

Technical Specifications for Language Analysis for the Norwegian Immigration Administration

Some foreign applicants do not present a valid passport or other approved ID-document with their initial application to Norwegian authorities. Language analysis – linguistic analysis of recorded speech – provides these applicants with an opportunity to contribute towards substantiating an undocumented claim of a national, ethnic or regional identity, through establishing an affiliation to a particular language community. These technical specifications apply to all such language analysis conducted for the Norwegian Immigration Administration.

Order Requirements:

When ordering a language analysis report, the following information about the applicant (based on his/her own information) will follow the order: gender, age, level of education, mother tongue (language and dialect), language of education, nationality; ethnicity; last permanent place of residence prior to departure from the applicant's native country; any previous place(s) of residence, with information regarding what period(s) of time the applicant lived there. Where any of this information is unavailable, the reason should be stated in the order. As the order shall be anonymous, the precise address shall be excluded from the order.

Furthermore, it will be specified whether it is an ordinary order or an express order. Ordinary orders shall be returned to the Norwegian Immigration Administration within three weeks. Express orders shall be returned within one week.

Recording Requirements:

The audio recording on which the analysis is to be made will consist of a monologue from the applicant, mainly in the shape of a free narrative – not singing, poem recital or any other pre-defined performance.

The audio recording will have a duration of 15-20 minutes. In cases where two or more languages from the same applicant are to be analysed, separate audio recordings of 15-20 minutes for each language will be presented, as they are to be analysed as two separate orders.

The audio recording will be anonymous; the applicant should not state his own name or names of relatives during the recording. If these conditions are not met, the audio recording shall be considered invalid for analysis. In such a case, the assignment shall be returned to the Norwegian Immigration Administration.

Requirements regarding Qualified Linguists and Native Speaker Analysts:

As a basis, the procedure and the reports produced shall be in line with the principles established in the relevant *IAFPA resolution*¹ and in *Guidelines*,² with the specifications and modifications stated below. Any further reservations with respect to the principles established in these documents must explicitly be clarified by the supplier.

The analysis shall be conducted by a qualified linguist in cooperation with a native speaker analyst. The responsibility for the quality of each analysis report shall rest on the qualified linguist, and is to be signed by this person only. In the event of a report being questioned as part of a case brought before a court, the qualified linguist will be expected to defend the report in person.

Qualified linguists responsible for reports ordered by the Norwegian Immigration Administration shall hold at least a relevant master's degree (or equivalent). In addition, the qualified linguists shall have a relevant professional/academic specialization and/or relevant work experience. The supplier must present a detailed documentation of the professional qualifications of these linguists.

Native speaker analysts involved in the preparation of reports ordered by the Norwegian Immigration Administration shall have the analysis language/dialect as his or her mother tongue/first language, be

well acquainted with the linguistic developments in the relevant linguistic community and demonstrate the necessary analytical skills. If a native speaker analyst does not fulfil any of these criteria, the analysis shall contain an explanation regarding why it has not been possible to find a fully qualified analyst. The supplier shall guarantee for the qualifications of the analyst. As a consequence, information regarding the identity or the qualifications of the analyst will not be required.

Each analysis report shall be subject to internal quality control and approval from the supplier before submission to the Norwegian Immigration Administration. This quality control shall ensure that the report is prepared according to the specifications laid down in the agreement, as well as these technical specifications.

Analysis Stage A: Linguistic Community

Based on the audio recording, it shall first be determined to what extent it is possible to establish to which linguistic community the applicant belongs. The linguistic community in question shall as far as possible be specified as follows: language, dialect and sub-dialect. If such a specification is not possible, the analysis shall contain an explanation as to why this is the case. Each analysis report shall contain an account of which relevant linguistic characteristics that separate this particular linguistic community from linguistically adjoining communities.

The main focus in the analysis is on phonological, syntactical and morphological features. The analysis may be complemented with examples of vocabulary. Prosodic features (for example stress/accent patterns and tonal features), as well as allophonic features, shall be included in the phonological analysis if relevant.³ If required, other linguistic aspects will be specified in the order.

As a minimum, five phonological traits and three each of syntactical and morphological traits are expected to be included in the analysis, to the extent that such traits can be identified in the analysis material. Each of these traits shall be illustrated with at least three examples from the recording. Where these numbers of relevant traits or examples cannot be identified in the material, this limitation shall be made explicitly clear in the report.

Prosodic features and allophonic traits shall only be included in the transcription where they are relevant for the analysis. We encourage a focus on prosodic features and allophonic traits where such traits are indicators of dialectal and/or sociolectal differences in a given language community.

