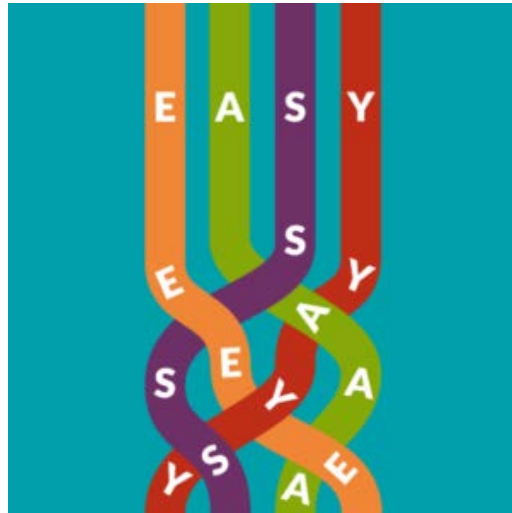


IELD 2021

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IELD 2021

1st International Easy
Language Day Conference
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Book of Abstracts

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Keynote Abstract

Easy-to-understand language beyond the written word

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Much research has been developed since the turn of the century on how to make audiovisual content accessible, within the framework of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility Studies. Access services such as subtitling, audio description, audio subtitling or sign language interpreting, among others, have been the object of substantial research. Following technological developments –from analogue to digital, hybrid or immersive–, research has provided relevant insights on the best strategies to be used to make access services understandable and enjoyable. Beyond the specific features of access services, research has also approached production and delivery aspects. These investigations haven often followed user-centric methodologies with the ultimate aim of fulfilling user needs.

When referring to easy-to-understand language (from Easy-to-Read, or Easy Language, to Plain Language), the emphasis has traditionally been on the written text. It is only recently that easy-to-understand language has begun to be considered in the audiovisual realm. In our digitized society, though, it makes sense to ask ourselves: How can we create audiovisual content that is easier to understand? How can we adapt audiovisual content that is easier to understand? And how can we create audiovisual access services that are easier to understand?

These three questions will be at the core of my presentation, which will report on my experience as main researcher in the EASIT project and on the findings obtained through the research carried out by a consortium made up of universities, user representatives and broadcasters. My presentation will focus on various aspects: the terminological challenges, the current situation in Europe in terms of practice and training, the challenges of creating easy-to-understand access services, the importance of research and training, and the relevance of standardisation. These discussions will be contextualized in the wider framework of Audiovisual Translation and Media Accessibility Studies, with a special emphasis on the research carried out by TransMedia Catalonia research group.

Conference Abstracts

Stigmatization of Easy language users in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia

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The Easy language is still little used in the countries (Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovenia) participating in the comparative study of Easy language ecology. The public who has heard about Easy language mainly associate it with one narrow target group - people with intellectual disabilities. Since this target group has historically been stigmatised, other social groups, which would also benefit from Easy language, avoid using it because they do not want to be associated with people with intellectual disabilities. The people who objectively need the Easy language are afraid of being considered uneducated or inferior to others, and thus, often do not get the information they need in an accessible form.

The survey conducted within the framework of the Erasmus + project Promoting Easy-to-Read Language for Social Inclusion (PERLSI) studies the attitude towards and need for the Easy language among both, end-users and general public. The general public is surveyed using questionnaires, nine different user groups are surveyed on a cluster basis, while the professionals working with different user groups participate in structured interviews and express their views on the general use of Easy language as well as specifically for the needs of their target group.

The study draws conclusions regarding common and individual characteristics in the project countries. The findings assess the public perception of the Easy language as a tool for providing accessible information and will reveal the public acceptance of people who need the Easy language, thus addressing the issues of social inclusion. The study also foregrounds the opinion of 9 different target groups of Easy language end-users as regards public attitude they experience and the extent to which target groups identify themselves as users of the Easy language. The study shows the general trends and draws conclusions as regards further actions to reduce stigma.

Next step towards standardization for audiovisual translation into Easy and Plain Language

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Plain and Easy Language help many people to understand long and challenging texts, as well as abstract concepts, which however contain important information and content, and to understand the laws as well as the rights they have to act accordingly. Nowadays, a lot of information is presented as audiovisual products. In our research, we translate 10 different types of audiovisual information including user guides, tutorials and e-learning videos into plain and easy language and explore the perception of different target audiences – blind and visually impaired people, Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing community and people with cognitive and learning disabilities. Consequently, we examine which modes and subdivisions of audiovisual translation – subtitles, voiceover, dubbing, audio description – are best suited for each target audience in order to find the more effective way to make important information available. Project procedure: Create simplified content on specified language levels (four versions). Do a professional review. Experts check whether simplified content is still consistent. Get feedback from the focus groups (target audiences). Communication experts test how target audiences understand and perceive the contents. Consultation with experts if any changes are necessary. Update the simplified content (e.g., subtitles). Experts check whether the updated content is still consistent. Final test: the target audiences test the updated content and give feedback. If necessary, further adjustment of the contents. With the support of German and Russian NGOs, the research is carried out simultaneously in Germany and Russia. The working languages are Russian and German.

Authors: Anja Lützen, easy language translator and interpreter, speech-to-text interpreter (certified by the German Association for the Hearing impaired), personal assistant for people with deafblindness and vision and hearing impairment, *Easy To Read*.

How Easy Language began - what we can learn from history

Ulla Bohman

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The EL movement started +50 years ago in Sweden. Through various political initiatives, legislation and awareness of human rights, EL is accepted. This presentation will give a historical background to the EL journey. The journey started in the 1960's. At that time Sweden underwent a movement towards a more classless society. This reflects Sweden's early ratification of UN Covenants, and in the Political Initiative "Culture to everyone". It was in this setting the first disability initiatives about participation were taken. The background of EL is therefore both having access to culture, and everyone's human right to participate fully in society.

The first EL material were books published in 1968. The perspective was "giving some culture to people with handicap"(the term used at that time). The awareness of the need of Easy Language and the work with EL started. In 1987, the Swedish Parliament decided upon the start of the Foundation for Easy-to-Read with responsibility for the development of EL in Sweden. The name was later changed to Centrum för lättläst, Centre for Easy-to-Read.

Parallel to the development of EL books, the newspaper 8 Sidor had started. 8 Sidor became together with the publishing of EL books the responsibility for the Foundation.

The development of EL has been a process of learning by doing in close contact with the readers. Key factors have also been political and judicial initiatives. The presentation will have an international perspective. It will also discuss how language cannot be separated from comprehensible layout and illustrations in EL information. This became very clear with Internet in early 2000. Information at websites is open to everyone, but not always accessible.

We all can and should learn from history when moving forward!

Syntactic complexity in German Easy Language: Does the transformation of causal clauses simplify sentence processing?

Liv Borghardt

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The role of working memory in processing complex sentences is discussed in German Easy Language research. Guidelines propose a resolution of causal clauses into autonomous sentences (cf. Bredel / Maaß 2016a, b) with the assumption of lowering the demand on working memory. However, this hypothesis lacks an empirical foundation. Cognitive studies have shown that inter-clause integration takes place at the end of the second clause (Millis / Just 1994), and that working memory has to be active until the semantic information is integrated into the following content (Kuperberg et al. 2006).

The aim of the presented studies is to investigate the question whether a resolution of causal clauses into autonomous sentences really does simplify sentence processing. For this purpose, differently formulated causal stimuli were created, with one of the comparisons examining the difference between so-called complex sentences with *weil* ("because") vs. two autonomous sentences linked with *deshalb* ("therefore"), the latter representing the proposed structure for causal scenarios according to the guidelines. A behavioral pre-study in form of a causality- and naturalness-rating investigated these stimuli. Since it is a well-known finding that response times increase with more syntactic complexity (e.g., Fedorenko et al. 2004), and causally connected sentences in comparison to not causally related sentences lead to shorter reading times (Keenan et al. 1984; Myers / Duffy 1990), response times were recorded to obtain first evidence of the processing. The analysis of the comparison mentioned above showed neither a significant difference in the transfer of causal information nor in the processing.

Based on the results of the rating, a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) study was conducted. Differently formulated causal scenarios were presented to 24 participants to determine differences in the processing of the scenarios and to investigate the neural correlates involved in the processing of causally related scenarios.

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Are Easy Language Best Practices Applied in Educational Texts for Children in French?

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Prior research identifies children with aphasia, learning difficulties, and cognitive and hearing impairments as part of the primary target groups with legal rights to Easy Language (EL) texts (Hansen-Schirra and Maaß 2020). However, little is known about the potential of EL texts for children and adolescents in general, regardless of their reading abilities. Psycholinguistic studies have shown that some practices, such as the use of anaphoric expressions (Joseph et al. 2015) or temporal connectors (Lecorvé 2020) could have an effect on children's reading comprehension. In this context, it would be interesting to have a closer look at EL and educational texts to highlight shared patterns and pin down what their distinctive features are.

Our ultimate goal is to empirically test whether EL texts can be successfully used as a tool to enhance Universal Design for Learning (UDL). As a first step towards this goal, we conducted a study aiming to identify common guidelines among different sets of EL principles used in French-speaking countries and investigate whether educational texts for children aged 7-12 comply with them.

