

English in multilingual settings

The Asian circle(s)

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30 March 2026

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Outline

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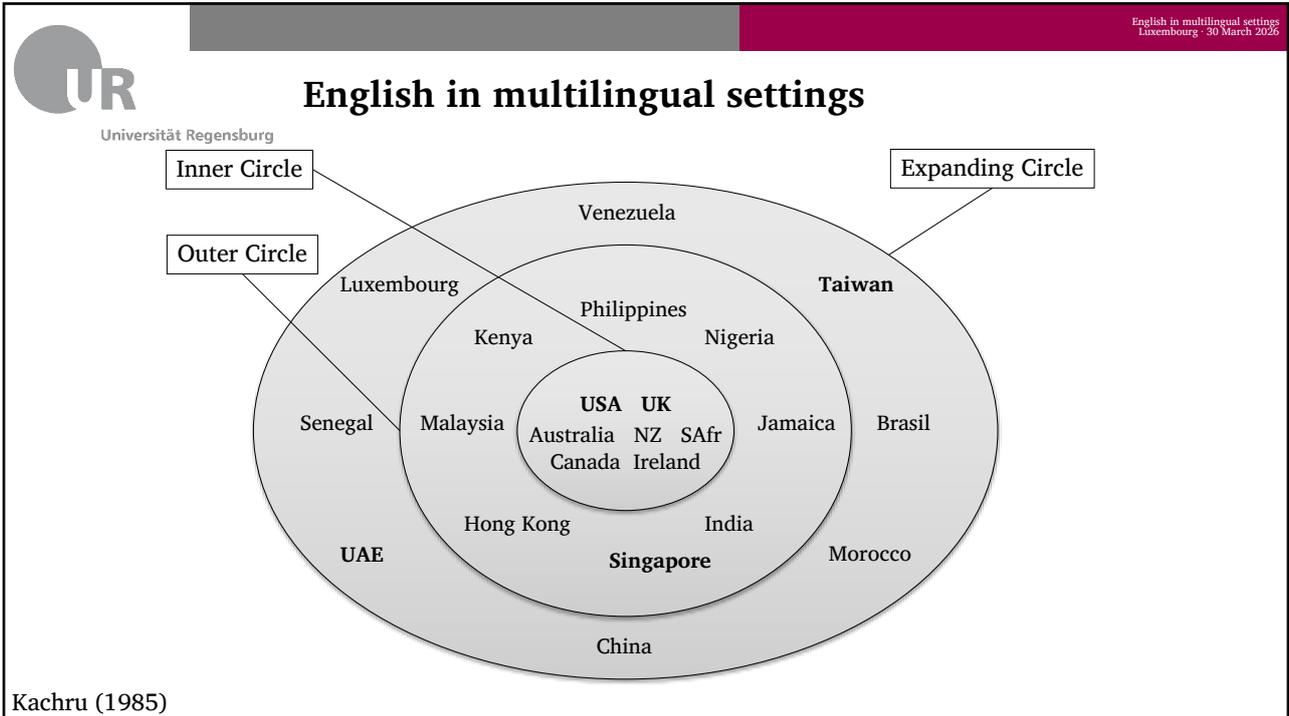
Dubai: globalised multilingualism

