



Universiteit Antwerpen
| Faculteit Letteren
en Wijsbegeerte

Making Climate Communication Accessible. Leveraging insights from a Belgian project on crisis communication

Prof. dr. Gert Vercauteren

Prof. dr. Mieke Vandenbroucke

Why Crisis Communication as an Example?

- Similar sender
- Similar target audience
- Similar rationale
- Similar text characteristics
- Similar text forms
- Similar channels

The Belgian ICC project



University of Antwerp

TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE CRISIS COMMUNICATION POLICY

Project Consortium Advisory Board Project Results Contact

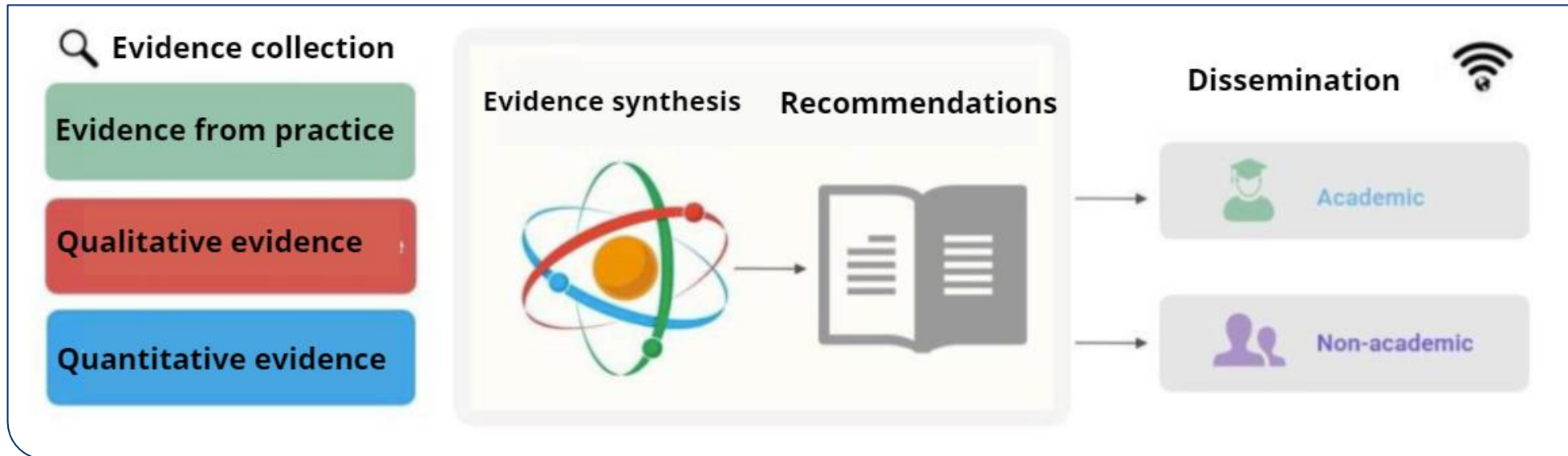
Towards an inclusive crisis communication policy

The development and validation of strategies for multilingual and media accessible crisis communication



This interdisciplinary project subsidized by Sciensano aims to develop an effective strategy for more inclusive (digital) crisis communication, which takes account of the socio-linguistic diversity of Belgium and actively battles information inequality. The focus lies on how government communication about COVID-19 information during the pandemic can be improved through bespoke (re)translations and accessible media and language tailored to linguistic minorities' needs and specific needs groups. These needs include the information's linguistic and multimodal form, the communicative channels and dissemination measures.

The project methodology



- Mixed-methodological design (QN+QL) with synthesis of evidence sources
- Systematic literature review, round table discussions, focus group discussions, product development and testing
- Transdisciplinary research: academics (interdisciplinary), government, stakeholders in civil society, end-users and experts-by-experience

Lessons learned – A Concrete Example

=> Born accessible video



The Target Audience

Anyone suffering from **communication vulnerability** (Hanssons et al 2020) due to

