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Rosemary Salomone, *The Rise of English: Global Politics and the Power of Language*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021. Pp. 488. Hardback, ISBN: 9780190625610, \$37.99; e-book, ISBN: 9780190625634, 0190625635


Book Review

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English is used as a first or additional language by nearly 1.5 billion people across the world (ethnologue.com), rendering English in all its varieties the most widely used language today. In *The Rise of English: Global Politics and the Power of Language*, legal scholar and linguist Rosemary Salomone reveals the complex trajectory of widespread English usage. Carefully researched and documented yet written to be accessible to a general audience of those interested in language and sociolinguistics, politics and law, history, or globalization, the book details the persistent and contested status of English as a global lingua franca.

Salomone paints this complex portrait through a deep dive into the history of English imposition, adoption, and competition with other languages in a wide range of national contexts, revealing a multitude of layers of how power is constructed, fortified, and competed for through language policy and practices. The book argues that the optimal future will involve a dynamic balance among languages, which will necessitate that all nations equip all students to become (at least) fully bilingual. In this vision of the future, English in all its varieties would co-exist with other international, national, and local languages as one global lingua franca among several, while all languages thrive as important community identity and cultural heritage.

The book is divided into three thematic sections, composed of four chapters each. The three sections align loosely with Kachru's (1985) expanding, outer, and inner circles, in that order. The explicit narrative of the book, however, starts with contemporary legal debates over English-medium university programs in Europe, and shifts from that context to a broader study of the role of English in post-colonial globalization. The first section examines Europe's ongoing debates on English in diplomatic and educational domains. The second section focuses on postcolonial dynamics where English is deeply implicated in politics, policy, and access to power in Africa and South Asia. The final section devotes its attention to the potential to move beyond a monolithic monolingual English mindset in the United States.

Each chapter relies on a range of news articles, political speeches, legal briefs, and policy documents as primary source material, as well as numerous scholarly book chapters and articles. Sources exemplify the book's embrace of multilingualism, in that texts written in Italian, Dutch, French, and Mandarin are listed among the book's references. This primarily European distribution of multilingual source material is consistent with a primary focus on how competition for the past 400 years among economic empires impacts the languages that compete for global power today. Salomone establishes a framework for examining how language use is not just political, economic or cultural, but is a complex interaction among the three. In each section of the book, Salomone examines the medium of instruction in education, laws governing use of English, the displacement of other languages by English, and unequal access to English proficiency based on socioeconomic status.

The Europe section of the book contrasts the European Union ideal of multilingual diversity and language preservation with the reality on the ground. Even post-Brexit, the diplomatic and economic advantages of English maintain it at the top of a hierarchy across Europe, followed by national languages, then smaller regional languages, then finally immigrant languages. This section unfolds with case studies on English medium higher education and diplomatic English use in Scandinavian European

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countries, in France and Italy, and in the Netherlands. Threaded throughout these chapters is a theme of tension: between English and a national language as medium of instruction, between internationalization and restricting symbolic and legal borders, and between recruiting international students and deprioritizing their enrollment.

The postcolonial section of the book connects France's colonial history in many regions of Africa with French efforts to promote *la francophonie*, a transnational French-speaking identity. Despite these efforts, as this section illustrates, English, French, and more recently Mandarin are in economic and symbolic competition today as global languages of power in African nations that were formerly colonized by France. Case studies in Rwanda and Morocco closely examine the rejection (or partial rejection) of French as a national *lingua franca* or international language of diplomacy and commerce, and the concomitant rise of English and other potential alternative national languages.

