



The Changing Languages of Europe (Oxford Linguistics)

Bernd Heine, Tania Kuteva

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The languages and dialects of Europe, this book shows, are becoming increasingly alike. Furthermore this unifying process goes at least as far back as the Roman empire, is accelerating, and affects every one of Europe's 150 or so languages including those of different families such as Basque and Finnish. The changes are by no means restricted to lexical borrowing but involve every grammatical aspect of the language. They are usually so minute that neither native speakers nor trained linguists notice them. But they accumulate and give rise to new grammatical structures that lead in turn to new patterns of areal relationship. Professor Heine and Professor Kuteva look for the causes of linguistic change in cultural and economic exchanges across national and regional boundaries and in the processes that occur when speakers learn or are in close contact with another language. Testing their data and conclusions against findings from elsewhere in the world, the authors reconstruct and reveal when, how, and why common grammatical structures have evolved and continue to evolve in processes of change that will, they argue, transform the linguistic landscape of Europe.

The book is written in clear, non-technical language. It will appeal to scholars and students of language change and variation in Europe and elsewhere. It will also interest everyone concerned to understand the nature of language and language change.

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