



**EXPLORING JUVENILE DELINQUENCY THROUGH THE LENS OF LANGUAGE:  
A FORENSIC PSYCHOLINGUISTIC APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING  
PSYCHOLOGICAL BEHAVIOUR**

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**Abstract:**

This research paper examines the behavioural patterns of juvenile delinquents by substantiate anomie theory of deviance. The objective is to provide valuable insights into an individual mindset and actions. The study focuses on rule breaking behaviour.

Data collection employs a questionnaire method administered to juveniles residing in observation homes, with a focus on juveniles aged ten to eighteen. Purposive sampling is employed in this study, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses are applied to the collected data. This research aims to detect the linguistic expressions of juveniles, concentrating on word usage and phrase.

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**Keywords:** Forensic Psycholinguistic, Juvenile Delinquency, Behavioural Pattern, Rule breaking behaviour

## **1. Introduction**

Forensic Psycholinguistics can be defined as the study of language, law, and psychology. It is a multidisciplinary field that focuses on the written or spoken data of offenders or language usage in crime to identify and assess the delinquents. It can be used as primary or collaborative evidence.

Behavioural pattern refer to the characteristics of rule-breaking behaviour in juveniles, which can involve individual or group acts that are often repeated in particular situations. Rule-breaking behaviour reflects a deviation from established norms and regulations, indicating a tendency to defy societal rules.

### **1.1 Review of Literature**

**J. Karisma, N. Vijayan. (2020). “Language of Juvenile Delinquents and their Psychological Factors affecting them to Involve in Delinquency.”** The present study says about psychological factors affect the juvenile delinquent mainly the researchers’ see the disorders and risk factors and aggression was seen in their language before and after involving in delinquent activity. The researchers’ collected data from the movie. In this research paper aggression was identified with the help of language of juveniles.

**Shaogang Yang, Zhuo Liu. Shaogang. (2019). “On the Construction of the System for Forensic Psycholinguistics.”** This research article says that Forensic Psycholinguistics is a new multidisciplinary field that uses psychological approaches to investigate linguistic phenomena in judicial proceedings, and it is growing in popularity. The researchers say that there is no theoretical approach for this study, but our own understanding should give some kind of structure to the field. The study explains how Forensic Psycholinguistics involves the Linguistic psychological activities and how it can tell the patterns of any crime committed by anyone. Additionally, the article explains how it has been connected to legal language.

**Priyanka Yadav. (2016). “Juvenile Delinquency as a Behavioural Problem.”** It mainly talks about types of juvenile delinquents, their personalities, causes of delinquency, and how to prevent them. Preventive programmes for juvenile delinquents were also classified into two, the role of police in an observation home, and enforcement of the law. Additionally, in aftercare and rehabilitation programmes, the role of counselling has been explained clearly. Finally, the researcher tries to focus on the role of counselling for juvenile delinquents.

## **2. Aim**

This research aims to detect the linguistic expressions of juveniles, concentrating on word usage and phrase.

## **3. Anomie Theory of Deviance**

Emile Durkheim was the first to develop the idea, which sheds light on the societal factors that contribute to criminal behaviour and deviance, including among juveniles. Anomie is characterized by a breakdown in social norms or a state of normlessness. The theory states that when juveniles encounter a mismatch between their goals and the possibilities available to them for achieving those goals, they may become apathetic. Behaviour is largely governed by societal norms and values; in the absence of clear rules, this can lead to abnormal or illegal behaviour. Juveniles who face limited opportunities for education, employment, or social mobility may experience strain or frustration.

