Accessible Communication: A Cross-country Journey

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Accessible Communication: A Cross-country Journey

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Easy – Plain – Accessible

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To my family, and to all the COVID-19 victims, helpers and carers, who have been struggling selflessly while I had the duty and the privilege of staying home, and finishing this book.

Contents

List of abbreviations and symbols

AD   Audio description
E2U Easy to Understand
EL   Easy Language
PL   Plain Language
SDH Subtitling for the D/deaf and hard of hearing
TTR Type/Token Ratio
*   As per note 31, a star is used in figure captions in the case of questionnaire items allowing for multiple answers
| A vertical bar is used to signal the text breaking when marking it is relevant, e.g., when reporting Easy Language and subtitle texts

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Foreword

Audiovisual content is all around us. We communicate, learn, derive pleasure and find information thanks to a combination of audio and visual elements with both verbal and non-verbal components. However, this audiovisual content is not always accessible to all of us. For a wide variety of reasons, we may not be able to see an image or we may not be able to hear a sound. Audiovisual accessibility services have long provided solutions in the form of audio description, subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing or sign language interpreting, to name three of the most well-known. However, accessing audiovisual content does not only mean that we can see or hear it, it also means being able to understand it. When the content is in an unknown language, dubbing, subtitling and voice-over are useful solutions. But this lack of understanding can also occur in our own language. The way content is phrased or presented, the situation in which the communicative situation takes place or our individual capabilities can turn understanding into a real challenge. Easy-to-Read Language and Plain Language have been proposed as solutions, but the focus so far has been mainly on written texts. It remains to be seen how the concepts behind Easy-to-Read Language or Plain Language could be transferred to the audiovisual world.

This was the starting point of the EASIT project, which frames the research presented by Elisa Perego in this book. Partners from various countries and environments have collaborated since September 2018 in order to gain a better understanding of what we call "easy-to-understand language" and how this language could be used in the audiovisual realm. Elisa Perego captures this shared learning process in a unique monograph in which she thoroughly explains the EASIT project and addresses the issue of accessible communication. The core of the book is the result of the first part of the project, led by Elisa Perego herself and with contributions from all partners, in which a survey was used to map current easy-to-understand language training and practice in Europe. The results of the survey became the basis for further project work, led by other project partners, in which new professional profiles – and their skills – have been identified, a curriculum has been designed and open access educational materials have been developed.

This book is an innovative outcome of the EASIT project and a necessary contribution to audiovisual translation and accessibility. It is a good example of how we can go beyond existing access services and research new ways to cater for the needs of diverse users. It is also a perfect example of how international and interdisciplinary collaboration yields relevant results.

Anna Matamala, EASIT project leader

Introduction

Given the growing attention to and need for accessible communication in several areas of everyday life, considerations related to straightforward forms of communication that can be shared and appreciated by several sectors of the population as well as implementation thereof are gaining attention.

A sensitivity to simplified variants of language is not new, and, in fact, has been differently implemented over time in different countries and to different extents, with Anglophone countries having played and still playing a pivotal role in this area. What is new is the growing need to apply simplified variants of language to ever more types of content, including multimodal content. Originally, simplification was applied only to the written texts and its association to the written mode essentially still prevails. However, the current spread of relevant content via digital and multimodal services makes it necessary to adapt to these complex multifaceted modern communication scenarios, and to consider where and how we can implement simplification to ensure full communication accessibility.

In this book, we will focus on a selected range of audiovisual communication services, while considering possible ways of implementing simplification strategies in subtitling, audio description and audiovisual journalism. These are the main areas of interest of the European project EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training; Chapter 2), the main objective of which is to generate a course curriculum and training materials to train new hybrid professional figures that can cater for new communicative needs and unite existing audiovisual services and simplification practices. These new professionals include the Easy-to-Understand subtitler, the Easy-to-Understand audio describer, and the Easy-to-Understand journalist.

"Easy-to-Understand" (E2U) (IFLA 2010; Inclusion Europe 2014) is an umbrella term used to cover specific and established forms of language comprehension enhancement such as Plain Language and Easy Language (cf. 1.2), i.e., the language simplification varieties that are considered in the EASIT project and in this book. On a terminological note, we highlight our decision to opt for the expression Easy Language as a more inclusive label than the traditional Easy-to-Read (cf. 1.3; Maaß 2020), which was also originally used in the EASIT project application documents. The former seems to limit its

reference to the ability of end users to decode written texts, while the latter reaches those end users who cannot access written modes of communication, but nonetheless embraces a variety of messages that are delivered multimodally.

