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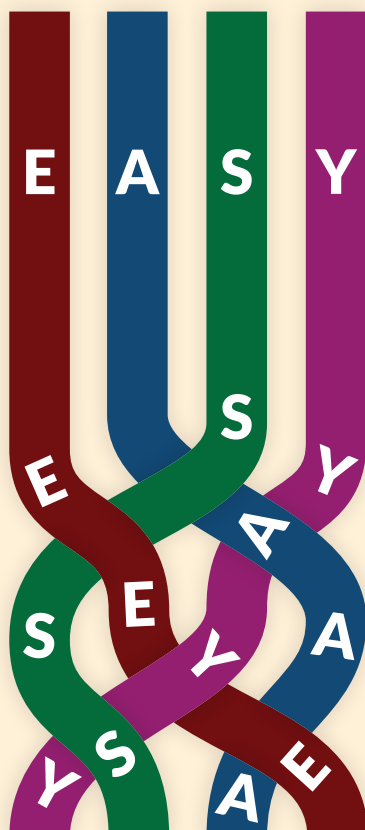
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Tēzes

Abstracts

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Leealaura Leskelä

From the fringes to the forefront of societal equality – developing Easy Language in Finland

Since the 1980s, Finland has developed and promoted the use of Easy Language in order to support people with linguistic restrictions to function in society. In the beginning, Easy Language was mainly tied to people with intellectual disabilities, whose independent living was thought to be aided by using this language variety. Like many Western countries, Finland had a long history of housing people with disabilities in institutions, in which linguistic support was not seen essential. As living in institutions was gradually replaced by community-based housing, the need for Easy Language became increasingly apparent.

These developments launched in Finland the production of Easy Language materials, the goal of which was to inform and educate, provide instructions and improve life management of people with intellectual disabilities. However, people do not use language only to get information, but to gain reading experiences, to express themselves, and to exercise their democratic rights and responsibilities. In addition, many other groups of people may also benefit Easy Language, such as older adults with dementia-related illnesses, people with severe reading difficulties, and language learners. It was soon noted in Finland that Easy Language can also serve these needs and these groups of users – if it is given the opportunity to develop beyond strict boundaries.

At first, Easy Language caused confusion, as many considered Finns to be excellent readers who do not need linguistic simplification. Both justified criticism and unfounded fears were raised. Where justified criticism has always advanced Easy Language, intimidation has increased the stigma and been harmful to people who need Easy Language. Little by little, however, Easy Language has overcome many obstacles and gained societal acceptance. This development has been supported by the signing and ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Finland in 2016.

Finland's strength lies in its long practical experience with Easy Language. Over the decades, empirical knowledge has been accumulated about what works and what does not, what kinds of materials are needed and who needs them in which situation. Easy Language research does not have such long roots in Finland, but in the last ten years it has also begun to make progress.

In this keynote speech, I will take you on a journey from the early stages of developing Easy Language in Finland to the present day. The path has not always been

straightforward but sometimes included winding side routes. As many of these side routes have been necessary to elevate Easy Language from the margins towards a more central social position, I will not only talk about successes but also reflect on failures.

Christiane Maaß

Easy Language in Germany and the role of the Research Center for Easy Language

The lecture focuses on the situation of Easy Language in Germany, its origins and current status, and the role of the Research Center for Easy Language, of which I am the director. Following several pilot projects, particularly in the legal and administrative fields, the center was founded at the University of Hildesheim in January 2014. The goals were to research Easy Language, but also to model functional rules and test them empirically. Text-based and user-based methods were used. I will discuss the resources and funding sources that the research center has relied on to fulfill its tasks and explain how it sees itself as a research institution. In the early years, Easy Language was not yet a scholarly subject, and the research community had reservations about engaging with it. We still encounter these reservations in many countries today, despite the situation having changed in recent years. On the other hand, there have been repeated attempts from the practical field to co-opt the research center for activist goals or to deny its legitimacy to research an empowerment subject using scientific methods. At the same time, we can look back on a rich tradition of projects with various practical partners with whom we have helped shape the field. The special nature of a research center for Easy Language has had an impact on the political perception of the subject, which is evident, among other things, in the standardization processes undertaken for German Easy Language, in which I was involved. The lecture will also present the research lines of recent years – from text type-oriented studies to user studies with different target groups to processes of automatic text generation and translation process research related to Easy Language – and will outline their impact on professional practice.

Ina Druviete

Easy Language in Latvia: Sociolinguistic context, legal framework, and taxonomic challenges

In today's world, the conceptually new mode of language existence—Easy Language—has become an integral component of many languages' diverse manifestations. The wealth of practical experience accumulated in many countries has made it possible to approach an almost common understanding of the social aspects of Easy Language usage and linguistic structure. However, these basic principles are implemented differently across countries. It is necessary to examine the impact of each country's sociolinguistic situation, legislative framework, and linguistic traditions on the implementation of the Easy Language concept in order to enhance the theoretical approach to Easy Language. This paper will examine Latvian legislation, the status of research, and its impact on traditional assumptions in linguistics.

In 1999, the government's policy paper Equal Opportunities for All marked the first official recognition of the necessity of Easy Language for the inclusion of people with disabilities. Easy Language is also mentioned in the Guidelines for National Language Policy 2021–2027, which highlights the need for research and usage of Easy Language. Targeted scientific research into Easy Language began with the Erasmus+ project Promoting Easy-to-Read for Social Inclusion (PERLSI). This cooperation also served as the basis for a university course on Easy Language.

While interpreting Easy Latvian through the lens of variety linguistics is theoretically possible, no strict hierarchy of varieties is recognized in Latvia. The standard language has never been associated with power relations between social strata. Therefore, the more suitable framework for the Latvian linguistic context is the traditional conditional trichotomy: Standard language – regiolect (dialect) – sociolect (colloquial speech). Within this classification, Easy Language should be positioned as a modified form of the Latvian literary (Standard) language, characterized by specific features.

Ulla Bohman

Easy Language – a tool for accessible culture

It is a Human Right to have access to culture, both as a consumer and as a creator. The awareness about physical barriers is fairly known and these are often being removed.

But the barriers for people who has cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities to access culture and to participate in various culture activities are still high. These target groups have difficulties in finding information about cultural activities. They very often do not feel that they can participate or should participate. When museums for example want, and sometimes also need, more visitors, this is a potential group of visitors that are left behind.

In Sweden as well as within Europe there are several projects running now about Accessible Culture. This presentation will share information and findings on how to make museums, theatre and other stage performances and various forms of culture more accessible to a larger audience by using Easy Language. Accessibility is important in all steps – in information before the visit, when making exhibitions and performances, in audio guides and guided tours. The presentation will also cover how institutions can work successfully together with target groups to make culture activities more accessible to a bigger audience. It will also give some examples of how it is not enough to make just the language easy to understand. The content and presentation are equally important. And, how often the accessible Easy Language version of information is highly appreciated by so many more than people with cognitive and/or intellectual disabilities.

Karolina Ruta–Korytowska, Sandra Kaczmarek, Elżbieta Grądziel

Can art be accessible? On the (in)effectiveness of ETR based on curatorial descriptions of exhibitions

The conference paper presents a summary and extension of research conducted as part of the project (In)Complete Access to Culture: A Study of Information and Communication Accessibility in Cultural Institutions.

The motivation for undertaking this research stemmed from the recognition of significant limitations in cultural participation among persons with intellectual disabilities. Our findings indicate that this group engages in cultural activities only to a limited extent. Survey data revealed that many individuals with intellectual disabilities either do not understand museum descriptions or do not read them at all, assuming in advance that they will not be comprehensible. The language used in exhibition texts often includes specialized terminology accessible only to a narrow group of art-informed readers. However, exhibitions are created not only by artists and curators but also by their audiences. After all, the right to participate in culture is a fundamental human right.

