

G. Extra, M. Spotti & P. van Avermaet, (Eds.) *Language testing, migration and citizenship: Cross-national perspectives on integration regimes.*
London: Continuum. 2009. Pp. 270.

In many countries, citizenship has become a central issue in relation to political discourses about migration. Within these debates, language testing has come to the fore as a mechanism (Shohamy 2006) through which migrants may demonstrate language proficiency, civic knowledge and their willingness to adapt to the country in which they are to become citizens. *Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship* is a much needed collection that charts language testing and citizenship in 12 different countries.

Language Testing, Migration and Citizenship brings together some of the most current prominent thinkers in Applied Linguistics on language and citizenship. Each chapter follows a similar structure. That is to say, each chapter illustrates the historical background about migration and language policy and how they relate to citizenship. The book has 13 chapters. Following the introductory chapter, chapters 2 to 9 examine European cases; namely Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Spain. Chapters 10 to 13 investigate non-European cases such as United States, Canada and Australia. Each chapter deals with national and knowledge and cultural knowledge, the form of testing and the consequences of not passing tests.

Hogan-Brun provides an account of language and citizenship in Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia in chapter 2. This is a particularly interesting set of countries given their having gained independence from the Soviet Union. In these cases citizenship has been a way of consolidating a set of existential values which pertain to nationhood. This appeal to shared values is all the more relevant following independence from the dominant power of the former USSR. Furthermore, Hogan-Brun examines the surrounding discourses on citizenship and language.

In chapter 3, Nygren-Juskin demystifies the commonly-held notion that immigration is a relatively new phenomenon in Sweden. Moreover, what emerges is that unlike many other European countries, Sweden neither demands a language test requirement nor does it discourage dual citizenship. Reflecting the tolerant attitudes towards language testing and migration, Nygren-Juskin succinctly summarizes: 'once you are in, you are in.'

Blackledge draws upon his expertise in Critical Discourse Analysis in chapter 4 with an examination of British political discourse surrounding citizenship. Blackledge is further informed by the work of Makoni and Pennycook in 'disinventing' the notion of language and nation. Such delinking from traditional ideas around hermetically-sealed languages permits a view that citizenship literature reflects an 'invented' notion through a 'convenient fiction.'

Germany provides the setting for chapter 5 (Stevenson & Schanze). The unification of East and West Germany is the starting point as German language becomes a key point in unifying the nation. As discourses involving security and integration change over time, new attitudes to language policy develop. This in turn means that new demands are placed on migrants.

The issue of language deficiency is revisited in the case of Belgium in chapter 6 (van Avermaet & Gysen). Debates on language proficiency vary. For example, French speaking parts of Belgium have no language condition for integration. In contrast, in Flanders language is considered essential for integration. This selectivity of argument between not only whether language is essential at all as well as which languages migrants possess as part of their linguistic repertoire flavours the nature of language debates in Belgium.

Chapter 7 investigates the Netherlands. Extra and Spotti note the harsh undertone of political discourse in the Netherlands which has changed the once liberal perception of the country. There are three stages within the Dutch testing regime: (1) admission (*toelating*), (2) integration (*inburgering*), and (3) citizenship (*naturelisatie*). Extra and Spotti pose pertinent questions in raising concerns over the accountability of testers involved in such regimes. This leaves much to ponder for testers and the field of testing.

Luxembourg has the highest percentage of foreign residents in the EU and has traditionally been multilingual. According to Horner in Chapter 8, Luxembourg is ascribing to a one nation-one language ideology. Horner uses language ideology debates to move the analysis beyond technical aspects of testing to opening up a discursive space which brings to light the inherent tensions involved in a one language-one nation debate in a trilingual country.

Spain, a country which has historically grappled with managing national languages and languages of the autonomous regions, is the subject of chapter 9 by Vigers and Mar-Molinero. Given such a contentious linguistic history, the Government has shown a reticence to engage in knowledge of language/culture requirements for residence/nationality.

Chapter 10 is the first to illustrate an example from outside of Europe. Gales analyzes the US example. This is a curious case given that English is not an official language yet there exists a language requirement in demonstrating a

knowledge of English. Gales offers examples of de facto language tests in the everyday lives of migrants.

In chapter 11, Nygren-Junkin provides real examples of the Canadian citizenship test questions. This chapter also highlights the citizenship ceremony within the path to citizenship. Nygren-Junkin leaves us with a quotation comparing the British colonial histories of Australia and Canada as well as trajectories towards transnational citizens.

Australia is the subject of chapter 12. McNamara charts a history of language assessment and testing of migrants in Australia which has at times been explicitly racist, for example the White Australia Policy. In contrast, other policies have resulted in the provision of English language tuition for migrants through programs such as the AMEP (Adult Migrant English Program). A repoliticization of language and migration emerged from the late 90s which culminated in the 2007 citizenship test. McNamara provides sample questions and a lexical analysis. Crucially, McNamara questions the potentially collusive role of testers within policy and practices which may be discriminatory towards migrants.

In the final chapter, Shohamy and Kanza argue while Hebrew and Arabic are official languages, it is Hebrew which allows citizens to access vital resources for educational and professional betterment. Shohamy and Kanza view citizenship as a 'hollow' concept.

Overall, this collection is an excellent starting point for those with an interest in language testing, migration and citizenship. While there appears to be prevalent sentiment that language is essential for integration and citizenship, the multiple examples in this book demonstrate that each country has its own complexities. While many countries may draw upon testing regimes, *how* and *why* they do so may widely vary.

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References

Shohamy, E. (2006). *Language Policy: Hidden Agendas and New Approaches*. London: Routledge.