

MANAGING INTERCULTURAL CONTACTS THROUGH TRANSLATION AS PART OF SLOVENE LANGUAGE POLICY

Prof. dr. Vojko Gorjanc, head of the chair for Slovene, Department of Translation Studies, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

The presentation deals with the main characteristics of the Slovene language policy and language planning from the viewpoints of translation and interpreting. It examines the Slovene language situation and related language-policy and language-planning activities before the Slovene independence, when Slovenia was part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the period after 1991 when the status of Slovene changed with Slovenia's independence, and the period following Slovenia's accession to the EU. Since translation has played a crucial part in all key stages in the creation of standard Slovene, a considerable amount of attention was also paid to translation within language policy since the 1970s. This was a result of a very modern sociolinguistic approach of linguists and Slovene political leaders of the Socialist Union of Working People working within the first Slovene action plan for the public use of Slovene in 1979. We will demonstrate how translation and interpreting were incorporated in that action plan, and how the focuses have been altered after the independence, not just due to the different circumstances but also due to the different ideological framework of the key actors. Namely, the progressive language policy moved towards protectionism in spite of a better language status. At the end, we focus on the later language policy activities and show how we are still seeking answers to the questions arising from the coexistence in a multicultural and multilingual Slovene environment, especially when it comes to the question how to manage multilingualism with the systematic introduction of translation and interpreting in public services. Later language policy activities did not adequately address this topic and consequently failed to properly deal with a language barrier in the public services, which often results in unequal treatment and power imbalance in the cases where interpreter-mediated interaction could resolve the communication problems and reduce the democratic deficit.