Specifically, Chapter 1 will offer an account of accessible communication by focusing on simplification as a powerful tool leading to language comprehension and communication inclusion in countless sectors of our lives and for countless beneficiaries, including individuals with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. Plain Language and Easy Language will be described with the help of their textual and linguistic features, guidelines and recommendations, target audiences, fields of application, and professionals who deal with them. We will also tackle the acceptability issue. This, in fact, poses a central paradox whereby the more comprehensible a text is, the less it is accepted by its users and the general audience, thus leading to challenging social stigmatization scenarios that are still difficult to overcome but need to be faced and conquered. In Chapter 2, we will describe the EASIT project, its premises, aims and objectives and then focus on the strategic partnership, project activities, sustainability and dissemination. This will serve as a framework to introduce the results of a survey that was conducted as the very initial stages of the project. Given the aims of EASIT, it was essential to start collecting information on the current European scenario regarding E2U training and practice. A specific Intellectual Output, or project stage (cf. 2.4), was devoted to this aim in order to identify shared and new practices to be implemented in a future curriculum, as well as to gather information that could be used as a starting point for the identification of the skills and competences required for the new professional profiles. Chapter 3 will describe the methodological approach adopted to reach the initial aims of the project. It will illustrate the selected target population (E2U experts and professionals) and focus on the chosen procedure and the materials used in the study, i.e., an online survey questionnaire focusing on previous education, working position and training of E2U experts and professionals, as well as on their training preferences. Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 will present the results of the survey. Chapter 4 will offer a profile of the E2U expert based on a sample of 128 respondents. Chapter 5 will deal with the training preferences of the experts who responded to the questionnaire that was circulated in all project languages. Finally, Chapter 6 will briefly illustrate how the survey results were exploited to identify the skills and the competences of the new E2U experts and how the EASIT curriculum is organized.

The role of Anglophone countries and of Plain English (cf. 1.1) are stressed in the book due to their relevance in the inception and development of clear language initiatives, but also due to the role of English as a lingua franca. For instance, while multilingualism is emphasized and sustained in the project, English is the shared language among partners, their lingua franca, and the language in which most materials are created before being translated into all project languages (Catalan, Galician, German, Italian, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish).

Writing the book gave us the chance to focus on English both in terms of its long-standing inclination towards clear style and in terms of language analysis. All the examples discussed come from English and revolve around English. This decision has two main reasons. The first is an accessibility-driven decision: the book is written in English to reach a global audience and to enable readers from diverse backgrounds – not necessarily Europe-centric – to tackle the Plain and Easy Language issues more comfortably. Second, the international role of English, its early interest in matters relating to simplification and its current spread around the world, make it a suitable choice as a model but also allow researchers to use a greater amount of tools for analysis. This enabled us to include specific sections in the book in which we focus on the analysis and simplification mechanisms of English language texts, both from a qualitative and from a quantitative point of view. Appendix 1 briefly illustrates the parameters and the measures of complexity that that we chose to analyse the texts in the book. In terms of quantitative analysis, we were interested in providing textual and linguistic measures that could assess usability, i.e., the extent to which something is user-oriented, cognitively effective and satisfactory. Text usability is linked to text complexity, which in turn determines text readability, the degree to which printed information is unambiguous on the basis of the reader's language fluency, the message communicated and the quantity and the quality of text delivered. As a matter of fact, there are specific sections in the book where Plain and Easy English texts are tackled and analysed, often in comparison to standard texts. In Section 1.6 (*Easy language in audiovisual translation*), we focus on subtitling for the D/deaf and the hard of hearing (cf. Note 20) and on audio description for the blind and visually impaired to identify what type of textual and linguistic interventions could be effectively implemented where these accessible forms of audiovisual translation are concerned. Case studies are reported and discussed with examples in English being analysed to offer a first round of possible strategies for empirical testing

in the near future. In Section 2.6 (*Easy language in the EASIT website*), we give an account of the Easy English version of the EASIT website, written according to the main Easy Language guidelines (IFLA 2010; ILSMH 1998; Inclusion Europe 2014). Specifically, we focus on the Easy English website text that we consider a target text resulting from a more complex, expert-language source, i.e., the text used for the project application form. We compare the two Englishes (Easy and Expert) to highlight the main features of texts that have a very different communicative purpose and target audience and to determine their structure, their rhetorical strategies, their content and text "moves" (Bhatia 1993). Finally, in Section 3.3.3, we focus on the questionnaire used for the study that is reported in this book. The questionnaire is the result of the joint work of all partners that used English as a shared language, and followed Plain and Easy English rules to make it accessible to the target respondents. The decisions made during the drafting process based on E2U principles are discussed and illustrated. The whole English version of the questionnaire used in the study is included in Appendix 2 at the end of the book. This might serve both as a further example of Plain English specifically exploited for a survey questionnaire, but also as a methodological tool for future research and replications in countries where it might be worthwhile uncovering the working and training patterns in the E2U sector.

1   Accessible communication

We are used to associating the term "accessibility" with disabilities and physical barriers. This approach however is only partially correct. It is true that accessibility has a close link with special needs: it is a core principle in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), where it is defined as "a two-way process: persons who have no disabilities should be open to the participation of persons with disabilities". It is mentioned (247 times in 350 pages) as functional to human rights in the World Report on Disability (2019) issued by the World Health Organization and the World Bank, where it is defined as "the ability to reach, understand, or approach something or someone" (p. 170), and later in the glossary to describe "the degree to which an environment, service, or product allows access by as many people as possible, in particular people with disabilities" (p. 301).

