, in the case of suicide, the police did not look deeply or suspicious, but needs to determine whether the text is found at the time

of the suicide have another clue about the cause of death. Forensic Linguistics attractive for use as a material for linguistic research (Ariani et al., 2014).

### Contents and Forms of Forensic Linguistics Student's Suicide Notes

The contents of a suicide note consists of three things, namely: the purpose of the suicide, the contents of the message, and submission, despair that refers to the reference to suicide. The purpose of the suicide is addressed to both parents (mother, father), siblings (brother, sister), friends (school friends and special friends, girlfriends). The purpose of the message content is addressed to people who close to the life of the victim and disclosed directly to the intended destination in accordance with the relationship or the level of familiarity of the author with the intended person. The contents of the notes tend to mention the things that need to be done or done to what is desired by someone who commits suicide without hesitation. People who commit suicide see and realize that the action taken is not good; length of a suicide note no more than 300 words; and the situational context of suicide notes is unclear (Danielewicz-Betz, 2012).

#### The contents of suicide note to mother.

[1] "Ibu... maafkan atas semua kesalahanku. Dengan ini semua, Ibu sudah nggak mau lihat dan menemuiku lagi. Ternyata, percuma yow..Ibu menyekolahkan aku hingga SMEA kalau aku harus mati dengan cara bunuh diri'. Saat dikubur nanti, aku minta Ayah dan Ibu, tidak menangis. Dan aku mau jika nanti mas Rizky menikah, Ibu dan Ayah harus merayakannya. Aku sangat kangen sama mas Risky. Aku iri sama teman-temanku yang bisa merasakan punya kakak laki-laki." (Retrieved from anaxmuda.blogspot.com on April 10th, 2020).

"Mother ... forgive all my mistakes. With all this, you don't want to see me and see me again. Turns out, it's useless! Mother sent me to high school if I had to die by suicide '. When buried later, I asked Mom and Dad, do not cry. And I want it if Rizky gets married, Mom and Dad have to celebrate. I really miss Risky. I'm jealous of my friends who could feel has a brother."

**Table 1.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [1]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	9.21
Posemo	1.32
Negemo	7.89
Anger	1.32
sad	3.95
social	19.74
family	10.53
friend	1.32

Table 1 shows the results of data extraction using computerized text analysis with a focus on the dimensions of the psychological process. The results showed that the emotional level of the victim when writing suicide notes was quite emotional, which was 9.21%. The notes indicate that the message he wrote wanted to be conveyed to his family and society, as many as 10.53% and 19.74%. The victim is not in a state of excessive anger or sadness, the percentage is just under 4%.

**The contents of suicide note to Father.**

[2] “Ayakhu tersayang, Aku telah belajar banyak bagiku. Kamu adalah motifator dalam hidupku. Tidak ada orang lain yang bisa menggantikanmu. Aku telah tumbuh dengan usahamu yang tak terkira. Banyak yang ingin aku katakan padamu, bagaimana aku ingin menunjukkan rasa hormatku. Mungkin aku tidak bisa membuatmu bangga padaku. Aku mungkin tidak bisa menjadi sosok yang kamu inginkan. Tapi, asal kamu tahu, bahwa kamu adalah ayah terbaik.” (Retrieved from hello-pet.com on April 10th, 2020).

“My dear father, I have learned a lot for me. You are the motivator in my life. There is no one else who can replace you. I have grown with your efforts beyond measure. I have a lot to say to you, how I want to show my respect. Maybe I can't make you proud of me. I might not be the person you want to be. But, just so you know, that you are the best father.”

**Table 2.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [2]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	5.06
Posemo	5.06
Negemo	0.00
Anger	0.00
sad	0.00
social	17.72
family	2.53
friend	1.27

Table 2 shows that the emotional level of the victim when writing suicide notes was quite stable at only 5.06%. In the process of psychology, he wrote not in a state of anger, sadness, and by not using negative word choices. The note indicated that the message he wrote more wanted to be shown to his environment, which was 17.72%. The analysis is that he wants to show others that his father's figure is a warrior and special for victims.

**The contents of suicide note to Siblings.**

[3] “Di kesempatan ini saya juga ingin meminta maaf kepada Kakak saya, Adik2 saya, Om, Tante, Sodara2 saya, sahabat dan seluruh teman2 saya... maafkan saya.. dan terima kasih untuk semua doa dan dukungannya.” (Retrieved from ceritamu.com on April 10th, 2020).

“On this occasion, I also want to apologize to my brother, my younger siblings, uncle, auntie, my brothers and sisters, friends and all my friends ... forgive me ... and thank you for all your prayers and support.”

