

**BOOK REVIEW: Coleman, H. (Ed.). (2015).
*Multilingualisms and Development: Selected
Proceedings of the 11th Language & Development
Conference, New Delhi, India.* London, UK: British
Council ISBN: 978-0-86355-840-5.**

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Multilingualisms and Development: Selected proceedings of the 11th Language & Development Conference, New Delhi, India 2015, edited by Hywel Coleman, is a collection of 21 chapters (as well as a Preface and Appendix) that center on theories, policies, and pedagogies of multilingualism around the world. Specifically, chapters explore the roles of multilingualism in social practices as well as dominant languages such as English in connection to multilingualism, to highlight how in a multilingual world, “every language community in order to survive must create quality content through its own language, share that content internationally, regionally and locally, and receive feedback” (Pattanayak, pp. 12-13).

This collection of papers, derived from conference proceedings of the 2015 Language and Development conference held in New Delhi, are categorized into four thematic groups. Chapters two through five center on “Multilingualism, marginalization and empowerment” while chapters six through 12 focus on “Mother-tongue-based multilingual education.” Chapters 13 through 15 examine the role of multilingualism in the “metropolis,” or largely populated urban areas, while the remainder of chapters (16 through 21), under a theme entitled “English in a multilingual world,” highlight the expanding nature of English and its relationship to multilingual educational contexts. Overall, the diversity of geographical, linguistic, and educational contexts discussed in these chapters reveal the necessity of teachers, researchers, and policy makers to further explore the ever-changing nature of multilingualism in education and development worldwide.

The preface of this book, written by Debi Pattanayak, senior scholar in multilingual education, is a curious way to commence as he contends, “There is no excellence in research, scholarship and education in language and linguistics in any university or institution in India” (p. 11). This statement is surely made as a means to spark debate on the further need for research on languages in India and globally, though it seems disconnected to the plethora of “excellent research” that ensues in the proceeding 21 chapters. Pattanayak also asserts that the world is linguistically divided into dominant monolingual and multilingual populations, leading to “many social problems” (p. 11). He exemplifies these divisions by noting that being in support of multilingualism is not synonymous to being anti-English. Pattanayak concludes by discussing the role of technology in the marginalization of many less-dominant languages as well as noting the multiple meanings of the term “development” in connection to language. To a degree, the somewhat disjointed nature of this preface exemplifies the larger point of

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this book, namely, that research in language use internationally is multiplex and convoluted and, at times, language research can, metaphorically, be speaking different languages.

Within the first section of the book, authors examine the role of language in marginalization and empowerment. For example, in Chapter Two, Banjeri notes how in an Indian context, notions of “native language” are complex as there are “home languages,” “school languages,” “mother tongues,” and “father tongues.” Consequently, she argues that frameworks of language learning that derive from Western settings do not work in these contexts. In Chapter Four, Brock-Utne examines language use in schools in African contexts, and in Tanzania in particular. She finds that current understandings of language boundaries were previously established by missionaries who did not understand the numerous dialectical variations of these languages. This is important, she finds, as those who focus on the difficulties of teaching in ‘vastly different’ African languages often miss the similarities between them. These chapters broadly reveal the complexities of multilingualism and how an emphasis on dominant languages, and on English in particular, can create dissonant feelings of both agency and shame for speakers.

The second section of the book centers on mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) in which teachers teach in students’ “first language in the early years of their education and then, at a later stage, help them to use a dominant regional or international language as the medium of learning” (p. 20). In these chapters, authors explore how educational institutions are using MTB MLE to support learning for multilingual learners. In Chapter Six, for example, Benson centers her research on the “Integrated Plurilingual School System” in the Basque Country of Spain, where learners develop skills in multiple languages at different but appropriate levels of proficiency. She finds that this type of system could be ideal in multiple global contexts. Authors in chapters seven through nine examine the use of MTB MLE across differing states in India and discover that although multilingualism can create differing forms of cultural and social capital, both the social push for English language acquisition and teachers’ differing understandings of MTB MLE can make implementation in schools difficult. In sum, this section highlights the importance and difficulties of multilingual language practices in school settings.

“Multilingualism and the metropolis,” the third section of the book, contains only three chapters, representing urban contexts in the United Kingdom and India. Within these chapters, “urban linguistic superdiversity” is explored to understand how language practices develop and are (re)shaped in “superdiverse” contexts, settings the editor contends are scarcely researched. In Chapter 13, for example, Simpson argues that translanguaging is common in superdiverse contexts, though state language policies fail to recognize these practices and instead, privilege certain languages over others. Meganathan, in Chapter 14, also analyzes national and state language policies to understand language use on public signs in Delhi. He similarly finds certain languages, and particularly English, dominate the written linguistic landscape of the city. Chapter 15 takes a different turn by centering on language in health care clinics; in this chapter, Saranagi argues that when patients and doctors speak different languages, this can result in patient discrimination and vulnerability, and have serious health consequences. Overall, this section examines how population and geographical context inevitably impact how language is used in social spaces.

The last section of the book centers on the role of “English in a multilingual world.” Four of the six chapters are situated in India and all examine the complex results of the “widespread ‘rush to English’ in education systems” (p. 29). For example, Mohanty in Chapter 16 and Rao in Chapter 17 analyze the connections between English and elitism. Both authors find that English acts as a separator of sorts in which only those already with social and

economic privilege benefit from its use. In Chapter 19, Durairajan takes a slightly different approach as she finds that English can be used to empower Indian learners, so long as L1 resources are also allowed in classrooms. In the final chapter, Kral and Smith describe their work on an English language teacher project in Sarawak, Malaysia. They discover that within the region, there are differing, and often contradictory, understandings of the role of language in education in policies and practices.

The four sections of this book produce wide-ranging and multi-faceted examples of the importance of languages for individuals, schools, cultures and societies. The Appendix, written by Coleman, the book's editor, provides an example of this diversity of research. He describes the themes and sub-themes that emerged from "Research Agenda and Action Agenda" forms that conference participants were asked to complete at the end of the conference. These themes included multilingualism in society and education, multilingualism in development, English language learning, and "translational" research ("across domains of research-cum-practice," p. 348). In other words, the book's various themes parallel those of conference participants' takeaways.

In many ways, this diversity of focus (of both the book and the conference themes) is surely generative, as it forces researchers to expand their thoughts and philosophies on language use to include multiple theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical frameworks. In other ways, the large variety of themes can lead to contradictions between the chapters. For example, while some chapters note the necessity of moving beyond "mother tongue" discourse to include numerous forms of language use (see Chapter Two), other chapters readily adhere to terms such as mother tongue-based multilingual education, including the entire second section of the book. Further, although the title of the book indicates it will cover multilingualisms and development, definitions of "development" are far-ranging and not consistently defined even within sections. However, these occasionally conflicting definitions and understandings of terminology only further expose the importance of recognizing language practices in social, educational, and political spaces. Consequently, this book is vital for researchers, policy makers, and educators wanting to explore how languages are conceived of, circulated, and re-shaped worldwide.

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