

Applied Linguistics Research Circle Weekly Talk

Accessing health information: Linguistic human rights in Indonesia

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Abstract

Linguistic human rights – for example, the right to be educated in one's own language and the right to use one's own language in law courts – have been discussed for at least a quarter of a century (Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson & Rannut 1994). Implementation, though, has been sporadic. In Indonesia, as in many other parts of the world, health protocols are frequently not adhered to and, as a result, bringing COVID under control is difficult. A factor contributing to non-adherence is that official health messages are poorly understood. This paper is an interim report on ongoing research into the language about COVID which appears in local government health department websites in two Indonesian provinces. If the language used is unfamiliar the right to receive comprehensible health information is transgressed.

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David Fero lectures in Communication Studies in the State Christian Institute of Tarutung in North Sumatra, Indonesia. He is particularly interested in technology, new media and mass communication.