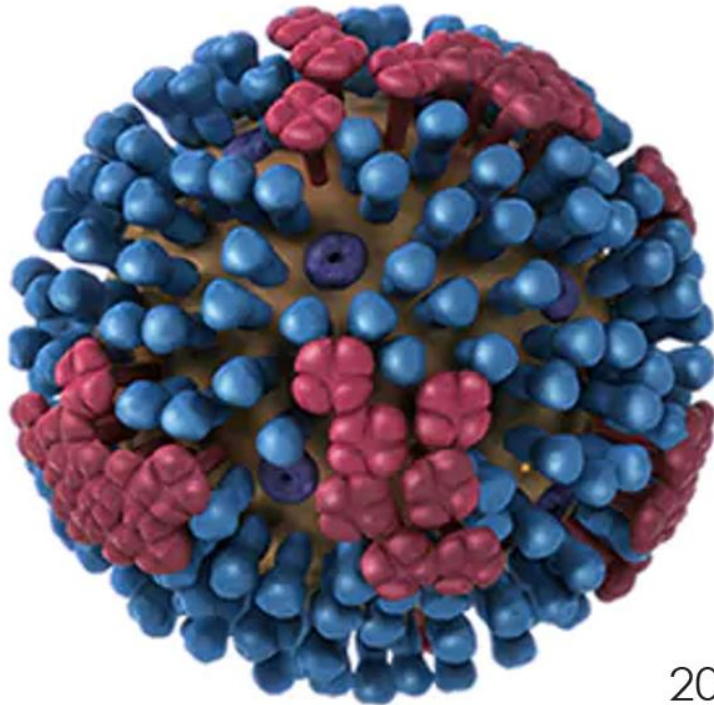


Photo Credit: Illustrator: Dan Higgins, CDC



2009 A/H1N1



SARS-CoV-2, Dec 2019

Prof. Federico M. Federici
Centre for Translation Studies, UCL
META-FRASEIS Translation Studies and Interpreting Laboratory
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
14 May 2021

Translating Crises Language as a social determinant of health

Overview



Overview

Risk communication

Translation as risk reduction

Vulnerability

Social determinants of health

Minorities, life protection, access

Language inequality

Marginalised culturally and linguistically diverse communities

Equity

A linguistic abstract concept vs a sociolinguist reality

From language inequalities to equity

Crisis: a terminological note

For Sellnow and Seeger (2013: 4-20), three conditions must be present for a situation to be considered as a crisis: the situation



(1) violates social expectations of daily routines

Crisis: a terminological note

For Sellnow and Seeger (2013: 4-20), three conditions must be present for a situation to be considered as a crisis: the situation



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(2) poses threats

Crisis: a terminological note

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(2) poses threats



(3) requires responses

Crisis: a terminological note

For Sellnow and Seeger (2013: 4-20), three conditions must be present for a situation to be considered as a crisis: the situation

“Lack of integration, lack of participation, lack of access to information represent vulnerabilities for culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.” (O’Brien and Federici 2019: 131)



(1) violates social expectations of daily routines



(2) poses threats



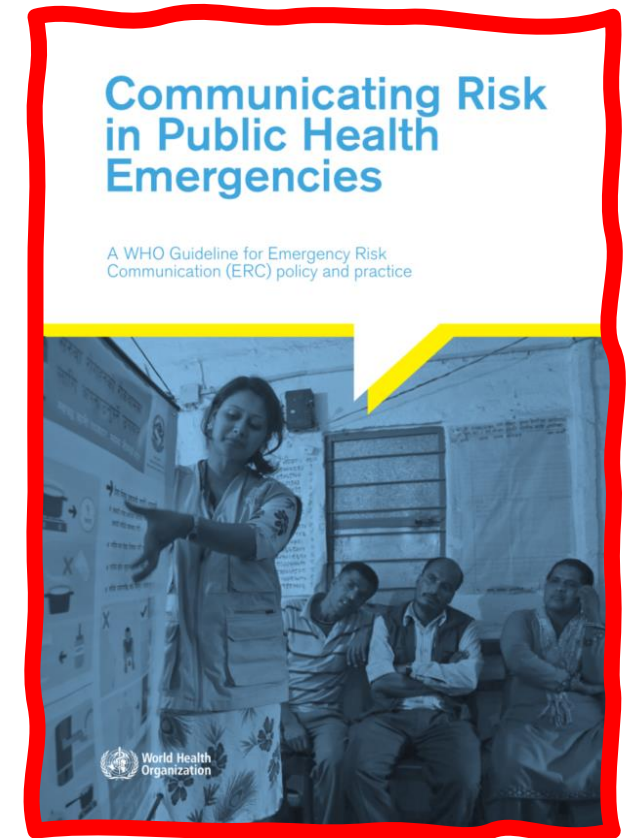
(3) requires responses

Sellnow, T. L., & Seeger, M. W. (2013). *Theorizing crisis communication* (Vol. 4). Oxford; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons.

O'Brien, S., & Federici, F. M. (2019). Crisis Translation: Considering Language Needs in Multilingual Disaster Settings. *Disaster Prevention and Management: An International Journal*, 29, 129-143. doi:10.1108/DPM-11-2018-0373.

Risk communication

“During public health emergencies, people need to know what health risks they face, and what actions they can take to protect their health and lives. Accurate information provided early, often, and in languages and channels that people understand, trust and use, enables individuals to make choices and take actions to protect themselves, their families and communities from threatening health hazards.” (WHO 2017)



WHO. 2017. *Communicating Risk in Public Health Emergencies. A WHO Guideline for Emergency Risk Communication (ERC) policy and practice*. Geneva and New York, NY: World Health Organization. Available at : https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/9789241550208-eng_0.pdf (accessed 1 June 2020).

Crisis Translation



In emergencies and crises, the confines between written, oral, or multimodal modes are narrower

Crisis Translation



In emergencies and crises, the confines between written, oral, or multimodal modes are narrower



CATCH IT 

Germs spread easily. Always carry tissues and use them to catch your cough or sneeze.

BIN IT 

Germs can live for several hours on tissues. Dispose of your tissue as soon as possible.

KILL IT 

Hands can transfer germs to every surface you touch. Clean your hands as soon as you can.

NHS



Crisis Translation



In emergencies and crises, the confines between written, oral, or multimodal modes are narrower



“Translation” is therefore here intended as any form of linguistic and cultural transmission of messages that enables access to information during an emergency, regardless of the medium, the channel, and the format

Crisis Translation



In emergencies and crises, the confines between written, oral, or multimodal modes are narrower

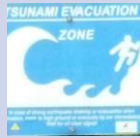


“Translation” is therefore here intended as any form of linguistic and cultural transmission of messages that enables access to information during an emergency, regardless of the medium, the channel, and the format



Different means of communication are considered: multiple solutions are required

Crisis Translation



Different means of communication are considered: multiple solutions are required **AT DIFFERENT TIMES**



Videos with accessible formats. Audio in Central Arrernte and EN subtitles, from Australia



Leaflet, Tagalog, Philippines



For refresher, intensive courses, OpenWHO, Yorùbá



Translation can be used to inform of hazards beforehand...

