

Conflicts and Complexities: a Study of Hong Kong's Bilingual Street Signs from Functional Perspective on Translation

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Abstract : Hong Kong's bilingual street signs declare a kind of correspondence, equivalence and thus translation between the English and Chinese languages. This study finds four translation phenomena among the street signs: domestication with positive connotation, foreignization with negative connotation, bilingual incompatibilities, and cross-street complexities. The interplay of, and the tension between, the four features open up a space where the local and the foreign, the vulgar and the elegant, alternate and experiment with each other, creating a kaleidoscope of methods for expressing and domesticating foreign otherness by virtue of translation. An analysis of the phenomena from the functional perspective reveals how translation has been emancipated to inform a variety of dimensions. This study also renews our understanding of translation as both a concept and a practice.

Keywords : street signs, linguistic landscape, cultural hybridity, Hong Kong

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