Convergence on Dominant Language Constellations: World Englishes in their local multilingual ecologies

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This presentation describes a new Research Unit that strives to compare seven representative and heterogenous multilingual world regions in regard to the use and position of English in the local multilingual ecologies. The Unit's focus lies on linguistically dense micro areas that represent important targets of international and internal migration. We compare Botswana, Cebu City (the Philippines), Cyprus, Kurdistan Region (Iraq), Lagos (Nigeria), North-East India, and Tanzania. We hypothesize that these multilingual areas, much as other similar areas in the world, currently converge on Dominant Language Constellations of functional bilingualism and trilingualism in which English assumes a prominent role (Aronin 2016). Speakers' language repertoires are reconceptualized in terms of dominance rather than order of acquisition, thus, questioning established constructs such as first, native, second, and third language. The Research Unit is interested in uncovering the dominant sociolinguistic patterns and in explicating the factors that lead to language contact, change, shift, and loss. Language choice and maintenance are interpreted as a function of a language's symbolic power in particular usage domains (Bourdieu 1991) as well as its social and cultural dominance. Research work is based on the concept of multilingual ecologies that expands and refines Haugen's (1972) original ideas by adding acquisitional parameters as well as those predicting investment into languages (Darvin & Norton 2015). We offer a theoretical extension and refinement of multilingual ecologies and Dominant Language Constellations, as well as a synthesis of models of World Englishes (Siemund 2023). Crucially, the Research Unit goes beyond the canonical national approach to World Englishes considering specific local multilingual ecologies as the sites where linguistic enrichment and conflict are acted out most forcefully and where cross-linguistic interaction is strongest.

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Siemund, Peter. 2023. *Multilingual Development: English in a Global Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Biodata

Peter Siemund is Professor and Chair of English Linguistics at the University of Hamburg. He is interested in World Englishes, the use of English as an additional language, and multilingual development. His most recent monograph is *Multilingual Development: English in a Global Context* (CUP 2023).