Singapore: multilingualism to bilingualism

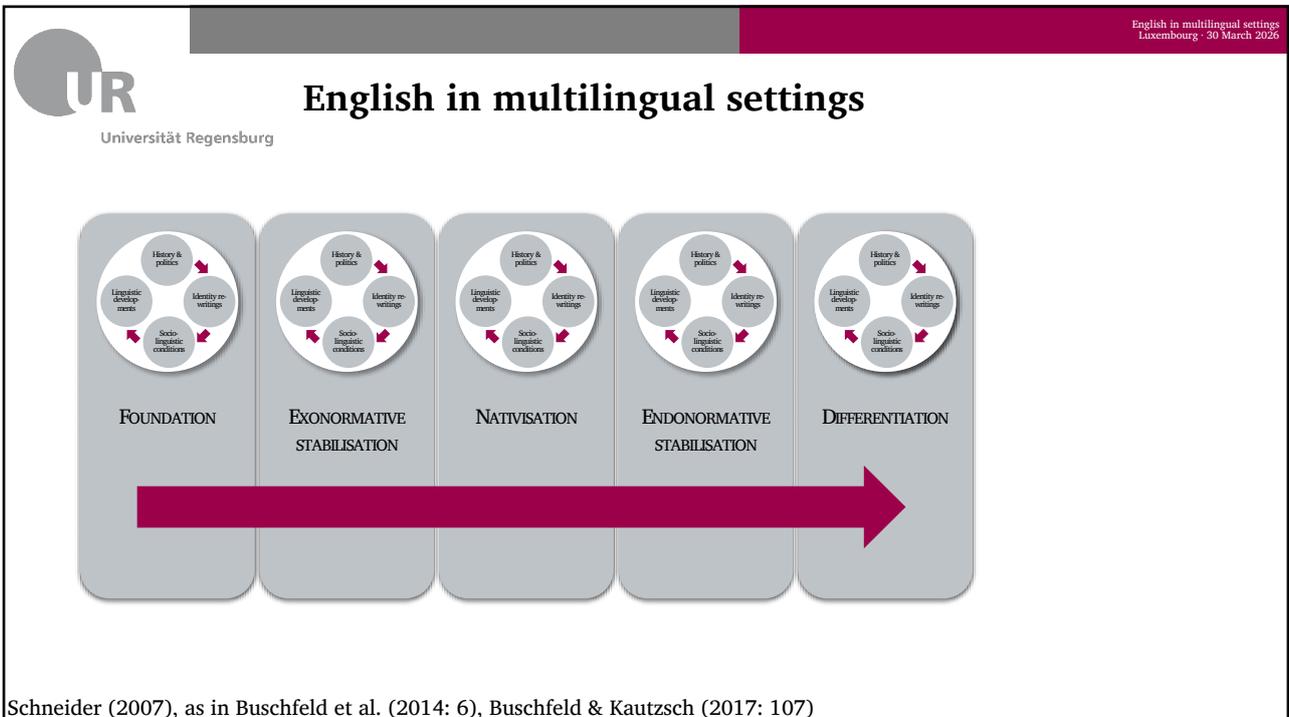
Taiwan: multilingualism realigned

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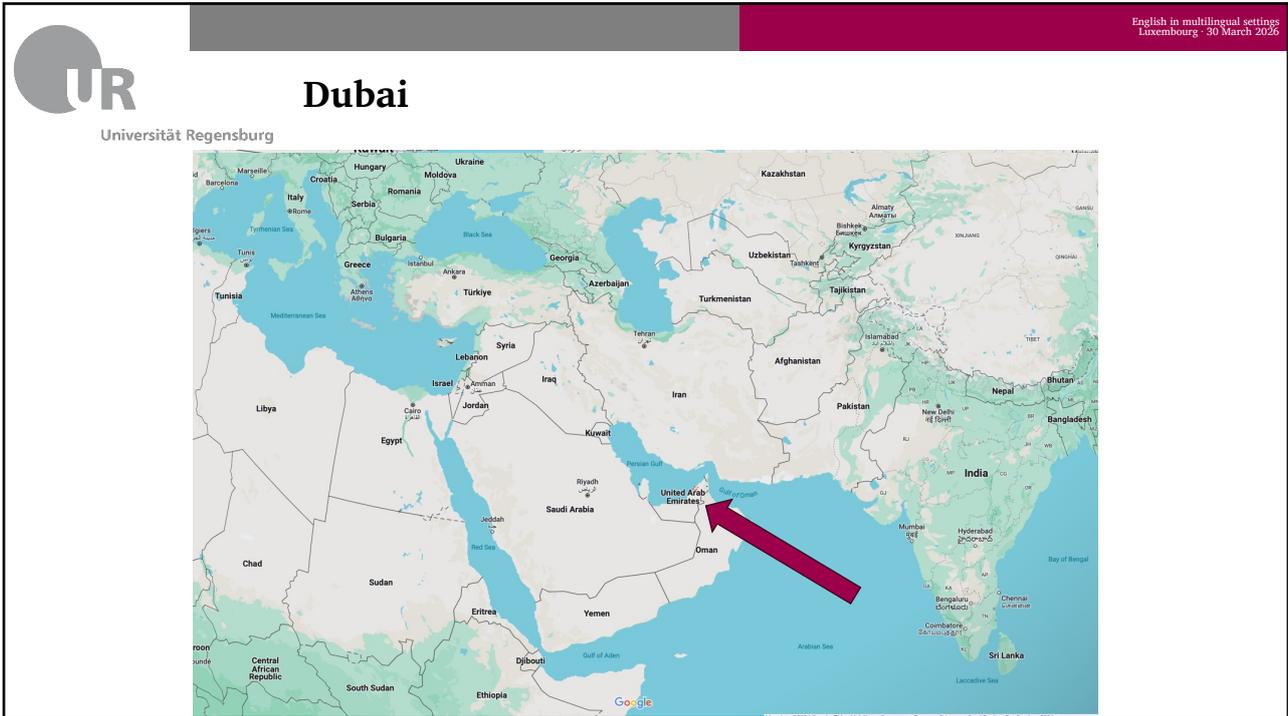
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- Seven emirates = UAE
- British protectorate 1819–1971
- Oil boom of the 1960s

- Massive population growth, primarily immigration
 - Population 1833: 1'500 → 2024: 4.5 Mio.
 - In-migration from throughout the world

- 85% of population with foreign citizenship → multilingual population

The top chart is a bar graph showing population in millions from 1833 to 2024. The population grows from approximately 1,500 in 1833 to 4.5 million in 2024. The bottom chart is a line graph showing the population composition in millions from 2014 to 2020. It shows two lines: 'Emirati' (red) and 'Non-Emirati' (blue). The 'Non-Emirati' population grows from about 2.1 million in 2014 to 3.2 million in 2020, while the 'Emirati' population remains relatively stable around 0.3 million.

