



Nic Craith, M. (2006). *Europe and the politics of language: Citizens, migrants, and outsiders*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.

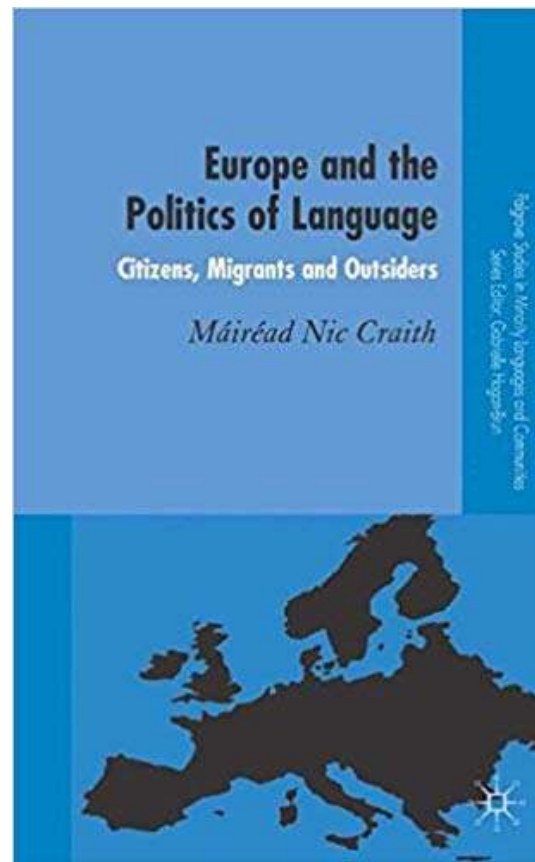
Pp. v + 217

ISBN: 978-1-4039-1833-3

Reviewed by Joseph Axel
Arizona State University
United States

Mairead Nic Craith takes readers on a vicarious, language-policy tour of Europe, one which elucidates the socioeconomic and geopolitical issues that are found within the European Union. In *Europe and the Politics of Language: Citizens, Migrants, and Outsiders*, the author examines the intersection of language and policy. She asserts that the post-colonial EU has become a centralized, federal policy-maker that simultaneously promotes while fails to endorse certain European languages. The EU grants official and working status to member states' languages, which the author claims creates social and economic disparities for unofficial minority languages. She looks critically at the socioeconomic and sociolinguistic strata established and maintained by the EU.

Chapter one establishes the historical foundation on which to establish the context of the modern-day dynamic of languages in the Europe Union and ends with the description of a religiously and geopolitically discordant continent. The author constructs a center-periphery model of post-modern Europe, emphasizing social politics and the



rise of transnationalism. Statehood, citizenship and language are the interwoven topics of chapter two, and language is presented as a symbol of national and state unity. The author links language to political and social ideologies as well as ethnic identity. Social and economic inequities are the foci of chapter three. She contends that certain languages benefit in manifold ways from EU identification as being *official*. In chapter four, the author looks at the contextual paradox of a language having a minority status in one context, like Danish in Northern Germany, while having an official national status in another (Denmark), and yet is an official language within the EU.

Chapters four through six identify frameworks of institutional support, which promote policies that challenge traditional, linguistic homogenization and extend rights across the deterritorialized borders of an economic and political constellation of nation-states. Chapter eight carries perhaps the greatest weight in terms of the sociopolitical implications of the future of the European Union. The author depicts a globally representative Europe, one which in true hypocritical, democratic fashion, places languages such as Chinese in Northern Ireland or Arabic in France on the farthest edge of the center-periphery model, i.e., they are the “outsiders,” with special note to Europe’s

association of Arabic with Wahhabi Salafism. Nic Craith contends that there needs to be a far greater investment in language planning within university research in order to affect change at the federal level and promote agency within language-support networks.

The author stresses the issues associated with funding, specifically from the European Commission and individual, nation-state governments. The book’s passages often sound like the author is pleading with specific members of particular funding committees which is both educational as a policy student but also at times seems trite and unsuccessfully substantiated.


In addition to covert, institutionalized, xenophobia, an intolerance for the Other, and reverse-colonization, the author provides multiple iterations of the funding issue. This is understandable as the author is an advocate for languages without political representation. It is this reviewer’s understanding that the author’s main assertion is that languages whose speakers participate in any of the myriad facets of the European Union should have recognition and support at an official level. This book is appropriate for the following audiences: scholars of language, economic, or educational policy; sociolinguists; immigrant studies.

About the Reviewer

Joseph Axel is a Ph.D. student in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies at Arizona State University. His research interests include language maintenance, global and heritage / community languages, and integrated cultures in cosmopolitan contexts.



Education Review Reseñas Educativas

 *Education Review/Reseñas Educativas/Resenbas Educativas* is supported by the edXchange initiative's Scholarly Communications Group at the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University. Copyright is retained by the first or sole author, who grants right of first publication to the *Education Review*. Readers are free to copy, display, and distribute this article, as long as the work is attributed to the author(s) and ***Education Review***, it is distributed for non-commercial purposes only, and no alteration or transformation is made in the work. More details of this Creative Commons license are available at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>. All other uses must be approved by the author(s) or ***Education Review***. ***Education Review*** is published by the Scholarly Communications Group of the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University.

Disclaimer: The views or opinions presented in book reviews are solely those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent those of *Education Review*.

Connect with *Education Review* on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Education-Review/178358222192644>) and on Twitter @EducReview