

The Role of English in Multilingual Contexts: A Comparison of the Republic of India and the European Union

Thursday, 4 June 2026 12:00 (20 minutes)

Global English functions not only as a practical instrument of communication but also as a force that shapes individuals' language choices in everyday interaction. The aim of this paper is to compare the role of English in multilingual contexts in the European Union and the Republic of India by identifying the sociolinguistic domains in which English occurs most frequently and examining how these practices align with speakers' language beliefs. The empirical basis of the paper consists of survey data on respondents' linguistic repertoires, language use and beliefs about language as a value and a component of identity. A comparison of the two respondent groups highlights both shared patterns and context-specific differences, offering insight into how perceptions of language value correlate with actual language practices. In multilingual settings marked by tensions between local languages and wider lingua francas, English is often established as an ostensibly neutral means of communication; yet how neutral is it in the long term?

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Session Classification: Multilingualism, Language Justice & Knowledge Infrastructures: Who Gets to Know-and in What Language?

Track Classification: General sessions: Multilingualism, Language Justice & Knowledge Infrastructures: Who Gets to Know-and in What Language?