Year	Population (Millions)
1833	~0.0015
1900	~0.01
1968	~0.05
1985	~0.2
1995	~0.5
2000	~0.8
2010	~1.8
2020	~3.5
2024	4.5

Year	Emirati (Millions)	Non-Emirati (Millions)
2014	~0.2	~2.1
2015	~0.2	~2.2
2016	~0.2	~2.4
2017	~0.2	~2.6
2018	~0.2	~2.8
2019	~0.2	~3.0
2020	~0.2	~3.2

Emirate of Dubai (2024); Pacione (2005: 257)

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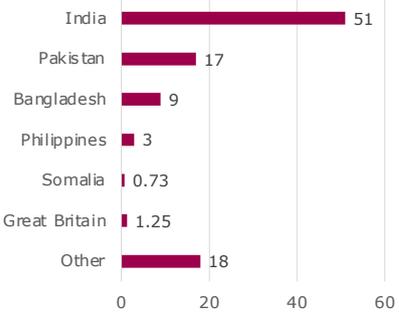


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- 85% non-citizen residents → multilingual population
- More than half from South Asia (esp. India)
 - Indo-Aryan, Dravidian
 - English
 - No Arabic (almost)
- Arabic = official language
- English = lingua franca



Country	Percentage
India	51
Pakistan	17
Bangladesh	9
Philippines	3
Somalia	0.73
Great Britain	1.25
Other	18



Dubai Population (2017)

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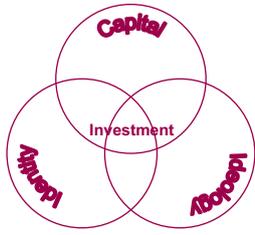
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- **Model of investment (Darvin & Norton 2015)**
 - **Identity**
 - 'multiple, a site of struggle, and continually changing over time and space' (2015: 45)
 - **Ideology**
 - 'a normative set of ideas', in constant flux and constantly renegotiated (2015: 43)
 - **Capital**
 - Bourdieu (1986)
 - economic, cultural, social capitals
 - linked to power
 - if ratified, becomes 'symbolic capital'



Darvin & Norton (2015), Leimgruber et al. (2022)

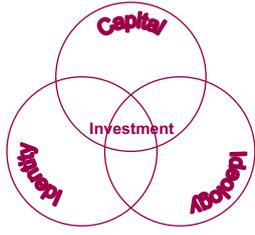
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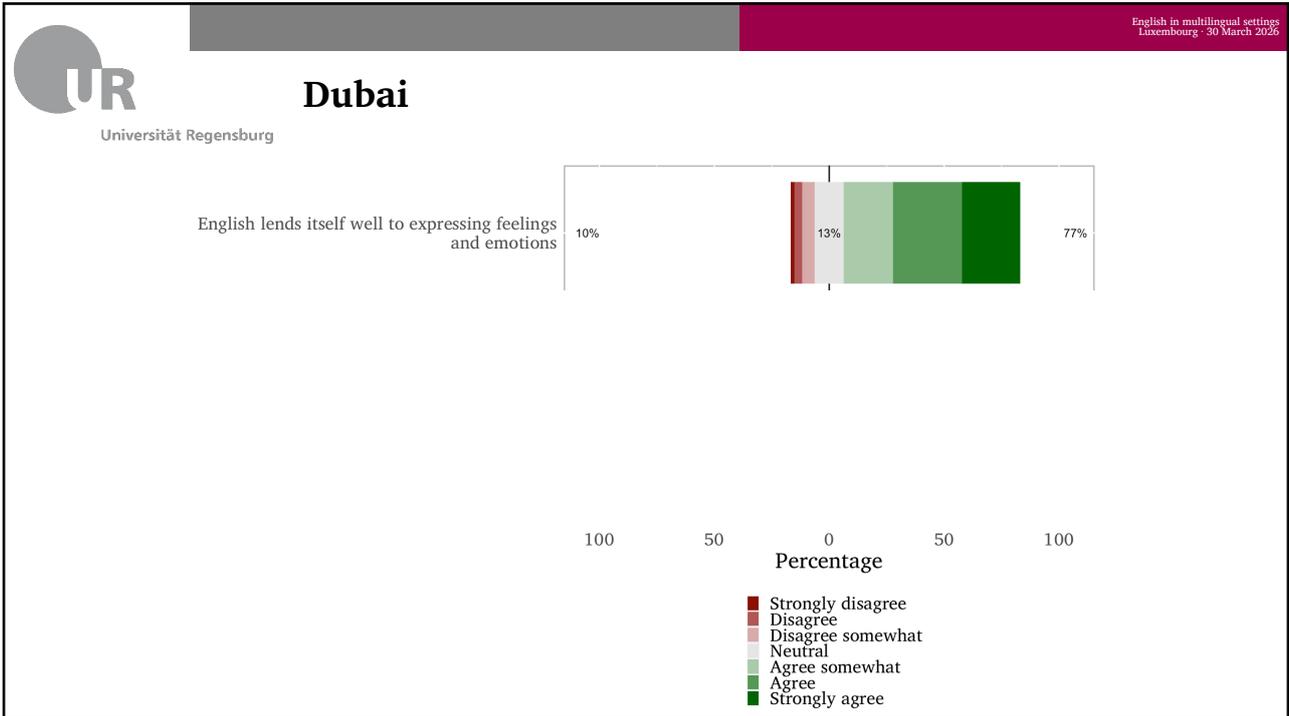
Dubai

