

# Linguistic human rights in the asylum process

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Individuals with varying types of language expertise - linguists with academic credentials, interpreters with different levels of qualification, native speakers with few or no academic qualifications - are increasingly involved in the determination of national, regional or ethnic origins of refugees as part of the asylum process (Eades 2005). There has been considerable controversy over the role, if any, that language experts and linguistic expertise should play in this process, and each host nation differs in its practices. Attempts to draw up a minimum set of standards (Language and National Origin Group, 2004), though widely endorsed by linguists, are still preliminary and have been contested in proceedings. In this talk I explain some of the issues and developments, and illustrate some particular problems that speakers of (African) Creole languages have encountered in the process.

Eades, Diana. 2005. Applied Linguistics and language analysis in asylum seeker cases. *Applied Linguistics* 26(4): 503-526.

Language and National Origin Group. 2004. Guidelines for the use of language analysis in relation to questions of national origin in refugee cases. In Diana Eades & Jacques Arends, eds., *Language Analysis and Determination of Nationality*. Thematic issue of *The International Journal of Speech, Language and the Law: Forensic Linguistics*, 11(2): 179-266.