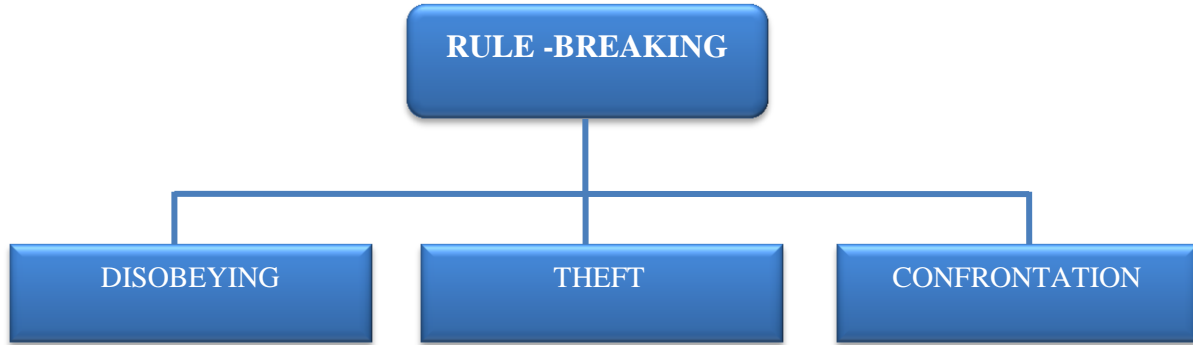
## **4. Data Collection**

Data collection employs a questionnaire method administered to juveniles residing in observation homes at Coimbatore, Chennai, Madurai and Salem. The focus is on juveniles aged ten to eighteen. Purposive sampling is employed in this study, and both qualitative and quantitative analyses are applied to the collected data.

## 5. Rule-Breaking Behaviour

Juveniles showing rule-breaking behaviour may involve in activities such as stealing, confrontation, lying and disobeying etc. Factors influencing included in these behaviours include peer influence, family and socio-economic circumstances.

The responses to the question asked were further classified based on who was responsible for the juvenile act of delinquency. The responses received from them are in spoken Tamil and are transcribed as given.



**Chart – 1 Rule-Breaking Behaviours**

### 5.1 Disobeying

When elders ask them to do some things, they do not accept or follow them. They do not respect them and are not ready to hear what they are saying. They are not ready to follow the rules and regulations.

Example – 1

<i>school</i>	<i>paṭikkum</i>	<i>pōtu</i>	<i>ita</i>	<i>paṇṇakkūṭāturāṇṇā</i>	<i>paṇṇuvēṇ</i>	<i>pōlīs</i>	<i>aṭikkaṭi</i>
school	studying	while	this	do not do	do (I)	police	often
<i>piṭṭicirukkāṅka</i>	<i>paikkula</i>	<i>pōkum</i>	<i>pōtu</i>	<i>license</i>	<i>illēṇṇu</i>	<i>ata</i>	<i>mīriyum</i>
catch (me)	(in) bike	going	while	license	not (having)	that	cross
<i>oṭṭiṭṭu tāṇ</i>	<i>iruntēṇ.</i>						
drive was	even then (I)						

‘When I was studying in school, if they tell me ‘you should not do this’, I will do it. Many times, police have caught me driving the bike without a licence. Even then I drive the bike’.

Example – 2

<i>colli</i>	<i>irukkaṛāṅka</i>	<i>collum</i>	<i>pōtu</i>	<i>inta</i>	<i>kātula</i>	<i>vāṅki</i>	<i>anta</i>
said	they are	telling	while	this	ear	get	another
<i>kātula</i>	<i>uṭṭuṭaṇum.</i>						
ear	leave (it)						

‘Yes, they have told me, but when they tell, I hear from this ear and leave from that ear’.

Example – 3

<i>avaṅka</i>	<i>eṇṇa</i>	<i>colṛatu.</i>	<i>nāṇ</i>	<i>eṇṇa</i>	<i>ceyyaratu</i>
they	what	saying.	I	what	to do

‘Who are they to tell me and why should I obey them’.

