Multilingualism—language diversity in society—is a perfect expression of human plurality. About 6,500–7,000 languages are spoken, written, and signed, throughout the linguistic landscape of the world, by people who communicate in more than one language. Languages are instruments for interacting with the cultural environment and their ecology is complex. Multilingualism: A Very Short Introduction shows how multilingualism offers cultural diversity and complex identities, and plays a part in issues of nationalism and regional rights. It considers multilingualism in the context of globalization and the fate of many endangered languages as they disappear from the world. Why do some languages thrive, but others decline?

Sociolinguistics: A Very Short Introduction

Sociolinguistics: A Very Short Introduction deals with the social life of language: language in its sociocultural context. It draws from sociolinguistics, the sociology of language, and psycholinguistics. It explains the differential social evaluations of languages and dialects, how names (and naming) are much more than simple designations, and why some languages come to dominate others. It also explores the relationship between language and gender, sexist language, the language of poverty, the intertwining of language and religion, and politically driven language planning and policy. It demonstrates the connections and continuities that exist within the language arena in which we all participate.