**Table 3.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [3]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	8.11
Posemo	8.11
Negemo	0.00
Anger	0.00
sad	0.00
social	32.43
family	16.22
friend	5.41

Table 3 shows that the victim was quite calm when writing her suicide note. Shown by 8.11% the level of emotions is quite positive or good. He wrote a message for the environment and his family. There are indications

of family problems which then involve the social environment. Generally, this type of victim wants to prove something related to the problem he faced at the time.

**The contents of suicide note to friends.**

[4] “Salam kepada semua teman-teman dan selamat melanjutkan ke perguruan tinggi, serta sukses selalu untuk kalian. Hidupku hanya cukup sampai di sini, terima kasih atas semua kritikan, dukungan, serta bantuannya.” (Retrieved from detik.com on April 10th, 2020).

“Greetings to all friends and congratulations on continuing to college, and always success for you. My life is just enough to get here, thank you for all the criticism, support, and assistance.”

**Table 4.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [4]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	12.12
Posemo	9.09
Negemo	3.03
Anger	3.03
sad	0.00
social	12.12
family	0.00
friend	3.03

Table 4 shows that the victim was in a state of disappointment to himself. This is indicated by the high level of emotion, which is 12.12%. Emotions that tend to be negative and anger that is caused by a failure. Disappointed he wanted to show to his friends and environment.

**The contents of suicide note to girl/boyfriend.**

[5] "Untuk Yono, terima kasih atas kebaikanmu selama ini. Tapi pesanku, jangan sering menyakiti dan mempermainkan hati cewek ya say," (Retrieved from sukaunik.blogspot.com on April 10th, 2020).

“For Yono, thank you for your kindness all this time. But my message, do not often hurt and toying with a girl's heart, my dear.”

**Table 5.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [5]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	15.38
Posemo	11.54
Negemo	3.85
Anger	0.00
sad	3.85
social	19.23
family	0.00
friend	3.85

Table 5 shows that the condition of the victim when writing is quite high emotional level, which is 15.38%. Disappointment is high enough he can convey wisely, by not issuing negative and harsh statements. He wanted to convey a wise message to his lover, his environment and his friends. There are no indications of revenge in this note.

The contents of the student's suicide notes revolve around the happiness of the person left behind; heartache; not looking for victims; don't cry over the victim's departure; break promises or disappointment; out of control emotion; anger to someone; you are the best mother; expressing remorse; financial freedom; broken home; don't hate the princess; and I don't accept if you scold me for mistakes I've never made.

Forensic semantics is one of analysis of the meaning of words, phrases, clauses, paragraphs, etc., in written or oral sources about law, business, and academics, such as contracts, testament, copyright violations, or plagiarism according to expert opinion (Amato et al., 2018; Dagher & Fung, 2013). Legal language texts that are interpreted through words, phrases, or ambiguities and interpretations of meaning in oral discourse are the basis of forensic semantic analysis (Bright, 2007). In this case, the interpretation of the suicide note so that it is easily understood then uses forensic semantic analysis. In short, semantics are general linguistic elements that are very helpful in investigating a crime.

Many cases as symptoms of depression are part of a seeping pattern, causes, emotions, personal problems, problems at school, substance of violence, and physical health (Mehlum et al., 2016). There are several factors causing students to commit suicide, such as family factors, school environment factors, and economic factors.

#### **Family factors.**

Many factors make students take reckless actions to end their lives. The family is the most important factor so students avoid negative things. Most of them experience pressures that are not conveyed. It could also be due to the role models of media, tv and news on tv. In other words, they have no place to share and complain.

[6] “Keluargaku akan hidup bahagia tanpa diriku. Semoga tidak akan ada lagi sesumbar tentang kalian. Selamat tinggal semuanya, selamat tinggal diriku yang penuh dosa.” (Retrieved from detik.com on April 10th, 2020).

“My family will live happily without me. Hopefully there will be no more boast about you guys. Goodbye all, goodbye my sinful.”

**Table 6.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [6]

<b>Language Features – Psychological Process</b>	<b>Extract [%]</b>
Affect	8.70
Posemo	8.70
Negemo	0.00
Anger	0.00
sad	0.00
social	21.74
family	4.35
friend	4.35

Table 6 shows that the message he wanted to convey to his family, friends, and environment. There is a fairly high emotional indication, which 8.70% likely is caused by all three factors.