The first stage of the project involved assessing the extent to which cultural institutions are accessible to individuals with specific communication needs. In the subsequent phase, we undertook actions aimed at fostering greater information and communication inclusivity. Specifically, we developed ETR descriptions of selected artworks exhibited at the National Museum in Poznań (Poland). These texts were created in simplified language to ensure greater accessibility and were later evaluated for their effectiveness. To this end, we conducted consultations with individuals with intellectual disabilities to determine which aspects of the adapted texts enhanced comprehension compared to the original versions. We examined both the linguistic layer (lexical and syntactic structures) and the overall text organization, including visual elements such as illustrations.

In our presentation, we will share the conclusions drawn from this stage of the project and attempt to answer the question of whether Easy-to-Read texts truly fulfil their intended function. We will also discuss the challenges we encountered when applying this format to the domain of visual art.

Laura Vilkaitė–Lozdienė, Justina Bružaitė–Liseckienė

Easy Language: If it is easy for some, is it easy for all?

When describing target readers of Easy Language texts, practitioners and advocates of Easy Language tend to list quite a few groups of people who would benefit from accessible communication. People with intellectual disabilities and second-language speakers are usually mentioned. However, the same general principles of simplifying texts are applied.

While researchers have already been asking how much these principles are empirically grounded (e.g., González-Sordé & Matamala, 2024), this question becomes even more complex if one takes different reader groups into account. Considering that some need Easy Language due to cognitive challenges, while others due to lower linguistic competence, it is unclear whether different language groups find the same linguistic constructions easier or more challenging to process.

In the present study, we set out to experimentally explore whether the same lexical and morphosyntactic features affect language processing for two Easy Language user groups: people with intellectual disabilities and language learners.

We have designed a self-paced reading experiment that allows us to capture the reading times of each word of the text to measure the reading process precisely. Our participants read six short texts. We have statistically analysed their reading times using linear mixed-effects models. Firstly, by looking at the processing speed of 60 target words used in the texts, we have explored how certain lexical features (namely, word frequency, concreteness, and length) affect their processing speed. Secondly, we have explored how using non-finite or alternative finite verbal constructions (n = 43 experimentally manipulated phrases) affects processing speed.

We will discuss the group differences and the implications that those have for writing Easy Language texts for different reader populations.

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Sarah Ahrens, Chiara Fioravanti

Exploring intercultural aspects of Easy Language: A scoping review

"Migrants" are often one of the target groups of Easy Languages – even in countries where Easy Language was originally a tool to address people with cognitive impairments, meaning Easy Language would be used intra-culturally. In communication with "migrants", however, Easy Language would be used inter-culturally, to bridge not only a linguistic, but also a cultural gap that affects expectations of text types, understanding of text and images, and evaluation of the text and its contents, among other elements. This scoping review aims to identify which considerations Easy Language writers need to make to adapt an Easy Language text to recent migrants who are still learning a target language. We aim to identify common content-related topics, linguistic features, and visual elements that need addressing in the design of intercultural Easy Language texts.

In 2024, we have collected 16 articles from Google Scholar using a search string containing the elements:

1. Visualisation
2. Text
3. Simplification
4. Migrants.

The articles include studies, conference papers, and theoretical works that are drawn from disciplines like communication and translation studies, health and administrative communication, cultural studies, and education.

We put emphasis on visual elements, including layout, typography, and imagery, and how they can or should be used in intercultural Easy Language texts. For example, ISO certified imagery has a stable meaning between cultures and could be leveraged for comprehensibility-enhanced texts; and it may be important for authors to know about layout conventions and how they shape reader expectations across cultures.

We are in the process of extracting key information from the 16 articles, and we will present our findings. The findings will act as a preliminary guide for developing best practices in this use of Easy Language, which is, in many countries, still an evolving field.

Elisa Perego

Why making (English) art audio description easy can matter

Art audio description (AD) is a form of intersemiotic translation that converts the salient visual elements of artworks into spoken verbal narratives, enabling access for blind and visually impaired museum visitors. As an accessibility practise increasingly used in Anglophone museums and galleries, art AD plays a vital role in inclusive cultural participation.

However, both quantitative and qualitative linguistic analyses of professional English art ADs show that these texts are often lexically rich and syntactically complex – features that stand in stark contrast to the principles of Easy Language. This raises a crucial question: How can art AD be adapted or repurposed in contexts where Easy Language is essential?

This presentation explores the potential of art AD as a tool not only for accessibility, but also for linguistic and emotional empowerment. It will argue that, when suitably mediated, art AD can support the development of creative and affective expression in Easy Language contexts. Particular attention will be paid to the ways in which art AD can promote a more emotionally and cognitively engaging experience for users by helping them to build their own expressive resources — whether in their native language or in a second language. The presentation aims to reframe the intersection of AD and Easy Language as an opportunity, especially in the context of educational and inclusive museums.

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Justina Bružaitė–Liseckienė, Laura Vilkaitė–Lozdienė

Does simplification of grammar reduce text acceptability?

Texts in Easy Language differ from typical texts in various ways. A different layout, simpler vocabulary, or the explanation of more difficult words draw the reader's attention. Grammatical choices also distinguish texts in Easy Language from standard texts. However, Easy Language experts and researchers note that comprehensibility and Easy Language rules do not always coincide with acceptability (Hansen-Schirra and Maaß 2020).

This study investigates how readers accept the grammatical simplification of verbal forms in Lithuanian. We asked the participants of the study to evaluate a list of sentence pairs. The sentences were identical apart from the fact that one sentence of a pair contained a non-finite verbal form, the other sentence of a pair contained an alternative finite verbal form, the use of which is recommended in the guidelines for easy Lithuanian (Bružaitė-Liseckienė, Daraškienė and Vilkaitė-Lozdienė 2021).

We administered the task individually and asked different groups of language users to choose their preferred sentence and comment on their experience of choosing between the sentences.

Two groups of participants evaluated 26 sentence pairs in standard language:
- Neurotypical young native speakers,
- Neurotypical aging individuals,

And another two groups evaluated 14 sentence pairs in Easy Language:
- People with cognitive impairments,
- Young L2 speakers.

We summarize the results of the study using descriptive statistics and content analysis of the participants' responses. Finally, we discuss the issue of metalinguistic awareness and verbalization in different groups of language users.

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Simone Girard–Groeber, Annette Lichtenauer, Thyra Krosness

Reading with Images: An interdisciplinary project on images in Easy Language texts among three different target groups

Images are regularly included in Easy Language (EL) texts, and some guidelines exist regarding their use. While initial studies have begun to explore aspects such as image type, text-image relations, and their influence on comprehension and user preference (e.g., Yaneva, 2016; Bock, 2019), empirical findings remain limited, leaving many answers unanswered. Given the diversity of potential influencing factors and target groups, further research is needed to clarify under which conditions images enhance comprehension.

In this talk, we will present an interdisciplinary research project that complements current findings and investigates how images influence comprehension, gaze behaviour, and the attractiveness of texts in three different target groups: people with intellectual disabilities, prelingually deaf people, and non-native speakers. By analysing gaze behaviour, fixation patterns, and subjective assessments, we want to understand how visual elements influence the reading process. In addition, we want to develop guidelines for practitioners who want to create images for their EL texts or need to assign illustrators with this task.

Initial findings from workshops conducted with both illustrators, text authors, and representatives of the target groups provide first insights into the text-image creation process. The results emphasize the importance of integrating image and text development from the outset and highlight the central role of close collaboration between the different actors involved – an approach also recommended in the German guideline DIN SPEC 33429. Moreover, based on the findings, we suggest that selecting which parts of a text to illustrate should be based on the macrostructure and core message of a text, rather than on surface-level linguistic features such as word types. These insights will be presented and discussed considering their relevance for user-centered design practices in Easy Language contexts.

