



Language and Economy

Florian Coulmas

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This is an exploration on the economic significance of language and of the influence of economic forces on linguistic development. Drawing on studies of a wide range of sociolinguistic settings, Florian Coulmas discusses the many ways in which language and economy interact, how economic developments influence the emergence, expansion, or decline of languages; how linguistic conditions facilitate or obstruct the economic process; how multilingualism and social affluence are interrelated; how and why language and money fulfil similar functions in modern societies; why the availability of a standard language is an economic advantage; how the unequal distribution of languages in multilingual societies makes for economic inequality; how the economic value of languages can be assessed; why languages have an internal economy and how they adapt to the demands of the external economy. Language, Florian Coulmas shows, is the medium of business, an asset in itself and sometimes a barrier to trade. So powerful is their relation that we cannot explain changes in the linguistic map of the world without understanding its economic development. The book is aimed at specialists and advanced students in sociolinguistics and the sociology of language.

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