

## Minority Language Policy and Planning in Manchester, Britain

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**Abstract :** Manchester, Britain has become the destination of immigrants from different parts of the world. As a result, it is currently home to over 150 different ethnic languages. The present study investigates minority language policy and planning at the micro-level of the city. In order to get an in-depth investigation of such a policy, it was decided to cover it from two angles: the first is the policy making process. This was aimed at getting insights on how decisions regarding the provision of government services in minority languages are taken and what criteria are employed. The second angle is the service provider; i.e. the different departments in Manchester City Council (MCC), the NHS, the courts, and police, etc., to obtain information on the actual provisions of services. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with different personnel representing different departments in MCC, solicitors, interpreters, etc.; through the internet, e.g. the websites of MCC, NHS, courts, and police, etc.; and via personal observation of provisions of community languages in government services. The results show that Manchester's language policy is formulated around two concepts that work simultaneously: one is concerned with providing services in community languages in order to help minorities manage their life until they acquire English, and the other with helping the integration of minorities through encouraging them to learn English. In this regard, different government services are provided in community languages, though to varying degrees, depending on the numerical strength of each individual language. Thus, it is concluded that there is awareness in MCC and other government agencies working in Manchester of the linguistic diversity of the city and there are serious attempts to meet this diversity in their services. It is worth mentioning here that providing such services in minority languages are not meant to support linguistic diversity, but rather to maintain the legal right to equal opportunities among the residents of Manchester and to avoid any misunderstanding that may result due to the language barrier, especially in such areas as hospitals, courts, and police. There is actually no explicitly-mentioned language policy regarding minorities in Manchester; rather, there is an implied or covert policy resulting from factors that are not explicitly documented. That is, there are guidelines from the central government, which emphasize the principle of equal opportunities; then the implementation of such guidelines requires providing services in the different ethnic languages.

**Keywords :** community language, covert language policy, micro-language policy and planning, minority language

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