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Andreea Deleanu, Sabine Braun, Constantin Orasan

Enhancing cognitive accessibility: Designing and trialling questionnaires for cognitively diverse audiences

While individuals with cognitive-related impairments (APA, 2013; COGA, 2017; Maaß, 2020; Perego, 2020) are entitled to Easy Language formats (UNCRPD, 2006; European Commission, 2019, 2021; European Parliament, 2016; ODI, 2010), current guidelines are often vague, leading to inconsistent practices (Deleanu et al., 2024). Moreover, due to time restraints, costs, and limited access to trained validators and end-users, professionals find themselves relying on in-house guidance and minimal feedback from actual end-users (Maaß, 2020).

This issue extends to academic research, where universities typically provide only standard versions of consent forms and information sheets, and encourage researchers to adapt them when participants with disabilities are involved. This leads to the creation of amateur Easy Language forms by researchers without adequate training in intralinguistic and intersemiotic translation. Consequently, the data collection process from cognitively diverse participants lacks depth and reliability. However, standard surveys, demographic forms, and questionnaires require careful adaptation to the individual needs, expectations, and preferences of participants. This is particularly relevant in Media Accessibility research, where enjoyment, immersion, and comprehension are often assessed using paper forms in group sessions.

Our paper addresses this challenge by presenting a detailed procedure for designing, validating, and adapting research data collection forms to the individual preferences and needs of associations for adults with learning disabilities. Specifically, it outlines the development of adapted questionnaires used to assess the experience of adult audiences with learning disabilities in a film screening session.

Leealaura Leskelä, Chiara Fioravanti, Sarah Ahrens

Easy Language for migrants: Scenarios, opportunities, and challenges

Literature and guidelines consider recent migrants who are learning the language of the host country as their second language (L2) to be a target audience for Easy Language (EL) content. While in countries like Finland and Japan, EL is widely used for migrants, the use of EL for this target group remains relatively limited in countries like Germany and Italy. This is despite its scope of overcoming communication barriers, possibly helping recent migrants access essential information, such as legal and healthcare content.

In this presentation, we will be examining the contexts in which EL texts are used to address migrants (e.g., in education, administrative communication, health communication), and when, where, how, and by whom EL texts are used. We will also bring up possible obstacles public institutions may face in adopting EL.

Finally, we will reflect on the design of EL texts. We will point out the intercultural aspects of creating common grounds, like different understandings of certain words, symbols or imagery, as well as linguistic considerations for a non-native speaking target audience.

The final goal of our reflection is to gain a better understanding of the ways and contexts in which EL can play a strategic role in promoting the inclusion and participation of newcomers in the host society.

Adrianna Glegoła

Making medical information more accessible to deaf people? An analysis of easy-to-read texts and Polish sign language translations

Introduction

Many texts we encounter daily – such as legal documents, informational leaflets, device manuals, and even medical information – are written in a way that makes them difficult to understand.

A report from 2023 highlights concerning statistics about adult reading comprehension, revealing that 39% of Polish hearing respondents experience significant difficulties in understanding texts (Sitek et al., 2024). Reading skills influence how we acquire, select, and process information. International researchers show that the Deaf have poorer access to health care, face difficulties in communicating with doctors, and have limited access to health information (Morisod, K. et al., 2022, Chandanabhumma, P. P. et al., 2024).

In Poland, as in many other countries, the Internet has become a primary source of information. However, online texts often contain specialized and complex vocabulary that can be challenging even for native speakers. While written text may seem perceptually accessible to Deaf people, it is usually difficult to understand. This is because Polish is the second or third language acquired by the Deaf in Poland (Kotowicz, 2013).

Modern societies are increasingly prioritizing accessibility for the Deaf by introducing standards that remove communication barriers. One proposed solution is to use various text adaptations, such as Easy-to-Read (ETR) texts and translations into sign language. Research in the United States has shown that simplifying medical texts can significantly improve comprehension for Deaf readers (Kushalnagar et al., 2018). This study aims to conduct a similar analysis in Poland, considering the role of Polish Sign Language (in Polish PJM - Polski Jęzk Migowy) in their communication.

Goal

The main goal of this study is to examine how different forms of adapted text, such as ETR, simplified texts written in plain language, Polish Sign Language (PJM) translation, and their combination, affect text comprehension among the

Deaf in Poland. The study aims to answer questions about the effectiveness of these strategies and their combinations in improving access to health-related information. A key focus will be to determine whether text adaptations can serve as an independent alternative to sign language translation. Additionally, the study will assess how medical texts should be adapted to better meet the needs of the Deaf, ensuring their access to reliable health information.

The key research questions are:
1. How does the linguistic structure of Polish texts impact reading comprehension for the Deaf in Poland?
2. Do adapted texts provide better communication effectiveness than PJM translations?
3. Does combining text adaptation with PJM translation lead to better comprehension compared to using only one of these methods?

Data

The study analyses three different versions of the same medical content:
1. Original text (control group) – publicly accessible medical text from an online source.
2. Easy-to-Read (ETR) text – adapted according to Inclusion Europe standards, featuring simplified sentence structures, accessible vocabulary, and clear formatting.
3. PJM translation – a video recording by a Deaf sign language interpreter.

The research scenario for this study is as follows: the research group consists of Deaf participants only, divided into subgroups, each receiving a different version of the text. After reading or watching the material, participants complete a comprehension test and participate in a qualitative interview. During the preparation of materials, readability assessment tools developed by Gruszczyński et al. (2015) are used, including a web-based application that analyses sentence length, the presence of complex words, and syntactic structures that may affect text clarity.

Potential Research Extensions

The results of the study show how different forms of text adaptation, such as ETR and Polish Sign Language (PJM) translations, affect text comprehension among the Deaf in Poland. They will be discussed in detail in my presentation. In the future, the same study could be conducted with hearing participants to compare whether specific adaptations enhance comprehension for both groups. These findings may support future research on communication accessibility and help develop effective standards for text adaptation.

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Tools and Applications used

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Logios Redaktor – https://redaktor.logios.dev/config

https://www.plainlanguage.gov/

Laura Marie Maaß

Sign language–oriented Easy Language plus: Accessible communication for deaf people

Easy Language (s. ICS 01.140.10) was originally developed for people with intellectual disabilities but is now used for many other target groups. One of the typical target groups are deaf people, who often have the average reading level of a hearing fourth grader due to the inadequate educational opportunities for deaf people (see Deilen 2022). However, sign language users often perceive classic Easy Language as highly stigmatising (see Maaß 2020). This is partly because the deaf community strongly identifies with the use of German Sign Language. Easy Language Plus offers an alternative.

A central aspect of Easy Language Plus is its flexibility. It is optimised for different target groups, including deaf people, older people, people with dementia or people for whom German is a second language. This creates a form of communication that can be adapted to different needs, thus facilitating access to information while keeping stigmatisation to a minimum.

Sign language-oriented Easy Language Plus (SLO+) was developed for prelingually deaf sign language users. It is more strongly oriented towards the structure of sign language in its syntax, grammar, and choice of words. For example, the typical sequence of information is adapted, typical lexemes or expressions from sign language are included, and the syntax is adapted to the structure of sign language.

Based on the findings of comprehensibility research, important terms are deliberately emphasised, and complex sentence structures are avoided. These linguistic adaptations can significantly improve comprehensibility for deaf people. We have initial findings from the world's largest survey on the collaboration between sign language interpreters and their deaf clients, with around 800 participants (s. Maaß, LM 2025 in prep).

The lecture will present SLO+ as a communication concept. Both the theoretical foundations and practical examples of application are explained, showing how a linguistic approach to sign language improves comprehensibility for deaf people.

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Velga Polinska

Eiropas Piekļūstamības direktīvas ietekme uz vieglās valodas lietojumu Latvijā: novērojumi un rekomendācijas

The impact of the European Accessibility Act on the use of Easy Language in Latvia: observations and recommendations

Latvijā trūkst tiesību aktu, kas regulētu vieglās valodas lietojumu. Termins "vieglā valoda" iekļauts tikai Ministru kabineta 2020. gada 14. jūlija noteikumos Nr. 445 "Kārtība, kādā iestādes ievieto informāciju internetā", nosakot, ka valsts un pašvaldību iestāžu vietnes jābūt sadaļai "Viegli lasīt" ar īsu informāciju par iestādi un citu informāciju, kas varētu būt nepieciešama iestādes klientiem. Šajā sadaļā ietvertajai informācijai jābūt vieglajā valodā (MK 2020).