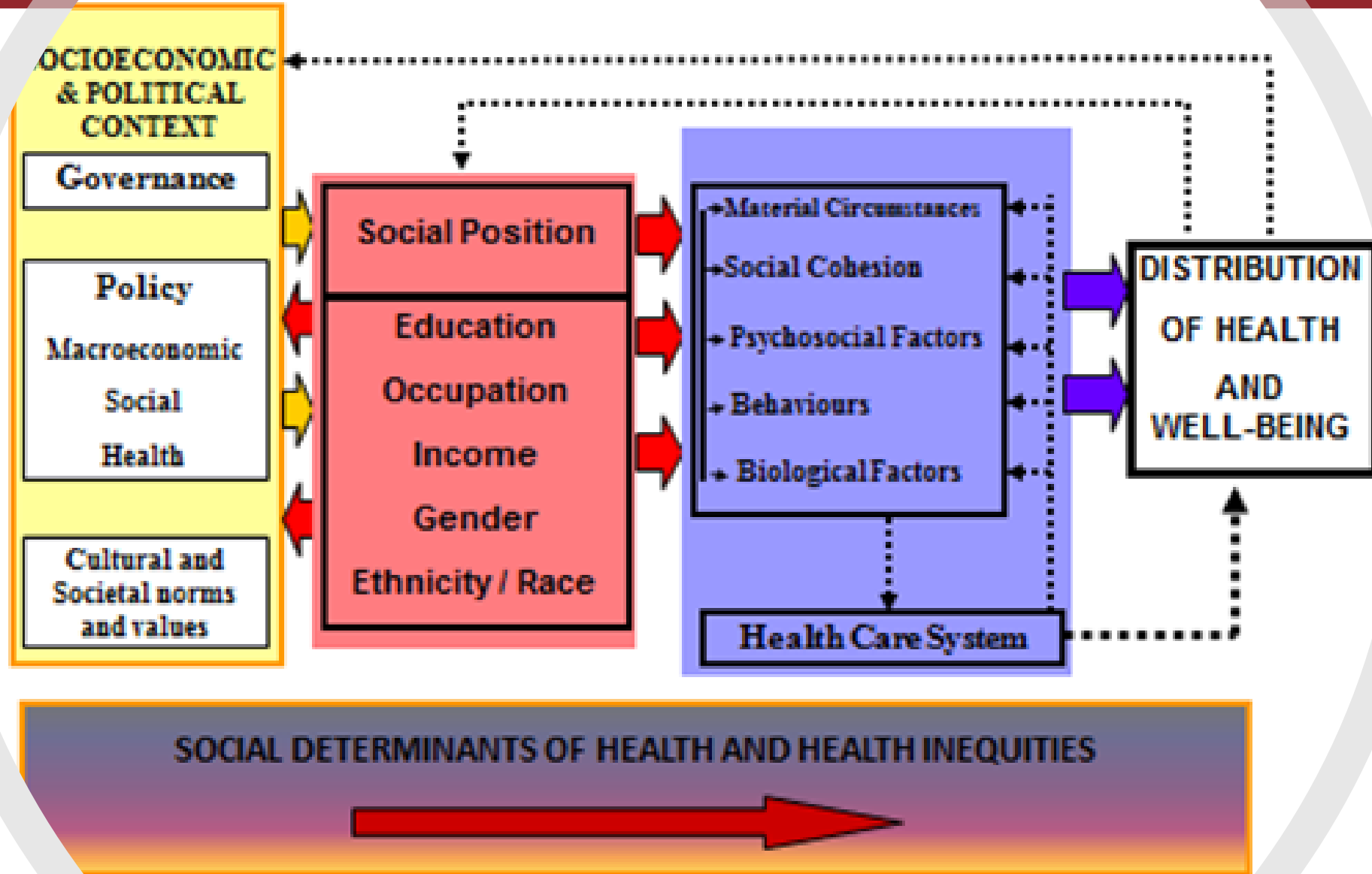


Social determinants of health

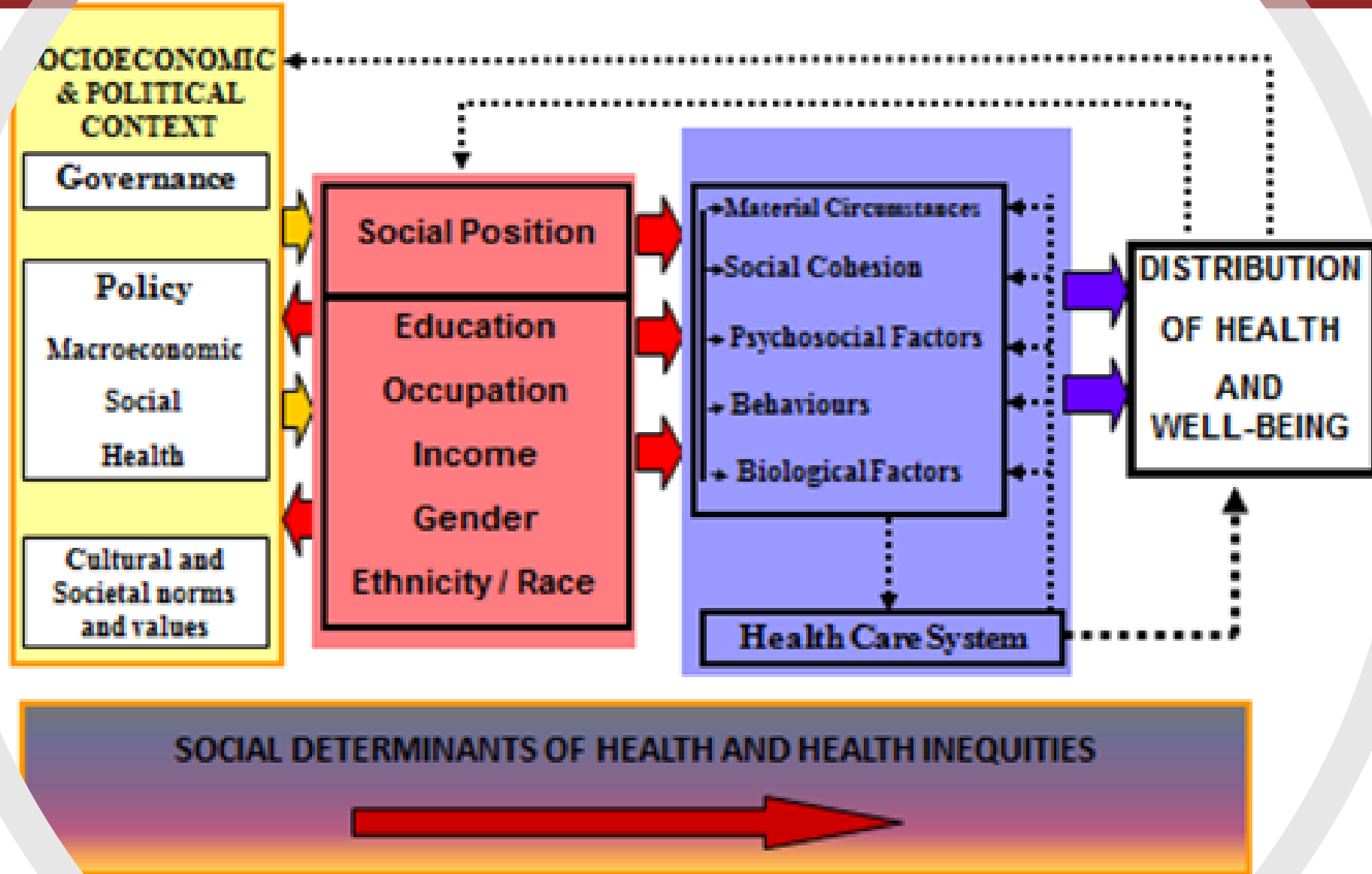
Language and health access

Social determinants of health: Language inequality

- Linguistically: all languages are equal in potential
- Socially: not all language users are equal
- Culturally: some varieties are more powerful than others
- Racially: systemic discrimination affects language choice and language use, from choice of register, to language choice
- Legally: some languages are used in law making and they become *standards* in specific geographical areas
- Economically... obvious



Institute of Health Equity, London, UK



Institute of Health Equity, London, UK

Social determinants of health

- 'Income and social protection
- Education
- Unemployment and job insecurity
- Working life conditions
- Food insecurity
- Housing, basic amenities and the environment
- Early childhood development
- Social inclusion and non-discrimination
- Structural conflict
- Access to affordable health services of decent quality'



World Health
Organization

Social determinants of health



World Health
Organization

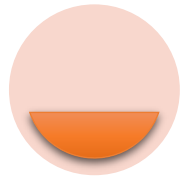
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- Access to affordable health services of decent quality’

Social determinants of health: language position

- American Association of Applied Linguistics (AAAL) in the USA recommended a form of advocacy for language phenomena in healthcare communication to be studied in relation to their role as a social determinant of health
- “Why is it critical that our profession [applied linguists] advocate for renewed attention to language in health care, not merely as a demographic marker, but arguably as one of the most significant (and yet underexplored) social determinants of health in underserved linguistic minority communities?” (Showstack et al., 2019: n.p.)

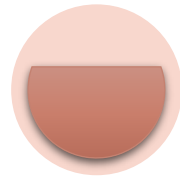
Showstack, R., Santos, M. G., Feuerherm, E., Jacobson, H., & Martínez, G. (2019). *Language as a social determinant of health: An applied linguistics perspective on health equity*: American Association for Applied Linguistics Newsletter. <https://www.aal.org/news/language-as-a-social-determinant-of-health-an-applied-linguistics-perspective-on-health-equity##> (accessed 30 March 2021).