In the first stage of the study, we analysed and compared five of the most popular sets of EL principles available in French. Guidelines were classified into five groups based on an adapted version of O'Brien (2003) categories for controlled languages, i.e., lexical, syntactic, text structure, pragmatic and typography. During the second stage, we will examine a corpus comprised of children's journalistic texts (e.g., *Le P'tit Libé*) and check for compliancy with the common guidelines identified.

Determining to what extent children's educational texts follow EL guidelines will not only inform the next phase of our project for the validation of EL materials but might also provide some concrete examples on how to implement French EL guidelines, some of which tend to be general and uncorroborated.

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“Easy German”: A Case Study on Causative and Conditional Sentences

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The purpose of this corpus-based research is to study the concept of “Easy German” (Leichte Sprache) and to analyze the strategies used when translating source text in “Standard German” into target text in “Easy German” with special focus on causative and conditional sentences. Research into texts to be included in the research corpus resulted in the choice of fourteen publications of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs: seven of which were written in “Standard German”, while the other seven are its counterparts in “Easy German”.

The result suggests that the “denotative equivalence” and the “pragmatic equivalence” practices are widely used. Furthermore, paraphrase, omission, and addition are the frequent strategies used for translating “Standard German” into “Easy German”, resulting in the transformation of text type, text function and text layout. Moreover, further syntactical analysis shows that there is surprisingly high use of the subordinate conjunctions such as “wenn” (if) and “weil” (because), in which verb will be placed at the end of the sentence. However, this strategy conflicts with the “Easy German” guideline from renowned institutes. To keep the translation in line with the principles of “Easy German”, seven strategies for translating causative and conditional sentences can be deducted from the corpus, which are (1) the unmarked position, (2) the marked position, (3) the use of colon in place of comma, (4) the stand-alone dependent main and subordinate clause, (5) the elliptical structure, (6) the strategy “connector + colon” and (7) the construction “question + ‘dann’ (if)”.

Keywords: “Easy German” (Leichte Sprache), language variety, causative sentence, conditional sentence

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Some takeaways from teaching language by other subjects in a secondary school - Easy language as a process

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Some years ago I worked as teacher for Maths and History in a preparatory class in a Cologne secondary school. These preparatory classes aim to improve new student's German language abilities as well as their basic knowledge of some school subjects to allow them to take part in standard classes according to their age. The pupils then were children from Iraq, living with their families in refugee-homes.

This paper is about experiences from this work. It emphasizes the common development of plain language with the specific users and readers in a chosen context. It is no scientific study. Its general approach follows the thoughts of Wilhelm von Humboldt, who characterized language as an activity, a permanently new work of understanding each other. The experience in a pedagogic environment shows that language is only easy in relation to a shared content or subject. So, easy or plain language (as well as language in general) exists not as an absolute item on its own but only as a medium to explore reality for a given group of speakers in a given situation. The experience also shows that the use of easy or plain language in a certain context is dynamic and sees development. In a school setting, the teacher is always to set out new goals and subjects for his class. The students contribute in their way, leading to other aspects of the subject or entirely new ideas and along with this to new boundaries of used language. So the form and content of (easy) language at the end of such a process will differ from the beginnings for all participants. These lessons probably have consequences for the use of plain language in more complex surroundings like social or cultural institutions where people meet more often and for more extended discussions or visits, e.g., for trainings or exhibitions.

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Strategies to improve reading understanding and reading pleasure in people with aphasia

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Introduction: People with aphasia (PMA) and alexia have problems understanding written information, which greatly limits their participation and access to the world (Webster et al. 2020). Accessible written information (Dalemans et al. 2009) would enhance participation for PMA.

Method: We investigated the effect of five different strategies (extra line spacing, bolding key concepts, font Verdana, visual support using pictograms, combination) on comprehension and reading pleasure in a quantitative within-subject design in 20 PMA with mild to moderate alexia in the first study and 23 PMA with severe alexia in the second study. In this second study, the strategy font "Dyslexia" was added to the strategies.

The reading comprehension is measured by means of a structured yes-no questionnaire related to the text. In addition, reading pleasure was measured using a visual ten-point scale with zero being the least pleasant and ten the most.

Results: In the first study there appeared to be no significance between the different strategies regarding reading comprehension. There was a significant difference between the reading pleasure of different reading strategies ($\chi^2(4) = 16.661$, $p = 0.002$): between "Verdana 16" and "Pictograms" ($p = 0.002$; $z = -3.172$), where "Verdana 16" was experienced as most pleasant and between "Verdana 16" and "Combination" strategies ($p = 0.005$; $z = -2.831$), where "Verdana 16" was experienced as the most pleasant.

In the second study reading strategies, both "Verdana 16", the "Combination of Strategies" and "Pictogram" had a significant positive effect on reading comprehension, with "Pictogram" (Sig. 004) having the most positive effect. "Dyslexia 12" (Sig. 0, 030) was found to be significantly the most pleasant to read.

Conclusion: It is important to adapt the strategies to the wishes and achievements of the individual to promote reading comprehension and the reading experience.

The use of strategies makes it possible to achieve significant improvements in both reading comprehension and pleasure in PMA.

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You know nothing asking uncomprehensible questions!: Making questionnaires communication friendly for people with neurogenic communication disorders

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Introduction: Professionals are increasingly using Patient Reported Experiences Measures (PREMs) and Patient Reported Outcomes Measures (PROMs) (1). The results of these questionnaires help healthcare professionals in the treatment process. However, for people with neurogenic communication disorders (PNCD) these questionnaires are difficult to understand, therefore the results do not provide a valid picture of the experiences. Previous attempts to make questionnaires appropriate and valid for this target group were based on fragmented insights. There is no systematic knowledge about the usefulness of such strategies. This leads to the question: "How can we make questionnaires more comprehensible and thus more valid for PNCD?"

Methods: Design research: In work package 1 knowledge about design requirements for the questionnaires was developed through literature study, observations and interviews with clients from the target group. In work package 2, promising strategies were tested by collecting objective (eye-tracker) and subjective (interviews) data, leading to redesign rules for questionnaires. These have been applied to 3 existing questionnaires. In work package 3, the psychometric properties (reliability, validity, usability) will be tested.

Results: Three questionnaires were examined: the CAS-DSWALQOL, the AIQ-NL and the Client satisfaction survey Home Guidance from SGL. The following aspects appear to be important in the design guidelines: 1) display of language (font, font size, keywords, use of white space and line spacing); 2) meaning of language (semantics: length of words, frequency of words, imaginability of words, syntax: sentence length, action, coherence, information structure) and 3) degree of support: possibility of repetition, explanation, navigation, examples, degree of instruction, use of visualizations.

Conclusions: Measuring instruments must be communication-friendly if we want to obtain valid and reliable answers from PNCD. A set of validated design guidelines to (re)design questionnaires communication-friendly was developed and three existed questionnaires communication-friendly redesigned, the psychometric properties will be tested in a follow-up study.

Visual segmentation of compounds in German Easy Language: Does facilitating perception reduce cognitive processing costs?

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Currently, four separate guidelines for Easy Language postulate that compounds are to be optically segmented to facilitate lexical access to the compound's constituents (see Inclusion Europe 2009, BITV 2.0 2011, Netzwerk Leichte Sprache 2013, Bredel/Maaß 2016). However, only a limited number of empirical research efforts have been conducted into cognitive processing of compounds in Easy Language. This is one of the reasons why compounds are still not structured consistently, but different translation agencies follow different principles when it comes to the use of structuring signs.

The present study, which was conducted within the research project “Simply complex! A multimodal and interdisciplinary approach to examine linguistic complexity within Easy Language“, focuses on this research gap and uses eye-tracking data to infer differences in the cognitive processing of compounds that are segmented with a hyphen (Fahr-Rad-Reifen ['bicycle tyre']) and compounds that are segmented with a mediopoint (Fahr·rad·reifen), versus compounds that have not been segmented.

The study assumes that segmenting compounds is beneficial in helping people with low literacy skills process transparent compounds, but counterproductive in facilitating these same individuals understanding of opaque compounds, which are not directly linked to their constituent representations (i.e. Maulwurf ['mole']). Furthermore, the study suggests that the processing advantage for segmented compounds increases with morphological complexity. By testing transparent and opaque compounds, in addition to compounds with varying morphological complexity, the study sets out to interrogate whether or not compounds need to be segmented in order to effectively reduce cognitive processing costs for people with low literacy skills and attempts to identify the most suitable ways to segment compounds (mediopoint or hyphen) in instances when these structuring signs are shown to reduce cognitive processing costs.

The study was conducted with both neurologically unimpaired speakers and with representatives of the target groups of Easy Language, specifically pupils with prelingual hearing impairments. In addition to recording eye movements during reading of compounds, several background assessments, such as a neuropsychological test battery and a reading test, were conducted to determine whether the need for compound segmentation is dependent on a participant's neuropsychological skills and/or reading proficiency.