Essentially, accessibility is a universally inclusive concept that is based on the idea of availability, and is not necessarily linked to persons with disabilities but applied to all while hinging on the general ability to use products or services. First mentioned in the area of universal design, to which it is still strongly associated, accessibility has become part of our daily life in several areas, including the multidimensional world of communication. Accessibility, which is a physical notion, is not to be confused with usability, which is the extent to which something is user-oriented, cognitively effective and satisfactory. In communication, usability depends greatly on the extent of simplification of a text – intended as anything that conveys a set of meanings. The process of text simplification implies the transformation or translation of a text into "an equivalent which is more understandable" (Saggion et al. 2010: 341). Comprehensibility is the extent to which a text as a whole is easy to understand and therefore usable and is one of the core principles of accessibility.

Texts can be barriers in several communicative situations and not only for people with disabilities: ordinary people are excluded from expert language or may find it difficult to understand information that is new, unforeseen or too abundant, especially in stressful situations (Maaß 2020). We use the expression "accessible communication" to refer to any form of simple or simplified communication that prevents communicative exclusion. Accessible communication benefits all audiences by making information accurate, clear, direct,

precise and easy to understand (Balmford n.d.; Bennett 2019; Cutts 2013; Gunning 1952, 1964) as well as by distancing users from the "dysfunctionality" (Maaß 2020: 18) of most specialized and expert-language texts. Resorting to varieties of natural language that enhance comprehension (Bredel and Maaß 2016a; Maaß 2015, 2020; Maaß and Rink 2020), such as Plain and Easy Language, can enable accessible communication and limit communicative exclusion in several contexts.

The attention to clear communication, however, is not a new issue but can be traced back to the early XX century. It also has several nuances, target audiences and applications that originated and evolved at different times, in different modes and in different European countries. Among them, the Anglophone countries certainly played a crucial role, becoming a reliable model for many.

1.1 The case of Plain English

Anglophone countries have always been acutely aware of the importance of accessible communication and in particular of writing in a clear style (e.g., Quiller-Couch 1916; see APA 2010; Balmford n.d.; Bennett 2019; Cutts 2013; Gunning 1952, 1964): although modern movements on clear language began in the 1970s, people have opposed vague language ("foggy", to use Cutt's words) for many centuries with pleas for Plain English being traced back to at least the time of Chaucer in the 14th century, who presumably wrote the first technical treatise on how to operate an astrolabe "clearly and in plain English". His target reader was a ten-year-old who did not know Latin (Cutts 2013: xxvii).

As a matter of fact, plain style's basic premises (clarity, economy and precision) are still praised in all English writing manuals (Bennet 2009), where they hold a practical as well as moral and political value, legitimizing simple language as the only vehicle for truth as if complex texts were just low-quality purveyors of falsehood (Bennett 2019: 2; Cutts 2013: xiii). Besides exalting plain stile, Anglophones are also aware that writing in a clear style is difficult and time-consuming (Cutts 2013: vi; MENCAP 2005: 5), but it is the only way for readers not to "halt, backtrack, and – often – give up", as happens when they find themselves struggling with forms of unclear writing including "officialese and legalese" (Cutts 2013: vii). In fact, the development of Plain English was associated to overcoming legalese, especially in the USA

(Balmford s.d.; Bernabé forthcoming; García Muñoz 2012), where in the past century it was triggered by the need to make legal, government, and economic texts accessible to lay-readers. Initiatives such as the Clarity Journal (the leading source of Plain language news and research from across the globe featuring the latest Plain language research, practical advice, before-and-after examples, success stories, campaign strategies and much more) and Clarity (https://clarity-international.net/), i.e., a worldwide network of professionals who are committed to promoting plain legal language, still struggle actively (Balmford s.d.). And in fact, in the USA, Plain Language has long enjoyed a high profile in law schools where many lecturers offer legal writing courses focusing specifically on clear communication.

The effects of unclear writing, especially in the social and public fields, can be devastating: they can cost money and lives and are often the result of the inability of many public figures to admit that they do not understand the message themselves. Clearer documents, on the other hand, can improve access to services, benefits, justice and a generally fairer deal. This is what motivated Martin Cutts, a British writer, editor and teacher to work in the Plain English field, and enabled him to become a leading voice in the international Plain Language movement[1]. In 1979, he founded the Plain English Campaign and later became the author of a renowned reference manual for clear writing.

His *Guide to Plain English* (Cutts 2013), first published in 1993 as *The Plain English Guide* and later as *The Quick Reference Plain English Guide* (1999), offers thorough language-specific guidance on the written word meant to help create Plain English documents through a series of recommendations that come with an extensive number of English examples. In this seminal volume, Plain English (Plain Language outside the UK) is defined as a type of communication in which "wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can easily find what they need, understand what they find, and use that information" (Cutts 2013: xii) to make informed decisions irrespective of their level of literacy.

Plain English, however, which should never be patronizing or over-simplified, does not claim absoluteness (Cutts 2013; García Muñoz 2012, 2014). Its efficacy depends greatly on the background literacy levels of its audience and

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1   Whether it is still appropriate to talk about a Plain English movement is debatable. Balmford (n.d.), who specifically refers to the USA, attempts to show that Plain Language is no longer a movement but has evolved to become a product, a business, an industry, or a professional service.

their specialization in a given area of knowledge, but also on the varied and multifaceted English-speaking world as well as the national and regional varieties in question. As Cutts puts it, what is plain in Manchester may be obscure in Mumbai or in Maine. McArthur's (1987) famous circle of World Englishes[2], which presents the number of English varieties developed globally, confirms the extent of Cutt's claim by showing the volume of existing English Standards.