Social determinants of health impact



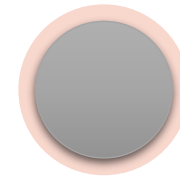
Education

100% low-education groups are at higher risk of health problems



Communication

Lack of cultural and language-appropriate communication increases risks



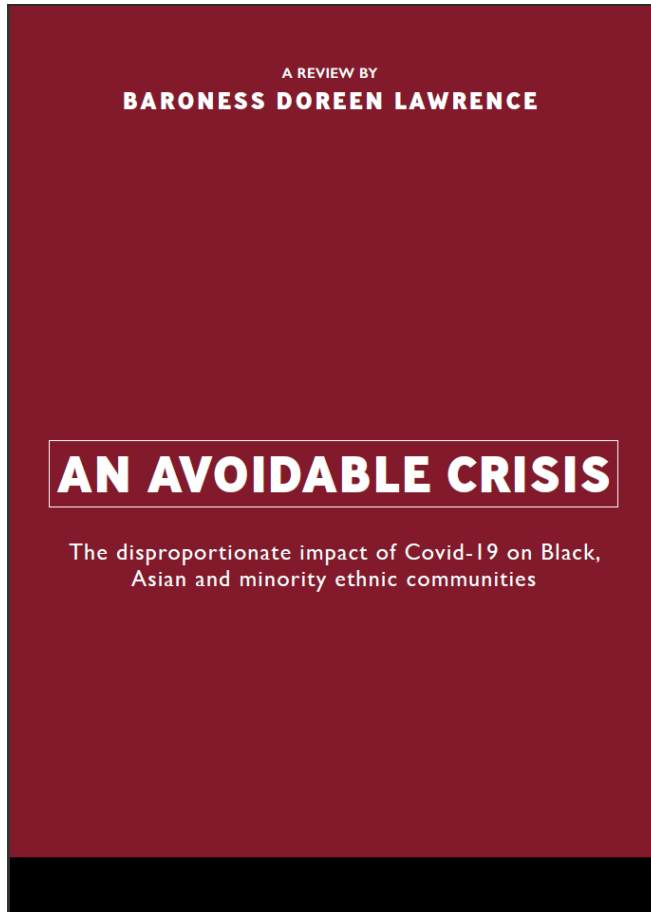
Incidence

Most deprived areas have double mortality rates on Covid-19 than least deprived areas

Lawrence, D. (2020). *An Avoidable Crisis. The Disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. A Review by Baroness Doreen Lawrence*. London: Labour Party.

Marmot, M. (2017). The health gap: doctors and the social determinants of health. *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, 45(7), 686-693.

Social determinants of health impact



“One submission reported the remarks of a junior doctor working in intensive care:

“Language barriers for people who can’t speak English, especially when you can’t say if you’re in pain or short of breath, can have a huge impact.”

For migrants, requirements to show passports when seeking care and information passing between the NHS and the Home Office has created a significant barrier to accessing even emergency healthcare.” (Lawrence 2020: 10)

Social determinants of health impact

- ‘Black, Asian and minority ethnic people face significant barriers to accessing healthcare. These barriers include a lack of cultural and language-appropriate communication; not being taken seriously when presenting with symptoms; a lack of clinical training on the presentation of different illnesses across communities; and the ‘no recourse to public funds’ rule which prevents migrants accessing state assistance. Black, Asian and minority ethnic people are also under-represented across the senior leadership of the NHS.’
(Lawrence 2020: Executive Summary)
- Sewell’s Report on UK Racism: let’s stop using BAME

Lawrence, D. (2020). *An Avoidable Crisis. The Disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities. A Review by Baroness Doreen Lawrence*. London: Labour Party.

Take-aways from these premises



Language is one of the social determinants of health; communication strategies depend on it



Inequalities are often compound (poverty, health, discrimination, marginalization, and so on): acting only on one factor is not a solution

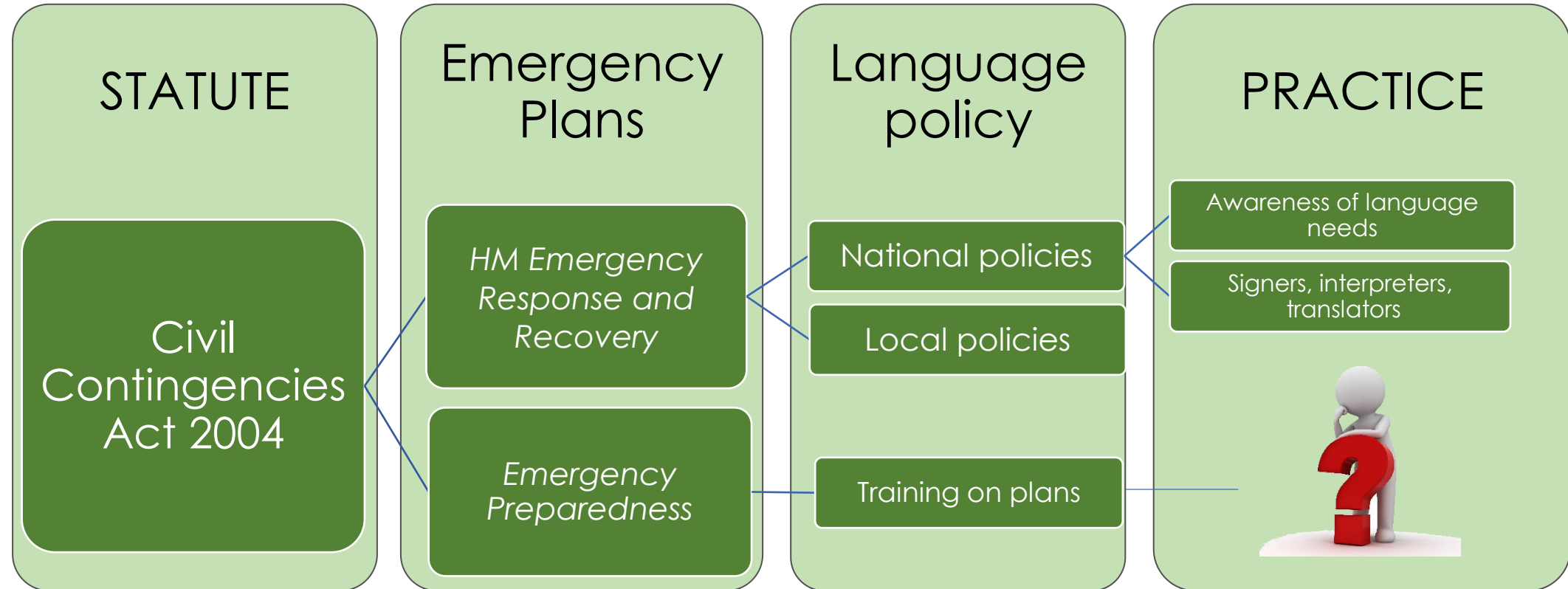


Importantly, linguistic inequality begins to be considered and its role is tangible as lack of access to crucial information has cascading effects

Emergency plans and language policies

Positioning language service provision: from terminologists, to translators, interpreters, signers, and language-related professionals

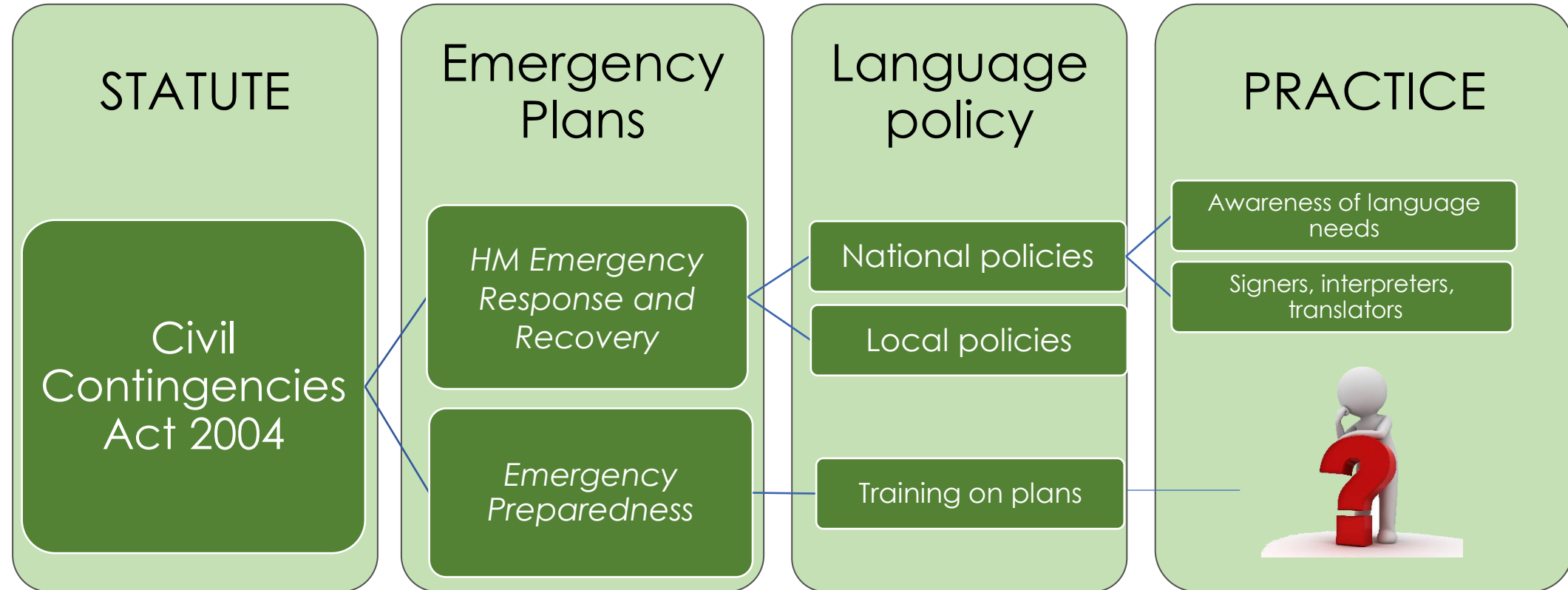
Risk communication



HM Government. 2013. *Emergency Response and Recovery. Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004*. London: Crown Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253488/Emergency_Response_and_Recovery_5th_edition_October_2013.pdf.