2019. gadā publicētā Eiropas Piekļūstamības direktīva, kas paredz noteiktās jomās izplatīt un sniegt tikai piekļūstamas preces un pakalpojumus, viesa cerību, ka aktīvi pieaugs pieprasījums arī pēc satura piekļūstamības. Direktīva Latvijā iestrādāta piecos likumos: Preču un pakalpojumu piekļūstamības likumā, Likumā par atbilstības novērtēšanu, Publisko iepirkumu likumā, Sabiedrisko pakalpojumu sniedzēju iepirkumu likumā, kā arī Elektronisko sakaru likumā. Šajos tiesību aktos noteiktās prasības jau ir stājušās spēkā. Tomēr prasības, kas attiecas uz informācijas saturisko izklāstu, ir nekonkrētas – likumi paredz, ka informācijai par drošību, lietošanas norādījumiem un citai būtiskai informācijai jābūt rakstītai skaidrā, saprotamā un viegli uztveramā valodā.

Arī prakse rāda, ka tehnoloģisko risinājumu nodrošināšanas informācijas piekļūstamības kontekstā tiek skatīta biežāk nekā valodas vienkāršošana. Piemēram, Nacionālās elektronisko plašsaziņas līdzekļu padomes ziņojumā par pakalpojumu pieejamības veicināšanu 2024. gadā, plaši aprakstīti dažādi subtitrēšanas aspekti, zīmju valodas pieejamība, taču vieglā valoda nodrošināta tikai Latvijas Radio ziņu raidījumā, kas klausītājiem pieejams kopš 2016. gada – tātad vieglās valodas lietojums plašsaziņas līdzekļos nav pieaudzis (NEPLP 2025).

Satura piekļūstamības trūkums cieši saistīts ar izpratnes trūkumu par vieglās valodas nozīmi dažādās mērķgrupās. Vieglā valoda aizvien pakļauta stigmatizācijai un noraidošai sabiedrības attieksmei. Piemēram, 2022. gadā veikts pētījums parādīja, ka vairumam cilvēku apziņa, ka speciāli viņiem sagatavo informāciju

vieglajā valodā, radītu diskomfortu, pat kaunu. Taču vienlaikus cilvēki atzīst, ka ir piedzīvojuši situācijas, kad nespēj saprast kādas valsts iestādes vēstījumu (Polinska 2024, 106). Tāpat satura piekļūstamības kvalitāti tieši ietekmē zināšanas par tekstu adaptāciju vieglajā un vienkāršajā valodā. Patlaban arī MK noteikumi nesniedz norādes par sadaļas "Viegli lasīt" satura izklāstu, tāpēc šīs prasības izpilde bieži ir tikai formāla (Polinska 2024, 103).

Lai Piekļūstamības direktīvas prasības par skaidru, saprotamu un viegli uztveramu valodu varētu īstenot pēc būtības, nevis tikai formāli, nepieciešamas vienotas rekomendācijas valsts līmenī. Tāpat tekstu veidotājiem būtu jānodrošina iespēja saņemt konsultācijas pie nozares speciālistiem. Papildus tam jāturpina darbs pie sabiedrības izglītošanas, jo, paaugstinot izpratni par vieglās valodas nozīmi, pieaug arī sociālās atbildības līmenis.

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Idastiina Valtasalmi

Text and user perspectives on Easy Language vocabulary: Academic dissertation focusing on Easy Finnish

This presentation introduces an academic dissertation that focuses on Easy Language vocabulary from text and user perspectives (N.N.). Although the dissertation is related to Easy Finnish, many of the results are applicable to Easy Languages in general. The dissertation further defines the lexical criteria of basic-level Easy Finnish presented in Selkomittari (Selkokeskus 2022). The lexical criteria include, for example, word frequency, familiarity, length, and concreteness. The dissertation also provides new information on the lexical knowledge of adults with intellectual disabilities who read texts in basic-level Easy Finnish.

The lexical criteria were studied from a text perspective by comparing Easy Finnish and standard Finnish text corpora. The criteria were also studied from the user perspective by conducting surveys and empirical tests. Data were analysed using multiple methods. The results indicated, for example, that word frequency could be assessed with frequency of occurrence and frequency of encounters. The results also indicated, for example, that Easy-Finnish readers with intellectual disabilities knew especially well concrete words that higher education students had rated as very familiar.

In this presentation, practical suggestions are made for assessing words when writing texts in Easy Language. Suggestions are also made on reducing cognitive and attitudinal barriers to access when the target audience of an Easy Language text consists of adults with intellectual disabilities.

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N.N.

Vilma Wacklin, Idastiina Valtasalmi, Juuli Vallinen, Liisa Mustanoja

How to use bias–free language in Easy Language research?

Easy Language research has gained momentum in Finland in recent years, with a growing interest in user-based research topics. Thus, more information is needed about writing about research participants with inclusivity and respect. Research participants of user-based studies may include persons with and without disabilities, and the groups may be compared. In this presentation, we discuss how bias-free language may be used when collecting data and reporting research results.

We argue that bias-free language is an essential skill for Easy Language researchers. The topics of our presentation are based on English-language guidelines for bias-free language presented by the American Psychological Association. The guidelines include topics such as general principles for reducing bias (American Psychological Association 2024a) and participation in research (American Psychological Association 2024b). In our presentation, we examine bias-free language as a linguistic means for reducing attitudinal barriers in communication.

Some of the principles of bias-free language are mentioned in the Easy Finnish Indicator 2.0 (2022), which is a tool for assessing whether a text meets the criteria for easy Finnish. Previous study has also shown that person-first expressions favoured in bias-free language are often used in easy Finnish (Valtasalmi 2021). Therefore, bias-free language is relevant not only in Easy Language research but also in producing texts in Easy Language.

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Lena Wieland, Ingo Reich

Figurative language in easy German: Comprehension and preference in adult low-literacy readers

Idioms such as "am Ball bleiben" ('stay on the ball', fig. 'persist') are often excluded from Easy German due to concerns that they are inaccessible to readers with limited literacy or cognitive resources. However, empirical support for this exclusion remains limited.

This study investigates whether idioms are truly inaccessible to adult low-literacy readers, or whether their comprehensibility depends on more specific linguistic and reader-level factors. To address this, we examined how idiom comprehension and preference are influenced by semantic transparency, whether figurative meaning can be derived from constituent parts. We also examined literal plausibility – whether the literal meaning fits the context – literacy, and familiarity.

We tested five hypotheses:
1. transparency supports figurative meaning,
2. plausibility reduces idiomatic preference,
3. transparency facilitates figurative interpretation when plausibility is low but promotes literal construal when plausibility is high,
4. higher literacy enhances figurative construal,
5. familiarity improves both interpretation and preference.

The study included four experiments:
1. literacy assessment (Exp1),
2. idiom norming (Exp2),
3. no-context comprehension task (Exp3),
4. contextualized comprehension and preference task (Exp4).

In Exp2, 30 typical readers rated 71 idioms; 24 were selected for a 2×2 design crossing transparency and plausibility and used in Exp3–4 with 30 low-literacy adults.

In Exp3, comprehension was predicted by plausibility ($b = 0.44$, $p = .008$) and literacy ($b = 0.03$, $p < .001$), with an interaction ($b = −1.36$, $p < .001$) indicating literal bias for transparent–plausible idioms.

In Exp4, familiarity predicted comprehension ($b = 0.71$, $p = .024$), with marginal effects of literacy and transparency. Idioms were preferred over distractors ($b = 4.60$, $p < .001$), but not over literal paraphrases.

Our findings challenge the assumption that idioms must be categorically excluded from accessible communication. When idioms are familiar and contextually supported, figurative meaning is often recoverable – even for low-literacy readers. However, literal plausibility can still lead to misinterpretation. We argue for nuanced, evidence-based idiom guidelines in Easy Language, balancing accessibility with linguistic richness.