- **Multinational and multilingual population**
- **Value of English and Arabic in the local linguistic marketplace**
- **Use of and investment in linguistic repertoires for social capital**
- **Cosmopolitan identity construction through investment in English**
- **English and Arabic both with high status in the UAE**
 - Arabic as sole official language
 - English with added 'global' and 'cosmopolitan' value
 - Spread of English as a medium of instruction
- **In our study, English is credited with more symbolic and cultural capital**

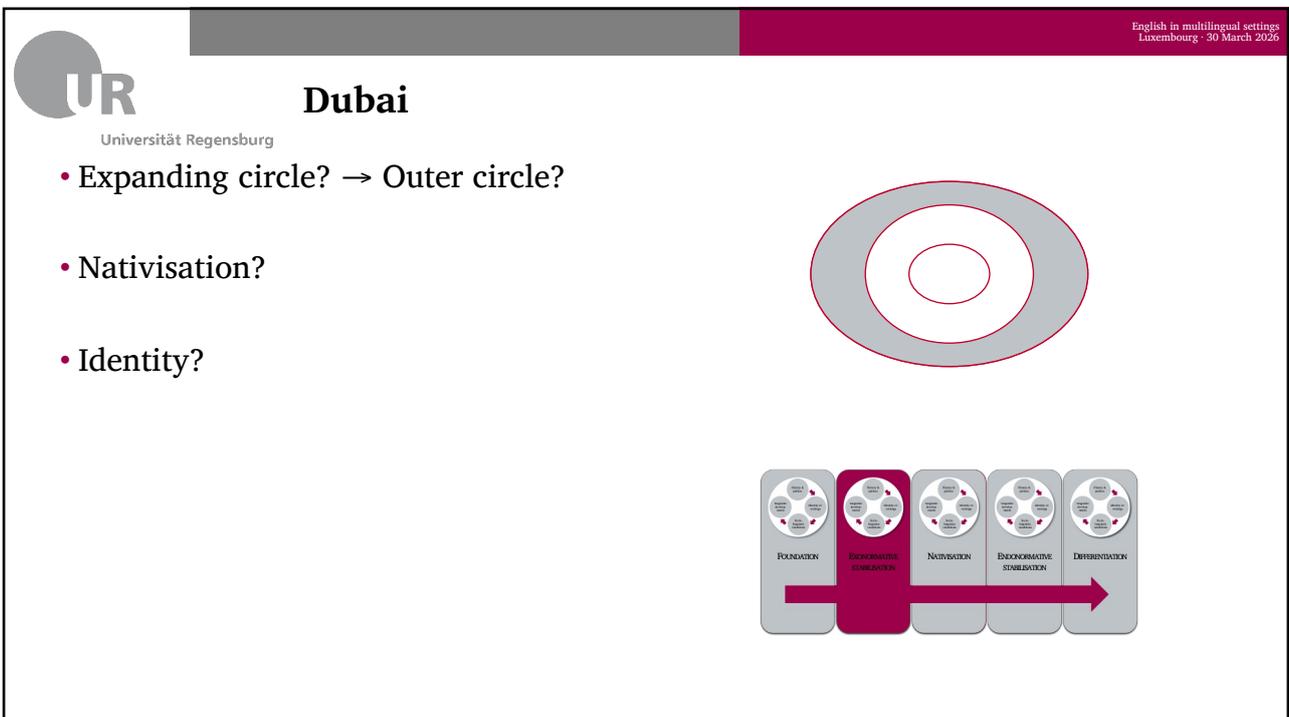


Darvin & Norton (2015), Leimgruber et al. (2022)

