

Ethics and Professional Conduct Oversight in Forensic Linguistic Expert Evidence

Isabel Picornell
QED Limited
Guernsey, United Kingdom
isabel@qedforensics.com

Abstract

Much discussion of professional conduct in forensic linguistic analysis has centred on the scientific methodologies to analyses, focusing especially on identifying approaches which are reproducible and reduce uncertainty. However, methods do not a profession, or an expert, make. As the field matures, and we increasingly see the use of forensic linguistic evidence in court, discussion has begun turning towards issues of ethics and the professional conduct of experts. Who regulates them? Or, more precisely, who should regulate them? This address will argue that, at 30 years old, it is now time for the field of forensic linguistics to become a profession; and there is a role for the International Association for Forensic and Legal Linguistics in the regulation of that profession and of expert behaviour.