Silke Gutermuth, Silvia Hansen–Schirra,
Dimitrios Kapnas, Moritz Schaeffer

The intralingual translation and interpreting competence questionnaire: An online tool for research on translators and interpreters for Easy Language

Despite the growth of research on Easy Language as a form of intralingual translation, measures of competence in such activities typically stem from informal, non-validated instruments. This scenario casts doubts on the ensuing findings and hinders comparability across studies. To address the issue, we introduce the intralingual Translation and Interpreting Competence Questionnaire (iTICQ), an online tool for collecting relevant quantitative and qualitative data.

The instrument comprises three sections. Section A covers demographic data and aspects of language history and linguistic (including multilingual) abilities. Sections B and C focus on intralingual translation and interpreting competence, respectively, via self-rating scales on modality-specific skills and questions about procedural, declarative, and otherwise professional factors.

Following the stringent validation procedure applied to the interlingual version of the questionnaire (TICQ, Schaeffer et al. 2019), we will test whether the iTICQ can robustly classify subjects in terms of their actual status (laymen, students, professionals with different backgrounds) in the Easy Language communities and will present first results of completed questionnaires. Currently, the iTICQ is available in two languages, English and German, but it is fully customizable, and it can be administered online, locally or in pen-and-paper format. Briefly, this user-friendly tool provides comprehensive information for empirical investigations in the field of Easy Language translation, offering unprecedented opportunities to enhance sample selection, between-study comparisons, and meta analytic research.

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Katy Brickley, Wilczek Watson

Applying transpositional grammar to easy read practice and research

In the UK, Easy Read translations aim to make information easier to understand for people with a learning disability or cognitive impairment. However, Easy Read practitioners currently lack systematic linguistic frameworks in this "decision making process" (Schaffner 2001:238) to teach Easy Read or examine how meaning is translated into this new format.

This study explores Transpositional Grammar (Cope and Kalantzis 2020, Kalantzis and Cope 2020) as a structured approach to teaching and analysing Easy Read. Drawing from linguistic theory and auto-ethnographic practical applications, we demonstrate how Transpositional Grammar, as a grammar of multimodal meaning, can support translators to systematise the process of simplification and easification, while maintaining semantic integrity.

By applying the framework in a training context, this research offers new insights into pedagogical strategies for Easy Read trainers. We also discuss the potential benefits of this framework to study and evaluate easy read texts, using multimodal inclusive news as an example. This invites discussions on implications for standardisation, effectiveness, and real-world applications.

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Tiina Onikki–Rantajääskö

Analysis of meaning in easy Finnish: Cognitive semantics viewpoint

The true measure of the effectiveness of Easy Language is to assess how discourses resonate with the target audience. There are inevitably gaps in the texts in relation to the background knowledge required of the reader. While simple sentence structures and common words help comprehension, they alone are not enough. Different audiences and even individuals have different needs for explanations and clarifications. However, meeting these needs should not disrupt the flow of information or unnecessarily lengthen the text.

Analysis of Easy Language texts benefits from a coherent theory of meaning. In the approach presented in this paper, the meaning organisation is analysed according to the principles of cognitive semantics, and in particular, some concepts of cognitive grammar are applied, such as knowledge frames as part of figure–ground organisation.

This paper focuses on examples of informal test situations in which radio journalists evaluated a new Easy Finnish radio news format with panels of three target groups:

1. immigrant L2-speakers
2. aphasic persons
3. people with disabilities.

The results varied by target group. Immigrant speakers struggled with culture-bound information and felt frustrated by the repetition of unfamiliar keywords. People with disabilities were easily bored by over-familiar topics, while people with aphasia appreciated repetition (Rantanen 2025).

For more than 15 years, Easy Language journalists in Finland have used audience panels to test the comprehension of Easy Finnish news. However, the tests have been informal and have not been documented. To establish research relationships, students initially documented existing testing protocols and their results (Lumerto & Salmi 2023, Rantanen 2025).

The results are helpful in designing research on understandability. Furthermore, the results can be used in integrating Easy Language into the communication of different organisations and training AI to produce simplification of texts.

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Eliisa Uotila

Intersubjectivity in news genre?
A case of explaining in Easy Language news

The case of explaining is discussed as an example of explicit intersubjectivity in the news genre, where on standard schemas it doesn't necessarily belong. It brings forth the lack of common ground (e.g., Clark 1996) and the active attempt to evoke necessary domains for the shared current discourse space (Langacker 2008) for the audience to be able to carry on and understand the news broadcast.

The research is using qualitative text linguistics as its method, and the aim of the study is to map out what gets explained by Easy Language news and how these explanations are interpreted. Explaining (e.g., Calsamiglia & Van Dijk 2004; Dalton-Puffer 2007) can be seen as part of dialogical interaction written into the text that calls the audience to be a part of the discourse community of the news genre. In the data, explaining occurs as in the example below:

"Hybridiautojen myynti on kasvanut Euroopassa. Hybridiauto voi kulkea sekä bensalla että sähköllä. Viime vuonna hybridiautoja myytiin ensimmäisen kerran yhtä paljon kuin dieselautoja." – YleSELKO88

Translation:

"The number of hybrid cars has grown in Europe. Hybrid cars can use both gas and electricity. Last year, for the first time, there were just as many hybrid cars sold as diesel engine cars."

Through dimensions of construal (Langacker 2008), different intersubjective strategies of explaining are mapped, including, e.g., leaning to conceptual hierarchies (see example above) or processual description. The results show different kinds of approaches on how subjectively or objectively the conceptualizer is construed to the explanation and how the explanations differ in the way they're being mentally scanned. Also, explaining in Easy Language news is compared with explaining in standard language news and their differences in this respect will be discussed.

The data set of this study is self-collected corpora of non-topic-related Easy Language news on radio and their standard language counterparts (n 105 pairs from years 2019–2022, Yle Finnish broadcasting company). Easy Language (e.g., Leskelä, Mustajoki & Piehl 2022) is a language form designed for people to whom standard language is too difficult (reasons being, e.g., language learner status or developmental disability).

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Anna Celine Mark

ORF easy-to-understand-news

Approximately 1.3 million people in Austria alone rely on Easy-to-Understand News (E2U-News) for various reasons. Since 2017, ORF has been offering 'News in Plain Language', focusing on developing content for specific target groups in collaboration with various editorial teams that publish current news. A recent OECD study indicates that 29% of adults in Austria alone experience difficulties with reading, underscoring the increasing significance of E2U-News. Easy Language (EL) and Plain Language (PL) are "easily understandable languages".

It should be noted that there are differences between EL and PL in Austria/German. EL corresponds to language levels A1 to A2, making it even easier to understand than PL. PL is approximately at the B1 language level.

EL can also be referred to as Easy Reading (ER). ER has specific rules on how words can be used and sentences structured. Additionally, a target group must review the ER texts. The target group for ER primarily includes people with learning difficulties. Only when the review group understands the text well can it be published with the "ER" label. PL does not have as strict rules as EL. PL can be more complex than EL. The target group for PL includes, for example, people who are learning a new language.

At an analytical level, the comparison of written, audio, and audiovisual news in Plain Language is presented. The focus is on best practices, Dos and Don'ts, and potential synergies. The exploration includes what is specific to each format, how other broadcasters present audiovisual E2U-News, and the lessons learned. This leads to the provision of a framework of guidelines for E2U-Nwes in German.

News in PL should be designed so that people with limited language skills can understand the information. In "easily understandable language", explanations of difficult words are very important. Additional information and examples from everyday life are also particularly helpful.

The target group for News in PL includes people with learning difficulties and limited language skills, as well as older people. Children also benefit from information that is easy to understand. ORF has been offering news in PL in various formats on television, radio, and online for several years. Access to information is essential for forming opinions independently, and Easy-to-Understand News plays a vital role in this.