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Using a parallel Russian-Simple Russian dataset to study methods of text simplification

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Nowadays there exist multiple parallel datasets where regular texts are aligned with their simplified versions, such as Simple PPDB for English (Pavlick et al., 2016) and Newsela for English and Spanish (Xu et al., 2015). Often they are used to train models for automatic text simplification treating the task as a special case of neural machine translation. When the result of such systems is evaluated, the assessment is mostly focused on the quality of translation instead of a deeper understanding of the simplification patterns present in the data. It seems like the potential that these parallel datasets offer for exploring the linguistic characteristics of simplified texts and simplification methods is often overlooked. In this work, we aim to study the patterns of simplification found in simplified Russian texts. For that, we will mainly use a dataset made of Russian literature texts adapted for learners of Russian as a foreign language aligned to their original versions, which is composed of about 8000 paragraphs from various texts. First, we will explore the changes that texts undergo when they are simplified by human experts and find out what kind of simplification patterns might be found in our data. We will investigate the differences in vocabulary, grammar, and syntax between regular and simplified texts. Then, we will study how those patterns differ from established rules for Russian-Simple Russian translation and simplification methods described in previous research (Titova et al., 2018; Sibirtseva et al., 2014). We believe that understanding the principles of text simplification is important not only for theoretical studies of simple language, but also for practical tasks like evaluating the quality of automatic text simplification tools. Besides, since Russian text simplification is quite an underdeveloped field, it is essential to study and describe the properties of the Simple Russian language data.

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How did government agencies and news media handle easy to read material during the covid-19 pandemic? A qualitative study from Sweden

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The covid-19 pandemic demands informed citizens to act wisely and according to government instructions. The Swedish strategy on how to handle the pandemic heavily related on citizens doing the right thing. To do that they need information that is accessible and understandable. People with intellectual disability often needs specially adapted information and are often depending on other people to help them to get informed. This becomes vital in a crisis. But are government agencies, health care organizations, local municipalities and the media prepared to produce and distribute such information?

The objective of this study was to describe how responsible actors in Sweden provided people with intellectual disability information about covid-19.

People with intellectual disability was interviewed and participated in focus group discussions. Data was transcribed and analysed by qualitative content analysis.

The government agencies responded slow to the demand of easy-to-read material. When such material was published it often only covered the very basic facts about how to avoid transmission. As the pandemic developed this material was often not updated. Local information about testing was almost never presented in easy-to-read versions.

Swedish media broadcasted 5 minutes specially adapted information on radio and TV every day, but few people seemed to follow those.

Government agencies was not prepared to produce easy-to-read material. People with reading impairment often struggle to find information or to take action in order to get updated. Both government agencies and media should consider using techniques for pushing vital information to this population in channels established before a crisis. When a society shuts down, people with intellectual disability depending on personal contacts and personal support is at risk being left alone with information that is too difficult for them to understand.

The biopsychosocial model of functioning, disability and health of the ICF (WHO). Incorporating Easy Language. Application to target groups.

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The “International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health” (ICF) from the WHO (2001) provides a biopsychosocial model illustrating the interaction between several components (cf. Figure 1): Body functions and structures relate to physiological and anatomical aspects of the body. Activity is the execution of a task or an action by an individual. Participation is defined as a person’s involvement in a life situation. These components directly relate to health conditions. Environmental factors refer to all aspects of the external world that form the context of an individual’s life. And, finally, personal factors relate to the individual (age, gender, etc.). Disability is an umbrella term covering impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Barriers in a person’s environment create disability, whereas facilitators reduce disability (definitions according to WHO 2001: 220-222; cf. also Chan et al. 2009).

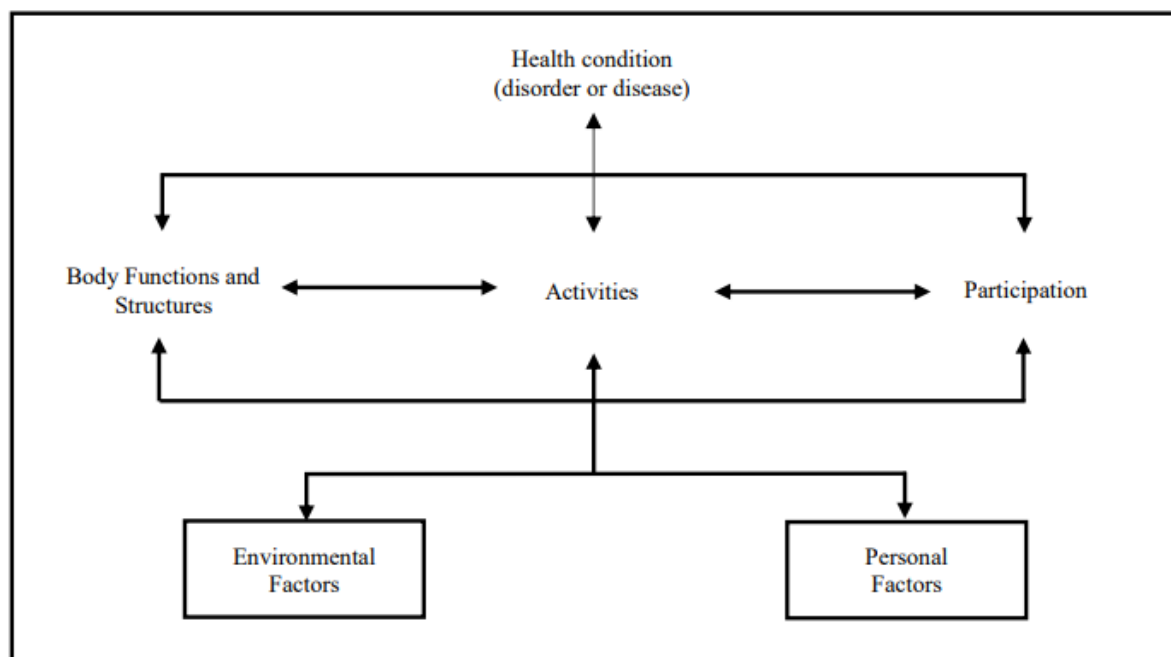


Figure 1: Interactions between components of ICF (adapted from WHO 2001: 18)

“Communication” – a part of the component “Activities and participation” – comprises “Communicating with – receiving – written messages”. But whereas Braille and sign language are mentioned explicitly in the ICF, Easy Language as a form of barrier-free communication is not (yet) considered at all, maybe because in 2001, Easy Language was not as developed as it is today. In research, the ICF with its communicative aspects has been considered in the context of speech-language pathology (cf. e.g., Ma et. al. 2008); however, reflections on an update of the model considering Easy Language are still lacking. The objectives of the presentation are

twofold: 1.) Standard language (barrier) and Easy Language (facilitator) are incorporated in the model, this way enriching and updating it. By systematic reflections, it will be demonstrated in what way the inclusion of these two aspects influences the dynamic interplay between the different components. 2.) By reflecting on exemplary case studies, the benefits of using the updated model in Easy Language research are illustrated.

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The status of the training for easy-to-read validators and facilitators in Europe

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Easy-to-Read is a methodology which focuses on creating or adapting comprehensible texts for people with reading difficulties. In “Don’t write for us without us” (Inclusion Europe, 2012), one of the publications stemming from the European project Pathways, led by Inclusion Europe, the authors proposed that easy-to-read texts be tested with people with reading difficulties, coordinated by supporters. The project marked the beginning of the formalisation of the roles of validators and facilitators. Validators assess the comprehensibility of easy-to-read texts, while facilitators organise their job, coordinate the working sessions and keep contact with easy-to-read writers. Later, the Spanish standard UNE 153101 EX included the process of assessing easy-to-read texts as compulsory to consider an adapted text as easy-to-read.

Train2Validate is a European project (2020-1-ES01-KA203-082068) funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Commission that aims to create a professional and certified training program for validators and facilitators. The project will produce skills cards, will develop a curriculum, and will create and test open educational resources for facilitators and validators, so that they can be certified or obtain a degree that can be recognised in Europe, similarly to the European project EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training).

The research will be based on the results of a survey conducted among the partners’ countries (Austria, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain) and all Europe, which will include information on the current situation of the training for validators and facilitators. The survey will be conducted in February 2021 and the results will be presented in May 2021 in national reports and in a consolidated report, as well.

The current presentation will share the main results of the survey, related to the existence or lack of training for validators and facilitators in the surveyed countries.

Easy and Plain Language in Audiovisual Translation

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Audiovisual translation (AVT) has established itself as a solidified branch of translations studies (Romero-Fresco 2019: 8, Díaz Cintas/Anderman 2009, Pérez-Gonzalez 2014: 91). In a broad sense, AVT can be defined as translation of texts formats that have an auditory and visual component (see Jüngst 2010, Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020, Pérez-Gonzalez 2014). For his part, *translation* can be defined as overcoming communication barriers and hereby making content accessible for specific target groups (see Hansen-Schirra/Maaß 2020, Maaß 2020, Rink 2019, Rink 2020). Therefore, AVT has also a strong link to accessibility (Romero-Fresco 2019). Typical forms of AVT that are implemented to overcome language barriers are dubbing, interlingual subtitling, and voiceover. Audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), supertitles, speech-to-text interpreting, and film interpretation are also AVT (see Jüngst 2010, Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020).