Cabinet Office. 2012. *Emergency preparedness. Guidance on part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, its associated regulations and non-statutory arrangements*. London: Crown Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>.

Risk communication



HM Government. 2013. *Emergency Response and Recovery. Non statutory guidance accompanying the Civil Contingencies Act 2004*. London: Crown Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/253488/Emergency_Response_and_Recovery_5th_edition_October_2013.pdf.

Cabinet Office. 2012. *Emergency preparedness. Guidance on part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, its associated regulations and non-statutory arrangements*. London: Crown Retrieved from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/emergency-preparedness>.

Crisis translation in action?

Cultures and information

The COVID-19 outbreak (unfortunately) has offered examples of all the reasons for efficient risk communication of hazards in public health



Political
e.g. number and
choice of
languages

Cultures and information

The COVID-19 outbreak (unfortunately) has offered examples of all the reasons for efficient risk communication of hazards in public health



Political
e.g. number and choice of languages



Socio-cultural
e.g. disproportionated impact on minorities;
trust in government

Cultures and information

The COVID-19 outbreak (unfortunately) has offered examples of all the reasons for efficient risk communication of hazards in public health



Political
e.g. number and choice of languages



Socio-cultural
e.g. disproportionated impact on minorities;
trust in government



Linguistic
e.g. sign language;
subtitles;
pictograms for low-literacy audiences...

Cultures and Infodemic

- Translations in over 500 of the 6,000(+) regularly spoken languages
- <https://endangeredlanguagesproject.github.io/COVID-19/#QXJhZ29uw6lz>

Aragonés

Desfendo mitos relacionaus con o coronavirus (extrayiu d'a OMS)

translated by an anonymous volunteer

[[homepage](#)] [[pdf version for PC](#)]

[The 8 pictures below can be saved onto your mobile phone]

Desfendo mitos relacionaus con o coronavirus (extrayiu d'a OMS)

Aragonés

1. Estar-se a lo sol u a temperaturas de mas de 25°C NO previén lo coronavirus (COVID-19).



https://covid-no-mb.org/?page_id=1185

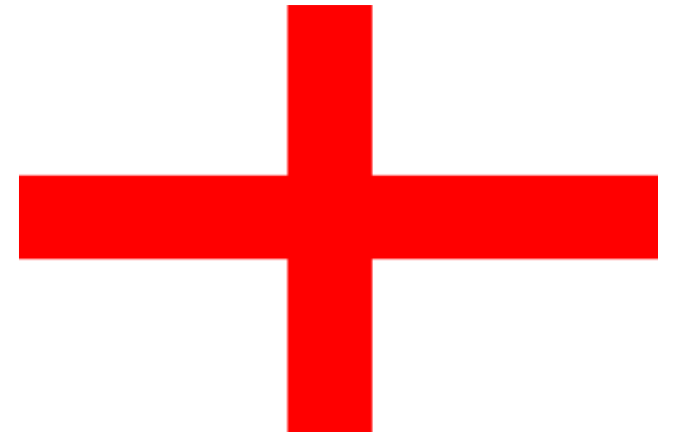
Crisis Translation for risk communication

Illustrations from COVID-19 response in the UK

Culture and infodemic

A devolved approach? The UK

- Public Health England (23 March): 10 languages including Welsh, plus easy read EN and WL



Culture and infodemic

The non-sensical UK approach

- Public Health England (23 March): 10 languages including Welsh, plus easy read EN and WL
- Public Health Wales, API (Recite^{me}): machine translations



Culture and infodemic

The non-sensical UK approach

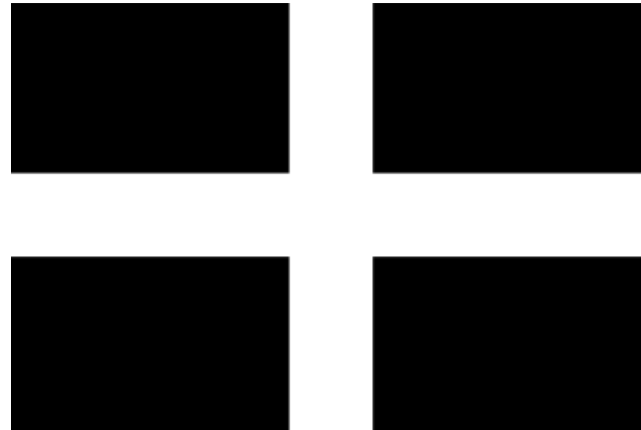
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- Doctors of the World for the UK (23 March): 43 languages
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Culture and infodemic