The second half of this section investigates postcolonial contexts where part of the population frames English as a liberatory alternative, particularly in South Africa and India. In the chapter on South Africa, Salomone explores the complex range of multilingual competencies that Kachru (1985) framed with Jamaica as a degree of complexity that defied the three-circles categorization. Salomone details the shifting institutionalization of Afrikaans, English, and nine other South African languages, and how language of schooling was used to enact racial segregation in the Apartheid regime. Despite a present-day South African constitutional commitment to multilingual equality, Salomone argues, the economic and diplomatic pull of English renders this commitment largely 'aspirational' (p. 229). The final case study in this section describes the complex fabric of language use in India, where English remains the language of the judiciary and competes with Hindi as a commercial and educational *lingua franca*, and where multilingualism is the norm. Salomone critiques schooling solutions where children from impoverished communities lack the proficiency in the language of instruction (e.g. English or Hindi) to be able to leverage education to change their economic circumstances. This section ends with a wish to see India thrive as a culturally and linguistically diverse and multilingual democracy.

The third section of the book turns to the United States, where a celebration of monolingual English usage has long reigned. Salomone vehemently argues that the United States should turn from this monolingual ideology to realize its own potential as a multilingual democracy. This final section of the book describes where shifts toward bilingualism are beginning to emerge, both in a greater cultural and economic valuation of multilingualism and through new models for sustained education in at least two languages, from elementary school through higher education. A greater investment in bilingualism in K-12 programs appears to be driven by factors including globalization and emergent cognitive science on the benefits of growing up bilingual, as well as research demonstrating how dual immersion programs are particularly successful in producing highly functional bilingual communicators. California, New York, and

Utah serve as case studies for this shift, with particular attention to promotion and funding by nations such as France and China.

The final case study tackles American English as capital in the world economic market, with detailed treatments of outsourcing, the related assimilationist accent reduction and English language training industry, and English as a prerequisite for participation in multinational corporations. Salomone points out a consistent correlation observed internationally between high national English language proficiency on the one hand and higher household earnings and greater foreign investment on the other. Salomone underscores how the privileged status of (American) English creates and exacerbates economic inequality: while, an individual who learns English may enjoy greater economic mobility, those who lack access to robust English learning face an even larger economic divide. Ending this section with an optimistic eye to the future, Salomone identifies a growing corporate need for a multilingual workforce due to economic globalization as a pull factor away from a monolingual mindset.

The concluding chapter of the book, situated before 75 pages of endnotes and a substantial topical index, pulls together the numerous threads in this careful examination of English and its global role in economic activity, diplomacy, and education. Salomone predicts a future where monolingualism as a norm will cede to the multilingual imperative of a globally connected world. The book finishes with a wish that reasons beyond marketability would prompt policy-makers and citizenries to invest in a multilingually competent population: cultural preservation, intercultural understanding, opportunities for self-realization, and greater equality.

From start to end, *The Rise of English* carefully documents the extraordinary complexity that underpins the present-day use of English as the world's most common *lingua franca*, and how English might be productively re-framed in the coming decades as one among several widespread languages in a higher valuation of multilingual communication. This vision reads as hope and possibility more than prediction, but it is clear that the trajectory of English use will continue to be complex and deeply influenced by political and economic competition for power.

The book's analysis of present-day multilingualism would be yet further strengthened by entertaining a translingual theory of individual and community language repertoires (Horner et al., 2011), which could also serve as a means to examine the complexity of plurilingual coexistence in Salomone's optimistic view of the future. Additionally, deploying a raciolinguistic lens (Rosa & Flores, 2017) throughout each case study would better allow the book to detail how English language use, access, and symbolism is co-constructed with racial identities in the multiple regions under study.

Even with its discrete-language perspective, this volume will be a valuable resource for leaders in public policy, politics, education, and business to become more aware of how their ideology and actions may impact multilingualism in our shared global future. The book ties together global

themes while closely examining the particularities of regional and local contexts. Especially important is the layered examination of how English figures in local politics and regional competition for power in multiple locations in Africa as well as India, and the variation in English language policy debates across northern and western Europe. The book works in spaces of dialectic tension, consistently acknowledging the coexistence of opportunity and harm inherent in the power with which the English language is imbued, and identifying cases where a more multilingual, multicultural, equal future may emerge.

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