Recent research points to the possibility of enhancing comprehensibility in AVT through language varieties such as Easy Language (EL) and Plain Language (PL) (see Bernabé Caro/Orero 2020, EASIT 2020, Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020, Perego 2020). These language varieties for comprehensibility enhancement have traditionally been used in written formats (Bredel/Maaß 2016, 2019, Hansen-Schirra/Maaß 2020 Maaß 2015, 2020, Rink 2020). Audiovisual formats are more retrievable and potentially addresses a broader spectrum of target groups through their multimodal character. The implementation of EL and PL thus opens a new perspective in the field of accessible communication in AVT.

For his part, translation can be defined as overcoming communication barriers and hereby making content accessible for specific target groups (see Hansen-Schirra/Maaß 2020, Maaß 2020, Rink 2019, Rink 2020). Therefore, AVT has also a strong link to accessibility (Romero-Fresco 2019). Typical forms of AVT that are implemented to overcome language barriers are dubbing, interlingual subtitling, and voiceover. Audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), supertitles, speech-to-text interpreting, and film interpretation are also AVT (see Jüngst 2010, Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020).

Based on AVT and accessibility research, this presentation focusses on the parameters that influence the use of EL and PL in AVT. Maaß and Hernández Garrido (2020) name four dichotomies of factors that influence the choice between EL and PL in AVT:

- **New creation vs. translation:** An AV text may be written directly in EL / PL or EL / PL can be added to an AV text that is not necessarily comprehensibility-enhanced. A new creation in EL / PL leaves a broader spectrum of opportunities to add EL / PL components afterwards.

- **Inclusive vs. accessible:** EL / PL translations can be planned or integrated right from the start or they can be added at a later production phase into a “regular” AV product. It proves to be a strong limitation to implement EL / PL in AVT if the AV source text is not planned to be accessible from the start (see Romero-Fresco 2019).
- **Fictional vs. non-fictional:** AV texts can have content that is either fictional or non-fictional, such as news, educational formats or AV content used in organizational communication. In fictional formats, aesthetics criteria have a rather important role (Koller 2011). EL and PL, especially EL, focus primarily on comprehensibility, frequently in detriment of the AV text’s aesthetic aspect. For that reason, implementing EL / PL in fictional formats could be more limited than in non-fictional formats.
- **Children vs. adults:** The target groups of an AV text may also define the possibilities of using EL / PL in AVT. Age is one of the central factors for accessible products and influences all stages of accessibility (Maaß 2020).

This presentation also goes into the challenges of implementing language varieties for comprehensibility enhancement in different forms of AVT (see Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020). The hypotheses delivered in this presentation serve as a starting point for further research and practical projects.

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Plain and easy language in the Swiss multilingual institutional setting. A reflection on texts, actors and translation

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Swiss institutions and administrations increasingly strive for multilingual accessible communication. When providing services to citizens, accessibility is paramount to ensure participation in public life for all. However, the institutions also play an important role in informing citizens. This is the case of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (FSO), whose aims are mainly to survey and describe the economic, social, territorial and environmental aspects of the Confederation.

This paper sketches a recent cooperation with the FSO to evaluate new ways for providing accessible information in “easy-to-understand” language, E2U (Perego 2020), in its main publication languages (German, French, Italian and English). We decided to focus on three main trajectories: subject matter, text producers and intra/interlinguistic translation.

Subject matter and texts deserve special consideration because topics can be very technical and complex. Texts range from technical reports, whose primary addressees are professionals, to direct communications with citizens, who are called to take part in surveys and censuses. Even if Switzerland has a long tradition of clear writing (Canavese 2020), previous studies have shown that administrative texts can be challenging (Felici/Griebel 2019; Griebel/Felici forthcoming). Translating institutional texts in E2U imposes to find a balance between content reduction and addition (Rink 2020:98-101; Maaß 2020:120-122).

Text producers at the FSO are mostly domain experts and are responsible for the Office communication. We are currently interviewing a group of authors to get their stance on accessible communication and to identify potential text producers of E2U contents.

Finally, creating accessible multilingual documents imposes a twofold intra- and interlinguistic translation process. This involves defining a clear strategy, because information and simplifications need to be provided at least in the three official languages (German, French, Italian), and several issues are at the stake (standard simplification rules, translation direction). Moreover, equivalence is also sought in terms of layout, presentation and format.

Keywords: Plain language, easy language, Switzerland, multilingualism, interlinguistic translation, intralinguistic translation

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A corpus-linguistic investigation into discourse-structural devices in Easy German

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Linguistic markers of discourse relations such as causality are important cohesive devices that serve as “processing instructions” (Sanders/Pander Maat 2006: 592 f.) for mentally reconstructing the intended meaning of a text. Their positive effects on online as well as offline text processing has been empirically verified (cf. Sanders/Noordman 2000; Degand/Sanders 2002).

(1) There was a loud bang *because* / *That’s why* she dropped her cup.

In example (1) the respective connective asserts the relationship between the two propositions which otherwise would be ambiguous.

As a first step in the investigation of how discourse relations are used in simplified German texts and how they may ease comprehension, we explored their use by annotating discourse relations according to the Penn Discourse Treebank (PDTB; Prasad et al. 2008; Webber et al. 2019) in LeiKo, a corpus of Easy and Plain German texts (Jablotschkin/Zinsmeister 2020). In addition to giving an overview of different relation types (such as explicit or implicit), semantic relations (e.g., result, precedence or arg2-as-detail), individual markers, and their syntactic types (subordinating vs. coordinating) across subcorpora, we focus on ambiguous connectives such as dann ‘then’ that are used to mark different semantic relations. In our corpus, dann, is attested for temporal, causal as well as purpose relations. We also investigate pairs of propositions with implicit relations allowing for more than one interpretation and discuss consequences for comprehensibility.

Furthermore, we critically discuss the applicability of the PDTB guidelines to simplified German texts. Some connective-like expressions functionally seem to be more similar to discourse markers than to connectives: They are syntactically optional and seem to operate in the sequential domain (Crible/Degand 2019) by organizing larger chunks of discourse rather than connecting propositions.

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Easy Language in school: “Und die Moral von der Geschicht...”

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Reading classical, canonical texts in school is becoming more and more of a challenge. On the one hand, the antiquated language is hard to read and hard to comprehend – not only for students with difficulties in reading. On the other hand, these texts are still relevant for us today, and working *on* and *with* language is a key element in school.

Approach, method and outcome:

“Materialien für den inklusiven Deutschunterricht” (teaching material for inclusive German lessons) is a joint project of the *Büro für Leichte Sprache der Lebenshilfe Bremen*, *Landesinstitut für Schule Bremen* and *Universität Bremen*. We aimed for a setting in which every student would be able to give an opinion on the content of the texts, discuss the behavior of the characters etc. – no matter what reading level they are on. And while vocabulary extension was considered subordinate, correct spelling and grammar were still very relevant. Therefore, we adjusted the assumed strict regulations for Easy-to-read according to our aim and considered practical experiences of teachers as the most valuable feedback.

Based on the source texts (four classical fables) we provided:

- translation into Plain language (*Einfache Sprache*) and Easy-to-read (*Leichte Sprache*)
- audio versions for original, plain language and easy-to-read
- illustrations suitable for all versions
- ideas for exercises
- and, especially for teachers: background information on our approach

As of April 2020, the material is offered to teachers as free, registered download. Since then, more than 180 registered downloads have been counted and undergo evaluation.

In our presentation, we would like to shed an eye on:

- Challenges for intralingual translation in school: But what about the genitive?
- Challenges for intralingual translation of classical texts: But what about the style?
- Experiences from teachers and students: Did it work?

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Experiences of professional training in Hungary

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In Hungary, special teachers are trained in 8-semester bachelor's degree programs. As lecturers of the Institute of Special Needs Education, we would like to report on the experience of the education of Easy Language at the University of Szeged. We teach the Easy Language method in a mandatory course entitled "The development and maintenance of communication skills in people with intellectual disabilities" (60h, 4 credits). One of our goals is to teach students how to use and speak Easy Language. At the end of the course they can create and adapt Easy Language materials to be used in education, training and everyday life. The course is planned and delivered with the help of participatory lecturers: self-advocates with intellectual disabilities.

We conducted an online survey to collect data on students' experiences about the course named above. Beginning in the spring semester of the 2016/17 academic year, the course was completed by a total of 232 individuals in 9 groups. 103 people (44%) completed the survey, which consisted of 24, multiple-choice, attitudinal, and open-ended questions. The first block of questions asked for some demographic data. In the second and third blocks, they could express their opinions about the framework and the content of the course (planned and achieved learning outcomes). In the fourth block, we asked for general opinions and suggestions in the form of a text response. The fifth, final block was to be completed only by those who were working as special teachers. We asked about how they apply their knowledge of Easy Language in their daily practice. The data and information obtained in the research convincingly prove the necessity of teaching Easy Language in bachelor's degree programs in special education. At the same time, it became clear how the professional content of the course should be further developed.