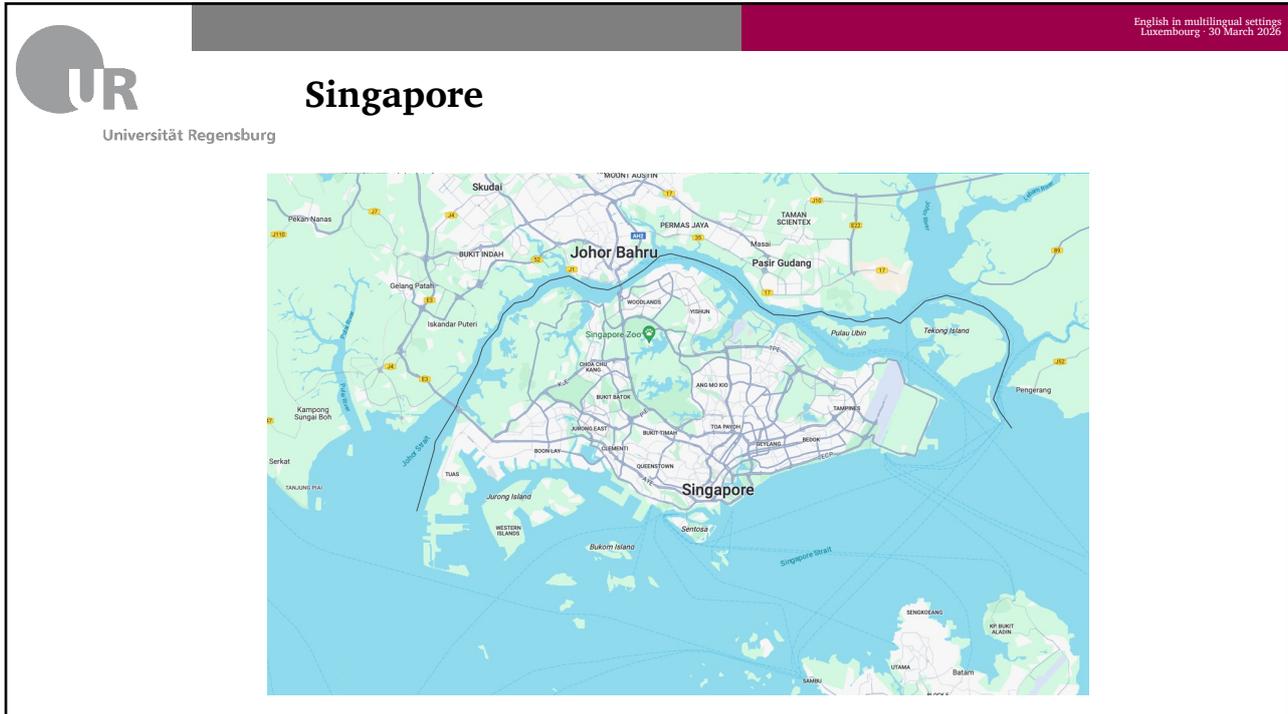
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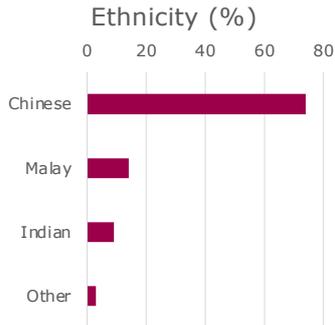
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- British colony (1819–1959)
- Independence (1959, 1963, 1965)

- Diverse population (\pm stable for the past 120 years):
 - Chinese (ca. 74%)
 - Malays (ca. 14%)
 - Indians (ca. 9%)

- Diverse linguistic ecology:
 - Sinitic (Mandarin, Hokkien, Cantonese, etc.)
 - Austronesian (Malay, Javanese, Boyanese, etc.)
 - Indo-European (English, Hindi, Gujarati, etc.)
 - Dravidian (Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, etc.)

Ethnicity (%)



Ethnicity	Percentage (%)
Chinese	74
Malay	14
Indian	9
Other	3

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- Language planning and policy:
 - Four official languages (Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, English)
 - One national language (Malay)
 - One 'working language' (English)
 - Three 'mother tongues' (Mandarin, Malay, Tamil)

- Bilingual education system (**English** + mother tongue)
- Promotion of Mandarin at the expense of other Chinese varieties
- Promotion of Standard English at the expense of 'Singlish'