Example – 4

<i>pōliskāraṅka</i>	<i>check</i>	<i>post</i>	<i>la vaṇṭi</i>	<i>nippāṭṭuvāṅka.</i>	<i>nāṇ</i>	<i>nippāṭṭāma</i>	<i>pōyiṭuvēṇ</i>
police (officers)	check	post	vehicle	(they) stop.	I	(without)	stopping (will) go (I)

‘When the police tries to stop me near the check-post, I will not stop and continue driving’.

Example – 5

<i>niṛaiya</i>	<i>mīri</i>	<i>irukkēṇ</i>	<i>laicaṇs</i>	<i>illāma</i>	<i>speed ā</i>	<i>pōyirukkēṇ</i>
a lot (of)	crossed	have (I).	licenses	without	fast/quick	drive (I)

‘I did not follow many rules, and I went fast without a licenses’.

Example - 6

<i>vaṇṭila</i>	<i>pōrappa</i>	<i>eta</i>	<i>paṇṇa</i>	<i>kūṭātō</i>	<i>ata</i>	<i>tāṇ paṇṇuvēṇ</i>
(In) vehicle	(while) going	what	do	not	that	is what I’ll do

<i>atu</i>	<i>tāṇ</i>	<i>piṭikkum</i>
that (is)	what	like

‘While I am going by bike, what is restricted I do that, because I like that only’.

The language used by juveniles reveals the existence of behavioural issues at the early intervention stage.

Expressions such as

1. *inta kātula vāṇki anta kātula uṭṭuṭaṇum*
2. *nāṇ eṇṇa kēṭkaratu*
3. *nāṇ nippāṭṭāma pōyituvēṇ*
4. *niraiya mīri irukkēṇ*
5. *ita paṇṇakkūṭaturāṇṇā paṇṇuvēṇ*
6. *eta paṇṇa kūṭātō ata tāṇ paṇṇuvēṇ*

indicates a disregard for rules and social norms among each juvenile. They exhibit a resistance to following advice from elders and a significant number of them attribute their misbehaviour to family influences.

Many juveniles appear to have gone off track due to inadequate guidance from their family members. Parents, should have taught essential values and steered juveniles in the right direction since childhood. However, it seems that they have neglected this responsibility. Allowing minors to ride two-wheelers without providing clear societal rules contributes to the problem. Interestingly, the focus of these juveniles’ talk emphasizes on disobeying the rules related to driving bikes rather than engaging in alcohol and drug use. This indicates, they are not aware that even usage of drugs and alcohol are against the societal norms.

## 5.2 Stealing

Things without knowing if it is right or wrong, just for their needs and desires, they might have started it.

Example – 7

<i>eṇakku</i>	<i>piṭicciruntā</i>	<i>tiruṭuvēṇ</i>	<i>kēṭṭa</i>	<i>taramāṭṭāṇka</i>	<i>ataṇāla</i>	<i>nāmalē</i>	<i>eṭuttukkaṇum</i>
(for) me	if I like	will steal (I)	(if) ask	will not give	so	we	(should) take

‘If I like something, I will steal it. If I ask, they will not give it to me, so we should take it’.

Example – 8

<i>phone</i>	<i>oru</i>	<i>tāṭṭi</i>	<i>friend</i>	<i>vīṭla</i>	<i>iruntuccu</i>	<i>atai</i>	<i>eṭuttēṇ</i>
phone	one	time	friend	house	(was) there	that	(I) took

‘One time, I stole my friend’s phone from his home’.

Example – 9

<i>kañcā</i>	<i>tiruṭuvēṇ</i>	<i>tiruṭṭu nāḷa</i>	<i>kañcā</i>	<i>kañcā</i>	<i>kāka</i>	<i>tiruṭṭu</i>
kanja	will steal (I).	theft because	kanja	kanja	because	theft

‘I stole kanja because I needed kanja and began to steal’.

