

Multilingual Development

English as a global lingua franca interacts with other languages across a wide range of multilingual contexts. Combining insights from linguistics, education studies, and psychology, this book addresses the role of English within the current linguistic dynamics of globalization. It takes Singapore, Hong Kong, and Dubai as case studies to illustrate the use of English in different multilingual urban areas, arguing that these are places where competing historical assessments, and ideological conceptions of monolingualism and multilingualism, are being acted out most forcefully. It critically appraises the controversial concept of multilingual advantages, and studies multilingual cross-linguistic influence in relation to learning English in bilingual heritage contexts. It also scrutinizes multilingual language policies in terms of their impact on attitudes, identities, and investment into languages. Engaging and accessible, this book is essential reading for academic researchers and advanced students of bi- and multilingualism, globalization, linguistic diversity, World Englishes, sociolinguistics, and second/third language acquisition.

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Multilingual Development

English in a Global Context

Peter Siemund

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One only sees what one looks for. One only looks for what one knows.

—Goethe

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Preface

This book is about the multilingual upbringing and development of individuals in their respective societies, adopting a perspective of English as the current hub language of the world. It is placed at the intersection of language acquisition research, sociolinguistics, language contact studies, education, psychology, and the study of World Englishes. The book analyses the linguistic outcomes of current and historical globalization processes, with a focus on the special role of English in relation to its status as a native language, learner language, foreign language, second language, additional language, New English variety, and lingua franca. It tries to harness the multiple aspects of a person's multilingual reality and experience, such as their language biographies, repertoires and attitudes, language acquisition and learning, language dominance, language contact and cross-linguistic influence, language ideologies and policies, issues of identity and prestige, metalinguistic awareness, and multilingual advantages. In a nutshell, the book discusses how individuals grow up in this global, multilingual world, and which aspects determine their linguistic development and outcomes. Each chapter takes up a selection of these problems for discussion.

The book is written from the perspective of English, as this language increasingly pervades all aspects of our lives and can be expected to influence nearly everyone on this planet in one way or another. English is the language that is responsible for the greatest number of language contact situations in history and occurs in highly diverse multilingual ecologies. It heavily influences other languages, but also changes and diversifies rapidly. Currently, English is the most widely used and studied lingua franca. The book is especially interested in the role that English plays in today's multilingual urban ecologies and the ways in which it interacts with other languages.

Multilingualism represents a complex problem that eschews simple interpretations. Accordingly, this book does not communicate a single message. However, it argues that it is beneficial and profitable to develop one's innate language ability in all possible directions. Multilingualism is a vital glue that keeps diverse societies together and ensures that they remain functional.

Acknowledgements

Although strictly speaking I only started writing this book in 2019, it had a much longer gestation period that can in fact be traced back to the initial stages in my career. My interest in linguistic diversity and language typology was aroused when I embarked on my PhD project and never ceased. Language contact and multilingualism were intensely researched in the Hamburg-based Collaborative Research Centre on Multilingualism (1999–2011). I profit from that experience even today. The social and educational perspectives of multilingualism were then strengthened during the Cluster of Excellence on Linguistic Diversity Management in Urban Areas (2009–2013) and the follow-up project on Multilingual Development: A Longitudinal Perspective (2014–2019). Several research projects on multilingualism in Singapore and the United Arab Emirates, funded by the German Research Foundation, added expertise from crucial international multilingual melting pots. All of these research strands are weaved together in this book, and I wish to extend my gratitude to everyone from whom I had the privilege to gain inspiration on my way.

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The book is a homage to all the people in the world who are torn between the opportunities that English offers and their attachment to their often multiple native and local tongues. The demands imposed by our modern super-efficient,

technology-based written cultures are extremely high and it is easy to conceive linguistic diversity as an obstacle to efficiency and progress. I wish to assure these very people that this conflict can be managed and even be considered an enrichment. The book describes the avenues along which this can be achieved as well as the various pitfalls that need to be circumnavigated. I believe that this endeavour needs guidance, as linguistic and cultural diversity can easily be sacrificed on the altar of lopsided ideologies that can produce severe problems in the long run.

About the Author

Peter Siemund has been Professor of English Linguistics at the University of Hamburg since 2001. He pursues a cross-linguistic typological approach in his work on reflexivity and *self-intensifiers*, pronominal gender, interrogative constructions, speech acts and clause types, argument structure, tense and aspect, varieties of English, language contact, and multilingual development. His publications include, as author, *Intensifiers in English and German: A Comparison* (Routledge, 2000), *Pronominal Gender in English: A Study of English Varieties from a Cross-Linguistic Perspective* (Routledge, 2008/2013), *The Amazing World of Englishes: A Practical Introduction* (with Julia Davydova and Georg Maier; Mouton de Gruyter, 2012), *Varieties of English: A Typological Approach* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), and *Speech Acts and Clause Types: English in a Cross-Linguistic Context* (Oxford University Press, 2018), and, as editor, *Language Contact and Contact Languages* (with Noemi Kintana; John Benjamins, 2008), *Linguistic Universals and Language Variation* (Mouton de Gruyter, 2011), *Multilingualism and Language Diversity in Urban Areas: Acquisition – Identities – Space – Education* (with Ingrid Gogolin, Monika Schulz, and Julia Davydova; John Benjamins, 2013), *Foreign Language Education in Multilingual Classrooms* (with Andreas Bonnet; John Benjamins, 2018), and *Multilingual Global Cities: Singapore, Hong Kong, Dubai* (with Jakob Leimgruber; Routledge, 2021).