The non-sensical UK approach

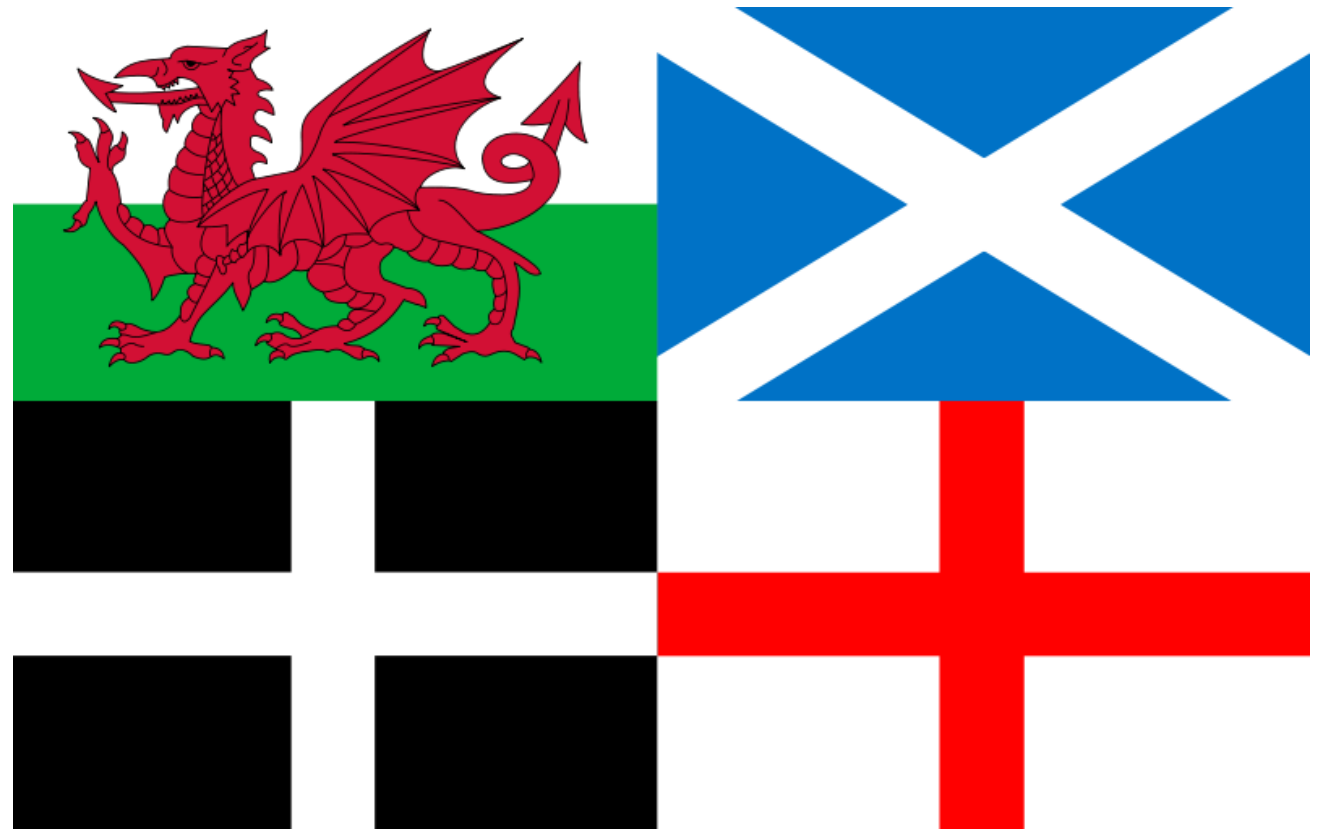
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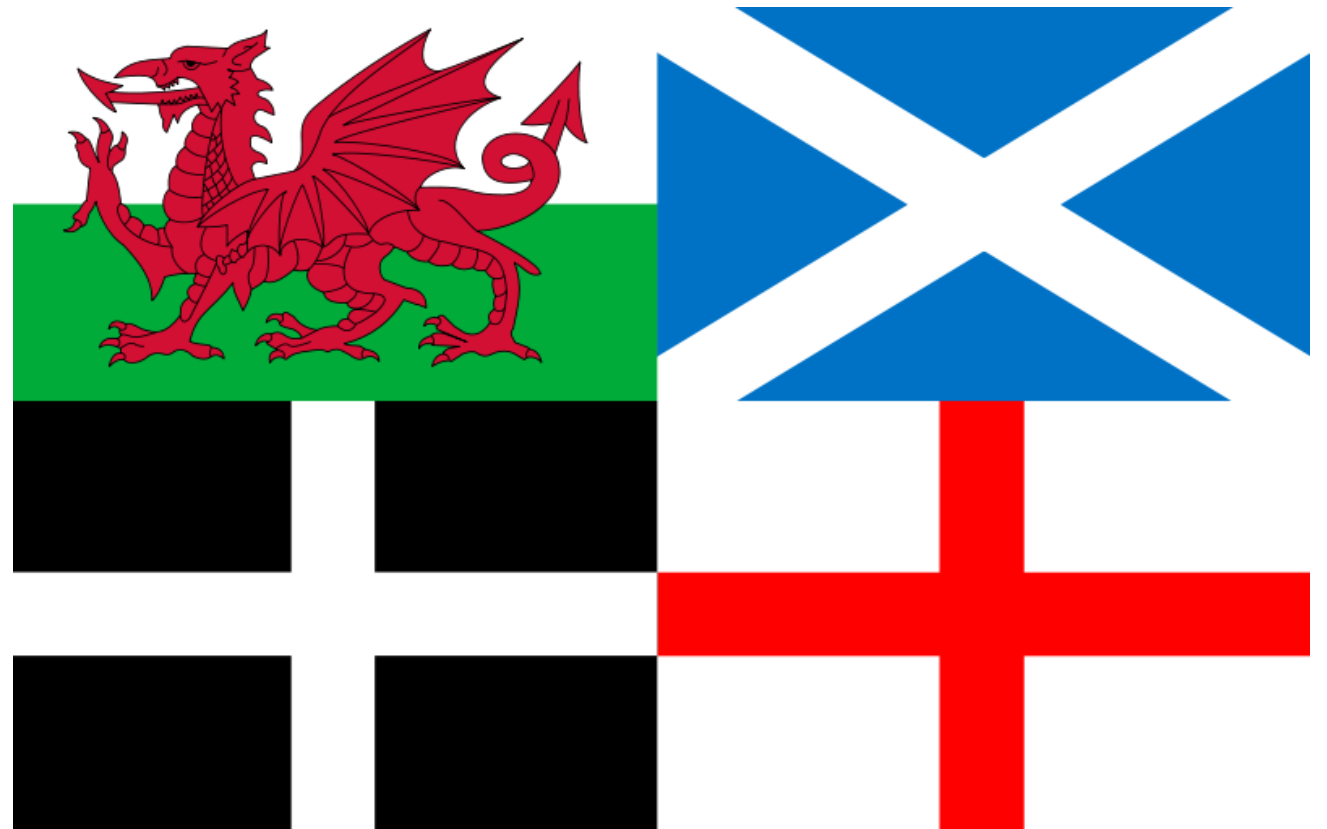
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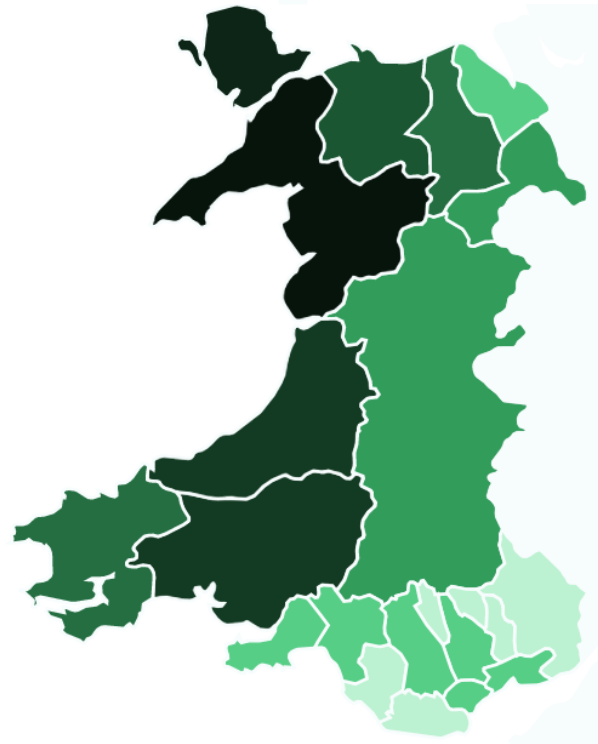
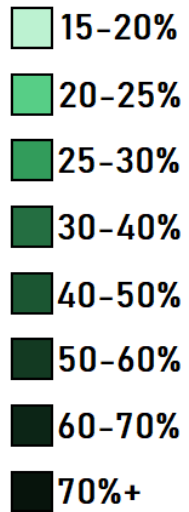


Local authorities also had a range of community-specific options.

Socio-linguistic spectrum



Welsh Speakers (2018)



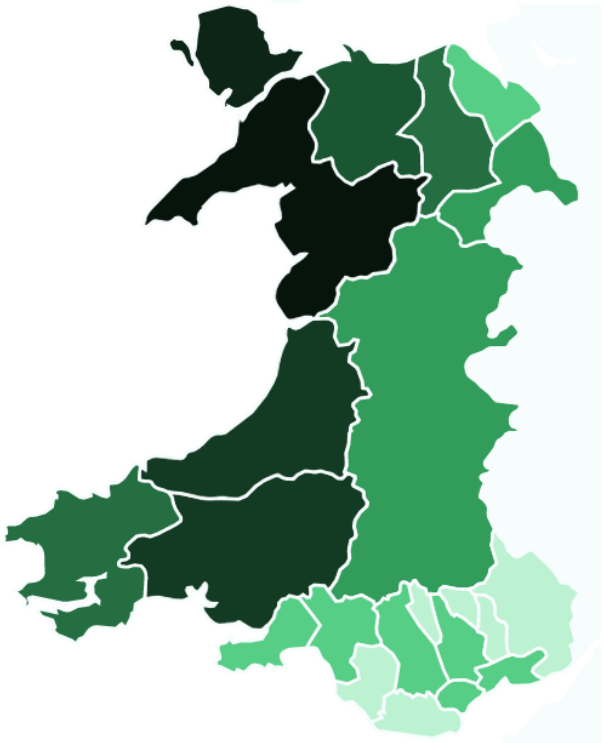
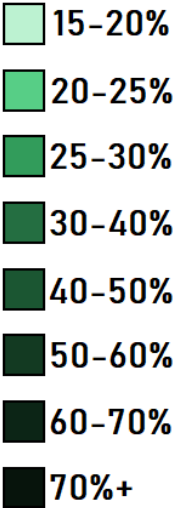
- Welsh Government. (2017). *Cymraeg 2050: A million Welsh speakers*. Cardiff: Welsh Language Division - Welsh Government.
- Government, W. (2019). *More Than Just Words Action Plan 2019-2020*. London: Crown

Krausova, A., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2014). *Wales: Census Profile*. Oxford: Migration Observatory. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/wales-census-profile/> (accessed 18 February 2021)

Socio-linguistic spectrum

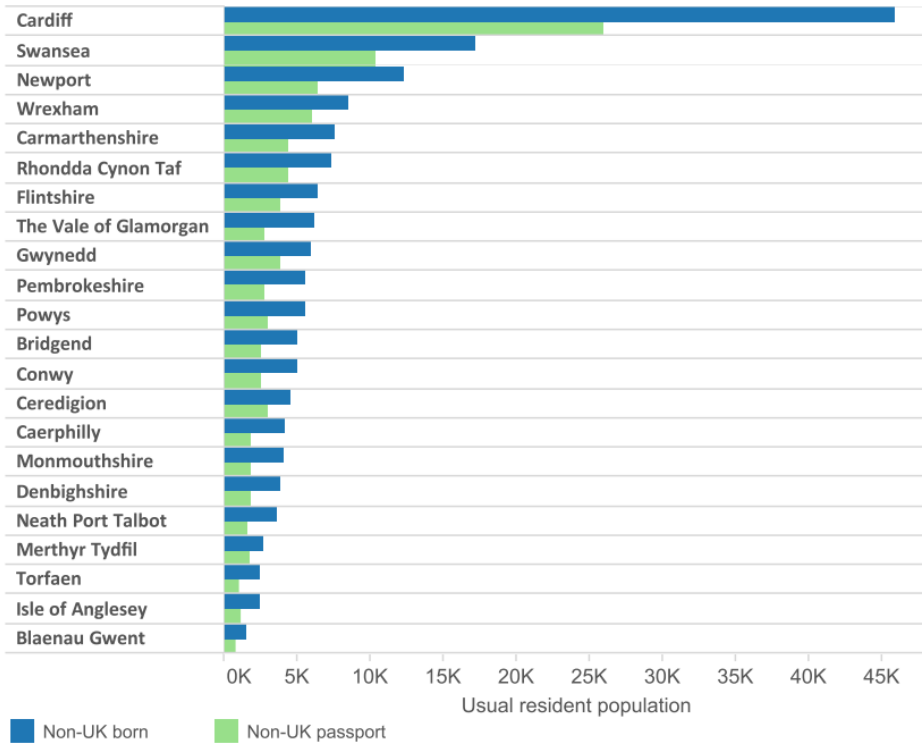


Welsh Speakers (2018)



