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# Language Translation During Disaster: A Comparative Analysis of Five National Approaches

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## Abstract

Clear, timely and accurate information is recognised as strategically and operationally critical to disaster response effectiveness. Increasing cultural and linguistic diversity across the globe creates a demand for information to be available in multiple languages. This signifies a need for language translation to be a key element of disaster management. However, language translation is an underdeveloped tool in disaster management and has been a neglected topic in research. We analyse the disaster response approaches for five nations—Ireland, the UK, New Zealand, Japan and the USA—to determine the degree to which language translation is utilised. Taking the right to information as a starting point, we use a 4-A, rights-based analytic framework. Each approach is inspected for standards of Availability, Accessibility, Acceptability and Adaptability. The US has the strongest adherence to these standards while the other approaches are less developed. We suggest several principles for effective practice in providing language access services.

**Keywords:** translation, interpreting, disasters, 4-A framework, linguistic diversity

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