All examples in the phonological analysis shall be transcribed phonemically in their syntactical context, in compliance with the standard *IPA 2005*.⁴ For the morphological and syntactical analyses, an established orthographic norm in Latin letters or an alternative established system of transcription may be used, but *IPA 2005* is recommended.

In a separate partial conclusion of the first section of the report, it shall be specified whether there is evidence present in the audio recording indicating that the language the applicant speaks on the recording is not the applicant's first language learned at home in childhood.

Moreover, a separate partial conclusion shall specify whether or not there are signs present on the recording indicating deliberate linguistic manipulation on the part of the applicant.

The main conclusion of the first section of the report shall follow logically from the partial conclusions. The partial conclusions shall consistently be based on sets of examples, contrasted with relevant sets of counter-examples from adjoining linguistic varieties.

The conclusion of analysis stage A shall be graded according to the enclosed *assessment scale*. Here, the claimed linguistic community of the applicant as stated in the order constitutes the hypothesis to be assessed.

This assessment shall be supplemented by an assessment of the basis on which the conclusion is made. This shall include information regarding any limitations related to the analysis material, limitations related to the analyst's familiarity with the linguistic community of the applicant and limitations of the available verified knowledge about this linguistic community and its geographical representation.

Analysis Stage B: Geographical Representation

A second section of the analysis shall give an account of the relationship between the linguistic community to which the applicant can be connected and the applicant's claimed history of residence. This shall be based on the conclusions of the first section of the report and the residence history as stated in the ordering letter.

The relevant core area of the specified linguistic community shall as far as possible be geographically determined on district level – or on sub-district level where relevant (according to the administrative hierarchical division: province, district and sub-district). If such a determination is not possible, the analysis shall contain an explanation as to why this is the case.

It shall further be concluded to what extent the linguistic community to which the applicant belongs according to the conclusion of the first section of the analysis is represented on the geographical locations where the applicant declares to have been a resident according to the information given in the order. As a main rule, this conclusion shall be substantiated with references to available specialist literature.

No notice shall be taken of any claim that is put forward by the person on the audio recording. Likewise, no evaluation of the content of what the person says on the audio recording shall be included in the analysis.

The conclusion of analysis stage B shall be graded according to the enclosed *assessment scale*. Here, the claimed national, ethnic and regional identities of the applicant as stated in the order constitute the hypothesis to be assessed.

This assessment shall be supplemented by an assessment of the basis on which the conclusion is made. This shall include information regarding any limitations related to the analysis material, limitations related to the analyst's familiarity with the linguistic community of the applicant and limitations of the available verified knowledge about this linguistic community and its geographical representation.

Analysis Stage C: Alternative Linguistic Community

A third section of the analysis – Analysis stage C – is relevant only in cases where the analysis in analysis stage A concludes that the results of a language analysis are *inconsistent* with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant (Assessment Scale A grades -1, -2 & -3), as stated in the order.

In these cases, there will be data on the recording that might be consistent with an alternative linguistic community from that claimed by the applicant. This section shall examine to which degree such data can identify the applicant as belonging to an alternative linguistic community from the one claimed by the applicant.

The conclusion of analysis stage C shall be graded according to the enclosed *assessment scale*. Here, the linguistic community that based on the analysis best could explain the findings constitutes a secondary hypothesis to be assessed.

This assessment shall be supplemented by an assessment of the basis on which the conclusion is made. This shall include information regarding any limitations related to the analysis material, limitations related to the analyst's familiarity with the alternative linguistic community and limitations of the available verified knowledge about this linguistic community and its geographical representation.

Direct Analysis:

Direct analysis is an analysis based on a recording over telephone. The above specifications are valid for direct analysis as well, where applicable. This involves that the recording on which the analysis is based in every respect shall comply with the specifications stated under "recording requirements" above, and that this recording shall be made available to the Norwegian Immigration Administration.

In certain cases, the analyst could be expected to provide a brief summary of the preliminary conclusions from a direct analysis to assigned representatives of the Norwegian Immigration Administration over telephone. In such cases, the supplier will not be held to account for these preliminary conclusions, and shall conclude the formal analysis regardless of these.

The Format of the Report:

The analysis report shall be written in English or in a Scandinavian language, and submitted electronically in PDF-format.

The argument of the different sections of the analysis should be formulated with a qualified linguist in mind. In contrast, the final conclusion of each section of the analysis should be formulated so that it will be accessible for a person without higher education of any kind.

All correspondence regarding the ordered analyses shall be sent in a secured digital form. The supplier shall handle all information regarding the individual orders with strict confidentiality, as regulated in the Agreement.

