Multilingualism

How do children and adults become multilingual? How do they use their languages? What influence does being multilingual have on their identities? What is the social impact of multilingualism today and how do societies accommodate it? These are among the fascinating questions examined by this book. Exploring multilingualism in individuals and in society at large, Stavans and Hoffmann argue that it evolves not from one factor in particular, but from a vast range of environmental and personal influences and circumstances: from migration to globalisation, from the spread of English to a revived interest in minority languages, from social mobility to intermarriage. The book raises important issues about multilinguals’ language competence and multilinguals’ literacy development and it highlights educational trends that challenge traditional approaches to language education rooted in monolingual outlooks. A clear and incisive account of this growing phenomenon, it is essential reading for students, teachers and policymakers alike.

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KEY TOPICS IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS

Series editor: Rajend Mesthrie

This new series focuses on the main topics of study in sociolinguistics today. It consists of accessible yet challenging accounts of the most important issues to consider when examining the relationship between language and society. Some topics have been the subject of sociolinguistic study for many years, and are here re-examined in the light of new developments in the field; others are issues of growing importance that have not so far been given a sustained treatment. Written by leading experts, the books in the series are designed to be used on courses and in seminars, and include useful suggestions for further reading and a helpful glossary.

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Multilingualism by Anat Stavans and Charlotte Hoffmann
Multilingualism

ANAT STAVANS AND CHARLOTTE HOFFMANN
For our families – three generations of multilinguals.
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This book grew out of our enduring passion and shared interest for the subject of multilingualism. Both of us have made the study of multilingualism part of our academic careers. We represent two generations of researchers: Charlotte has been part of the ‘first generation’ and Anat the following generation of trilingualism researchers. We have been able to observe the diverse trajectories multilingualism studies have taken, the increased body of studies that have resulted from an ever-growing interest in the subject. Through our parallel and shared trajectory, we are fortunate to have been supported and motivated by many colleagues and students (invariably many of them multilingual themselves) to undertake this book project. We are grateful to a number of colleagues who have given feedback on early versions of parts of chapters and provided corrections and comments for improvement. We are indebted to the two anonymous readers who reviewed the manuscript and made a number of probing comments and valuable suggestions. Needless to say, any oversights and mistakes are ours.

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