Non-UK born and non-UK passports held: Wales 2011

Chart provided by migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk



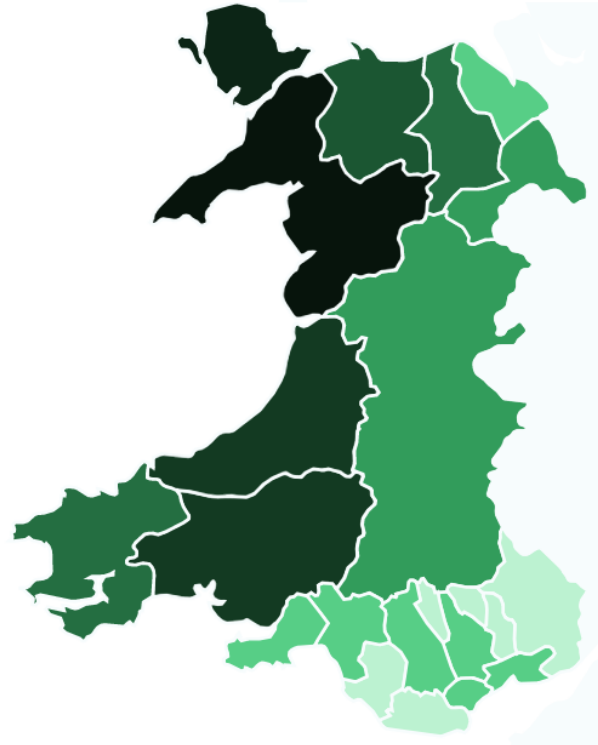
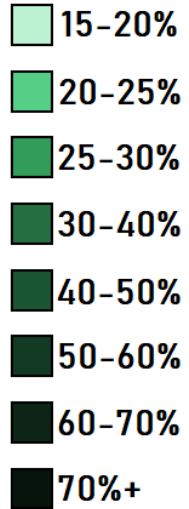
Source: England and Wales Census, 2011, ONS. Usual resident population.
 Note: Non-UK born and Non-UK passport holders are overlapping categories; the vast majority of residents with a foreign-passport will also be foreign-born.

Krausova, A., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2014). *Wales: Census Profile*. Oxford: Migration Observatory. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/wales-census-profile/> (accessed 18 February 2021)

Socio-linguistic spectrum

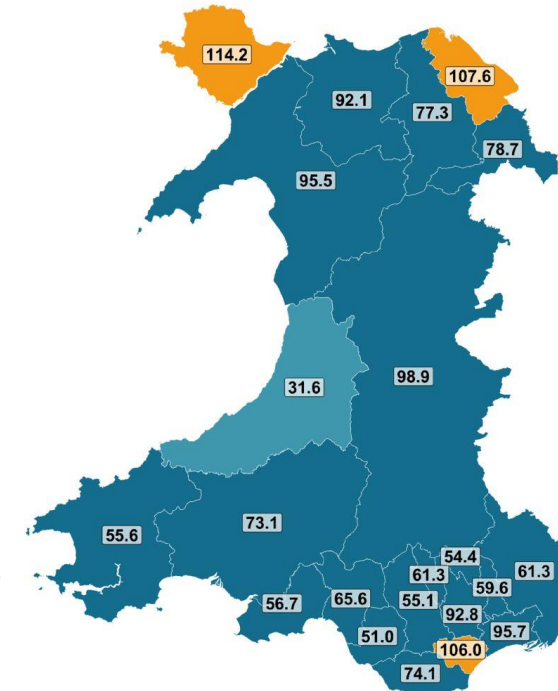
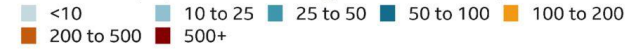


Welsh Speakers (2018)



Covid-19 case rates in Wales

Per 100,000 population - change over seven days



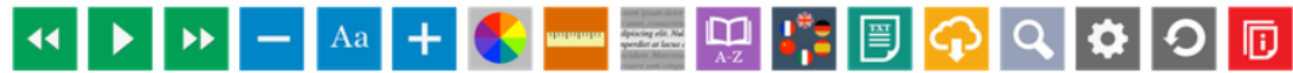
Source: Public Health Wales, 23 February. Data up to 18 February



Krausova, A., & Vargas-Silva, C. (2014). *Wales: Census Profile*. Oxford: Migration Observatory. <https://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/wales-census-profile/> (accessed 18 February 2021)

Crisis communication

Machines, trust, and accessibility



Search [X] [Q]



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

All of Wales is at [alert level 4](#).

You must:

- stay at home
- work from home if you can
- wear a face covering where required
- wash your hands regularly
- stay 2 metres from anyone you do not live with

From 20 February, 4 people from 2 households can exercise together outdoors (not in private gardens), under 11 year olds and carers are not counted in the maximum of 4.

Self-isolate if you or anyone in your household has [symptoms](#).

If you [have symptoms get a test](#).



NHS Galles NHS 111 Galles



Le tue preferenze sono state salvate. Per resettarli, premere il pulsante di ripristino

Ricerca x [Search icon]

Casa **Temi** Lavora per noi Dati notizia Servizi e squadre pubblicazioni Riguardo a noi



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Tutto il Galles è a livello di allerta 4

Devi:

- resta a casa
- lavora da casa se puoi
- indossare una copertura per il viso dove richiesto
- lavarsi le mani regolarmente
- stai a 2 metri da chiunque non vivi

Dal 20 febbraio, 4 persone di 2 nuclei familiari possono esercitarsi insieme all'aperto (non nei giardini privati), i minori di 11 anni e gli accompagnatori non vengono conteggiati nel massimo di 4.

Isolati se tu o qualcuno nella tua famiglia lo avete fatto sintomi

Se tu hai sintomi fai un test



NHS Galles NHS 111 Galles



Le tue preferenze sono state salvate. Per resettarli, premere il pulsante di ripristino

Ricerca x

Casa Temi Lavora per noi Dati **notizia** Servizi e **equadre** **pubblicazioni** Riguardo a noi



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Tutto il Galles è al livello di allerta 4

Devi:

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Isola **se tu** o qualcuno nella tua famiglia **lo avete fatto** sintomi

[Se tu hai sintomi fai un test](#)

Sexual innuendo: "if you did it"

What can we expect for
low-resourced languages
and rare language
combinations?

What can we expect for
low-resourced languages
and rare language
combinations?

Answer: Inequality

Coronafeirws (CO

Mae Cymru oll ar lefel rhybudd 4.

Rhaid:

- aros gartref
- gweithio o gartref os gallwch
- gwisgo gorchudd wyneb lle bo gofyn
- golchi eich dwylo'n rheolaidd
- aros 2 fetr wrth unrhyw un nad ydych yn byw gyda nhw

O 20 Chwefror, gall 4 person o 2 aelwyd wneud ymarfer corff gyda'i gilydd tu allan (nid mewn gerddi preifat). Nid yw plant o dan 11 oed na gofaluwr i'w cyfrif yn y mwyafswm o 4.

Dylech hunanynysu os ydych chi neu unrhyw un yn eich cartref yn arddangos symptomau.

Os oes gennych symptomau, dylech gael prawf.

Coronafeirws (COVID-19)

Mae Cymru gyfan yn lefel rhybuddio 4.

Mae'n rhaid i ti:

- aros gartref
- gweithio gartref os gallwch chi
- gwisgo gorchudd wyneb lle bo angen
- golchwch eich dwylo yn rheolaidd
- arhoswch 2 fetr oddi wrth unrhyw un nad ydych chi'n byw gyda nhw

O 20 Chwefror, gall 4 o bobl o 2 aelwyd ymarfer corff gyda'i gilydd yn yr awyr agored (nid mewn gerddi preifat), nid yw plant dan 11 oed a gofaluwr yn cael eu cyfrif yn yr uchafswm o 4.

Hunan ynysig os oes gennych chi neu unrhyw un yn eich cartref symptomau.

Os ydych chi cael symptomau yn cael prawf.

From inequality to equity

Linear, cyclical, spiraled, vectoral: provided it happens!

Let's make it the last pandemic

“Recommendation VI.