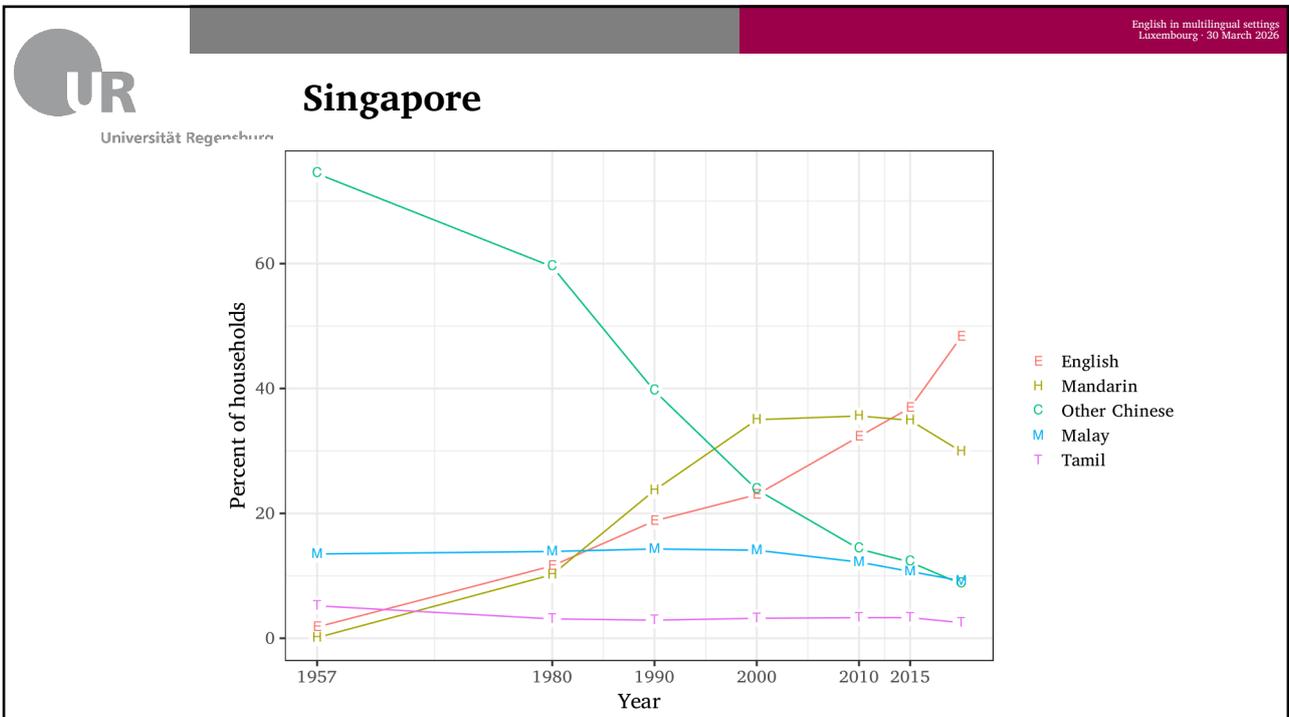




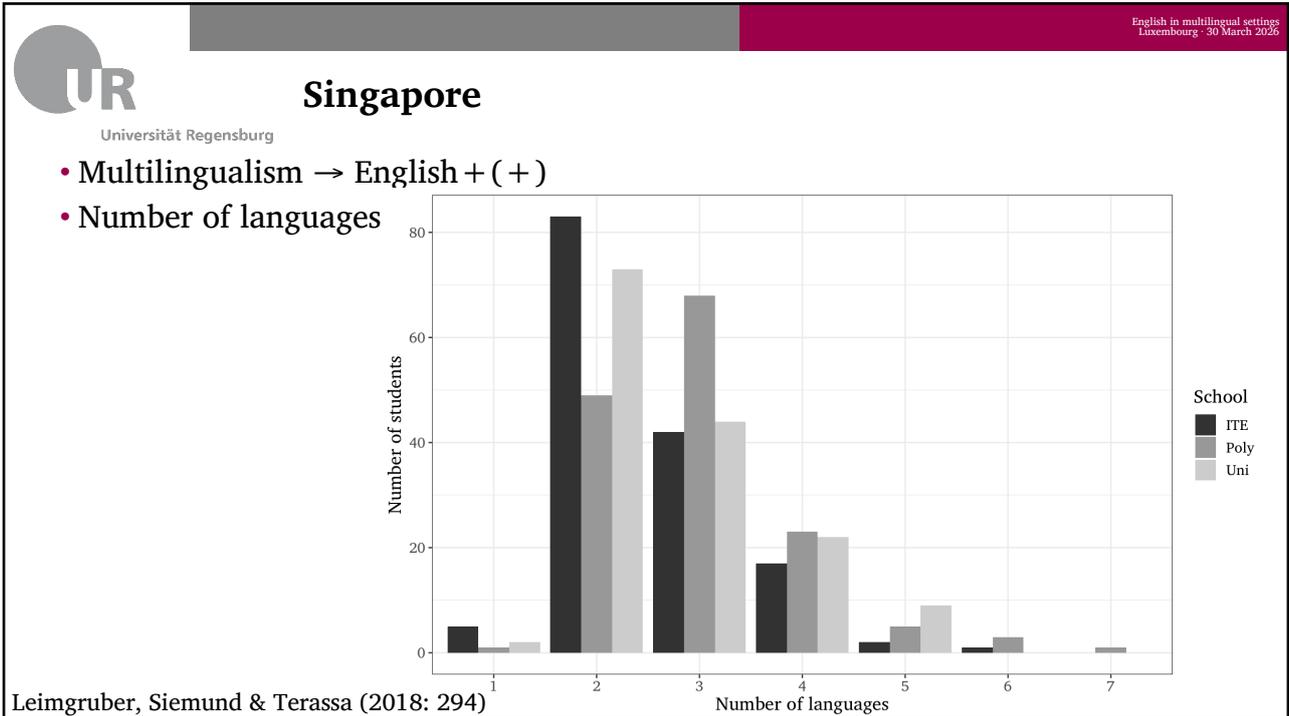
https://www.csp.com.hk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Quarterly-report_1st...-Singapore_csbhs.pdf