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Andrej Tomažin

First steps of the ENACT project: Mapping current practices in Easy-to-Understand journalism across Europe

The ENACT project (Easy-to-Understand News for Collaborative Transformation), co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, addresses the crucial need for accessible journalism on web, radio, and television platforms. Launched in December 2024, ENACT involves partners from Austria, Spain, Italy, Latvia, and Slovenia, collaborating under the leadership of RTV Slovenija.

The project's primary objectives include enhancing media professionals' skills through targeted training, developing clear guidelines for easy-to-understand (E2U) language, and fostering media literacy among underrepresented groups such as persons with disabilities and language learners.

This presentation will explore the findings from a comprehensive survey conducted among European organisations, aimed at mapping current practices in easy-to-understand journalism. The survey, completed by 39 organisations including broadcasters and disability associations who produce news, provides valuable insights into existing challenges, such as resource constraints, varying audience needs, and the necessity of balancing simplification with content accuracy. Furthermore, the survey highlights widespread recognition of E2U news as essential for accessibility and inclusion, despite limited funding and diverse legislative landscapes across Europe.

Key findings indicate that while written E2U content remains predominant, there is a growing preference for audiovisual formats and digital platforms. Furthermore, collaboration with target audiences in content validation is increasingly common, enhancing relevance and effectiveness. The results also reflect openness towards integrating artificial intelligence to streamline workflows, although professional oversight remains critical.

Dite Liepa

Vieglā valoda Latvijas medijos: informētība, terminoloģija, attieksme

Easy Language in Latvian media: Awareness, terminology, attitude

Plašsaziņas līdzekļi ir nozīmīgākais sabiedrības ietekmēšanas instruments. Taču mediji ietekmē ne tikai sabiedrību kopumā, bet arī katru no mums individuāli. Mediji mūs informē, izglīto un izklaidē, tie veido personisko identitāti un palīdz sevi apzināties, veic integrācijas un sociālās mijiedarbības funkciju – rosina sociālo empātiju, identificēšanos ar citiem un piederības sajūtu, palīdz atrast savu sabiedrības grupu, izprast savu sociālo lomu un rada iespēju kontaktēties. Un, lai gan no biznesa viedokļa svarīgākās ir mediju sociālās funkcijas, jo mediju uzņēmumi vēlas uzrunāt un ietekmēt lielas sabiedrības grupas, palielinoties mediju daudzveidībai, nozīmīgi kļūst mediju lietojuma individuālie aspekti (Rožukalne 2011, 64–65).

Mediji piedalās sociālās kārtības nodrošināšanā, jo paši darbojas jau atzītajās kultūras robežās. Tas nozīmē, ka "mediji pārstāv sabiedrībā atzītos viedokļus un vērtības un noraida atšķirīgās jeb deviantās vērtības un viedokļus kā sabiedrībai nepieņemamus" (Rožukalne 2011, 63, Shoemaker, Reese 1995, 225).

Lai gan Latvijas sabiedrībā vieglās un vienkāršās valodas jautājumi pēdējo piecu gadu laikā tiek apspriesti vairāk nekā iepriekš, mediju vidē joprojām trūkst saprotamas, objektīvas un kvalitatīvas informācijas, kas vairo mediju atbildību un lomu valodnieku un sabiedrības informatīvo gaidu nodrošināšanā.

Medijiem savas funkcijas būtu jāveic informatīvās plaisas un stigmas mazināšanai. Tomēr šīs funkcijas tiek veiktas tikai daļēji: informācija tiek sniegta, taču bieži tā nav pārdomāta un pārliecinoša, ir pretrunīga, tādējādi no mediju puses paplašinot plaisu un vairojot negatīvu attieksmi pret vieglo valodu un sabiedrības grupām, kam tā ir paredzēta. Tas savukārt izraisa pretrunīgu un stigmatizējošu sabiedrības reakciju, t. sk. arī inteliģences aprindās, īpaši sociālās tīklošanās vietnēs: lielākā daļa sabiedrības uz aktuālajiem notikumiem vieglās un vienkāršās valodas jomā reaģē negatīvi, noliedzoši, saskata draudus ne tikai latviešu valodai, bet arī visas sabiedrības primitivizācijai, nacionālo kultūras vērtību noliegšanai, pakļaušanai, bezierunu paklausībai, izsaka bažas par atgriešanos pie totalitāras sistēmas diktatūras u. tml.

Pētījumā aplūkoti piemēri no mediju publikācijām par vieglo un vienkāršo valo-

du. Iegūtie dati liecina, ka speciālistiem, kuri veido relīzes, izpratne par vieglās un vienkāršās valodas jautājumiem ir zema vai pat vēl vairāk – tās nav, jo daudzi informētāji ar šiem jēdzieniem saskaras pirmo reizi vai ir nepamatoti pārliecināti, ka šajā jomā orientējas. Attiecīgi klausītāji un lasītāji saņem mazāk kvalitatīvu, neprecīzu, pārprotamu un tendenciozu informāciju.

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Sergio Hernández Garrido

Multimodal health campaigns for vulnerable groups: The case of health communication in Colombia during COVID-19 from the perspective of accessible communication research

The global COVID-19 pandemic presented a major public health crisis, resulting in urgent and effective communication strategies. In Colombia, government institutions launched health communication campaigns aimed at informing the population and encouraging them to comply with preventive measures that were often invasive for the day-to-day routine (cf. Roselli 2021). However, vulnerable groups often face communication barriers, limiting their access to crucial health information (cf. Bonfadelli 2018, 2019, Schaeffer et al. 2021).

Furthermore, the Colombian population presents low levels of health literacy (for an extensive review on health literacy, cf. Falcón Romero/Ruiz-Cabello 2012, Sørensen et al. 2012) – resulting in difficulties in finding, comprehending, assessing and acting according to relevant health information (for an extensive review on accessible communication research, cf. Maaß 2020, Maaß/Rink 2019, 2024) – and often have limited access to the health system (Rivillas García et al. 2016, Schaeffer et al.2021). This represented a major challenge for public institutions in the creation of health-related content. In this context, accessible communication strategies are especially useful to address these vulnerable groups.

The use of multimodal content in video text formats with particular focus on communicative needs of vulnerable target groups were a widely implemented strategy to address the population during this time (cf. Hernández Garrido 2025). The different modalities and text format specific tools offer several opportunities for the implementation of accessible communication formats.

The presentation examines multimodal health campaigns from the perspective of accessible communication, focusing on materials used by Colombian authorities during the pandemic. It explores how accessibility principles can be integrated into mass health communication to reach populations with low health literacy, creating a content with a high potential of being found, perceived, comprehended, retained, accepted and action-guiding.

The findings highlight the importance of adapting health information through diverse formats beyond written communication. While Easy Language and Plain Language in written formats remain central in the current practice of addressing

vulnerable groups, multimodal approaches – including audiovisual translation and accessible formats – offer significant potential for improving health literacy. The presentation also contributes to the current state of research on accessible communication, highlighting approaches resulted from an interdisciplinary engagement with the corpus focusing on motivational and emotional barriers. In summary, the presentation represents a contribution to the field of accessible health communication by integrating theoretical frameworks and empirical analysis, offering insights into best practices for future health campaigns tailored to vulnerable populations.

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Michał Górnik

Between access and complexity: Evaluating interlingual respeaking through the lens of Easy Language

Interlingual respeaking (live subtitling from one language into another via speech recognition, IRSP) is increasingly adopted as a real-time translation solution in multilingual and inclusive settings (Górnik 2022, Romero-Fresco 2011). While not originally developed within the Easy Language (EL) framework, this empirical study explores the extent to which outputs of interlingual respeaking align with Easy-to-Read (ETR) principles, as defined in both English and Polish guidelines (cf. Inclusion Europe 2009a, Inclusion Europe 2009b).