Invest in and coordinate risk communication policies and strategies that ensure timeliness, transparency, and **accountability, and work with marginalized communities, including those who are digitally excluded, in the co-creation of plans that promote health and wellbeing at all times, and build enduring trust.**” (Independent Panel Report, 2021: 59)



**COVID-19:
Make it the
Last Pandemic**

Hard choices

“When a woman who didn’t speak English arrived at the overrun emergency room of a Brooklyn hospital last week, she was initially placed in a unit for patients who didn’t have the coronavirus. But on Thursday, a doctor realized she had a cough and fever and should be treated for COVID-19. The doctor brought her over to the coronavirus unit with a warning: ‘Good luck. She speaks Hungarian.’ She died the following night. A medical resident who treated her believes she would have gotten better care if she spoke English.”

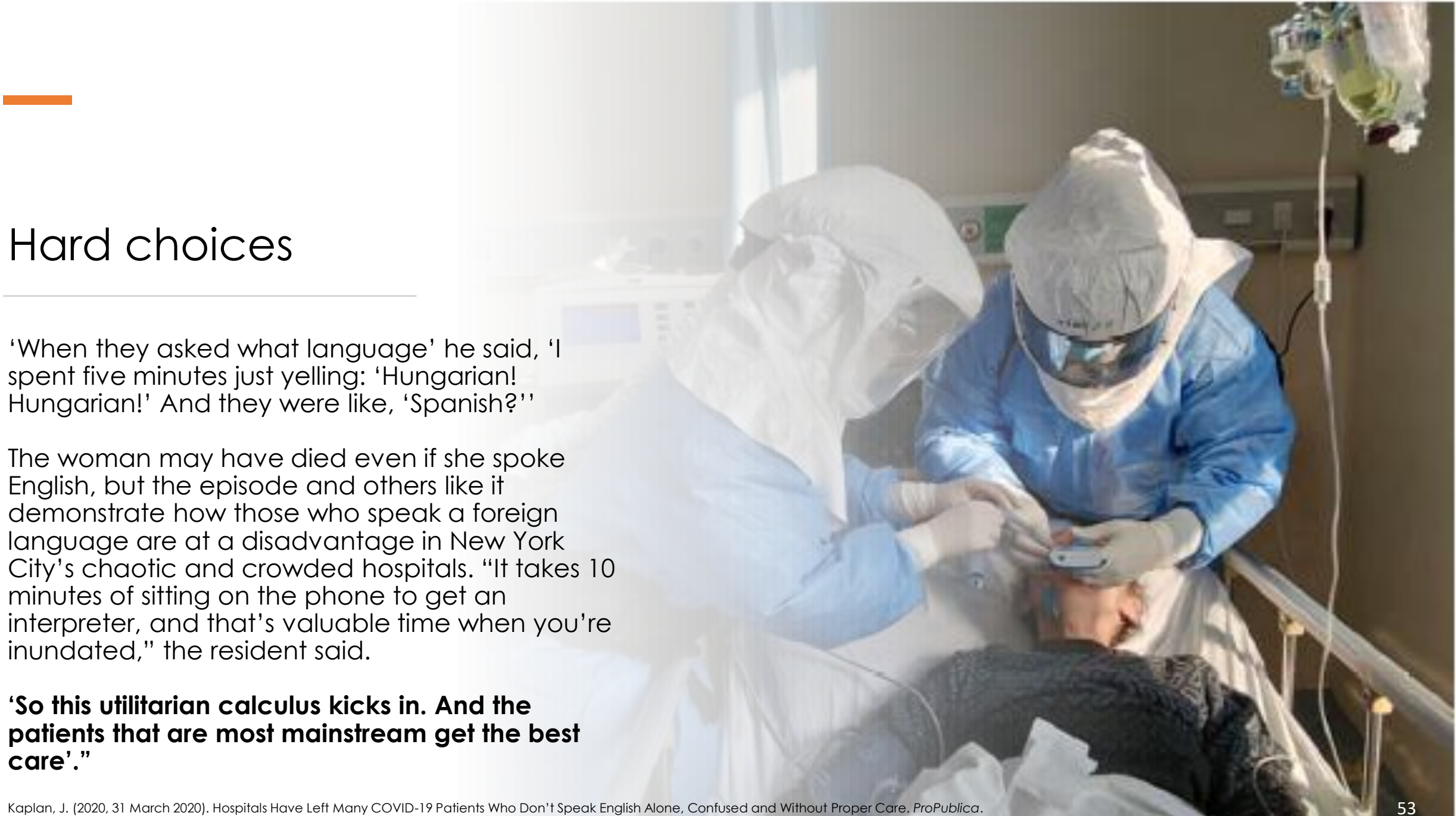


Hard choices

'When they asked what language' he said, 'I spent five minutes just yelling: 'Hungarian! Hungarian!' And they were like, 'Spanish?''

The woman may have died even if she spoke English, but the episode and others like it demonstrate how those who speak a foreign language are at a disadvantage in New York City's chaotic and crowded hospitals. "It takes 10 minutes of sitting on the phone to get an interpreter, and that's valuable time when you're inundated," the resident said.

'So this utilitarian calculus kicks in. And the patients that are most mainstream get the best care'."





What about MT?

- “On 30 December 2019, the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission issued two urgent notices to hospital networks in the city about cases of pneumonia of unknown origin linked to the Huanan Seafood Market. [...] On the morning of 31 December, Chinese business publication *Finance Sina* reported on one of the notices issued by the Wuhan Municipal Health Commission. [...] A machine translation of the *Finance Sina* report was published on the website of the Program for Monitoring Emerging Diseases (ProMED).” (Independent Report, 2021: 22)



What about MT?

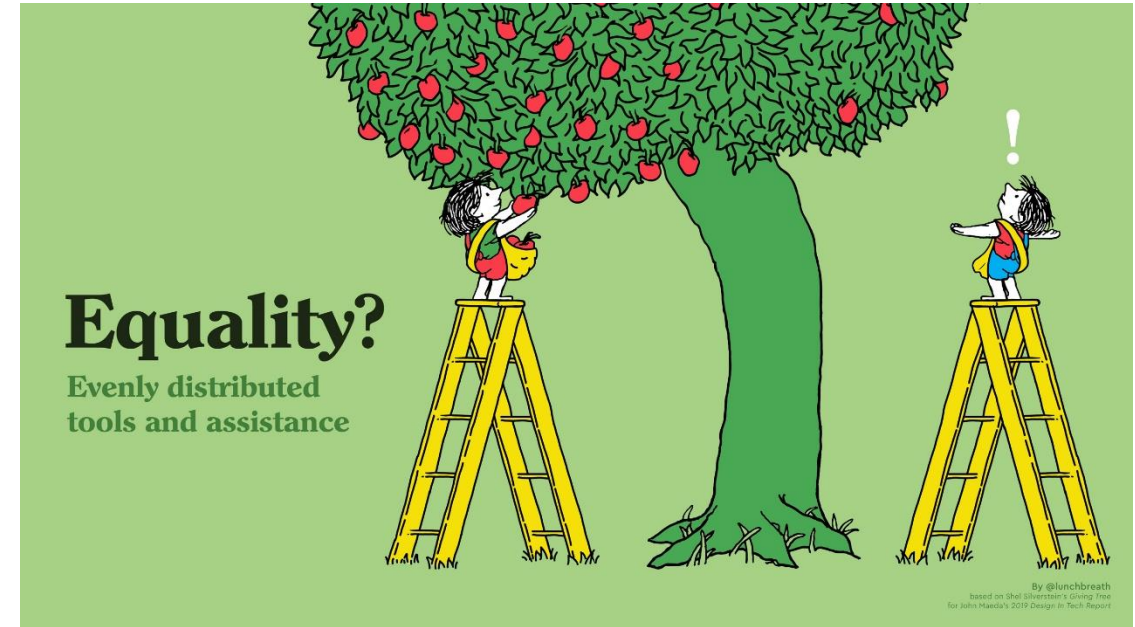
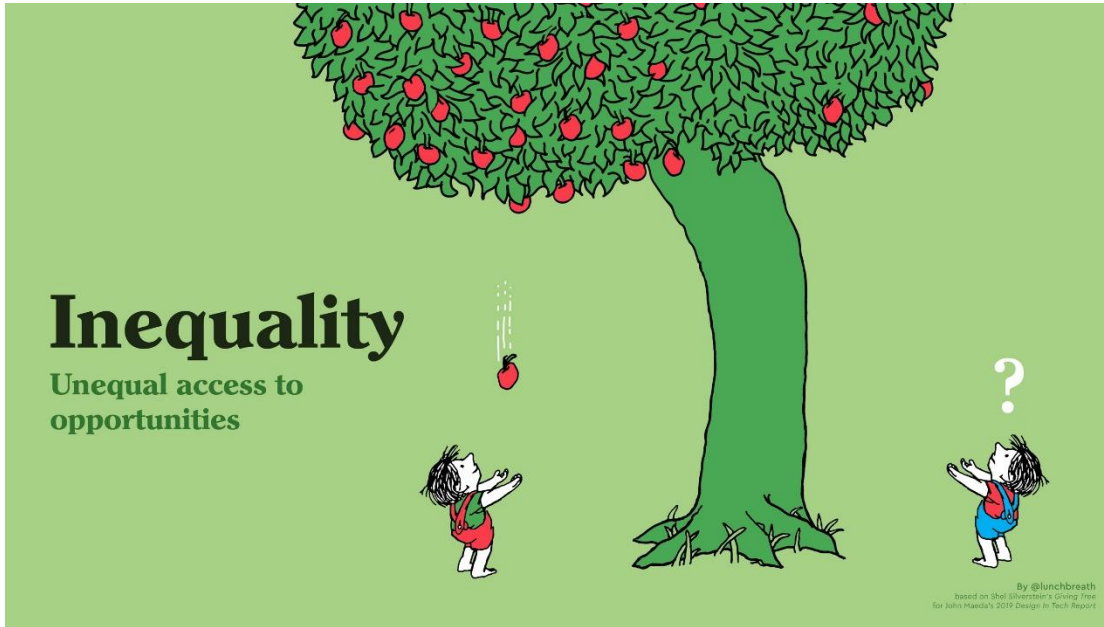
Table 3 Selected Examples of Gross Errors in Translation	Table 3 Selected Examples of Gross Errors in Translation
English Statement	Translation
"You can take over the counter ibuprofen as needed for pain."	Armenian: "You may take anti-tank missile as much as you need for pain."
"Your Coumadin level was too high today. Do not take any more Coumadin until your doctor reviews the results."	Chinese: "Your soybean level was too high today. Do not take anymore soybean until your doctor reviews the results."
"Do not blow your nose or put pressure on your facial fracture."	Chinese: The character chosen for blow is more commonly used in relation to "the wind blowing" Farsi: "Do not explode your nose because it could put pressure on the break in your face." (Taira et al. 2021)

