

Humans are a migratory species. Although in modern society the dominant imagery we have created about ourselves is that it is normal to be sedentary, nothing could be further from the truth. Prior to the advent of farming about 12,000 years ago, humans were constantly on the move. Even then, not everyone settled and someone or other was always pushed out and had to go and look for new livelihoods elsewhere. It is thus no exaggeration to say that mobility is part of our DNA – it is a species characteristic.

Language is obviously another.

But how do these two species characteristics go together? What does our propensity to migrate mean for the way we use language? And how does language play out in our mobilities?

In 2015, I was offered the opportunity to compile a collection of the key research on “language and migration” for the Routledge [*Critical Concepts in Linguistics*](#) series. The resulting four-volume edited collection [*Language and Migration*](#) has just been published.

In selecting critical contributions to research in language and migration, I aimed to strike a balance between the socially-relevant and topical issues of wider concern raised by migration on the one hand, and disciplinary conceptual and methodological concerns on the other. In doing so, [*Language and Migration*](#) is intended both as a showcase of the most important work in the field as well as an intervention in contemporary debates. To meet this challenge, [*Language and Migration*](#) has been structured around four themes:

- Languages in contact
- Identities and ideologies
- Linguistic diversity and social justice
- Education in linguistically diverse societies

Volumes One (“Languages in contact”) and Two (“Identities

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and ideologies”) take language as their starting point and explore how migration affects language. Two major perspectives on what constitutes the nature of the central research problem can be identified here: one perspective focusses on the ways in which migration affects language structure and the other situates linguistic diversity in indexical orders and seeks to illuminate how linguistic diversity constructs identities.

Volumes Three (“Linguistic diversity and social justice”) and Four (“Education in linguistically diverse societies”) take migration as their starting point and ask how language affects migration. Different language issues in relation to migration arise for first-generation adult migrants and their offspring. Consequently, Volume Three explores linguistic diversity and social justice against questions of adult language learning and in domains that mediate social inclusion for adults such as employment, health and community participation. Volume Four then focusses on education and the challenges of language learning and medium of instruction in linguistically diverse societies.

In addition to topical selection of the most important research, it has also been my aim to showcase research from a wide range of geographical, regional and historical contexts. Throughout, an attempt has been made to strike a balance between general overview articles and contextually-situated case-studies.

[*Language and Migration*](#) is intended for the library market. However, readers without access to a university library might find the table of contents and my editorial introduction useful. [These are available for open-access download here](#). The editorial introduction, also entitled “[Language and Migration](#)” spells out the selection principles, surveys the key research issues in the field and identifies future research directions. Happy reading!

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