[7] “Mama, Bapak aku minta maaf, sudah bikin kalian susah. Aku gak pantas hidup di dunia ini lagi. Mama bapak gak usah nangisin aku karena aku gak pantas untuk ditangisi” (Retrieved from google.com on April 10th, 2020).

“Mama, Father I'm sorry, it has been difficult for you guys. I don't deserve to live in this world anymore. You don't need to cry for me because I don't deserve to cry.”

**Table 7.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [7]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	11.76
Posemo	0.00
Negemo	11.76
Anger	0.00
sad	8.82
social	14.71
family	5.88
friend	2.94

Table 7 indicates that the victim was truly in a state of sadness [8.82%] accompanied by high emotional and emotional states, each at 11.76%. Disappointed can be caused by a third factor, namely social, family, and friends.

[8] “Aku secara emosional tidak bisa mengontrol diriku. Tapi kau selalu tau, kamu adalah ibu terbaik yang bisa ngasuh anak arogan sepertiku. Walaupun aku marah padamu kamu adalah ibu terbaik selamanya.” (Retrieved from google.com on April 10th, 2020).

“I can't emotionally control myself. But you always know, you are the best mother who can care for arrogant children like me. Even though I'm mad at you, you are the best mother forever.”

**Table 8.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [8]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	14.29
Posemo	8.57
Negemo	5.71
Anger	2.86
sad	0.00
social	22.86
family	5.71
friend	0.00

Table 8 shows the frustration towards the family and social environment. Victims tend to be in a state of anger and high emotions [14.29%], but can still be expressed with a good statement.

**School environment factors.**

Consider the following example:

[9] “Dear indi, Agak lama ya kita pacaran.. 2 minggu itu sudah lama banget buat aku. Kau ingat aku nembak kamu makam hari rabu 29-juli-2015 jam 18.48.aku sayang kamu, sayang banget. Aku gak mau kehilangan kamu.maaf ya kalo aku banyak salah sama kamu, maaf ya kalo aku ngekang kamu, maaf ya kalo aku sering buat kamu marahaku kayak gitu semta karena aku takut kehilangan kamu.” (Retrieved from google.com on April 10th, 2020).

“Dear Indi, It's been a long time since we were dating ... 2 weeks has been a long time for me. Do you remember me shooting you grave Wednesday 29 July-2015 at 18.48. I really love you. I do not want to lose you. sorry if I wrong a lot with you, sorry if I restrained you, sorry if I often make you angry, I'm like that solely because I'm afraid of losing you.”

**Table 9.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [9]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	14.67
Posemo	2.67
Negemo	12.00
Anger	1.33
sad	8.00
social	16.00
family	0.00
friend	1.33

Table 9 shows that almost all aspects of psychology are complex. High levels of emotion [14.67%], sadness and anger [1.33%] and [8.00%] that the victim wishes to convey to friends and their environment.

**Economic factors.**

Consider the following example:

[10] “Gw Jemi Septiria lahir tanggal 15 September 1983. Gw berharap saat Gw bangun sudah ada duitx kertas rupiah masih bagus layak pakai yang jumlahnya bisa membawa Gw dan bisa mendapatkan kebebasan finansial.” (Retrieved from google.com on April 10th, 2020).

“I am Jemi Septiria born on September 15, 1983. I hope when I wake up there is already good money that is worth using, the amount of which can bring me and can get financial freedom.”

**Table 10.** LIWC analysis result of suicide note [10]

Language Features – Psychological Process	Extract [%]
Affect	8.11
Posemo	8.11
Negemo	0.00
Anger	0.00
sad	0.00
social	0.00
family	0.00
friend	0.00

Table 10 has something different. Victims tend to be ordinary. Actually the victim has a fairly good level of confidence and emotions [8.11%], and this type of victim cannot be analyzed only from the linguistic point of view. But it needs further deepening, such as from the psychological aspect.

**V. Conclusions and Suggestions**

The contents of the linguistic forensic text of a student’s suicide notes are: use of unusual vocabulary in the context, carried out by committing suicide by using dead vocabulary, direct speech and addressed to someone or addressed to author's relationship, mentioning something that is necessary, desirable, there is no doubt in acting, short writings between 50 to 300 words, the situational context is not clearly indicated. Factors that cause students to commit suicide are family, social environmental, friend, and economic factors. Not all students who committed suicide in anger excessive, but generally their feelings are the accumulation of feeling unfulfilled. The shape of endpoint disappointed that is suicide. Therefore, counselors must continuously and routinely accompany each

student. A teacher or counselor can learn language features that have negative leanings so they can detect students early. For the police, especially investigators are expected to involve forensic linguists in analyzing suicide cases.

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