

In Search of a Translation Policy for Hong Kong

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Abstract

In a descriptive approach for a specific study, this article aims to explore the existing translation beliefs, management, and practices of Hong Kong. It first reviews the literature on translation policy and summarizes certain key concepts for application. In the focus case, it is found that the overt bilingual language policy of Hong Kong does not lead to any explicit translation policy. In some other official statements, translation management and practices are mentioned. It carries out institutional bilingualism with bilingual mandatory translation at the official level. For the small percentage of ethnic minorities, mostly South Asians, the government has set up guidelines to provide daily life assistance at departmental levels, including translation and interpretation. Certain non-governmental organizations are also involved. This is a typical case of a “cross-portfolio policy-making” approach to translation policy. The study recommends explicitation of the language and translation policies, along with their rationale, and the integration of the translation policies for minority languages. The Hong Kong case study could serve as a reference for policymakers and researchers, while the application of key concepts helps build the methodology for analyzing translation policies elsewhere.

Keywords

translation policy, language policy, minority language, Hong Kong, bilingualism