

# *Questions regarding use of Language Analysis in UK Asylum Claims cases*

*Peter L Patrick & Nicholas Oakeshott*

- We are interested in the role of language analysis in asylum claims cases. Linguists around the world are concerned that this be done (if at all) in an appropriate manner by people with the relevant expertise, and in full awareness of the complex issues and difficulties that may arise. For more information, please see above page, ie:  
<http://privatewww.essex.ac.uk/~patrickp/lhr/lhrasylum.htm>
- We urgently ask for your help in contributing to this effort. *Please respond today* if you can.
- This questionnaire is an attempt to get further empirical information about the range of UK Asylum Claims cases in which language is brought up as an issue. *We are only concerned with claims processed by the UK government.* If you have been involved in or have any direct knowledge of such a case, we would be grateful to you for answering the questions below.
- Please answer **separately** for **each** case. Results may be used in a conference paper and/or academic publication.
- We are not seeking to identify or contact any applicants, and will not use identifying information from particular cases.
- One of us is a linguist, one a lawyer; the latter may try to contact the lawyers involved in the cases for more information, but will respect confidentiality issues in any discussion.
- If it helps in discussing cases, you may provide a pseudonym, but please say so (eg, "This person, whom I will call Maria...").
- We will probably not use your name, but if you want to be sure we do not, please say so below; if you want to be credited, please also say so.

Please now download this questionnaire, fill it out and email back to us at this address:

[patrickp@essex.ac.uk](mailto:patrickp@essex.ac.uk)

If needed, you may also print out a copy and mail us your answers. See the address at the bottom.

Finally, if you have information but are very busy, one of us will call you and take down the information by phone.

*The more information you can give us, the more useful it will be; but even brief answers will be helpful. Thank you!*

[Questionnaire](#)

Your name:

Your affiliation:

Your contact info: email

phone

*I [do / do not] wish to be identified.*

**1. Role:** In what capacity were you contacted? Please describe briefly your main qualification or affiliation in this capacity.

(E.g. "I have a PhD in linguistics from Pennsylvania, and am employed as a linguist at the University of Essex.")

- a) A linguist (i.e. someone with advanced training in linguistics)?
- b) An interpreter or translator (i.e. someone with expertise in a relevant language other than English)?
- c) A lawyer?
- d) A refugee, asylum or human rights activist or professional?
- e) Other role: (describe)

**2. Dates:** Please give any information locating this case's date. This might be: when you were first contacted; when you made your contribution; when the claimant's case first arose; when their first or second interview(s) took place; when the case was rejected; etc. Dates will help us work out what policies etc. were in effect at the time.

**3. Nationality:** What nationality was the applicant claiming?

**4.** What other nationality was the applicant suspected of holding?

**5. Language:** What language or languages were at issue?

**6.** What degree and type of knowledge or competence do you have in them?

**7.** How was the issue of language first brought up in the case?

- a) Claimant was asked by the authorities whether she would agree to undergo language analysis testing
- b) Claimant did not undergo language analysis testing at government request, but language issues were cited as part of judgment refusing the claim
- c) Claimant, lawyer or other person involved on claimant's behalf raised language issues during appeal of a refusal
- d) Some other way (describe)

**8. Process:** Who instructed you?

- a) The UK government authorities
- b) Lawyers representing the claimant
- c) Other or no-one (explain)

**9.** What was asked of you?

- a) Asked to give expert testimony about a relevant language
- b) Asked to help find someone to give expert testimony about language
- c) Asked to interpret in a case
- d) Asked to provide information about some other aspect (describe)

**10.** What information did the authorities base their assessment of nationality on?  
(Information relevant to language, i.e. to your involvement – not e.g. passport issues etc.)

- a) Initial screening interview with the claimant
- b) Later, substantive interview with claimant, examining the claim
- b) Language analysis interview with client, at government request (face to face?

Or by telephone?)

- c) Recording of other interview (not specifically intended for language analysis)

Please describe this information for us.

**11.** What information were you provided with?

- a) Met with the claimant for an interview
- b) Given a recording of an interview or conversation with the client
- c) Copy of a report or judgment from earlier stage of claims process
- d) Informal description of the relevant facts (e.g. by a lawyer)
- e) Other

Please describe this information for us.

**12.** Was any person or organization other than you was asked to provide information or evaluate language evidence concerning the claimant's case? Who?

- a) Academic linguistic expert
- b) Interpreter or translator
- c) Employee of *Eqvator* or *Sprakab* or similar companies (company name)
- d) Anthropologist or other social scientist with knowledge of country/language
- e) National of claimed country with native-speaker expertise
- f) Other

**13.** What was the outcome of the case, or the result of your involvement?

**14.** Please provide us with the name and contact info you have for any lawyers involved on behalf of the claimant. We would like to contact them for further information in a manner that respects confidentiality and anonymity of the claimant.

Thank you very much for your help.

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[Linguistic Human Rights homepage](#) – [Peter L Patrick homepage](#)

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