**Using Corpus Linguistics in Legal Research:**

**Lessons from the *Law and Language at the European Court of Justice* Project**

*Karen McAuliffe, University of Birmingham*

The [*Law and Language at the European Court of Justice*](http://www.llecj.karenmcauliffe.com/) (LLECJ) project, funded under the European Research Council’s (ERC) FP7 scheme, is one of the first projects in law to attempt to use interdisciplinary research methods to study the production of multilingual case law by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU). Using a mixed-method, qualitative approach, that project explores the extent to which language, translation and multilingualism may impact the development of CJEU case law, and what that may mean for our understanding of EU law. In addition to socio-legal research methods such as interviews and participant observation, corpus linguistic research methods are used in that project to analyse language use in CJEU judgments and opinions of Advocates General. However, while innovative, those methods are not always helpful in addressing the project’s research questions, and at times raise more questions than truly meaningful analysis. This paper sets out how corpus linguistic methods are used in the LLECJ project, and where they were more or less useful, drawing out some lessons for the use of corpus linguistics in legal research more generally.

More information about the LLECJ project, including reports and outputs, can be found on the project website: [www.llecj.karenmcauliffe.com](http://www.llecj.karenmcauliffe.com)