

Multilingual ecologies in Surinam: observations, taxonomies, scenarios, constraints

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(based on joint work with Kofi Yakpo)

In this paper we survey the complex multilingual history of the Republic of Surinam (South America) since 1500, involving Cariban and Arawakan groups, imported Africans enslaved on the plantations and living as Maroons in the jungle, transplanted Indians, Javanese and Hakka Chinese, and finally European settlers. The multilingual ecologies characterizing this history will be approached in four steps: observed practices (making use of standardized elicitation kits), taxonomies of interlingual practices, language contact scenarios, and constraints on multilingual processing.