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Lost in Translation? Exploring the journey from press releases to news articles and mainstream media during volcanic crises, and its impact on public perceptions.

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During a volcanic crisis, effective communication between volcano observatories, local government, civil defence authorities, the media and the public is crucial in ensuring the safe management of the situation. A breakdown in this chain of communication may lead to unsafe behaviours, mistrust of authorities, economic impacts, anxiety, or at worst, fatalities (see Williams and Krippner, 2019). Over the past 100 years, various stakeholders have made progress in volcanic crisis communication, but the 21st century presents significant challenges (Fearnley et al. 2017). The world in which we communicate has changed rapidly in recent years; information from official bodies can be posted, shared, translated, re-interpreted and disseminated rapidly via online news outlets and social media. Widespread use of the internet means crises communications must now be fast paced and sustained, pushing the limits of those working in internal communication (Driedger et al., 2008). The modern drive of journalism to create different angles and interesting 'stories' can lead to conflicting comments from multiple sources, which could cause public doubt about how well a hazard is being monitored and managed (McGuire et al, 2009). This project aims to better understand how the 'translation' of press releases by the mainstream media impacts the behaviours and perceptions of the local and global community during a volcanic crisis. To achieve this aim, the project will focus on two research questions:

1. How is the language used in volcanic crisis press releases variably 'translated' into mainstream media?
2. How is this language viewed and interpreted by the general public, and what impact does it have on perceptions of volcanic hazards, risk and uncertainty?

This project will use two methodologies. Firstly, press releases and their associated media be analysed to assess how information becomes translated and adapted. The communication of volcanic crisis information will be categorised and compared across different countries, languages, types of volcanism, and types of media, using recent case studies (e.g. Hawaii 2018 and Agung 2017). The second stage will investigate the impact of the translation/adaption of press releases by various media channels on public perceptions. Two focus groups will be carried out to provide a comparison; one group will read materials from the original press release and the other from

social media/news articles. Both groups will then answer the same set of questions, allowing for critical comparison. This research will develop understanding of the power of modern communication to influence the public during volcanic crises. It will provide insights into how press releases are translated, with the potential to provide important learnings for the organisations that create and distribute them.

References Bird et al. (2012) Australian Journal of Emergency Management. (1) Driedger et al. (2008) USGS Professional Paper 1750. Fearnley et al. (2017) https://doi.org/10.1007/11157_2017_28 McGuire et al. (2009) <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvolgeores.2009.02.019> Williams and Krippner (2019) <https://doi.org/10.30909/vol.01.02.i-viii>