

Enhancing the Reliability of LADO: Examples from Fula and Wolof Cases

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Language Analysis for the Determination of Origin (LADO) has increasingly been used to differentiate genuine asylum claims from fraudulent ones in many Western countries. However, due to the limited number of specialists and the dearth of sociolinguistic research in applicants' speech communities, LADO faces challenges to ensure objective and reliable results in asylum application cases. In this talk, I will use data from three varieties of Fula and Wolof spoken in the Senegambian subregion to examine some of the methodological and investigative difficulties facing interviewers and analysts involved in LADO for applicants hailing from this area. Using features of the Fula and Wolof varieties spoken in the region, I will offer suggestions on how to test applicants' localized knowledge appropriately, collect, and analyze the necessary data (spontaneous speech) to enhance the reliability of the results of these serious language analyses.