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Towards an Ontology for ‘Leichte Sprache’

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In 2011, the German chapter of the World Wide Web consortium (W3C) included presentations related to "Leichte Sprache" (see references, in particular [1] - [3], [5], [7], [8]) into an event that revolved around accessibility on the web. Focus areas included language assets (e.g. glossaries), and tools (e.g. for checking compliance with constraints related to vocabulary and grammar; see [7]). In the 10 years following the event, activities in the realm of "Leichte Sprache" took off and resulted amongst others in a cornucopia of language assets and tools – some already implemented, and some only sketched conceptually. Simultaneously, the demand for "Leichte Sprache" grew to the point that efficient cross-domain collaboration is needed to provide additional tools and language assets. We propose a pragmatic ontology for software solutions/tools (with related language assets) related to "Leichte Sprache" as a key element to efficient collaboration. The proposal is based on the authors' expertise and experiences in academia, practice, standards settings bodies and industry. It considers trends in language asset management and technology that for example manifest themselves in cloud-only solutions, and the Linguistic Linked Open Data movement [4].

Key input for the proposal is derived from a persona- and user story-based view on "Leichte Sprache" – a view that recognizes that a number of actors and activities are needed for content in "Leichte Sprache". These activities include creation (e.g. writing), enrichment, review, management, publication, syndication, information retrieval, consumption (e.g. reading), and collaboration or interactions via social media, as well as crowdsourcing platforms.

The ontology (see Figure 1 Schematic view on ontologyFigure 1 Schematic view on ontology) can facilitate activities such as discussions related to existing or required tools or required and offered production processes. For example, a table-based overview (see Figure 2 Multi-dimensional matrix related to tooling) can be derived to highlight the features of certain tool (as well as prototypical users).

Examples:

1. tool for checking vs. tool for collaboration
2. stool for writers vs. tool for readers
3. tool that needs/does not need installation on users' devices

In a similar vein, the ontology can be used by buyers and suppliers of 'Leichte Sprache' content: They can describe the production process steps they require or offer.

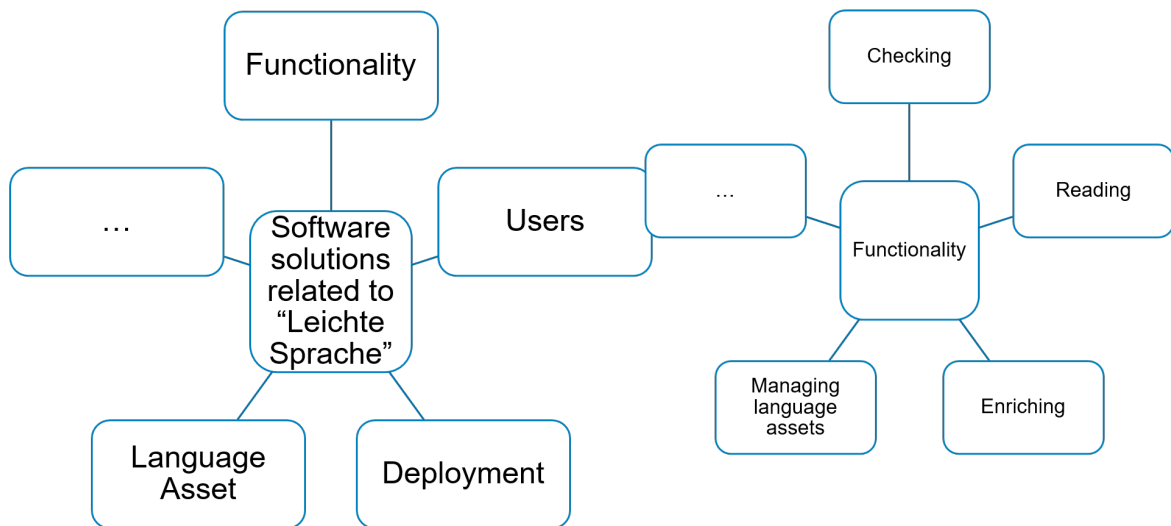


Figure 1 Schematic view on ontology

	Tool A	Tool B	Tool C	...
Functionality				
Enrichment				
Checking				
Collaboration/workflow				
...				
User				
Writer				
Reader				
Reviewer (Prüfgruppe)				
Editor				
...				
Deployment type				
Standalone (desktop/laptop installation)				
Standalone (mobile app)				
Plug-in/Add-on				
Cloud-only (no installation)				
...				

Figure 2 Multi-dimensional matrix related to tooling

References

References are excluded due to limitation of space and will be included in the presentation slides.

Taking into account the heterogeneity of the SDH target group: Creation of integrated titles using Easy Language for the prelingually Deaf

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Original Title: Erstellung von integrierten Titeln in Leichter Sprache für prälingual Gehörlose – ein Schritt in Richtung Zielgruppenspezifizierung in der Filmuntertitelung?

The underlying Bachelor's Thesis (see Marmit 2021), supervised by Prof. Dr. Silvia Hansen-Schirra and submitted to the Examination Office of the Faculty for Translation, Linguistics and Cultural Studies (FTSK) of the University of Mainz, Campus Germersheim (Germany) in May 2018, deals with the creation of both linguistically and visually adapted subtitles especially for the target group of the prelingually deaf as a means to pave the way to audiovisual content that meets the needs of a subgroup of recipients not only confronted with a sensory barrier but in many cases also with a linguistic barrier (Rink 2019, 49) when it comes to the decoding of text. Thus, the thesis proposes a further division of the target group of the commonly generated *Untertitel für Hörgeschädigte*¹ by additionally providing integrated Titles in Easy Language especially for the prelingually deaf. Within the framework of the underlying thesis, this type of subtitles was implemented on an experimental basis. The subtitles were drafted for the German trilogy *Ku'damm 56* (Bohse 2016) released in 2016 under the application of the set of rules for German Easy Language by Bredel and Maaß (2016, 2017). In order to further allow for a visually optimized perception on the part of the prelingually deaf viewer, the concept of integrated Titles (Fox 2016) had been applied. Although the main characteristics of Easy Language negatively correlate with the space and time constraints inherent to the medium of film (Marmit 2021, 96; see also Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020), the thesis concludes with possible solutions in this regard.

The reception of this kind of Titles will be tested empirically for the first time within the framework of the upcoming MA Thesis.

¹ Equivalent to *Subtitles for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing* the English-speaking world

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Do visualizations help to better understand easy read texts?

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Awareness has increased that many people have difficulties reading and understanding written communication products intended for a general public. For instance, government communication and medical information. Serving these inhabitants with easy-read texts is more and more common practice. In many cases these easy read texts are accompanied by visualizations (symbols, pictures etc.). But do visualizations really help people with reading difficulties to understand an easy-read text better? If it does, what kind of visualizations can be used? Contradictory results can be found in the existent literature. Therefore, we felt it necessary to carry out a systematic review on this topic.

The central research question of our systematic review was: does adding visualizations to an easy read text help people with reading difficulties to understand the information better?

To guide our search strategy, we used the PICOS acronym to compile relevant search terms. For this review, the PICOS terms were formulated as follows:

- Patient: Adults with reading difficulties.
- Intervention: The addition of visualizations in a paper or online easy-read text.
- Control of comparison: Paper or online easy-read text without visualizations.
- Outcome: Reading comprehension.
- Study design: Quantitative experimental studies or quantitative/qualitative experimental studies.

An online search of databases of the peer-reviewed research literature was conducted in August 2020. The online databases that were used for the search were PsycINFO, MEDLINE, ERIC and Web of Science Core Collection.

From a total of 1813 studies identified through database searching, eventually 8 studies met our inclusion criteria. The quality of the studies was assessed by using the RoB2 tool (Cochrane Institute) and a multilevel meta-analysis was performed to aggregate the results of the individual studies. Next to general effects of adding visualizations to easy-read text, moderating effects of different types of visualization and target population were examined.

For the conference the results of the study will be presented and discussed.

Easy Language in Russia as means to improve financial literacy in Russia

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Studies show that the level of reading literacy globally and in the Russian Federation in particular is extremely low [1, 2]. People do not understand standard texts, they often need help and explanations. Or simply prefer not to read at all.

At the same time, the level of complexity of legal, finance, technical etc. texts become higher [3], despite the general tendency to simplify the presentation of information. Low financial literacy is one of the consequences of such textual inaccessibility. Thus, the study among 1,819 people from 39 Russian regions showed that the overall level of financial literacy among a significant group of the population is quite low. 95% of respondents said that contracts and other documents need to be read and understood before signing. But only half of them (52%) admitted that they actually have time to do this in practice, only 40% of Russians read a loan agreement before signing it, and people with low financial literacy take out the most expensive loans [4].

The research question is how the level of financial literacy could be increased by means of easy Russian. Who can do it, who and how will evaluate the quality of the translations.

Translation into easy language (the so-called "easy-to-read" format) is mentioned in the road map of the Bank of Russia's working group on improving access to financial services for persons with disabilities, persons with impaired mobility, and the elderly [6].

Another project is launched by an interdisciplinary and international research and practice project group under the auspices of the Association of Translation Teachers [7]. The project *ясный.сайт.деньги* developing by this group focuses on readers with poor literacy levels being able to access and understand financial information. The aim of the content of this website is to improve the financial literacy of the communities in which we all work. The content is being developed by volunteers.

