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edited by
Kirsten Malmkjær
University of Leicester

TRANSLATION IN STATE GOVERNANCE

A Chinese Perspective

Dongsheng Ren
Ocean University of China

Lin Jiao
Ocean University of China

Sanjun Sun
Beijing Foreign Studies University



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Dongsheng Ren
Ocean University of China

Lin Jiao
Ocean University of China

Sanjun Sun
Beijing Foreign Studies University

Author for correspondence: Dongsheng Ren, dongsheng_ren@ouc.edu.cn

Abstract: Translation plays a consequential role in how states govern, manage multilingual affairs, and project influence, yet this role is rarely examined through a comparative, state-centred framework. This Element introduces the State Translation Programme (STP) to analyse translation as state-organised action. Comparing China with Japan, Türkiye, the United States, South Korea, Canada, and Poland, it identifies three strategic modes: Architects build national capacity and identity, Influencers project soft power and shape external narratives, and Administrators manage internal coordination and multilingual governance. China stands out in comparative perspective in seeking to combine all three modes, a pattern this Element terms ‘sovereign maximalism’. Tracing these governance functions from imperial dynasties to the contemporary People’s Republic, the Element offers a framework for comparative analysis across translation studies and political science.

Keywords: translation studies, State Translation Programme, political science, governance, discourse power

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