

Секция «Лингвистика: Проблемы современной социолингвистики»

**Language analysis for determination of national origin: Is it a one-size-fits-all method?**

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With the intense refugee flows and the growing public and security concerns that the asylum granting procedures can potentially be abused by people who are not genuine refugees, there is a need for tools that can systematically be used to either confirm or disprove an applicant's identity. For that purpose, Language Analysis for Determination of Origin (LADO) has been widely resorted to in multiple countries. However, despite such large application of this method, different members of the linguistic scientific community have raised concerns over its reliability [1].

The proposed paper argues that the general reliance on LADO as an appropriate way of determining a person's origin is largely based on a Western notion of monolingualism and monoculturalism. For a considerable number of regions the asylum seekers are originating from, the linguistic situation is more complex [2]. This results in asylum seekers (i) being speakers of multiple languages with different degrees of competence; (ii) being speakers of a language spoken in more than one country; (iii) being speakers of one or more languages, but going through a process of language attrition. This paper shows that, on top of the general critique of the LADO method, it can be argued that there is too little evidence to assume that LADO can be reliably used on certain groups of asylum seekers, which may result in their systematic discrimination.

This paper concludes with a brief discussion whether the linguistic computer software currently being tested in Germany by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has the potential of overcoming the shortcomings associated with LADO done by human experts. The results suggest that although the possibility of human error would practically be eliminated, it is still not clear whether the software originally designed as a voice recognition method intended to compare a sample of a person's voice to another sample in order to see whether the voice on both samples does indeed belong to the same person can yield reliable results when trying to match a sample of a person's voice to samples produced by people living in the same area. Moreover, just as expert-produced LADO discussed above, the software fails to address limitations associated with either multilingualism or language attrition. Although theoretically it is possible to include in the database samples from people coming from very different linguistic settings, including multilingual ones, or ones that are likely to have experienced cross-linguistic influence, it would take additional time to both accumulate such a comprehensive database and check its reliability for all kinds of different cases. Quite likely the reliability for people not coming from monolingual culture would be lower.

Hence, the present paper argues that both traditional expert-based LADO and the new software may not be as reliable as previously and indeed continuously assumed due to the limitations associated with multilingualism and the lack of rigorous scientific testing.

**Источники и литература**

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