Abstract. Forensic Linguistics (FL) is a relatively new subfield within applied linguistics that studies the different intersections between language and the legal field, which is heavily linguistic by nature. In order to have a fair, legal and effective procedure, anyone involved in a legal process (lawyers, judges, police officers, members of a jury, etc.) benefits from possessing a certain awareness of linguistic principles. With this purpose, the expert testimony of a linguist could contribute to the understanding or recognition of possible interpretations or points of view that might have gone otherwise unnoticed. This article provides the general linguist with an overview of the broad field of FL and highlights the different ways the discipline can contribute to the criminal justice system. It presents a summary of some of the most well-known and discussed legal cases and outlines the intersections between applied linguistics (mainly pragmatics, discourse analysis, and sociolinguistics) and this emerging field in three interrelated areas: (1) language as the medium of communication between law enforcement authorities and suspects/witnesses or as the medium of legal argumentation in the courtroom, (2) language of the law (issues of intelligibility, interpretation and construction of legal language), and (3) crimes of language and linguistic evidence (use, validity, and reliability in the courtroom). Challenges and limitations of the field are also discussed.

Keywords: forensic linguistics, intersections, law, legal language/legalese, pragmatics.