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## Book Review

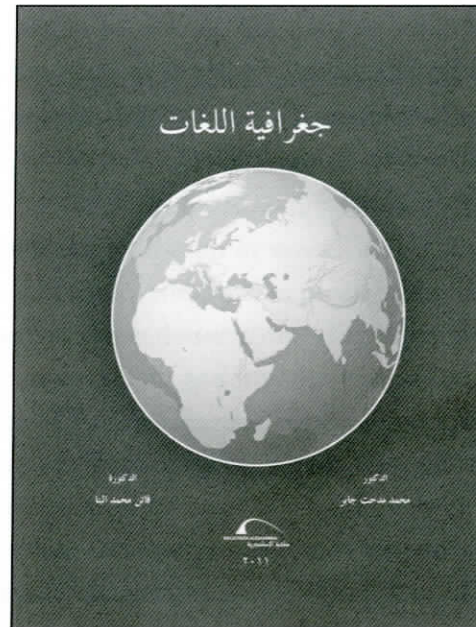
# Geography of Languages

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**Book Title: Geography of Languages**

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This publication is considered the first of its kind in its field of specialization published in Arabic. Researchers Dr. Mohamed Medhat Gaber and Dr. Faten Al-Banna, in composing this book, based their research on a large amount of recent, practical references in the field of languages, and their geographic distribution; and subsequently tracking their emergence, disappearance, transformation and development.

We have raised a number of questions in *Geography of Languages*, including: What is the purpose of this book? What is the difference between it and other linguistic books that have dealt with languages in analysis and study? What is the difference between the geography

of languages and linguistic geography? The book's chapters will answer all these questions and several others.

*The Geography of Languages* had garnered some interest at the turn and middle of the Twentieth Century, more so than the present day. This applies to the books and published articles in international periodicals that carry the title 'Geography of Languages'. Most of the books had indicated the march to compose journals and a linguistic atlas that linguists revived.

Thus, the absence of interest in the study of language from the geographic perspective spurred the authors to compose this book, especially some of the books of human,

civilization and regional geography specializing in languages, with some pages or sometimes a chapter or two for studying language within the context of the book. However, this does not suppress this passion of the geographer who desires to study languages methodically and detailed, without it being one among numerous topics.

The book *Geography of Languages* takes place in 11 research investigations included in 31 chapters that treated the topic of languages from many geographical aspects. The reader will perceive a difference in the size of the chapters. That difference reflects the importance of exhibited topics for research, and the nature of dealing with it, and not the paucity of data or special information as well. The reader will discover that the book sometimes shows some clear linguistic issues that were difficult to arrive to through geographical study even if the subject was brief from the linguistic perspective. The authors desired to show all the terms in *Geography of Languages*; and in languages, Arabic and others, to the benefit of the researcher.

The first chapter from the book *Geography of Languages* dealt with the subject geography of languages, and the difference between it and geographic linguistics. This chapter included two sections, the first of which treated the philosophical bases for the methods and entries of the geography of languages. The second dealt with the development of the study of linguistic geography over a century, whether from the linguistic or geographic perspective.

The second chapter treated the most important concepts, theories and ideas that dealt with languages, with interpretation and study of the linguistic and geographic

perspective. As for the third chapter, it treats cultural and linguistic levels with study; and includes three sections, the first of which deals with the model language, regional languages and industry. The second section deals with simplified, Creole and intermediate languages. As for the third section of chapter three, it deals with the study of distinguishing between linguistic and cultural areas.

In the fourth chapter, the geographic perspective became clear for purposes in the sections of the fourth chapter. The first dealt with historical geography for languages since the evolution of the human being on planet Earth. The study of historical geography for writing follows that in consideration that the written language followed the spoken language. The study of one of the "classical" geographic subjects, the names of geographic places and how they evolved and how they changed across time with the change of material and civilizational 'landscape', follows that. In the final section of this chapter, the authors dealt with an important geographic subject, language from the practical point of view of the diffusion process.

The fifth chapter also included four sections that dealt with the geographic distribution of languages from which reflects the spatial dimensions for languages with clarification. In the sixth chapter, its four sections dealt with defunct and threatened languages in practice. The research focused on the reasons of this phenomenon with their connection to geographic, demographic, political, linguistic and utilitarian factors.

In the seventh chapter, the book dealt with a clear geographic topic, the cartographic representation for languages which appeared

early, accompanying the movement of numbers of early linguistic atlases in the nineteenth century, and specifically in France and Germany.

In the eighth chapter, its sections dealt with the topic of linguistic complexity and the relationship of that with geographic complexity, especially morphological and ethnic, as is the case in the Caucasus region, some parts of Africa and Papua New Guinea. This chapter treated how linguistic complexity may lead to linguistic change, or even linguistic transformation, disappearance of the language completely and replacement of another in its place.

In the ninth chapter, relationships and bonds between geographical data, and data of a number of sciences, and supported specializations became clear. The chapter came under the title "Language and Data of the Social and Civilizational Environment" and included five sections. Thus, it includes the greatest amount of information in the entire book.

In the tenth chapter, within its four sections, it discussed the subject of language and political-geographic dimensions. The chapter focused on linguistic uniformity, bilingualism and linguistic plurality, and how political dynamics and language interact together. It concluded with a study of the languages of minorities and expatriate communities, which is a problem that appeared on the stage of events, especially with the increase of emigrants, foreigners and refugees among residents, not in their native country for many reasons.

In the eleventh and final chapter, the authors discussed the importance of modern technology in the geographic study of languages and linguistics in general. This provided quickness and precision in treating languages in study clearly regarding what was the situation previously when the study of languages lasted years, or sometimes the study is not completed when these technologies, especially calculators, electronic systems and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and others, granted a field for the increase of interest in languages and their study.

The book supports approximately 40 forms and maps in order to be able to understand its dimensions and its details as it included numerous references. The authors chose the use of "Bibliography", regarding the lack of possibility of its examination. However, out of concern for revenue and availability of sources and references in *Geography of Languages* for the benefit of researchers and readers, and the facilitation in becoming acquainted with it, and especially that it is difficult sometimes to obtain references to a topic, in light of the marginalization of the study of geography of languages in recent decades.

In the end, we only can hope that this publication is beneficial to geographers, researchers, intellectuals, and readers in general for the difference of their practical and intellectual awareness. Also, we hope this book represents a genuine addition to sincere geographical research in Arabic.