

# How languages shape economics

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Half of the world's population is bilingual or multilingual, with over 6,000 different languages spoken in the world today. But language is much more than just communication. As well as expressing cultural identity, language also enables trade and, perhaps surprisingly, trade shapes language.

The intimate link between languages and economics is the subject of a new book published today [9 Feb] by Bloomsbury. Dr Gabrielle Hogan-Brun, author of "Linguanomics. What is the Market Potential of

Multilingualism?" explores the benefits and challenges of language diversity and shows how economies that have embraced language diversity have always benefited, from ancient Egyptian traders on the Nile, to Marco Polo, post-colonial Africa and the EU project".

Dr Hogan-Brun from the University's Graduate School of Education, said: "Linguanomics is a journey through the evolution of language and its effect on our world. Never more politically charged than now, the topic of the languages we speak can either unite or split communities. At a time when the benefits of multiculturalism are being questioned, valuing [language diversity](#) is not only important for our culture, but also for our economy."

Linguanomics tackles the issues, opportunities and risks that a multilingual society presents, asking questions such as:

- What is the effect of multilingualism on society, organisations and individuals?
- What are the economic benefits and drawbacks?
- Is learning another language worthwhile, and should we be investing more in [language skills](#)?

With real-life examples ranging from tragic aircraft collisions to attempts to create a single universal language, and considering societies both real and imagined (e.g. J. R. R. Tolkien's Middle Earth), this book offers a unique and timely look at the value of [language](#) in our world today.

Provided by University of Bristol

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