

○ **V. EDWARDS *MULTILINGUALISM IN THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING WORLD***
(OXFORD: BLACKWELL PUBLISHING. 2004. PP. IX, 253).

In recent times academic and non-academic markets have been flooded by books on English as a world language, and on the globalisation of English and its impact on other languages and societies (see, for instance, Crystal 1997; Graddol 1997; Graddol and Meinhof 1999; Pennycook 1994; Phillipson 1992). Whilst discussions and descriptions around the theme of the spread of English around the world certainly touch upon issues of bi- and multilingualism, this is usually done in an implicit manner. An exception is found in books focussing on the threat English poses to the survival of endangered languages (e.g. Crystal 2000). In Viv Edwards' book on English-speaking communities multilingualism takes centre stage.

The book follows in the tradition of the many monographs and collections describing the language situation in various English language countries. These include, for example, the series published by Cambridge University Press in the 1980s and 1990s *Language in the USA* (Ferguson et al. 1989), *Language in Canada* (Edwards 1998), *Language in Australia* (Romaine 1998), as well as overviews of minority languages in these countries, such as *Multilingual Australia* by Michael Clyne (1982), and the Linguistic Minorities (1984) project. The approach taken in this book builds upon the well-known 'sociology of language' paradigm which sets out to document language(s) use in the community according to domains. This domain-based language examination then allows for identification of factors and contexts which facilitate or hinder language maintenance. Another paradigm shaping this treatment of multilingualism is that of language policy and planning. Edwards not only discusses the contexts or domains in which languages other than English are used but also policy initiatives and developments which have promoted or obstructed the use of other languages in the wider community.

The book is structured in three major parts, entitled *The extent of diversity*, *Language at home and in the school*, and *Language in the wider community*. In the first part the author provides Census and other survey figures from 'inner circle' English-speaking communities which illustrate the extent of multilingualism in these communities. These figures reveal that the multilingual character of these countries is linked largely to the many immigrant communities settling in the English-speaking countries and to some extent also to indigenous groups, many of whom were or have become minorities as a result of the expansion of English. Examples of the latter include Manx and Scottish

Gaelic in the UK, Maori in New Zealand, Australian Aboriginal languages, Inuit languages in Canada and also sign languages such as Auslan. Edwards also provides a historical overview of this multilingualism, highlighting the longstanding nature of it as a phenomenon, especially in Britain. Conquests and wars (especially in the case of the British Isles), colonisation, mass immigration and globalisation are identified as the main reasons for the presence of this multitude of languages in the inner-circle English communities. Edwards also points out that despite the multilingual character of the populations living in these countries there is still only limited provision of language services such as interpreting and translating, and multilingual public information. Clyne (2005) has termed this the ‘monolingual mindset’ in the context of Australia. In Part 2 the focus is very much on the two domains – home/family and school – which are central in the maintenance or loss of bi/multilingualism. In Part 3 Edwards examines to what extent languages other than English constitute a presence in the community at large. Domains and contexts singled out for attention include the world of work (global markets, tourism, local economies), the media (mainly print and broadcasting), the arts (film, theatre, music) and international relations (diplomacy and defence).

The information for Parts 1 and 2 has been drawn mainly from the author’s own work with multilingual communities in the UK, that of the many scholars working in this field around the (English-speaking) world as well as from various reports produced by government and other public agencies in the relevant countries. These sources certainly provide a rich plethora of examples of how multilingualism is treated and experienced in the different countries. However, the fact that the book attempts to tackle all inner-circle English countries results, not surprisingly, in a lack of depth in the exploration and discussion of this multilingualism. I believe therefore that the book is particularly valuable as an introduction to the study of multilingualism in English-speaking countries. It provides a very accessible text about the many aspects of bilingualism, and about its acquisition, maintenance and loss. Scholars of bilingualism and multilingualism are certain to recommend it to their students. Let us hope that some people (bilingual or not) outside the fields of language and linguistic study gain access to the book as it may help them to appreciate that their bilingualism is an asset, or it may help them change their ‘monolingual’ mindset.

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