

# **Preventive forensic linguistic analysis of Urdu/English suicide notes**



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**I.D # 13013084-005**

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**In the name of ALLAH, the most gracious and the ever merciful!**

## ABSTRACT

Aim of this study is to suggest some recommendations for suicide prevention with the help of linguistic analysis of suicide notes. As sudden increase in the rates of suicides in just a few decades has made it a global issue. Almost every country of the world including Pakistan has been affected by it. Most of the world's religions and cultures are against committing suicide. That's why a number of organizations are working in different countries like Australia, USA, UK etc. for suicide prevention. Laws also have been made against it such as in Pakistan there is punishment with different amounts of fines or prison if someone attempts suicide but if he/she remains successful in doing so, no law can do anything. It is beyond understanding that why people use to commit suicide inspite of strict religious, cultural and legal obstructions? Though these factors influence rate of suicides to a great extent but why still there are suicide cases and why there is increase in them? To answer these questions, 25 suicide notes were collected from some regions of Pakistan like from Nankana Sahib, Lahore, Islamabad, Faisalabad and Mardaan. Those notes were collected from police stations, army officers, psychiatrists, judges, lawyers and affected families. Two research questions have been devised and these notes have been analyzed according to them. Quantitative paradigm was used to support the qualitative one. Extensive reading of notes pointed out emerging patterns in SNs. For example, there was a logical relationship between sentences though a few instances were also traced where it seemed that wrong or ambiguous information is provided in SNs. It shows that SCs wanted to convey something more than what is explicitly stated. Those implicit meanings can be interpreted by the readers which may help in understanding their actual reasons of committing suicides. It showed the trends of suicides in Pakistan that which type of suicide is more common in Pakistan. Based on these above mentioned emerging patterns, relevant theories

such as entailment, cooperative principle, relevance theory and Durkheim's theory of suicide have been applied on SNs. Results of the analysis showed that there are some differences in language usage of males and females in SNs. Mostly there is logical relationship between sentences from both the SNs which creates coherence within texts and also helps in having better understanding of it. There is violation of Grice's maxims most of the time. Both genders violate maxim of quality and both follow maxim of relevance while maxims of quantity and manner are violated by males only and observed by females. Analysis of implicit information shows that behind intimacy, interpersonal and economical issues actually there is society. It is the negative impact of the society on individuals which forces them to commit suicide. These reasons may not have reached to their extreme and became the causes of their suicides if society didn't interfere negatively in them. So such preventive measures should be adopted which can change society's negative influence on individuals to lessen the rate of suicides in Pakistan. It is hoped that the study would contribute to forensic linguistic analysis of suicide notes and to suicide prevention.

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**Sumera Shan Ahmad**

## **DEDICATION!**

To my parents. I wish I could ever be able to thank them for their unconditional love, support, patience, guidance, modeled values and extreme level faith on me.

And

To Dr. Muhammad Shaban who taught me how to learn. I am indebted to him more than he knows.

## **CERTIFICATE**

(By the Supervisor)

I hereby certify that Ms. Sumera Shan Ahmad, UMT ID: 13013084-005 has been working under my supervision for her M.Phil thesis titled “Preventive Forensic Linguistic Analysis of Urdu/English Suicide Notes”. I believe that the content and scope of the thesis are commensurate with research at M.Phil level. I endorse its evaluation for the award of M.Phil degree through the official procedure of the university.

Dr. Muhammad Shaban

Assistant Professor, Chairman DELL, UMT.

## **THESIS DECLARATION LETTER**

(By the Candidate)

I, Sumera Shan Ahmad, UMT ID: 13013084-005 hereby certify that this thesis “Preventive Forensic Linguistic Analysis of Urdu/English Suicide Notes” is my own work, and that if evidence of plagiarism as prescribed by the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan is found in my thesis at any stage the degree may be revoked. The thesis has not been submitted in any previous application for higher degree.

Sumera Shan Ahmad

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Suicidal thoughts are temporary.

Suicide is permanent.

Don't give in to suicidal thoughts---

You can overcome them.

*(Understanding Suicidal Thinking, n.d.)*

#### 1.1. Chapter Overview

The first section of this chapter unfolds with an overview of the study, and the key factors which have laid down the premises for the current study. It spotlights the research questions of the study and discusses about linguistic methodologies which would be used to analyze suicide notes for the sake of its prevention. It confers previous studies in the field of forensic linguistics and the researches regarding SNs to show the gaps. It then outlines research questions upon which this study is based. Further this section briefly discusses the scope of the study and its possible contribution to the forensic linguistics and to the prevention of suicides. Last section provides sketch of the whole thesis.

#### 1.2. Introduction

Fairbairn (1995) has defined suicide as an intentional act of self destruction which leads to death. A suicide is not labeled as a suicide because it is done at some specific place or is result of a special kind of act. It is considered as a suicide due to the intention behind it. But we cannot refer an act as suicide only because of intention of dying behind that action rather that person has to die at the end. It may be adjudged as suicide if that protagonist ends up dead.