Major progress in Plain English was made in the last decades in diverse Anglophone countries, especially in research on the benefits relating to legal documents (Balmford s.d.). In the UK, this progress culminated with the Plain English Campaign, which has been fighting for crystal-clear communication and against jargon and misleading public information since 1979. The Campaign, co-founded by Chrissie Maher[3], is now independent and works in the name of "lucid", clear communication across many areas and issues and offers support to many UK authorities. The Crystal Mark, launched in 1990, featuring a gleaming diamond on a light blue background, and the first mark of its kind, is the Campaign's stamp of approval for the clarity of a document. Nowadays, it is used by over 2000 organisations who want to provide the clearest possible information based on the Plain English Campaign principles in the UK and in other Anglophone countries including the USA, Australia, Denmark, New Zealand and South Africa (Balmford n.d.). Since the Plain English Campaign was formed, it has persuaded many public and private organisations to clarify their language.

Crystal-clear communication according to the Plain English Campaign is based on guidelines that are freely available on the Campaign website. The general guide *How to write in Plain English*[4] provides all-purpose rules

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2   The circle illustrates the numerous English varieties used in diverse sociolinguistic contexts globally that have developed in territories influenced by the United Kingdom or the United States. A similar stepping stone for the division on Englishes, also incorporating varieties of English as a second language, is Kachru's (1985) circle, which describes the spread of English in terms of three concentric circles: the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. These circles represent "the type of spread, the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages" (Kachru, 1985:12).

3   Chrissie Maher was born in 1938. In 1971, she founded the United Kingdom's first community newspaper welcoming articles on the need for organisations to start using Plain English.

4   The materials offered on the website include a further list of complex words to avoid with plain alternatives (*The A–Z of alternative words*) and three glossaries (*A to Z of financial terms*, *A to Z of legal phrases*, and *A to Z of pension terms*). *The A–Z of alternative words*, 35 pages organized

(replicated in most Plain Language guidelines that developed later and in other European countries) such as using short sentences (Gunning 1964), active verbs, simple words and effective content organization, and is complemented by language-specific recommendations. These relate to adherence to the average sentence length (15 to 20 in English; Cutts 2013; Gunning 1964; Hearle 2011; Sanyal 2006) and to the English unmarked word order. They also recommend avoiding nominalizations[5], which "make writing very dull and heavy-going" (p. 7), but give the green light to some grammatical rules wrongly considered inappropriate in clear writing, such as for instance split infinitives. A list of complex English words is then accompanied by clearer alternatives.

The Plain English Campaign, and Plain English in general, focus on writing documents that are comprehensible, and are designed to teach the fundamentals of English grammar, punctuation, sentence construction and spelling that are essential for clear communication in everyday settings and for ordinary people.

The extent to which plain style is valued in Anglophone culture, but also its direct and indirect impact on other languages and cultures, cannot be underestimated (Bennett 2019; Lillis and Curry 2010; Scarpa 2014). However, although Plain English was originally directed at ordinary people – specifically, the large amount of Anglophones with a functional literacy level which would have prevented them from understanding the large number of dysfunctional texts they come across daily, simplified texts came to be seen as life preservers or even life savers for many people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. Once this was clear, several important local UK initiatives were launched and publications in this area began to flourish. To mention just a few, Sarah Carr's

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in alphabetical order, gives hundreds of plain English alternatives to the "pompous words and phrases that litter official writing" (p. 2), and provides everyday words (e.g., *enough, plenty, a lot (or say how many)*) that can easily substitute harder alternatives (e.g., *abundance*), warning the user to pick the right choice depending on the context of use. The three glossaries provide definitions and clearer alternatives to financial, legal, and pension terms and phrases. The glossaries are meant both to help understand specialized texts and to encourage document writers to write clearly, based on the belief that technical language is confusing while clear texts have made a valuable difference to the way government and businesses communicate with people and helping them to understand their rights and duties.

5   Nominalization, "the single most powerful resource for creating grammatical metaphor" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004: 656), involves the expression of an action (usually central to the understanding of a sentence) as an abstract noun. Nominalized sentences tend to insert much of their information into the subject position, which hinders readability and makes them difficult to understand.

Communicating with older people. Writing in plain English (2016) focuses on inclusive writing and highlights specific principles pertaining to the style and grammar of Plain English directed to a very specific audience. *The five principles for producing better information for disabled people* (ODI 2007) revolves around five core interrelated principles[6] that are essential to approaching accessible communication and granting adequate service and information delivery.

The recent heightened attention to special audiences has encouraged different reflections on their communicative needs with more radical forms of language simplification being tackled in the Anglophone world as well as in the rest of Europe. In the UK, local Plain English publications started to be accompanied by Easy English publications normally produced by associations that built on their everyday experience with users. These include for instance MENCAP (https://www.mencap.org.uk/), a UK leading charity for people with a learning disability who work collaboratively with them and their families (see MENCAP 2005), or CHANGE (https://www.changepeople.org/), a leading national human rights organization led by disabled people working towards an inclusive society (*The guide to producing easy read documents*, CHANGE 2016, is written in big print Easy English).