Amendments:

These specifications are subject to amendments by the Norwegian Immigration Administration to the extent that it is made necessary by relevant political or legal developments in Norway, or based on academic developments involving the relevant international professional/academic associations or their members. In such cases, the suppliers will be given written notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed changes.

¹ International Association for Forensic Phonetics and Acoustics (IAFPA) (2009): "Language and Determination of National Identity Cases", <http://www.iafpa.net/langidres.htm>.

² Language and National Origin Group (2004): "Guidelines for the use of language analysis in relation to questions of national origin in refugee cases", *Speech, Language and the Law*, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 261-66, <http://www.equinoxjournals.com/ojs/index.php/IJSL/issue/view/96>.

³ Phonemic vowel length is not considered a prosodic feature, but should be discussed as a general phonological feature.

⁴ International Phonetic Association (IPA) (2005): <http://www.langsci.ucl.ac.uk/ipa/>.

Assessment Scale for Analysis Stage A: Linguistic Community

The scale below shall be used when assessing to which degree the results of a language analysis are consistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant, as stated in the order.

The claimed linguistic community of the applicant thus constitutes a hypothesis that is to be tested against the results obtained in the language analysis.

Please note that the points below do not constitute any linear interval scale. The numbers are used for illustration purposes only.

- Grade +3:** In conclusion, the language analysis shows with certainty that the results obtained are clearly consistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade +2:** In conclusion, the language analysis clearly suggests that the results obtained most likely are consistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade +1:** In conclusion, the language analysis somewhat suggests that the results obtained more likely than not are consistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade 0:** In conclusion, the language analysis leaves the question open, as the results obtained do not provide a basis on which to assess the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade -1:** In conclusion, the language analysis somewhat suggests that the results obtained more likely than not are inconsistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade -2:** In conclusion, the language analysis clearly suggests that the results obtained most likely are inconsistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.
- Grade -3:** In conclusion, the language analysis shows with certainty that the results obtained are clearly inconsistent with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant.

Assessment Scale for Analysis Stage B: Geographical Representation

The scale below shall be used when assessing to which degree the results of a language analysis are consistent with the claimed identity of the applicant, as stated in the order.

The claimed identity of the applicant thus constitutes a hypothesis that is to be tested against the results obtained in the first section of the analysis.

Please note that the points below do not constitute any linear interval scale. The numbers are used for illustration purposes only.

- Grade +3:** In conclusion, the language analysis shows with certainty that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis are clearly consistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade +2:** In conclusion, the language analysis clearly suggests that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis most likely are consistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade +1:** In conclusion, the language analysis somewhat suggests that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis more likely than not are consistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade 0:** In conclusion, the language analysis leaves the question open, as the results obtained in the first section of the analysis do not provide a basis on which to assess the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade -1:** In conclusion, the language analysis somewhat suggests that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis more likely than not are inconsistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade -2:** In conclusion, the language analysis clearly suggests that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis most likely are inconsistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.
- Grade -3:** In conclusion, the language analysis shows with certainty that the results obtained in the first section of the analysis are clearly inconsistent with the claimed identity of the applicant.

Assessment Scale for Analysis Stage C: Alternative Linguistic Community

The scale below shall be used only in cases where the analysis in analysis stage A concludes that the results of a language analysis are *inconsistent* with the claimed linguistic community of the applicant (grades -1, -2 & -3), as stated in the order.

In these cases, there will be data on the recording that might be consistent with a specific linguistic community other than that claimed by the applicant.

This scale shall be used when assessing to which degree such data can identify the applicant as belonging to a specific alternative linguistic community other than the one claimed by the applicant.

The linguistic community that based on the analysis best could explain the findings thus constitutes a secondary hypothesis that is to be tested against the results obtained in the language analysis.

Due to the nature of this hypothesis, negative grades will not be relevant in this assessment scale.

Please note that the points below do not constitute any linear interval scale. The numbers are used for illustration purposes only.

Grade +3: In conclusion, the language analysis shows with certainty that the results obtained are clearly consistent with a specific alternative linguistic community.

Grade +2: In conclusion, the language analysis clearly suggests that the results obtained most likely are consistent with a specific alternative linguistic community.

Grade +1: In conclusion, the language analysis somewhat suggests that the results obtained more likely than not are consistent with a specific alternative linguistic community.

Grade 0: In conclusion, the language analysis leaves the question open, as the results obtained do not provide a basis on which to specify an alternative linguistic community of the applicant.