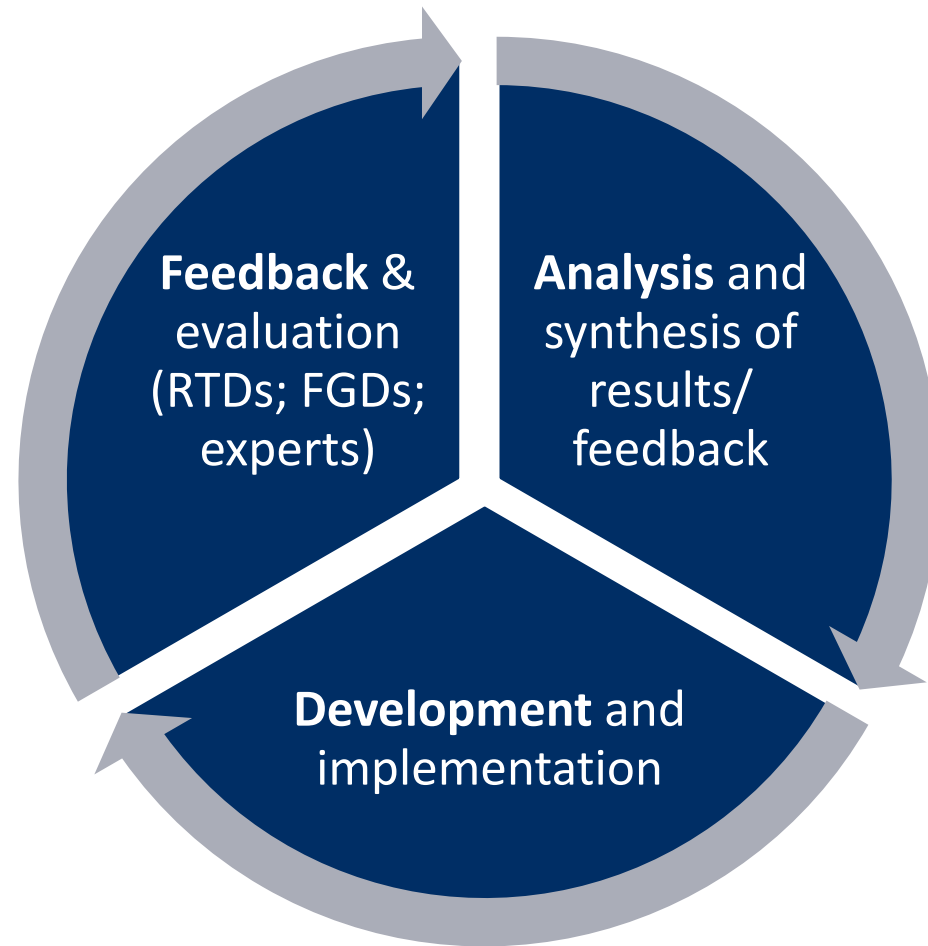
- Cognitive barriers
- Sensory barriers
- Linguistic barriers
- ... or an intersection thereof (Kuran et al 2020)

Access services that have to be provided

- Easy Language Audio
- Clear Visuals
- Interlingual Translation of the Audio
- Intralingual and Interlingual Subtitles
- Audio Description
- Sign Language Interpreting

⇒ **All options available in 1 video**

Creation Process with Iterative Feedback Loop



Elements to take into account

Monolingual Communication

- Clarity of Language
- Audio Description
- Tempo of Voicing
- Adequate Visuals (cultural meaning/inclusive representation)

Multilingual Communication

- Translations of the Audio
- Subtitling

Elements to take into account

Monolingual Communication

- **Clarity of Language**
- **Audio Description**
- Tempo of Voicing
- Adequate Visuals (cultural meaning/inclusive representation)

Multilingual Communication

- **Translations of the Audio**
- **Subtitling**

Clarity of Language

- Complex Information < > Easy Language
- Specific terminology < > Oversimplification
- Foreign-language speakers < > Low Literacy
e.g. “fertility” / “fertilité” / “fertiliteit” < > “vruchtbaarheid”

Level B1 (CEFR) but:

- some sentence structures still too complex
- some concepts still too difficult and abstract (+ scientific terminology)

Audio Description

- No real guidelines for AD of this type of communication
- Existing AD mainly for 'narrative' products => adaptations for informative content?

Testing in the ICC project

- Pre-tests with AD and AI
 - Give visual information before => focus on voice over during video
 - Mixed reactions (blind < > partially sighted)

Findings from the ICC project

- AD as added value/information + interacting with the voice over
- Positive reactions but some found it 'redundant' and 'not relevant'

Translation of Audio

Multilingual products available in multiple languages (e.g. audio + ST)

- ⇒ Some languages considerably longer
 - ⇒ Adjustments needed for synchronicity between images and audio

Findings from the ICC project

- ⇒ Favorably received
 - ⇒ More accessible for people with low literacy than ST

Subtitling

Parameters used:

- 42 characters per line
- 2 lines per ST
- Reading speed 12-14 CPS
- Regular pauses

Main issue encountered in the ICC project:

match ST in all languages with audio in all languages

- ⇒ Extensive adaptations needed
 - ⇒ Editing of source content
 - ⇒ Further reducing of ST content (ES / RU / AR)
 - ⇒ Increasing reading speed

Conclusions from the case study

- Born accessible = difficult balance to strike due to conflicting needs
- Certain access services also benefit other vulnerable end-users and society in general
- Labour-intensive, time-consuming process, but leads to sustainable practices & workflows through experience
- End product that is highly well-received and appreciated

- Design for all from the start and collaboration with target group in design phase
- Contribute to inclusive society by taking inclusive and accessible communication into account

15 FEBRUARY 2022

FINAL REPORT

TOWARDS
AN INCLUSIVE COVID-19
CRISIS COMMUNICATION
POLICY IN BELGIUM



Want to know and learn more?

- Videos:

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/projecten/naar-een-inclusief-crisiscommunicatiebeleid/video/>

- Project website and reports:

<https://www.uantwerpen.be/nl/projecten/naar-een-inclusief-crisiscommunicatiebeleid/>

- Send us an email!

15 FEBRUARY 2022

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NAAR EEN
INCLUSIEF COVID-19-
CRISISCOMMUNICATIEBELEID
IN BELGIË



15 FEBRUARY 2022

RÉSUMÉ

VERS UNE POLITIQUE DE
COMMUNICATION DE CRISE
COVID-19 INCLUSIVE
EN BELGIQUE



15 FEBRUARY 2022

ZUSAMMEN- FASSUNG

AUF DEM WEG ZU EINER
INKLUSIVEN COVID-19-
KRISENKOMMUNIKATIONS-
POLITIK IN BELGIEN