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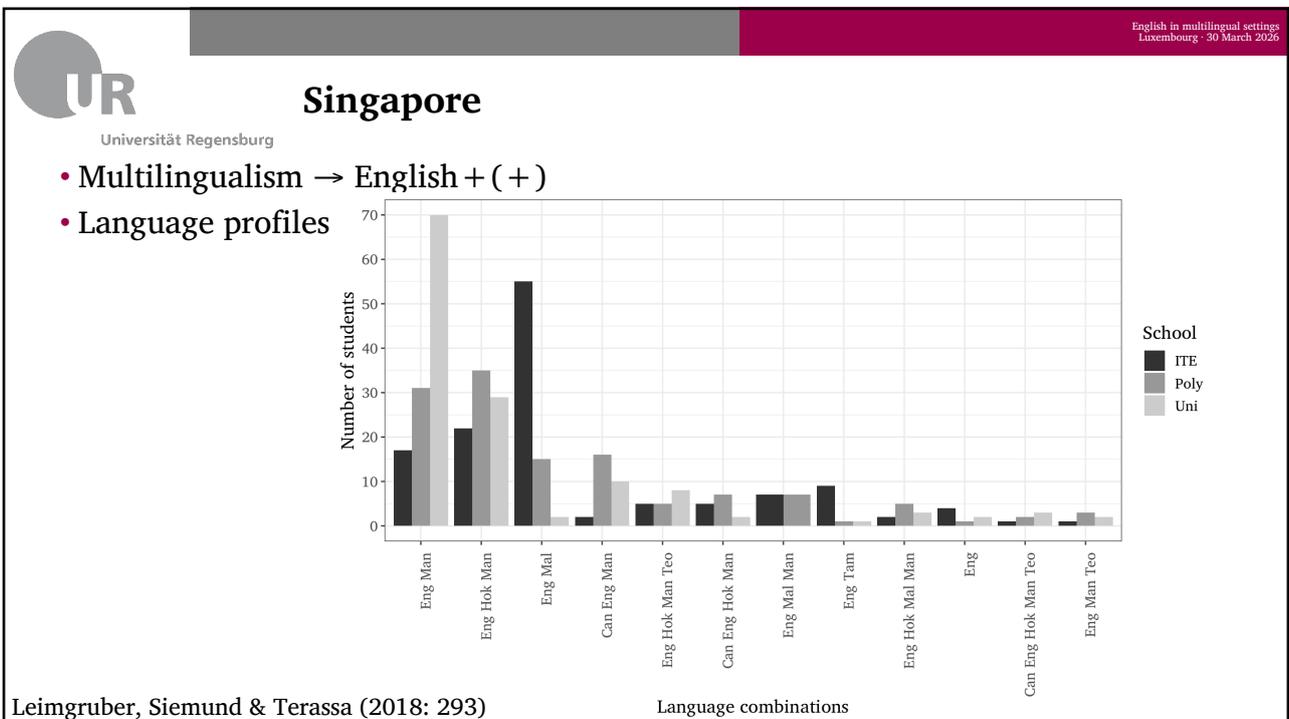
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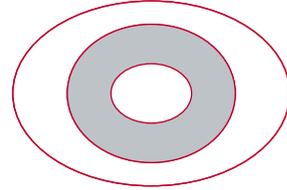


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- Outer circle? → Inner circle?
- Internal Differentiation?
- Local identity marking?



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- **Complex political realities**
 - De facto independence, but little recognition internationally



■ Territories controlled by the PRC
■ Territories controlled by the ROC

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/01/China_map.png

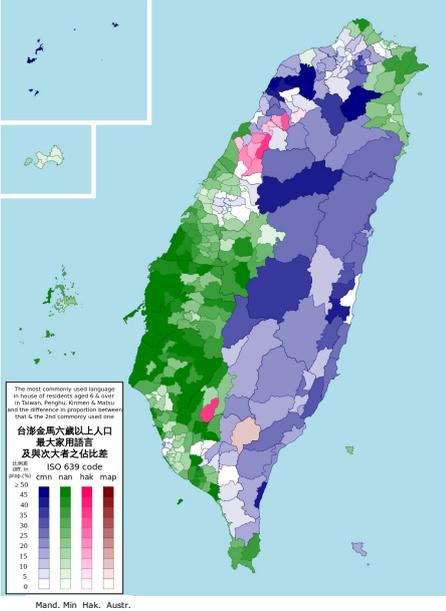
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- **Complex political realities**
 - De facto independence, but little recognition internationally
- **Linguistic diversity**
 - Indigenous Austronesian languages
 - 17th c.: Southern Min
 - 20th c.: Mandarin



The most commonly used language in terms of speakers aged 15 & over in each county, district & municipality. The difference in proportion between that & the 2nd commonly used one.

**台灣島馬六歲以上人口
最大常用語言
及與次大者之佔比差**

lang. (ISO 639 code)	1st	2nd
cmn	Mand.	map
nan	Min	hak
nan	Hak.	map
nan	Austr.	map

Mand. Min Hak. Austr.

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/ac/Map_of_the_most_commonly_used_home_language_in_Taiwan.svg

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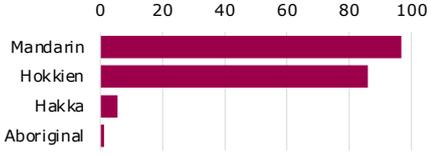
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- **Complex political realities**
 - De facto independence, but little recognition internationally

- **Linguistic diversity**
 - Indigenous Austronesian languages
 - 17th c.: Southern Min
 - 20th c.: Mandarin

- **Complex ethnolinguistic identities**
 - ‘Taiwanese’ vs. ‘Chinese’



Two-thirds of adults in Taiwan consider themselves primarily Taiwanese

% who think of themselves as ...

	Primarily Taiwanese	Both Taiwanese and Chinese	Primarily Chinese
Total	67%	28	3%
Ages 18-34	83	15	1
35+	61	33	4
Men	63	30	4
Women	72	25	2
Emotionally attached to China	44	48	6
Not emotionally attached to China	85	13	1

Note: "Emotionally attached" includes those who say they are very or somewhat emotionally attached to China. "Not emotionally attached" includes those who say they are not very or not at all emotionally attached to China. Don't know/Refused responses are not shown. Source: Survey conducted June 2-Sept. 17, 2023, in five East Asian publics. PEW RESEARCH CENTER

<https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/01/16/most-people-in-taiwan-see-themselves-as-primarily-taiwanese-few-say-theyre-primarily->



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English in Taiwan

- American presence (USTDC), connection



<http://ustdc.blogspot.com/2010/12/west-compound-1958.html>



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English in Taiwan

- American presence (USTDC), connection

- Importance in the (para-) education system



<http://focustaiwan.tw/news/aedu/201801290011.aspx>

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English in Taiwan

- American presence (USTDC), connection

- Importance in the (para-) education system

- Attempts at official language status (the 'Tainan project')
- But still 'foreign' language → E.C.