Nowadays, Plain and Easy English initiatives coexist with a growing general interest in accessible communication and a growing demand for this service (Bernabé and Orero 2019: 60). As a matter of fact, the benefits of language simplification in several contexts and the impact of Plain and Easy Language in granting full participation and communicative inclusion are now clearer than ever. Focusing on their features, similarities and differences will help us obtain a clearer picture of these language comprehension enhancers, and also to consider their implementation in new sectors.

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6   The five core principle include 1) Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start; 2) Provide information through a range of channels and formats; 3) Ensure your information meets users' needs; 4) Clearly signpost other services; 5) Always define responsibility for information provision. The booklet is published by the UK Office for Disability Issues, a body supporting the development of policies to remove inequality between disabled and non-disabled people by removing communication barriers. The 2007 ODI booklet was tested and developed into a more structured toolkit a year later.

1.2   The power of language simplification

Language simplification applies to a wide range of areas, is relevant to a wide range of users and has a wide range of purposes. Besides helping the general public, or even public administrators and academics (Bennett 2019: 4), its value and implementation can be observed in several contexts. Child-directed speech, involving simplified vocabulary and structures is known to be an aid to children's cognitive development (e.g., Ferguson 1977; Matychuk 2004). In language learning settings, simplified input has proven to be conducive to comprehension, which is a prerequisite for acquisition proper (e.g., Krashen 1985; Leow 2003; Long 1983, 1985).[7] The goal in communities where there are many languages in contact (as in much of Africa and South-East Asia) to trade with each other was achieved when they started communicating by adopting a simplified language, known as a pidgin, which combines elements of their different languages (Todd 1984). Similarly, the global communication problem has traditionally been solved by finding a language to act as a lingua franca, or common language, that enabled people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities to communicate (Crystal 2003: 11): English as a Global Language has naturally been standardized to simpler patterns resembling those of Plain English, including the "use of simplified sentence constructions, the avoidance of idioms and colloquial vocabulary" but also "a slower rate of speech, and the use of clearer patterns of articulation (avoiding some of the assimilations and elisions which would be natural in a first-language setting)" (Crystal 2003: 182).

Language and content simplification however can tremendously support persons with disabilities, too. As several guidelines of Plain and Easy Language indicate, producing simplified content tailored to the needs of end users with disabilities who require a reduced level of complexity to access such content is a matter of full participation and democracy (Bernabé and Orero 2019; Department of Health 2010; ILSMH 1998; NLS 2014; UNCRPD 2006): people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities have a right to high-quality levels of information that must be received in as clear and as easy to understand a format as possible (Inclusion Europe 2014). Simplification, which is implemented to different degrees and has to match the end users' ability levels, can in fact enable

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7   A core principle in second language acquisition whereby (according to Krashen's theory of language acquisition) giving learners input that is one level above that of the learners and if it can only just be understood, helps them acquire language naturally, rather than learn it consciously (Krashen 1985).

people with cognitive and intellectual disabilities to function autonomously in everyday life, to access information pertinent to making life-changing choices, to preserve their education, employment, finances, health, and family life. All this can easily be jeopardized if these target groups have difficulty reading, writing, and understanding (CHANGE 2016; García Muñoz 2012).

Given the importance and the benefits of simplification, one might wonder why it is not implemented consistently. Sciumbata (2017: 27), who focuses specifically on the Italian context, attributes this notable lack of implementation to the intricacy of the process: simplification is complex, expensive and time-consuming (Arfé et al. 2018; Cutts 2013; Maaß 2020). Furthermore, simplification is unfamiliar to most people who find themselves having to deal with it actively: normally, yet astonishingly, those who produce information are not language experts and have neither the means to write or edit effectively nor to deal with the obscure language and content of the old intricate documents they handle and pass on to end users every day. Public administrators tend to only slightly adapt such documents (e.g., adding a recent date or object) without really editing them or taking accessibility, usability, simplification and readability into account. Finally, the tendency to avoid simple written language, at least in the Italian context, is linked to its perceived status: being comprehensible is considered less prestigious and is rejected in most formal contexts (Berruto 1987).

Helping people to understand is not only a right, as stated in the World Report on Disability, but should also be a duty: "A lack of accessible communication and information affects the life of many disabled people. Individuals with communication difficulties, such as hearing impairment or speech impairment, are at a significant social disadvantage, in both developing and developed countries. This disadvantage is particularly experienced in sectors where effective communication is critical – such as those of health care, education, local government, and justice" (Health Organization and World Bank 2019: 170,172).

If content is not created from scratch, there are several ways to make it simpler. Drawing from Bhatia (1983), who applies these ideas to the language acquisition realm, we could think in terms of two different ways of dealing with texts. We can *simplify* a text, i.e., intervene directly by adapting its form (syntax and cohesive devices) and content (technical terminology and concepts), thus performing what is known as an intra-lingual translation process, and transfer such content "within the area of language already assumed to be known to the

proposed audience" (Bhatia 1983: 42). In a nutshell, we manipulate input to improve intake. Or, we can *easify* a text, i.e., add an instructional apparatus around the text to guide the users through the text itself and help them develop comprehension strategies. "Easification attempts to make the text more accessible to the learner by using a variety of what may be called 'easification devices', the purpose of which is to guide him through the text. A wide range of easification devices could be used to make authentic texts more accessible" (Bhatia 1983: 46). Plain Language seems to rely mainly on what Bhatia calls simplification. By contrast, Easy Language merges simplification and easification, relying, sometimes heavily on an apparatus of easification devices including non-langauge dependent elements such as illustrations, pictures, page design and layout.