The report is the speakers' attempt to review efforts and sum up experience of financial and some other organisations in making textual information more accessible by means of Easy Russian language.

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Language accessibility: Standardising easy access to language

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Recent European legislation has triggered a growing number of standards to fulfill the objectives of the United Nations Conventions of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006). These standards aim at securing Human Rights applications and the full participation of all people in society leaving no one behind. Standards are related to Media Accessibility services such as: subtitling, audio description, audio subtitling, Easy to Read, and Sign language and Cognitive Accessibility. This article presents the many standards (see below in the reference) where language accessibility is present. In some cases the standard identifies language accessibility as Easy to Read, but not always. This uneven treatment of language accessibility will be analysed. The different standardisation agencies and focus will be described to understand existing discrepancies. The presentation, through a descriptive methodology - will also draw the roadmap of all the standards, since some standards are in a writing process. Given the fact that writing a standard is a long-term project, participants of this conference may be interested in taking part in the process of writing. The need to have experts on Easy to Read when writing standards is crucial, and participation on standardisation agencies is one of the knowledge transfer of research results.

- CEN293 Accessibility 21 Accessible systems for living independently - Guidelines and recommendations
- Norma UNE 153101 EX Lectura fácil. Pautas y recomendaciones
- ISO/IEC XX 23859:2019(X)
Information technology – User interfaces –Guidance on making written text easy to read and easy to understand
- ISO/FDIS 24509:2019(E) Ergonomics — Accessible design — A method for estimating minimum legible font size for people at any age
- ISO 24502, Ergonomics — Accessible design — Specification of age-related luminance contrast for coloured light
- ISO/WD 24495-1 Plain language — Part 1: Governing principles and guidelines

Plain Language and text accessibility in health communication: The case of Layperson Summaries of clinical trials

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Language plays a major role in the healthcare setting. Yet, health communication is characterized by epistemic and thus power asymmetry (Heritage 2012, qtd. in Orletti & Iovino 2018: 26; Magris 2018) between communication act participants, i.e. expert and layperson. Such asymmetries may lead to both the so-called Fachbarriere and Fachsprachenbarriere, according to the terminology by Schubert and Rink in a categorization of communication barriers (Rink 2018: 29-65). However, the concept of patient empowerment (or autonomy, cf. Schulz & Hartung 2014; Magris 2016) and plain language movements are now changing these dynamics. An example of plain language requirement is provided by EU Regulation 536/2014 concerning clinical trials, which foresees the uploading of their results on the EMA (European Medicines Agency) portal in a public-friendly version, the layperson summary (cf. Schindler 2018).

After an introduction to this innovative text genre, an example in English and German taken from pharmaceutical company websites will be analyzed qualitatively on the textual, syntactic, morphological and lexico-terminological levels. A comparison will be drawn between the two language versions and the corresponding specialized text, in order to highlight the main differences and successful choices of simplification leading to enhanced accessibility. The contrastive analysis, although performed on a small sample, is representative in its attempt to highlight critical points and comprehensibility difficulties inherent in special languages and the way they are tackled in summaries for laypeople and provides a starting point for further reflections.

To evaluate simplification, inter alia de-terminologization strategies will be analyzed accurately, and readability formulas (such as the Flesch-Index and the Gunning Fog Index) will be used. Concerning acceptability, we will consider whether text characteristics tend more towards Easy or expert/standard language in the continuum and whether some traits (e.g. potential excessive explicitation) may lead to stigmatization basing on hitherto conducted studies (e.g. Maaß 2020).

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Language for all provides a win-win situation

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In the Netherlands there is a method for easy language called *Language for all*. It aims at providing information that includes as much intended readers as possible and simultaneously being appealing to all readers intended. Easy language is often thought as especially suitable for- and only appealing to readers with reading difficulties. Further it is thought that there is only a gain for the reader of information when using easy language.

We present three Dutch studies in which we examined the added value of using texts in *Language for all* in terms of: 1) comprehensibility and 2) acceptability. In two studies we examined letters on providing free laptops by a municipality which were written in *Language for all*. The letters were tested amongst readers with and without reading difficulties.¹

In the third study the original version of a letter for parents on school suspension was compared to a version of the same letter written in *Language for all*.² In this study an equal number of parents (with equally mixed levels of reading ability) got either the original or the *Language for all* version of the letter and filled out questions after reading.

Results show that all readers score good (the laptop-letter) or better (the letter on school suspension) on comprehension measurements after reading the *Language for all* versions.

This version also prevented unwanted misunderstanding concerning required parent actions after reading the letter.

Regarding acceptability the *Language for all* versions were significantly rated to be clearer, better to read and of better length than the original versions. This was also true for people with good reading abilities.

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Linguistic and Ethical Considerations in Easy Language Machine Translation

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The relatively high production costs of Easy Language (EL) texts in terms of time, financial and human resources, together with the nonexistence of EL guidelines for certain languages, or simply lack of awareness about them, may lead institutions to leave the needs of EL users unattended. In prior studies, authors have put forward Neural Machine Translation (NMT) as a tool that could bridge the resource and knowledge gap in such cases. Nevertheless, not only does raw NMT output produced with generic systems like DeepL present translation quality issues, but it also violates some of the most popular EL guidelines (Kaplan et al. 2019; Kaplan 2021). This seems to be confirmed by Rodríguez Vázquez et al. (forthcoming), who conducted a comparative study about Easy Language NMT across different text domains and languages.

In this paper, data from the aforementioned study will be explored more in detail to answer the following questions: what is the relationship between translation issues and EL rule violations? Are translation errors derived from the application of EL best practices in the source text? Are specific EL non-compliance issues caused by translation errors produced by the system? Could the latter be simply language variations (e.g. transformation of active form into passive form), rather than translation errors? Additionally, we will draw upon the data to expand on the ongoing discussions around MT ethics (Nurminen and Koponen 2020) by putting EL target groups in the spotlight. For instance, the use of raw MT output is acceptable, even if it contains errors, for gisting purposes (Forcada et al. 2018).

Would this be an option for all EL target populations? What would be the ethical implications? These questions will be addressed from MaaB and Rink (2020) understanding of EL as an empowering tool that allows both for participation and knowledge building.

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Social responsibility and accessible communication: Development and evaluation of an online course

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When companies disclose information on their socially responsible activities (CSR) — namely, on their commitment to address the social, environmental, and ethical consequences of their activities (Carroll, 2008) — they have multiple channels at their disposal, such as reports and corporate websites (Mazzotta et al., 2020). Previous research on these channels has highlighted the difficult language of CSR information in reports (Bakar & Ameer, 2011; Nilipour et al., 2020), as well as customers' preference for CSR information in accessible language and engaging format (Cone Communications, 2015).

Against this backdrop, we developed an online course on revising CSR content in reports in order to increase its accessibility. The course is hosted on the online writing centre Calliope (Van Waes et al., 2014). The course (in English) consists of a theoretical section, practical exercises, and a case study. The course components revolve around five principles of accessible communication (i.e., vocabulary; sentence length and structure; cohesion; visual aspects; and relevance) and their application to CSR content. Throughout the entire course, we maintain a reader-oriented focus, building on the assumption that the target audience is the final judge of the level of accessibility achieved by a text. Furthermore, as we tailored this course to trainees who might not have a background in linguistics (i.e., business and accounting students), we explain the principles of accessible communication in plain language and using a combination of textual and audio-visual materials.

In this presentation, we will discuss the design, content, and structure of the course, along with the results of its preliminary evaluation. Since information about a company's CSR activities can influence customers' loyalty and purchase intentions (Martínez & Rodríguez del Bosque, 2013), training future business experts in using accessible language can reduce information asymmetry (Beyer et al., 2010) and ensure that customers make informed purchase decisions.

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Lexical complexity in German Easy Language: Effects of length, frequency and repetition on the visual word processing of the target group

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The research project aims to identify and describe differences in the visual word processing of people with and without intellectual disability. With regard to the rules and regulations for German Easy Language (EL) on word level (e.g. Maaß 2015), the independent variables of word length, frequency and repetition are implemented in an eye-tracking-experiment which is completed by participants of the EL target group and an unimpaired control group.

Due to less exposure to written language caused by deviant living and educational circumstances, the reading experience of people with intellectual disability differs from the average reading experience of unimpaired adults. As the above-mentioned effects on visual word processing mainly ground on reading experience, they can not necessarily be expected to be evident in the visual word processing of people with intellectual disability in the same way as in unimpaired adults. Differences in cognitive domains related to language acquisition in general and to word learning in particular have to be considered in the target group (Pezzino et al. 2019). Besides effects on visual word processing, it is investigated which cognitive components affect the reading proficiency of the target group and in how far their structure varies from unimpaired readers. In this matter, a neuropsychological test battery is conducted, including aspects of executive functions, mental flexibility, word fluency, verbal intelligence, and visual processing speed. Neuropsychological data is used not only to explain for variation in the reading abilities of the target group but also to identify determinants for a successful reading acquisition. Results considering the visual word processing will be discussed together with results concerning the impact of an individual's profile (metadata, neuropsychological data) on reading proficiency. Above all, it is tried to give further guidance to EL translators on word choice in EL by describing the target group's needs and abilities.