Phrases such as

1. *atai eṭuttēṇ*
2. *eṇakku piṭicciruntā tiruṭuvēṇ*
3. *kañcā tiruṭuvēṇ*
4. *paik tiruṭa pōṇōm*
5. *pursela iruntu eṭuttēṇ*
6. *eṭuttuṭṭu ōṭiṭṭēṇ*
7. *kācu tiruṭiyirukkēṇ*
8. *50 rūpāy eṭuttēṇ*

shows that they do not hesitate to steal anything from anyone. This behaviour is to satisfy their needs and desires. Juveniles’ situation, environment or attraction towards things or substances tends to drive them to steal money from rich people, friends and the reason is not getting sufficient money from their home. Most of the juveniles accepted that they steal in order to buy drugs, alcohol, substances and other things. Words synonymously used for “*tiruṭu* ‘steal’ are *tiruṭuvēṇ*, *eṭuttēṇ*, *apēs paṇṇiṭṭēṇ*, *āṭṭaiyai pōṭṭēṇ*”. The juveniles are impetuous as they are not aware of the consequences they may face.

### 5.3 Confrontation

Is natural and common for everyone, but in the case of juveniles, they do it for pleasure and to enjoy the moment, if they feel irritated they beat someone to let out their frustration.

Example – 10

<i>kuṭiccā</i>	<i>pacaṇkaḷōṭa</i>	<i>jāliyā</i>	<i>irukkum.</i>	<i>taṇiyā</i>	<i>iruntā</i>	<i>caṇṭai</i>	<i>varum.</i>
drinking	(with) boys	fun	will (be).	Alone	be/stay	fight	(will) come

‘After I drink, it will be fun with boys. If I am alone, fight will come’.

Example – 11

<i>oru</i>	<i>mātiri</i>	<i>pēciṇā</i>	<i>iḷuttu</i>	<i>pōṭṭu</i>	<i>aṭicciruvēṇ.</i>	<i>atāṇ</i>	<i>eṇakku</i>	<i>teriñci</i>	<i>nalla</i>	<i>paḷakkam.</i>
different	manner	talk	pull	push	(will) beat.	That	my	known	good	habit

‘If anyone talks with me in a different manner, I will push and beat them nicely. This is my good habit’.

Example – 12

<i>iḷuttu</i>	<i>pōṭṭu</i>	<i>aṭicci</i>	<i>talaila</i>	<i>kutti</i>	<i>kāyamāyiṭuccu.</i>
pull	push	hit (in)	head	small	injury (happened)

‘I pulled (him) and beat on his head, and it became a wound’.

Example – 13

<i>kōpam</i>	<i>vantā</i>	<i>aṭikkaṇumṇu</i>	<i>tōṇum.</i>	<i>aṭiccā tāṇ</i>	<i>kōpam</i>	<i>kuraiyum.</i>
anger	(if) come	to hit	(will) feel.	hitting only	anger	(will) reduce

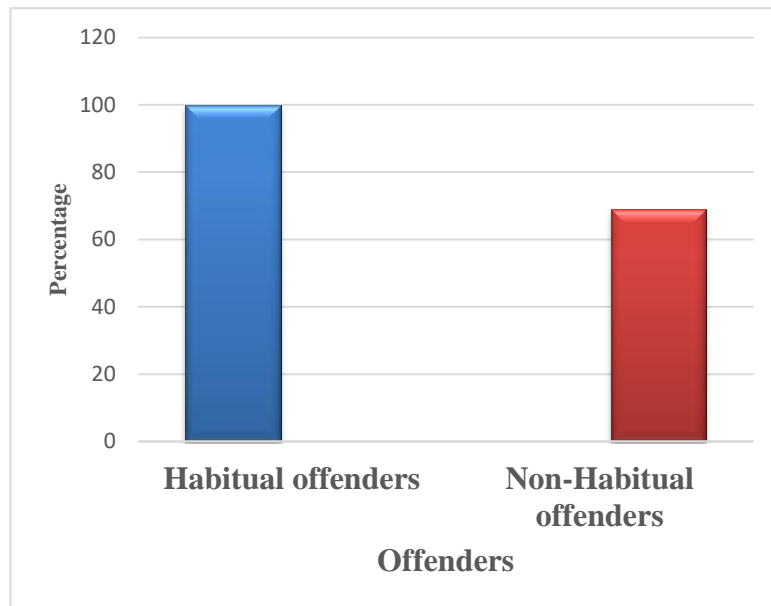
‘If I get angry, I feel like beating others. If I beat, only my anger gets reduced’.