If we focus on accessible communication and content or language simplification for special user groups with disabilities, we need to expand our horizons from Plain Language to other varieties of linguistic comprehensibility enhancements (Maaß 2020). Many do exist as varieties positioned somewhere on a continuum between the poles of expert or specialized language and Easy Language (Maaß 2020). The former includes Languages for Special Purposes or Expert Languages (e.g., Gotti 2003) that is rich in jargon or specialized vocabulary associated with specific occupations and usually deliberately impenetrable to outsiders (Jackson and Zé Amvela 2000: 128–129). Additionally, the rich diversity of regional dialects – especially in the Anglophone world – also falls into this category. The latter instead is the most comprehensible variety of a natural language, or, in other words the variety with maximally enhanced comprehensibility. Although it is difficult to distinguish all the minimal variations that populate this continuum, and although there are several problems related to the terms used to name each variety, Maaß (Maaß 2020) traces a useful scheme encapsulating the most recognizable varieties of accessible language in her book. These include, in an order of ascending complexity, or rather in an order of descending comprehensibility: Easy Language covering the maximum comprehensibility level, Plain Language covering an intermediary level of comprehensibility, Standard Language corresponding to the standard comprehensibility level and finally Expert Language or Languages for Special Purposes covering the most elaborate level of comprehensibility (Figure 1).
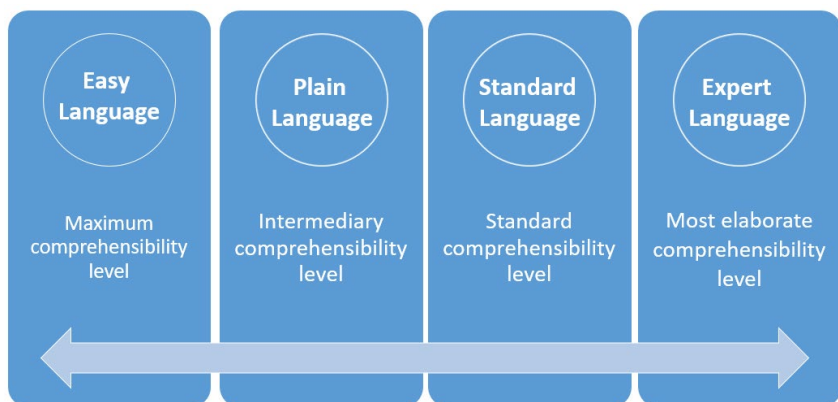
Figure 1: Different levels of language comprehensibility

In this book, we will focus on Plain and Easy Language which are the most established varieties. However, we will occasionally use the umbrella term Easy-to-Understand (used in Inclusiuon Europe 2014; see also Bernabé forthcoming; Bernabé and Orero 2019; EASIT 2019a) to cover both unless a distinction between the two is needed. Therefore, the expression Easy-to-Understand (henceforth E2U) will focus on the general "activity of simplifying, adapting, elaborating or creating texts that match readers' ability level" (Arfé et al. 2018: 2193) irrespective of the concrete linguistic and textual realizations needed to perform the simplification process.

1.3   Plain Language or Easy Language?

As emerged earlier, Plain Language and Easy Language are two "methods" (Arfé et al. 2018), "sevices" (Bernabé and Orero 2019), "instruments" (Maaß 2020: 169) or "approaches" (Vollenwyder et al. 2018: 514) used to reduce language complexity to benefit a given audience. Today, their implementation and development are still not standardised in different European countries (Bernabé and Orero 2019: 60; Fortis 2003: 8–11), which poses several terminological issues. In English, and especially in its use as a lingua franca, for instance, the established label "Easy-to-Read Language" was recently joined but not yet substituted by "Easy Language" (cf. "easy to access", Bernabé and Orero 2019: 69) emphasizing the shift in focus from the reading process and from

written content to a more modern multimodal view of information delivery and processing. Most guidelines, as well as many languages as shown in Table 1, still adhere to the traditional reading-centred terminology even though today "contents come in a large variety of media realizations and only few of them require the ability to read" (Maaß 2020: 54; see Bernabé and Orero 2019; ILSMH 1998: 7; Maaß and Rink 2020; Taylor 2012, 2018).