Taira, B. R., Kreger, V., Orue, A., & Diamond, L. C. (2021). A Pragmatic Assessment of Google Translate for Emergency Department Instructions. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, 1-5.



What about MT?

- “The important implication of our study is that, despite recent reports of improvement in accuracy and the suggestion that GT has a role for use in the clinical setting, we found that GT accuracy varies substantially by language and is not yet a reliable tool in the clinical setting. Even for languages in which the accuracy is high, there is still the potential for important inaccuracies and the potential for patient harm”

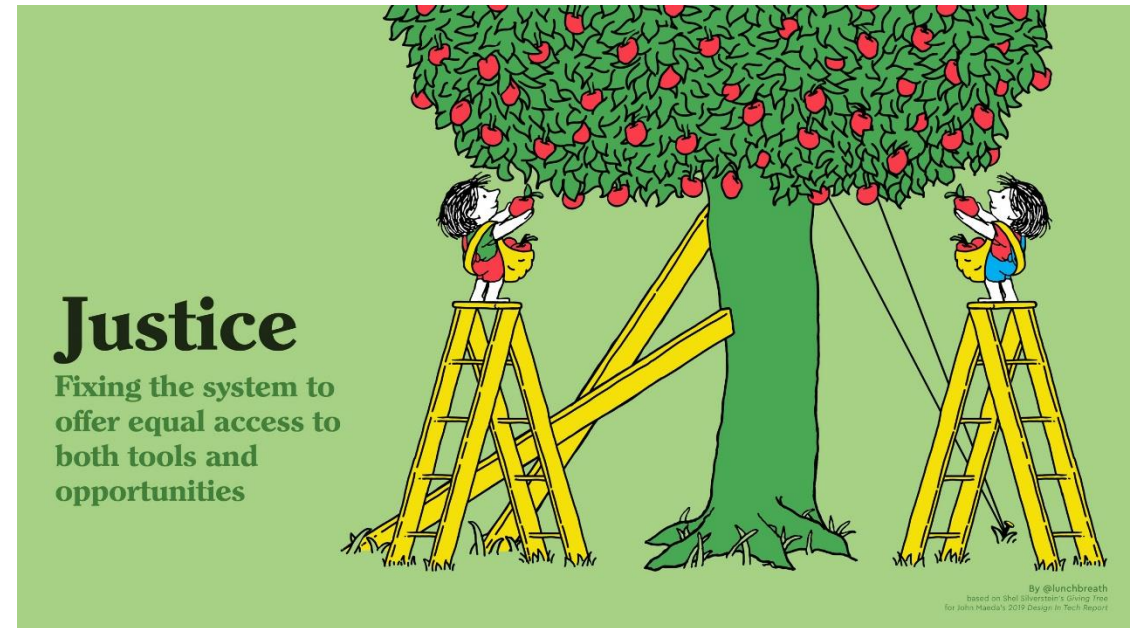
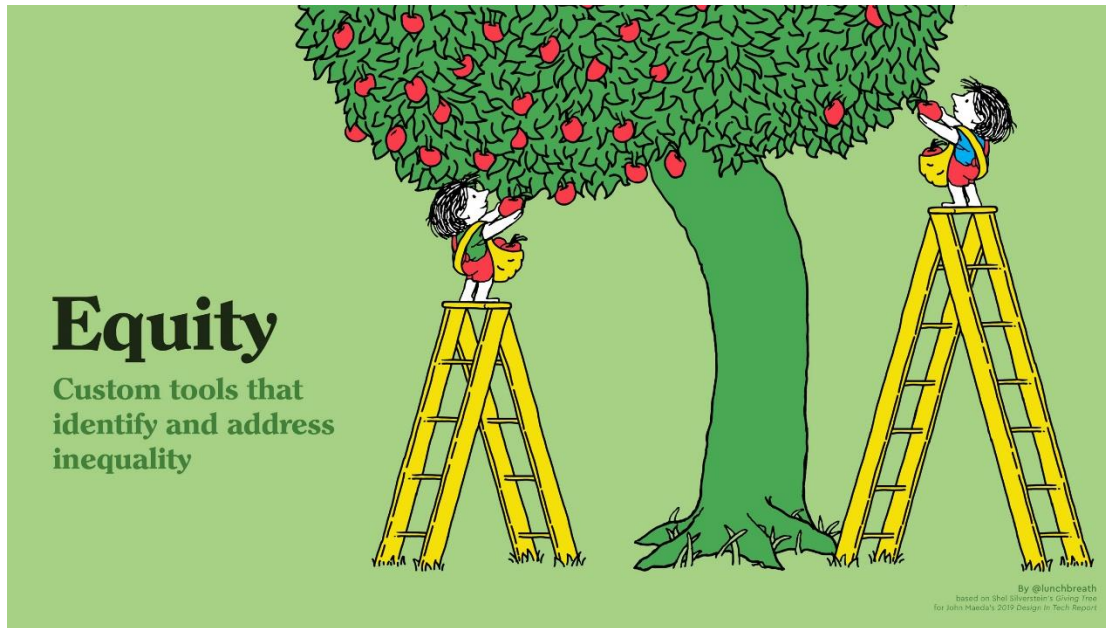


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Source: Tony Ruth, 2019 ©. In Maeda, John (2019). *Design in Tech Report 2019*. Available: <https://designintech.report/2019/03/09/design-in-tech-report-2019/> (accessed 29 January 2021).

Language inequity

- Translators and interpreters operate in the socio-linguistic ecosystems of specific societies
- Visibility and invisibility of translators and interpreters is an extension of existing language dynamics and attention to society to its complexity
- Lack of signers, interpreters, and translators reflect social inequalities and shows how language is a SDH



Source: Tony Ruth, 2019 ©. In Maeda, John (2019). *Design in Tech Report 2019*. Available: <https://designintech.report/2019/03/09/design-in-tech-report-2019/> (accessed 29 January 2021).

Take-aways





INTERACT Recommendations

1. Emergency management communication policies should include provision for translation and interpreting and should be regularly reviewed and revised.
2. A specific owner of the policy on translation and interpreting should be identified and assigned within organizations responsible for emergency communication policy and implementation.
3. Emergency management communication policies should be developed in consultation with relevant multilingual and multicultural communities.
4. Emergency management communication policies should cover all phases of crisis and disaster management (mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery).
5. Emergency management communication policies should consider languages spoken by affected communities (including sign language), levels of literacy, and cultural appropriateness.



INTERACT Recommendations

6. Alternative formats and channels for dissemination of translated information should be considered – not just traditional written or spoken formats.
7. Emergency management communication policies should allow for *two-way* communication between responders and affected communities.
8. Ensure training is provided for professional and volunteer translators and interpreters so that they can effectively operate in crisis and disaster settings. Also ensure training for users and managers of translation and interpreting services.
9. Establish direct lines of communication between emergency responders and professional associations of translators and interpreters for the purposes of collaboration.
10. Recruit into multilingual organizations who are responsible for aid or emergency response in such a way as to avoid reliance on international *lingua franca* and *ad hoc* or convenience translation and interpreting.