Based on a doctoral research project, the study analyses several real-life instances – conferences, TV broadcasts, and entertainment events – in which interlingual respeaking was performed between Polish and English. Three dimensions are examined:

1. Linguistic simplification (measured using tools such as Logios, ARI, Flesch, and Fog; Logios 2025, Readability Formulas 2025),
2. Visual and technical compliance of subtitles (e.g., sentence segmentation, screen placement, reading speed, punctuation) with ETR standards for audiovisual content (cf. Bernabé-Caro and García 2019 and Bernabé-Caro et. al. 2020),
3. Accessibility perception and usability, assessed via user surveys and interviews (cf. Górnik 2024).

Findings show that respeaking consistently produces linguistically simpler output than both the original source texts and simultaneous interpreting. While neither mode fully complies with formal ETR thresholds, respeaking subtitles more closely approximate ETR norms in syntax, vocabulary, and linear structure. However, layout and pacing inconsistencies remain – particularly in hyphenation, timing, and vertical spacing – limiting full accessibility.

The study also outlines the technical, procedural, and training adjustments needed to make interlingual respeaking a viable method of Easy Language interpreting. In this context, the limitations of fully automated subtitling solutions are discussed: despite advancements in ASR and machine translation, current systems cannot reliably ensure the simplicity, user orientation, and ethical responsibility required by ETR frameworks (cf. Greco and Jankowska 2019, Maaß 2020, Audiovisual Translators Europe 2021, Sayers et al. 2021).

Ultimately, interlingual respeaking holds strong potential as a real-time tool for more inclusive, user-sensitive communication – if designed with Easy Language in mind. Through participatory design and deliberate adaptation, it may help bridge the gap between translation, accessibility, and cognitive inclusion.

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Péter László Horváth, Gál Anna, Deák Elza Izabella

The impact of easy-to-read and easy-to-understand worksheets on student achievement

In the Hungarian public education system, primary school students' reading comprehension skills must be measured every semester. It is a common experience that students with special educational needs achieve lower than average results when assessed using standard assessment worksheets (Köböl and Vidákovich, 2015). In this research programme, students with special educational needs are defined as students with learning disabilities.

The hypothesis of the research is that students with special educational needs achieve better results in reading comprehension tests if the assessment is based on test papers that are adapted to their real language skills.

The guidelines for the school education of students with special educational needs – with particular attention to the EL guidelines – allow for the adaptation of text comprehension worksheets. This provides an opportunity to rework the typography and instructions of the standard text comprehension worksheets published centrally by the Hungarian Education Agency (Szenczi-Velkey and Szekeres, 2015a; Szenczi-Velkey and Szekeres, 2015b).

The empirical research was carried out by two students with teacher qualifications participating in a postgraduate training course at the Vilmos Apor Catholic College, under the supervision of their thesis supervisors (Deák, 2024; Gál, 2025).

The subjects of the research: all students with special educational needs in grades 2, 3 or 4 of an inclusive school. There were 13 students in total. The first data collection took place in the 2023/24 school year with 8 students. Based on the experience gained from the assessment, we revised the adapted worksheets for the following school year. The second data collection took place in the 2024/25 school year with 5 students at another inclusive primary school.

Research tool was standard language comprehension worksheets for grades 2, 3 and 4 issued by the Education Agency and versions adapted based on these guidelines. A measurement and evaluation specialist validated the adapted worksheets.

Research method was comparative analysis of the results of the two types of worksheets (standard and adapted). Half of the students involved in the survey first completed the standard worksheet and then, approximately one month later, the adapted version. The other half of the students completed the two types of worksheets in reverse order.

Based on the results of the research, the research hypothesis can be confirmed: The students with special educational needs who participated in the survey consistently achieved better results with the adapted worksheet than with the standard worksheet.

Although only two primary schools and a total of 13 students were involved in the research, based on the results, we recommend that primary schools integrating students with learning difficulties assess the reading comprehension skills of the students concerned using adapted worksheets rather than standard language tests.

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Egita Proveja, Ieva Sproģe

Vieglās un vienkāršās valodas lietojums un klasificēšanas izaicinājumi

Use and classification challenges of Easy and Plain languages

Referātā aplūkota valodas vienkāršošanas prakse jeb vieglās un vienkāršās valodas lietojums Latvijā. Pamats šim pētījumam ir piekļūstamības nolūkā pieejamie vienkāršotie teksti tiešsaistē, kā arī Valsts izglītības satura centra īstenotā Eiropas Sociālā fonda projekta "Kompetenču pieeja mācību saturā" 2023. gadā izstrādātie un adaptētie mācību materiāli ar norādi "viegli lasīt". Šie materiāli tika izveidoti kā alternatīvs atbalsta resurss oriģinālajiem mācību materiāliem iekļaujošajai izglītībai 7.–9. klasēs, aptverot visus mācību priekšmetus.

Mācību līdzekļu teksti tika izstrādāti vienkāršākā valodā un ar vizuāli atvieglotu dizainu skolēniem ar īpašām vajadzībām (t. sk. disleksiju, disgrāfiju, redzes traucējumiem, kā arī citu dzimtās valodas fonu u. c., bet ne skolēniem ar garīgās attīstības traucējumiem), kuri izglītību iegūst atbilstoši savam vecumam vispārējā izglītības programmā, lai sekmīgāk apgūtu mācību vielu un iekļautos mācību procesā. Šie teksti tiek adaptēti pēc SKOLA2030 jaunizdotajiem mācību līdzekļiem (sk. vietnē www.skola2030).

Autores Dr. Egita Proveja un Dr. Ieva Sproģe akcentē, ka valodas vienkāršošana nav tikai tehniska teksta pārveide, bet gan dziļāka izpratne par piekļūstamu komunikāciju un iekļaujošas sabiedrības veidošanu. Pamatojoties uz valodas lietojuma piemēriem, tiek parādīta šobrīd sabiedrībā konstatējamā neizpratne par vieglās un vienkāršās valodas nošķīrumu. Tādēļ tiek uzsvērta nepieciešamība skaidri definēt, kam un kāpēc tiek lietota vieglā un vienkāršā valoda, ņemot vērā konkrētas mērķgrupas vajadzības, kam sarežģīta valoda var radīt barjeras.

Avoti

ESF projekta „Kompetenču pieeja mācību saturā" veidotie mācību līdzekļi vieglajā valodā 7.–9. klasēs 15 mācību priekšmetos. Pieejams: https://www.skola2030.lv/lv/skolotajiem/ieklaujo-sa-izglitiba

Latvijas Republikas valsts pārvaldes iestāžu mājaslapas

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Saša Lesjak, Alenka Hanuš Pečovnik

Easy Language in practice: Co-creation, recognition and inclusion

Zavod RISA has been developing the practice of Easy Language for over fifteen years through various programmes and both national and international projects. In collaboration with people who need Easy Language, the public, and stakeholders from public institutions, civil society, and policymaking, we strive to create an environment that fosters understanding, active participation, and independent living.

In our presentation, we will introduce several current projects. We will highlight a co-creation model that empowers test readers as peer experts and calls for formal, structural recognition at the policy level. As collaborators, validators take on the role of co-creators and specialists in their lived experience. This approach raises important questions: how to systematically develop training programmes, implement certification, ensure fair payment, and create sustainable employment opportunities. We also stress the need for legal recognition of their role and the challenges associated with it.

The contribution explores Easy Language as a core element of comprehensive accessibility. It must be integrated across all levels of society – from education, culture, social services, healthcare and employment to digital content and communication. We advocate for a new language policy that includes Easy Language as a standard for an inclusive society, and the need for accessibility indicators for environments and organisations, encompassing all dimensions of accessibility.

By including real-life practices, user voices, and systemic recommendations, our presentation offers insight into approaches that respond to future challenges – especially in the context of deinstitutionalisation and demographic change, and since around 25% of the population struggles with reading literacy. Easy Language must become a normal part of how we live and work. To make this real, we need clear rules, strong support, and long-term commitment with clear policies.