CA	Lectura Fàcil	Llenguatge Planer
DE	Leichte Sprache	Einfache Sprache
EN	Easy-to-Read Language Easy Language	Plain Language
ES	Lectura fácil	Lenguaje llano
IT	Lingua facile da leggere e da capire	*Plain Language*[8] Semplificazione linguistica
GA	Lectura doada	Linguaxe sinxela
SL	Lahko branje	Preprost jezik
SV	Lättläst språk	Klarspråk

Table 1: Easy and Plain Language in the project languages

Furthermore, only a low percentage of the target groups for which Plain and Easy Language texts are produced are actually able to read texts successfully: "People with severe reading handicaps benefit very little from trying to read easy-to-read books by themselves. But reading aloud in a group or listening to a story is also a cultural experience, and reading together with others is a meaningful form of communication and a pleasurable experience" (IFLA 2010: 10). As a matter of fact, "some of the main target groups of Easy Language have reading scores well below the average population" (Maaß 2020: 54). This is why catering to non-readers is crucial. Nowadays only some contents require the ability to read, many do not, e.g., audio description, audiobooks, podcasts, audio guides, tactile signing, visual communication (including signs, typography, drawing, graphic design, illustration, industrial design, advertising, animation, colour, and electronic resources). "None of these forms include reading or require the ability to read at text level. Thus, 'Easy-to-Read' is not an

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8 Italian normally retains the English borrowing to refer to Plain Language, which co-occurs with the more general expression "linguistic simplification".

adequate term for this language variety as it blocks the view of the different forms of realisation that are necessary to achieve communicative inclusion of the target audience. The term *Easy Language* is open to broader conceptualisations of enhancing comprehensibility through language" (Maaß 2020: 56).

1.3.1 Target audiences

E2U target audiences are heterogeneous. As we anticipated, there is no clearly defined target group for Plain Language that does not primarily address people with disabilities but has its roots in efforts to "open expert contents for lay people" (Maaß 2020: 12; Fortis 2005) and improving information focusing on clear and precise writing (Cutts 2013; Skaggs 2016). Writings in Plain Language aim to be comprehensible for as broad an audience as possible "through clarity, brevity, and by avoiding technical language" (Miesenberger and Petz 2014: 321). Centred on the user's goals, Plain Language tries to make content "easily scannable and understandable" (Vollenwyder et al. 2018: 515). Good quality information is in fact essential to the delivery of effective, inclusive, accessible and high-quality services. This soon attracted people with disabilities who became a crucially important customer group (ODI 2007: 5) as of around the 1960s (Maaß 2020), especially in those countries where Easy Language was not yet offered consistently as an accessible communication instrument.

The situation of Easy Language is different. Its users are more specific and normally include people with some kind of disability. Easy Language is essentially constructed on the needs of individuals who are not able to use Plain Language (Miesenberger and Petz 2014: 321) but require further simplification and easification procedures to access content. Traditionally, Easy Language was (and in some cases still is) meant specifically for people with reading difficulties, or "struggling readers"[9]. Recent studies on Easy Language emphasize that simplification should not only apply to texts to be read but that the potential user group should go beyond struggling readers to include people (children, young adults or adults) with cognitive and intellectual disabilities or other disadvantages who have a permanent or temporary need for over-simplified

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9   With the expression "struggling readers", Arfé et al. (2018: 2192), capitalizing on a bulk of scientific literature on the topic, refer to a variety of poor readers "who experience difficulties in comprehending texts and learning from texts due to language problems […], cognitive processing problems […], or a combination of these difficulties […]. Compared with good readers, these readers often present a range of difficulties, including limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, poorer information processing capacities or limited working memory, and inferior inference-making skills".

products. The former category includes (Bernabé and Orero 2019: 61–62; Gargiulo and Arezzo 2017; Fortis 2003; Fajardo et al. 2013, 2014; IFLA 2010; Maaß and Rink 2020; Saggion et al. 2010:341; Vollenwyder et al. 2018: 515)[10] for instance persons with dyslexia and other reading difficulties, people with low language skills or auditory disabilities, persons with (mild, moderate, profound) intellectual disabilities, elderly persons, people with comprehension needs, persons with neuropsychiatric disabilities, caused by a variety of brain malfunctions and leading to learning problems, attention deficit disorders, as well as lack of motor and impulse control, pre-lingually deaf persons, deafblind persons, persons with aphasia and persons with dementia. The latter category comprises people who may find oversimplified material useful for a period of time, such as persons with limited reading skills caused by external factors. These may include (IFLA 2010, Inclusion Europe 2014: 6; ILSMH 1998: 9; Saggion et al. 2010:341) children, recent immigrants, other non-native language speakers, tourists, exchange students, language learners, poor readers that suffer from functional illiteracy due to lack of education, social problems or mental illness.

Such a distinction is not clearly delimited with overlap potentially occurring in certain situations and a single individual having multiple disabilities and therefore multiple overlapping needs.

1.3.2 Fields of application

The fields of application of Plain and Easy Language are normally not substantially different. Both varieties of language comprehensibility enhancement are used in contexts where important messages are produced and addressed to a heterogeneous audience with diverse social, economic and educational backgrounds and possibilities, but all deserving to smoothly access (rather than being subjected to) and successfully understand such messages (Fortis 2003).

We were able to identify four broad fields of application of E2U language (EASIT 2019a): public administration and justice, which covers for example institutional and administrative documents, public and legal documents, government statements, contracts, etc.; the area of media and journalism, which covers for example news, press releases, TV programmes, film scripts, web

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10 A more detailed account is found in García Muñoz 2012, Chapter 3. A comprehensive overview of disability and cognitive accessibility is found in FEPAS 2014, and in Gargiulo and Arezzo 2017.

content, etc.; the education field, covering all teaching and learning materials; and finally the field of culture and literature, which covers for instance museum brochures or audio-guides, opera librettos, theatre plays, theatre and film scripts, information about cultural events, novels, etc..