Taiwan mulling English as an official language, but is it ready?

2018/01/27 16:57:23



Photo courtesy of Tainan City Office of English as the Second Official Language

Tainan blazes trail in making English Taiwan's 2nd official language

2018/01/29 16:03:45



<https://trimage.s3.amazonaws.com/photos/2020/10/24/1603528256-5f93e640b6116.jpg>

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Current research

- Creation of a first corpus of spoken Taiwanese English (TASE; Rüdiger, Leimgruber & Tseng 2023)
 - Pilot corpus, expansion planned

- Discourse marker/particle *like* in Taiwan vs. Korea
 - dm: 4.4 vs 1.1 ptw
 - dp: 9.3 vs 7.0 ptw

- Quotative construction ‘BE-*like*’ similar distribution to inner circle

like...

(Leimgruber & Rüdiger 2025)

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- Taiwan typically seen as EC/EFL
→ English taught and learnt in the education system
- Discourse particle/marker and quotative *like* are not usually explicitly taught in such contexts → high rates perhaps surprising
- School-external sources of contact with (primarily US) English:
 - (global) pop culture and media
 - social media
 - actual contact with Americans is rarer
- Possible solidification of such features through repeated use *within* a Taiwanese English speech community

like...

(Leimgruber & Rüdiger 2025)

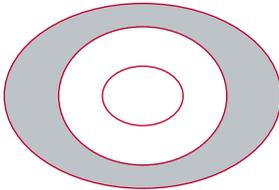
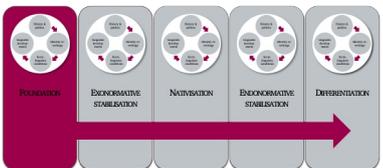
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Taiwan

- Expanding circle... English as a foreign language?
- Exonormativity?
- *Linguistic ownership* (Seilhamer 2015)?

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- Concentric circles model (Kachru 1985)
 - Dubai: Expanding → Outer Circle
 - Singapore: Outer → Inner Circle
 - Taiwan: Expanding Circle
- Dynamic model of postcolonial Englishes (Schneider 2007)
 - Singapore: phase 4 → 5
 - Dubai, Taiwan: not post-colonial!

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- ‘Transnational attraction’ of English (Schneider 2014)
- English in the ‘Expanding Circle’/non-postcolonial world (e.g. the Netherlands [Edwards 2016] or Taiwan [Rüdiger et al. 2023, Leimgruber & Rüdiger 2025])

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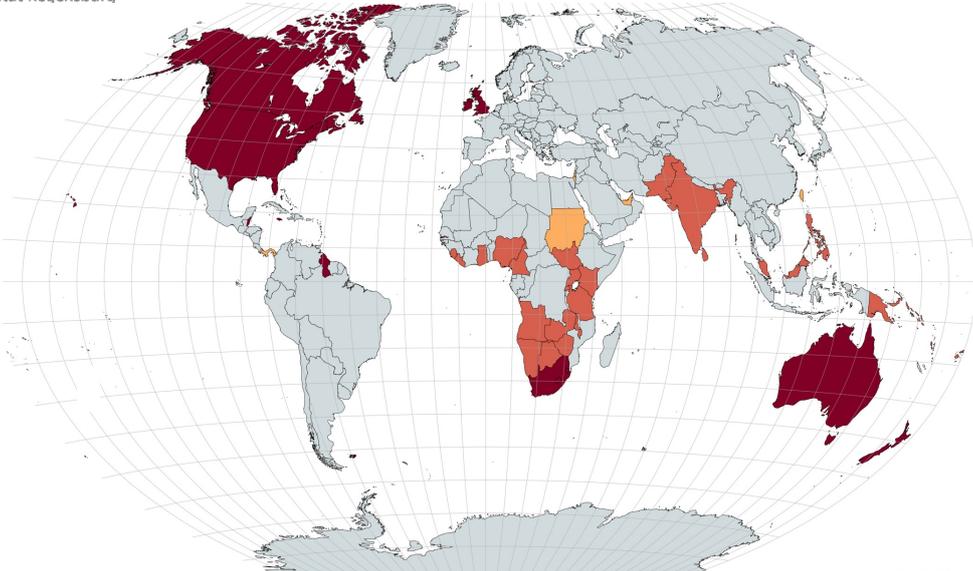
- ‘Sociolinguistics of globalisation’ (Blommaert 2010)
 - Features → resources
- ‘Interactions across Englishes’ (Meierkord 2012)
- Complex dynamic systems theory (Schneider 2025)



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 **Conclusion**
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Created with mapcarta.net

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 **Thank you · Merci · Merci · Danke**
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谢谢
Terima Kasih
நன்றி
شكرا

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