Annette Lichtenauer, Gabriela Antener, Anne Parpan–Blaser

Access to culture as a human right: An exploratory study on the accessibility of cultural leisure activities for people with cognitive disabilities in Switzerland

Equal participation in cultural life is a fundamental human right. Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) explicitly affirms the right of persons with disabilities to access cultural leisure. Article 9 obliges States Parties to ensure accessibility in physical spaces as well as in information and communication. Since ratifying the CRPD in 2014, Switzerland has committed to promoting cultural participation for persons with disabilities. In recent years, Swiss cultural policy has increasingly addressed the need for inclusive access to culture for all. A key step in this direction was the publication of the Guidelines for the Promotion of Cultural Participation by the "National Cultural Dialogue" in 2021.

Nevertheless, people with cognitive disabilities still face numerous barriers when accessing cultural leisure activities such as museums, theatres, or cultural events. Accessible information formats, particularly those using Easy Language, have the potential to significantly improve access.

This presentation discusses the findings of a small-scale exploratory study on the challenges and needs in accessing cultural leisure activities for people with cognitive disabilities. The focus is on the availability of information (e.g. prior to the visit) and on issues of comprehensibility and accessibility of the cultural offer, rather than physical barriers.

Data was collected through two focus groups: one with people with cognitive disabilities and professionals in the field of disabilities, and the other with experts from (inclusive) cultural institutions. The study replicates one aspect of the WEL project and offers initial insights into the situation in Switzerland. ("From written to oral texts in Easy Language. Easy audios in cultural visits and video games". The WEL project: https://webs.uab.cat/wel/en/)

Péter László Horváth, Cziráki Zsolt, Nagy Mariann

Self-advocates in new roles

The aim of this practice-oriented presentation is to show that the use of Easy Language creates new opportunities for self-advocates and opens new role models for them.

People with intellectual disabilities are thought of as people who need support and are unable to live independently nor to do intellectual work. By using Easy Language, people with intellectual disabilities can participate in innovative and creative work, take on teaching and training roles, and even do intellectual work (Cipó at all.,2023).

The presentation will introduce the following new role models:

- Participation in the development of a training programme for self-advocates. The essence of the new role model is that people with intellectual disabilities are given the opportunity to say what they want to learn.
- Participation as a co-educator in various training programmes. The essence of the innovative approach is that people with intellectual disabilities should not be thought of as mere learners. People with intellectual disabilities have experience and knowledge that makes them suitable for teaching others (Horváth at all., 2024; Jenei at all., 2024; Sándor at all., 2023).
- Participation in the development of the ERASMUS+ adult learning mobility programme. Here, too, the emphasis is on not letting professionals decide what adults with intellectual disabilities will learn but letting the adult learners themselves decide what they would like to learn from their foreign partner organisation during a mobility programme abroad.

We launched subjective guided tours in collaboration with the Petőfi Literary Museum, the Kassák Museum and the Ludwig Museum in Budapest. During these tours, a guide with intellectual disabilities shows visitors how they may interpret the museum exhibition. The guide of a subjective guided tour is guiding independently or together with a museum curator. The target group for the subjective guided tours is people with intellectual disabilities, but this special programme is open to anyone who is interested (Horváth, 2024; Sóki, 2024).

We hope that by presenting these good practices, we can contribute to changing the traditional and often stereotypical image of people with intellectual disabilities.

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Almudena Rascón

Inclusive participation: Easy Language and democratic process design in iDEM project

The Horizon Europe project 'Innovative and Inclusive Democratic Spaces for Deliberation and Participation' (iDEM) aims to support people with intellectual disabilities, elderly people, and migrants by addressing language barriers that represent an obstacle to their participation in democratic processes.

This research project has been developing an application based on Natural Language Processing that simplifies complex texts to different levels of Easy Language in Catalan, English, Italian, and Spanish. This type of text adaptation allows for a better comprehension and, therefore, more inclusion in democratic deliberations. To evaluate the impact of Easy Language, this application will be one of the supports used to facilitate 3 target groups in 3 use cases in 2026 in Madrid, Barcelona, and Bologna. A fourth use case in Malta will evaluate comprehension difficulties and investigate improvements in democratic contexts in English.

During the development of the theoretical foundations, accessibility barriers were identified as obstacles to democratic participation and deliberation, collected from contributions from focus groups composed of people with intellectual disabilities. Because the design of the use cases is fundamental for the iDEM solution, the project has been developed with a broad perspective. It focuses on the results of these foundations to address the needs and supports of potential participants in these use cases for their inclusive development.

The first use case, to be conducted in Las Rozas (Madrid, Spain), has been designed according to a top-down approach, meaning that the public deliberation topic is chosen based on the interests of the local government. Citizens will participate and deliberate during a series of sessions aimed at producing policy recommendations for the city council.

This presentation will discuss the main barriers to accessibility identified as fundamental for the design of the first iDEM use case and how Easy Language technology will be integrated in the process to promote comprehension, a more inclusive democratic participation.

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Sine Demirkiviran

Easy Turkish – challenges and opportunities

Since ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009, Türkiye has taken significant steps to remove barriers for people with disabilities – particularly in the areas of physical and sensory accessibility. However, cognitive barriers remained largely unaddressed. To close this gap, Easy Turkish was developed within the framework of Türkiye's first Easy Language project (2023–2025).

A key outcome of the project concerns the structural characteristics of Turkish, which present unique challenges for linguistic simplification. Its agglutinative morphology leads to complex word forms that encode multiple grammatical and semantic elements simultaneously. This is a challenge for individuals with cognitive impairments. While in Indo-European languages simplification often involves reducing sentence length or the number of words, Turkish requires limiting the number of affixes within individual word stems.

As a verb-final language, Turkish also demands that readers retain full sentences in working memory before grasping their meaning. Additional difficulties arise from figurative expressions, idioms, homonyms, and a generally high level of abstraction. The features of the Turkish language rendered a direct transfer of the European Easy Language guidelines unfeasible, thus necessitating the implementation of targeted adaptations.

In response, the project developed a guideline comprising more than 300 principles, which are now being reviewed to establish practical and consistent standards for Easy Turkish.

At the same time, the introduction of Easy Turkish also opens significant opportunities: since the concept was previously unknown in Turkey, it could be developed from the outset on a scientific foundation. This allows for close integration of theory and practice, free from entrenched discourses or stigmatisation. In a socio-cultural context characterised by a protective attitude that does not always support empowerment and self-determination, Easy Language is likely to be viewed as a supportive tool.

Easy Turkish could also inspire the development of Easy Language in other agglutinative language contexts. The project's principles, which consider both the language's structural and communicative features, can serve as a methodological guide for similar languages.

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Exploring the role of Easy Language in public sector communication: A comparative qualitative study in the field of social assistance

We will present the results of a comparative analysis of the use of Easy Language and linguistic simplification to support access to social assistance in three European countries, Finland, Italy and Switzerland.

Target groups of socio-economic support measures, such as social assistance, often have great difficulty in accessing the legal and administrative information needed to apply for and receive these subsidies (OECD, 2019). These are people with different communication barriers (Rink, 2024), such as low literacy, cognitive disabilities or people from different cultural backgrounds and with little knowledge of a second language, such as migrants. Accordingly, the use of Easy Language can lower barriers to accessing economic support and help professionals in this field to communicate.

In the European context, the use of Easy Language to support administrative communication in the field of social aid seems heterogeneous in the different countries and generally underdeveloped (see Handbook on Easy Language in Europe, 2021). We investigated how Easy Language and linguistic simplification are used to support access to social assistance in three European countries, which differ in terms of the characteristics of welfare state structures, the administrative system, and the regulation and promotion of Easy Language as part of public communication.

The study compares application procedures for social assistance and related information materials in Easy Language, which are available to users in the three countries. Several semi-structured interviews with people responsible for implementing and using EL at a strategic and practical level gave us deeper insights into the strategies and potentialities related to the use of Easy Language.

Initial results show how different structural conditions like centralised or federal, online processes vs. processes involving direct contact and discussion can lead to different scenarios and approaches in implementing and using EL as a public communication tool, tailored to the needs of the most vulnerable social service users.

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