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The role of the moderator of easy-to-read proofreading groups

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Translators for Easy-to-Read language in Germany can choose from a wide range of training and further education opportunities. There are also various special courses in which people with intellectual disabilities are trained to become proofreaders for easy-to-read. However, there are no distinct training opportunities to date for moderators of proofreading groups, despite the fact that moderation plays a crucial role in the proofreading process (cf. Bergelt 2018, p. 272). There also has been little literature to date within this very recent domain of research. To shed some more light on the practice of proofreading and thus encourage professionalization in the moderation of proofreading, I conducted a qualitative and quantitative survey of 22 proofreading moderators from all over Germany within the scope of my Master's thesis. Within the scope of my survey I examined, for example: How are typical processes involving group dynamics addressed? For example, how are very active participants slowed down and reserved ones encouraged? What knowledge and skills should proofreading moderators have? Consequently, although there is for the most part agreement on the knowledge and skills that a good moderator should have (patience, empathy, variety, etc.), when it comes to actually defining the settings (such as the duration of the proofreading session or the number of proofreaders per session), differences become apparent. Moderation and proofreading techniques also vary. With regard to the techniques, it would be necessary to further assess which methods are particularly effective in dealing with problematic text passages. On the basis of the current state of knowledge, further training could thus focus on soft skills. Different training modules should be developed depending on the needs of the proofreading moderators (e.g. moderation techniques, knowledge of target groups, etc.).

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Emerging and Professionalisation of Easy Language interpreting

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Easy Language interpreting is the latest newcomer in the field of Accessible communication practice and theory. When Bredel/Maaß (2016: 29, my translation) stated that „to edit complex information in such a reduced way requires an increased planning effort, and Easy Language therefore belongs to the conceptual domain of writing“, the Easy Language interpreting market was already on the leap. In 2019, more than 70 events with Easy Language interpreting were accounted for in Germany alone (Schulz et al. 2020: 173), with a rising tendency. With Accessible communication gaining ever more attention in theory and practice (for an overview on this research field, see Maaß/Rink 2019), Easy Language interpreting has become subject of research (Degenhardt 2021, Schulz et al. 2020). Strict application of Easy Language rules does not, however, fit into the setting of spontaneous interaction: “Oral forms like Easy Language interpreting usually veer toward Plain Language” (Maaß 2020: 88). So, one of the questions of future research is the kind of variety Easy Language interpreters are actually producing and how established interpreting techniques apply in this area (for a first overview on consecutive interpreting, see Degenhardt 2021). In my contribution, I will focus on the question of professionalization: Easy Language interpreting has found its way to academic and professional teaching. It is part of the curriculum of the M.A. Barrierefreie Kommunikation (Accessible Communication) at the University of Hildesheim and has entered the training portfolio of the Interpreters’ and Translators’ Association (Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer, BDÜ). I will give an insight into these offers, focussing on simultaneous interpreting and pointing to similarities and differences between Easy Language interpreting and interlingual forms of interpreting without complexity reduction.

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Do We Need New (Italian) “Easy-to-Read” Linguistic Guidelines?

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The proposal focusses on ‘Easy-to-Read’ and the need to rethink its guidelines. ‘Easy-to-Read’ is a model of linguistic adaptation designed to write texts that are easy to read and understand for people with intellectual disabilities (Nomura, Nielsen & Tronbacke, 2010). Its conciseness and simplicity make it suitable for other people with reading difficulties due to neuropsychiatric conditions, social factors, and/or poor knowledge of a language (Freyhoff, 1998; García Muñoz, 2012; Nomura, Nielsen & Tronbacke, 2010; Tronbacke, 1993). Several guidelines have already been created for some languages, along with the European ones, designed during the Pathways project by the European association Inclusion Europe (2009). However, the existing guidelines often lack extensive linguistic indications, they are not specifically designed for Italian or other languages and can therefore prove insufficient to write proper easy-to-read texts.

The proposal will discuss some methodological issues, such as the complexity of the needs of its recipient and some problems regarding the existing linguistic recommendation, with a focus on Italian, supported by the analysis of an Italian Easy-to-Read corpus (Sciumbata, 2020). Indeed, some defects emerge when analysing existing Italian easy-to-read texts written following the existing guidelines. Most defects resemble bureaucratic language and are well-known in the literature regarding plain language (Cortelazzo & Pellegrino, 2003; Piemontese, 1996). Most defects could be avoided by adding new in-depth recommendations to back up the existing guidelines.

A new set of guidelines was therefore proposed and tested for Italian (Sciumbata 2020). The process that led to the new guidelines will be presented. Finally, the results of an experiment carried out to test the new guidelines will be shown. Participants were asked to rewrite a text by using either the Inclusion Europe or the new guidelines. Results show that the new guidelines result in easier and clearer texts.

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A tool for participation of people with intellectual disabilities – peer counseling in easy-to-read language

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The contribution focuses on implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Article 21 provides freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information for all people with disabilities. Communicative barriers often arise for this group of people in everyday life. "Leben mit Handicaps e.V." meets these barriers with tailor-made offers based on scientific knowledge and practical experience of counselling in order to promote equal participation of people with disabilities in their community-life. "Leben mit Handicaps e.V." pursues the strategy of peer counselling and advice and supports in easy-to-read language. Therefor we provide counselling in tandems consisting of one counselor with an intellectual disability and another counselor without intellectual disabilities to improve the communicational and informational participation of this specific target group. One of these approaches is Leichte Sprache, which is fundamentally defined by catalogues of codified norms.

"Leben mit Handicaps e.V." offers complementary independent participation counselling for all people with disabilities, persons at risk of disabilities and their relatives. On the basis of research and expert knowledge "Leben mit Handicaps e.V." is specialized in the counselling and support of parents with disabilities. We provide support and advice for parents with disabilities in order to enable them to live independently with their children. Therefor we support parental assistance and the related application for funds.

In addition to supporting and advising people and especially parents with disabilities, „Leben mit Handicaps e.V.“ develops brochures in easy read language for people with cognitive impairments on the subjects of having children, family planning, pregnancy, childbirth, youth welfare service and child's wellbeing, as well as sign language videos and daisy audio books for people with hearing - and visual impairment.

Semi-Automatic Translation of Texts into German Easy-to-Understand Language ("Leichte Sprache")

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The discussion about barrier-free access to information is more relevant than ever. Easy-to-understand language concepts aim to make texts understandable and accessible to people, who have problems reading and processing written language. So far, there is no software that can fully automatically translate standard language into easy-to-understand language.¹

We present a software that helps translators to translate standard German texts into the concept "Leichte Sprache". Unlike the translation from one language to another, here the essential contents of the standard text must first be extracted. A sentence-by-sentence translation is not effective. Our semi-automatic translation process contains the following steps:

1. The first important task in the translation process is to read the original text and extract the relevant information. We solve this task with automatic text summarization.
2. The next step is compound analysis, which provides compounds with an interpoint between the components (e.g., "Bürger·amt").
3. Then, using a database, complex words are automatically translated into simpler ones.
4. Finally, the author is provided with LanguageTool matches and suggestions for reformulations. There are already numerous sets of rules in this area. We used and extended the LanguageTool rules² However, practice shows that it does not provide perfect results to strictly follow all of these rules in any context and for each target group. Therefore, the author can choose and exclude certain rules.

For the automatic text summarization, we decided to implement Edmundson's method³, after evaluation of several extraction-based methods. The length of the summary can be customized. It is specified as a percentage of the text length. Our next steps include revising the database for replacing complex words and improving the user interface. We are also working on editing, adapting and improving the LanguageTool rules.

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Audio Description: An Aid to Literacy

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Audio Description uses words that are succinct, vivid, and imaginative to convey the visual image that is not fully accessible to a significant segment of the population-- in the United States alone, over 32 million people are either blind or "have trouble seeing even with correction" (American Foundation for the Blind, 2019). This presentation focuses on the fundamentals of audio description and their applicability to building literacy.

Not too long ago I conducted a workshop with day care workers and reading teachers on what I think represents a new application for audio description--literacy. We experimented with developing more descriptive language to use when working with kids and picture books. These books rely on pictures to tell the story. But the teacher trained in audio description techniques would never simply hold up a picture of a red ball and read the text: "See the ball." He or she might add: "The ball is red--just like a fire engine. I think that ball is as large as one of you! It's as round as the sun--a bright red circle or sphere." The teacher has introduced new vocabulary, invited comparisons, and used metaphor or simile -- with toddlers! By using audio description, you make these books accessible to children who have low vision or are blind *and* help develop more sophisticated language skills for all kids. A picture is worth 1000 words? Maybe. But the audio describer might say that a few well-chosen words can conjure vivid and lasting images.

I have since used this notion in creating audio description for national broadcasts of the children's program, "Sesame Street". By using audio description, books and videos) are made accessible to kids who have low vision or are blind and simultaneously all kids develop more sophisticated language skills.