The expressions used by juveniles, such as

1. *taṇiyā iruntā caṇṭai varum*
2. *iḷuttu pōṭṭu aṭicciruvēṇ*
3. *kōpam vantā aṭikkaṇumṇu tōṇum aṭiccā tāṇ kōpam kuraiyum*
4. *aṭicci talaila kutti kāyamāyiṭuccu*

sheds light on their preference to engage in physical confrontations for temporary enjoyment or as a response to irritation. The influence of peer groups and family significantly contributes to these confrontational behaviours, as juveniles often consume alcohol together and initiate fights, influenced by their peers or learned behaviours from parents who engage in similar actions.





**Graph – 1 Rule-breaking Behaviour**

Upon examining the language used by juveniles to understand their psychological behaviours. A significant feature of 79% of the juveniles demonstrates a tendency for rule-breaking behaviour, suggesting challenges in adhering to societal norms. Mostly habitual offenders consistently exhibit rule-breaking behaviour, highlighting a persistent disobedience to societal norms. Non-habitual offenders also engage significantly, with 69% exhibiting this behaviour, indicating an established yet less universal tendency.

## **6. Conclusion**

Forensic psycholinguistics, a juncture of language, law and psychology, plays an important role in identifying, solving and assessing crimes committed by juvenile delinquents, thereby contributing to the betterment of the society. From the analysis, it was established that most of the juvenile delinquents committed crime because of low parenting and lack of support from the family (*J. Karisma & N. Vijayan. 2020*). By analysing the written or spoken expressions of juvenile offenders, forensic psycholinguistics enables investigators and the judiciary to delve into the intricacies of language usage.

A systematic analysis of phrases and sentences used by juvenile delinquents assists in determining whether a juvenile has committed an offence and the probability of becoming a habitual offender. The insights gained from forensic psycholinguistic analyses not only assist in solving crimes but also provide valuable information for the judiciary. Understanding the linguistic behaviour patterns of juvenile delinquents helps in understanding their mindset, allowing for a more nuanced method during sentencing. Further, this method facilitates the

assessment of a juvenile's mental maturity, assisting the juvenile justice board in determining the rehabilitation process and the need for additional support.

Rule- breaking behaviour is common among all juveniles, they don't seem to feel guilty after misbehaving, cheating, stealing at home, using drugs etc., This behaviour should be taken care of by parents earlier to avoid doing offence at a young age.

Contrary to cultural expectations in India, where obedience to elders is highly valued, these juveniles are not culturally bound and lack respect for traditional values. They believe that obeying parental or elder advice is unnecessary. It is important for teachers and parents to create awareness among juveniles about the consequences of their behaviour, emphasizing the importance of respecting societal norms. Counselling plays an important role in preventing further offences, providing a potential opportunity for redirecting disobedient behaviour.

According to a research in India a number of minor crimes such as theft, burglary, robbery and snatching is often committed by young people under the age of eighteen.

These examples illustrate the juveniles' resistance to adhering to rules, regulations and emotional control. They exhibit a disregard for societal norms, lack respect for others and proudly embrace disobedience. The collected data does not reveal an apparent lying factor. According to the anomie theory of deviance, when societal norms and values become vague, leading to a breakdown in social order, deviant behaviour may develop. In this context, juveniles who are unaware of the need to follow the rules begin to confront everything with a sense of pride and arrogance, claiming they will not follow any rules.

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