



# **Assessing Language Mediation Needs in Belgian General Hospitals**

Jan van Gucht and Erik Hertog

An aerial photograph of a historic city, likely Bruges, Belgium, featuring a prominent Gothic cathedral with a tall spire. The city is built on a hillside, with a canal visible in the lower right. The image is slightly faded to serve as a background for the text.

## **I. The Challenge**

To develop a **METHOD** for **ASSESSING**  
**LANGUAGE MEDIATION NEEDS** i.e.

- The need for an interpreter
- The need for written translation

In the **BELGIAN GENERAL**  
**HOSPITALS.**



## II. The Research Concept

Combining two paradigms :

- Objectively measuring the subject: The **Quantitative** Approach
- and
- Subjectively measuring the object: The **Qualitative** Approach



In other words:

Assessment of the language mediation needs by  
key hospital staff: The **Quantitative** Approach  
as well as

The functional language capacity of patients: The  
**Qualitative** Approach

# SWOT analysis of both paradigms

	Contact language	Underestimation of needs
Testing Patients = 'Psychological' approach	Red	Green
Querying staff = 'Sociological' approach	Green	Red



## **II. The Research Methodology**

## **MAIN INSTRUMENT**

- **Language mediation needs questionnaire for hospital staff (H.o.D./general staff) resulting Quantitative parameters (as a ratio, as an incidence figure and as a ranking)**

complemented with

- **Qualitative parameters for contextual information**

The results usable at **departmental, hospital or higher management** level.



### **III. The Research Phases**

## PHASE

## OBJECTIVE

- 1. International Consultation** ? *Development of tools/strategies*
2. Pilot ? *Testing of patient procedure*
3. Pilot ? *Testing instrument*
4. Field test ? *Practical use of instrument + tentative typology*
5. Registration exercise ? *Verification by Health Advocates*

## PHASE

## OBJECTIVE

1. **International Consultation** ? *Development of tools/strategies*
2. **First Pilot** ? *Testing of patient procedure*
3. **Pilot** ? *Testing instrument*
4. **Field test** ? *Practical use of instrument + tentative typology*
5. **Registration exercise** ? *Verification by Health Advocates*

## PHASE

## OBJECTIVE

1. **International Consultation** ? *Development of tools/strategies*
2. **First Pilot** ? *Testing of patient procedure*
3. **Second Pilot** ? *Testing the instrument*
4. **Field test** ? *Practical use of instrument + tentative typology*
5. **Registration exercise** ? *Verification by Health Advocates*

## PHASE

## OBJECTIVE

- 1. International Consultation** ? *Development of tools/strategies*
- 2. First Pilot** ? *Testing of patient procedure*
- 3. Second Pilot** ? *Testing instrument*
- 4. Field test in three hospitals** ? *Practical use of instrument + tentative typology*
- 5. Registration exercise** ? *Verification by Health Advocates*

## **PHASE**

## ***OBJECTIVE***

- 1. International Consultation** ? *Development of tools/strategies*
- 2. Pilot** ? *Testing of patient procedure*
- 3. Pilot** ? *Testing instrument*
- 4. Field test** ? *Practical use of instrument + tentative typology*
- 5. Validation exercise** ? *Verification by Interpreters or Intercultural Mediators*



# **IV. Results and Observations**

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Rome, showing a large, ornate cathedral with a dome in the center. The city is densely packed with buildings, and the background shows a hazy horizon. The text is overlaid on this image.

**Language mediation needs can validly be estimated by hospital staff by use of a questionnaire method**

**The estimations are realistic (probably a conservative estimation)**

**Results point to a language mediation need constant**

**The method allows for large scale application**

**The method allows to develop empirical typologies**