Negation processing with and without truth value reversal

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Even though negation is a basic part of daily communication, its linguistic processing has been proven cognitively effortful (Kaup 2001, Lüdtke et al. 2008, Dudschig & Kaup 2020). Therefore, the rules for Easy Language texts recommend avoiding negation and, if negation cannot be transformed into an equivalent affirmative, negation words should be emphasized by the typographical marking of bold print (Bredel & Maaß 2016: 467f.). To date, the advantageous effect of typographic marking on the semantic processing of negated concepts lacks empirical evidence. Furthermore, it is well known that among other functions, negation for example falsifies a true statement (e.g., A robin is a / no bird, c.f. Fischler et al. 1983: 402), or suppresses the activation of a concept (e.g., Elizabeth bakes some bread but no cookies, c.f. MacDonald & Just 1989: 635). Sentence negation has been investigated in many ERP studies, but while the primary focus has been on the first function (Dudschig et al. 2016, 2019), the latter has not been thoroughly examined.

Therefore, these two distinct types of sentence structures were investigated in the present EEG experiment. The first type directly adapted categorical stimuli by Fischler et al. (1983). The second type manipulated verb-object congruency (congruent vs. incongruent, e.g. The woman reads a/no newspaper/bicycle) with a potential suppressing effect of the negation word.

The analysis included the ERP effects for the negation words and the sentence final objects as well as analysis in the time-frequency domain. The results from 21 native German participants showed that the typographic marking with uppercase affects the negation word processing, but that the semantic processing of target words seems not significantly affected by that. Furthermore, negation in both contexts proved to be effortful, which underlined the usefulness of the Easy Language recommendation.

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Comparing Sentence Alignment Methods for Automatic Simplification of German Texts

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Research on automatic text simplification has become widespread. While many contributions exist for English, work on German is far less numerous. Among the existing approaches, many treat the task as one of automatically translating a standard-language text into a simplified-language version using (sentence-based) neural machine translation. The success of such approaches is contingent on the availability of high-quality sentence alignments. Sentence alignment of standard and simplified texts is a challenging task due to the fact that simplification often summarizes the content of the original document. Alignments of the form $n:m$ are common: sentences in the original text can be split up across multiple sentences, or conversely, be omitted in the simplified version.

In this contribution, we compare different sentence alignment methods against a manually created gold standard compiled from four sources of standard German/simplified German document pairs: a collection of parallel texts crawled from websites in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, parallel news articles from the Austria Press Agency (APA), parallel texts from capito, a provider of manual simplification services, and articles from the German Wikipedia aligned with “Simple German” articles obtained through automatic translation of Simple English Wikipedia articles. For each of the four sources, our gold standard features 1,500 simplified sentences aligned to their complex counterparts. The gold standard was created by two independent annotators and an arbitrator who took the final decision in cases of disagreement.

Among the alignment methods compared are simplification-specific alignment tools, such as CATS (Štajner et al., 2018) and MASSAlign (Paetzold et al., 2017), as well as tools developed in the context of bilingual sentence alignment, such as LASER (Schwenk and Douze, 2017). We report on the type of alignments supported by the different methods, present the results of our evaluation against the human gold standard, and establish mandatory features for monolingual sentence alignment.

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First Attempt to help People with Cognitive Disabilities to understand Micropoems

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People with cognitive disabilities present difficulties in reading comprehension, communication, and ability to respond to routine situations. Of course, people with disabilities have the right to participate in the activities of the society in the same way as others¹. Putting the emphasis on culture, it is crucial for people with cognitive disabilities to enjoy their leisure time as well as to enjoy and understand literary texts. To improve the daily life of people with cognitive disabilities, materials can be manually adapted following the Easy-to-Read (E2R) Methodology [1, 2, 3]. However, this process is a human resource consuming process, due to the need of involving people with cognitive impairments as well as E2R experts. To facilitate this adaptation process, semi-automatic tools for validating materials [4, 5] and for transforming texts [6] can be used. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is not significant research on the adaptation of literary texts following E2R guidelines with the aim of helping people with cognitive disabilities to understand creative materials.

To overcome this research gap, we propose to develop a method and a software pilot called SUPER (SUGgesting microPoems in E2R), based on the use of AI techniques, to automatically suggest micropoems² in compliance to the E2R Methodology, so they can be more easily understood.

Our research methodology has included four activities: (1) to explore what are the main difficulties in the comprehension of micropoems by people with cognitive impairments; (2) to investigate and decide the most appropriate AI techniques to be used; (3) to create a method and to implement SUPER; and (4) to evaluate our approach. Since readability indices are frequently used as a way to know how easy is to comprehend a text [7], we have evaluated our approach by comparing readability scores of both original and adapted micropoems.

¹ Ley General de derechos de las personas con discapacidad y de su inclusión social. Versión en lectura fácil. (December 2015).

² Micropoetry is a genre of poetic verse which is characterized by its extreme brevity, is written usually with a language different from standard spelling and grammar conventions, and is often found online, mostly on Twitter (<https://twitter.com>)

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Simplification as Transportation of Language Barriers: Popularization of Science Through Museum Texts

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The aim of this presentation is to instate linguistic simplification procedures in specialized texts dealing with scientific issues as a form of intralingual transposition. Hence, a corpus of specialized texts lifted from the Museu de Ciências e Tecnologia da PUCRS, in Brazil, has been used. This genre has been studied under a doctoral investigation within a research group devoted to studies in the areas of Terminology and Translation at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul (<http://www.ufrgs.br/textecc/acessibilidade/>), in Brazil. The texts in the corpus have been simplified with an eye to making scientific information more easily understood for lower-literacy audiences (Elementary and Middle school students, elderly individuals, etc.). As we want to demonstrate, this kind of simplification can be considered as intralingual translation, a type of translation in which the source and target languages are the same. In an effort to break down a communication barrier (2009, ZETHSEN), we are dealing with the principles of the concept of Textual and Terminological Accessibility (2016, FINATTO).

This is a new area of studies that is mostly devoted to presenting scientific information more easily understandable for lower-literacy individuals. Upon comparing and contrasting the simplified corpus with its original counterpart, it has been found that the task of simplification, by virtue of the variety of strategies that have been implemented, is a very complex and time-consuming activity that deserves attention from researchers. It is hoped that this presentation can serve as a wake-up call for translation practitioners to revisit the status intralingual translation should have within Translation Studies and attract other language and discourse researchers to develop studies in the area.

Keywords: Intralingual Translation; Text simplification; Science Museum.

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Numerical Data in Easy Language News Articles at RTV Slovenija

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A substantial part of the news is about numbers. The outbreak of the coronavirus epidemic in 2020 brought about the rise of numerical data and statistical representations in news reporting. The small difference in numbers made a big difference between epidemic veering out of control and taming the spread of an epidemic by, for example, lockdown policies.

At RTV Slovenija, the Slovenian National Broadcaster, we've started to create and adapt news in Easy Language in the middle of March 2020, on the same day that Slovenia declared a coronavirus epidemic. In creating and adapting news articles in Easy Slovenian the journalistic need for accuracy and the need for comprehensibility and understandability as seen in Easy Language collide. Our system of validation is due to the fast tempo of news publication (mostly) set post festum: the testing groups or individuals test some of the news articles after publication and through their feedback, we set the standards for certain characteristics of the texts on which we rely further on.

As coronavirus took the central role of the news items, the multi-digit numbers became the core information within news reporting. We had to develop a strategy to inform the target groups of our news texts adequately, but at the same time retain the accurateness as we have to adhere to certain journalism standards. And with the constant change of measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus came the need to differentiate the days of the week with more adequate dates. The presentation at the conference will show the results of the validation by the testing groups and what were the strategies that we've employed to tackle the aforementioned problems within news reporting in Easy Language and numerical data.

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Reflections on Easy Language

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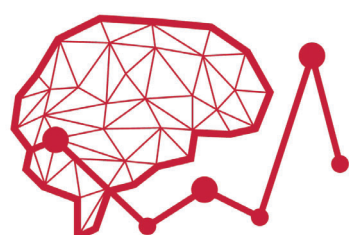
Referring to the paper “Ambivalenzen Leichter Sprache” (“Ambivalences of Easy Language”), which will have been published by the time of the conference (Trescher 2021), I will present some key findings of my recent research. This research included extensive literature analysis and interviews. The literature review was conducted by a systematic literature research that combines quantitative and qualitative elements. The interviews with people with ‘learning difficulties’ have been analyzed with the help of a qualitative-content analytical method (Trescher 2021). The theoretical reflection of these results leads to a discussion of the ambivalences of Easy Language. Consequently, the aim is to reflect not only on arguments in favour of and against the use of Easy Language but also on the people who are addressed by it. Furthermore, the following questions will be discussed:

- Who will be addressed and who will not be addressed by Easy Language?
- Should Easy Language be a special language or the lingua franca?
- How can we deal with modern forms of language such as ‘Netspeech’?
- Technical simplification involves simplified content, how can we solve this problem?
- Do varieties of translation represent a problem?
- How can experiences of marginalisation and infantilisation be addressed?
- What role does the tool ‘Easy Language’ play in the everyday life of the target group?
- Do we risk creating ‘losers of inclusion’ as many persons with learning difficulties cannot read at all?
- Can Easy Language enable – or at least extend – fluency, social affiliation and participation in society?
- Does Easy Language reproduce the label ‘disabled’ for the people who use it?
- What role could Easy Language play in educational settings?

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