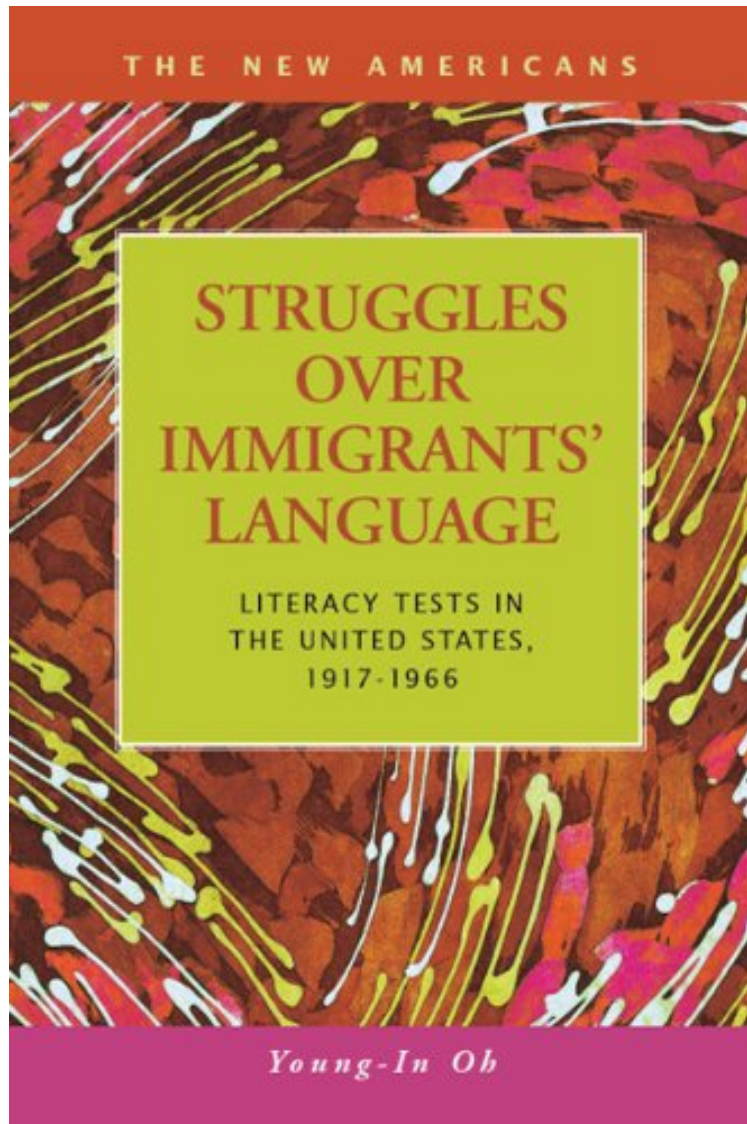


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## Struggles over Immigrants' Language: Literacy Tests in the United States, 1917-1966 (The New Americans: Recent Immigration and American Society)

*Young-in Oh*

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Oh argues that the introduction of literacy tests influenced both the possibility of immigrant admission to the United States and the exercise of suffrage. The Literacy Test Act of 1917 was the first national language restriction on immigration and was used as a means of excluding undesirable linguistic minorities. Focusing on New York State, Oh shows how literacy tests were used to preserve the political hegemony. She argues that linguistic assimilation carried different meanings for different people. For Europeans, it meant swifter assimilation into American society, while for non-whites it meant greater resistance to their attempts to enter society. Ultimately, the interactions and conflicts between immigrants, the states, and society over language restriction have been integral to the historical processes that defined and redefined the nation.

About the Author Young-In Oh teaches American history, Modern Western History, and Race and Ethnicity in America at universities in Korea. She received her Ph. D. in 2008. She worked for the Research Center for Migration Culture in 2009-2010 and is serving on the editorial boards of Korean Society for Migration and Ethnic Studies and the Korean Society of American History. She has published articles about literacy tests and whiteness in America, receiving an award for the Best Article from the National Research Foundation of Korea in 2010. Her current research interests are Bilingual Education and a possible alternative language policy for language minorities in America.