**University of Leicester**

**Future 50 PhD Scholarship**

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**Section 2 – *Project Information***

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| **Project Title** | Multilingual Repertoires: Refugees’ Sociolinguistic Citizenship in ESOL | |
| **Project Highlights:** | 1. | It explores issues related to asylum seekers’ and refugees’ language use and social cohesion/justice. |
| 2. | It is interdisciplinary in nature as it investigates integration, wellbeing, multilingualism and language learning. |
| 3. | It is innovative in linking language to acts of resistance and citizenship through participatory approach and including decision-makers in the process. |
| **Project Summary** | | |
| Refugees and asylum seekers often seek participation and recognition from the moment they apply for a refugee status in their host communities but frequently  face barriers in terms of accessing health care, well-being support, employment and other services that could make them active citizens (Simpson, 2019). This is often viewed as due to a lack of English language proficiency or reluctance to learn it. However, it is also claimed that hostility to other languages or multilingualism may result in negative stereotyping or essentialising of refugees and asylum seekers (Cooke, Bryers & Winstanley, 2019). Part of resisting these ideologies is through language use. This is tightly linked to what Isin (2008) calls ‘acts of citizenship’, which are actions that challenge ideologies and practices in the hope that they might lead to change. ‘Sociolinguistic citizenship’ focuses on how people use language outside institutional settings in their everyday practices, and stresses on individual’s agency and empowerment (Rampton et al., 2018).  This research project aims to investigate asylum seekers’ and refugees’ daily experiences of speaking languages other than English, while focusing on their participation, integration and well-being. Central to this discussion is the term ‘linguistic  repertoire’, a sociolinguistic concept defined as ‘the totality of linguistic resources (i.e. including both invariant forms and variables)’ (Gumperz, 1986:20-21)  To this end, the research aims to investigate asylum seekers’ and refugees’ linguistic repertoires, their experiences with languages and how they perceive them. The following are some guiding questions:     * What linguistic obstacles do asylum seekers and refugees in the UK face to their participation, well-being and integration in society? * What are their linguistic repertoires and how do they manage them in their private and public spheres? What are their attitudes towards their repertoires and other repertoires? * Do they face linguistic discrimination because of using languages other than English in public spaces? If so, how does this affect their sociolinguistic citizenship and well-being?   The study will contribute to sociolinguistic research in this field, taking a participatory approach aiming to empower vulnerable groups while researching them. In addition, it is hoped that this research project will influence policy makers in implementing change and innovative solutions by and for refugees to their integration and citizenship issues. | | |