Because Plain Language is intended to make the life of ordinary people easier and more effective, it tends to be implemented mainly in specialized fields, such as bureaucratic, medical, administrative or legal fields with the purpose of simplifying sectorial jargon to make the documents comprehensible to the greatest number of laypeople (ILSMH 1998). In this respect, the public sector in particular benefits from Plain Language (Fortis 2003: 6–8) because it is the source of all social and institutional communication. Easy Language, on the other hand, should ideally cover all possible fields of application to ensure that everyday information that all citizens use in their daily life is usable. Therefore, it is important that Easy Language also covers pieces of locally relevant information regarding "where they live, people they want to meet, opening hours of community services, where to go with everyday problems, how to visit friends or the doctor" (ILSMH 1998: 10), how to do things which other citizens can do without help. Delivering Easy Language information in all these areas can in fact be decisive at crucial times of change in a person's life, or when considering major life choices, such as leaving school, getting a job, moving home, receiving a payment, becoming involved in a sexual relationship, getting married or becoming a parent or a carer for another family member as well as retiring (Department of Health 2010: 10).

1.3.3   Text professionals

Even though text simplification might seem to be an intuitive and easy process, implementing accessible communication is in fact utterly complex and is an activity that cannot be improvised (Arfé et al. 2018; Cutts 2013; García Muñoz 2014; Sciumbata 2017). As Maaß (Maaß 2020: 51) highlights, thinking of producing or translating a given text into an "easy" or "plain" text is terminologically misleading. It is in fact so misleading that it can "belittle the translation effort making it difficult for translators to be taken seriously and charge adequate prices that correspond to the complexity of their task. The terms suggest that anyone can do translation (as it is 'easy'); this tends to attract poorly trained bidders without sufficient training to offer their services" (Maaß 2020: 51). To make things worse, the knowledge and the use of Easy Language rules does not imply knowing how to adapt texts (García Muñoz 2014: 24).

Unambiguously determining the categories of experts working in the area of content simplification is not simple. The roles and the terminology used to refer to professionals operating in the field differ from country to country, overlap, and sometimes clash. Based on the most common activities performed by those who are involved in E2U text practices, four categories of experts can be identified, thus merging different yet possibly overlapping profiles working on diverse aspects of E2U, or sometimes specifically on Plain or Easy Language (EASIT 2019a; Maaß 2020). These include:

- trainers,
- producers/creators/writers,
- translators/adapters, and
- validators/advisors.

Trainers know and teach, as a main or secondary profession, the principles of E2U language in diverse types of settings (academic, vocational, in companies or associations, etc.). They are usually also E2U professionals and/or E2U researchers (cf. the idea of "practisearchers"; Gile 1994; see ADLAB PRO 2017a, 2018a; Torres-Simón and Pym 2016). Producers/creators/writers write content directly in Plain or in Easy Language, usually for public organizations that cater to the needs of people with intellectual or learning disabilities (Department of Health 2010) (cf. 4.2). Translators/adapters work from an existing text (a source text) and make it accessible by translating it intralingually based on specific E2U principles or recommendations. Validator/advisors, as we will see later, check the quality of the final texts.

The *Make it simple* guidelines maintain that "When writing an easy-to-read document you are likely to start with one of two situations: either you already have a text which you want to make accessible to people with learning disability or you want to write a completely new text for them. Either way, you first have to start thinking about your target group and the main aim of your publication" (ILSMH 1998: 11; see also García Muñoz 2012: 25). This quote implies that the writing and the adaptation process are not so different. And as a matter of fact, they share several features. In both cases text experts have to make decisions about the balance of text and illustrations in the target text, they must organize content clearly and logically and they should list the most important points of a document – either from scratch or summarizing them from a pre-existing text

(ILSM 1998: 11–12). Further shared stages include end users reading and amending the draft, and then checking it again with a reader group before print.

However, for some authors, writing and adapting content are different processes that need to remain distinct (García Muñoz 2012; Tronbacke 1993). The adaptation process can in fact be particularly difficult (García Muñoz 2014: 24) because it implies a relationship between two texts – the original source text and the simplified target text. Therefore, not only does adapting a text mean creating a new one that has to be good, but it also implies maintaining balance and fidelity with regard to the source text in terms of meaning, atmosphere, and mark of the original author. To do so, the adapter has to be able to thoroughly analyse the source text and identify its genre, main subject and global tenor to help maintain them in the target text with acceptable approximation (García Muñoz 2014: 24)[11]. All these reasons resulted in this process earning the label "translation" – and it is in fact reminiscent of its basic principles (e.g., Eco 2003; Jackobson 1959; Munday 2016). Some experienced professionals however may prefer to read the original document and write their own version directly in Easy Language rather than working meticulously with the source text (ILSMH 1998).

In the production chain of E2U texts, validators/advisors[12] are a very important category. Validating understandability is decisive in Easy Language contexts and recommended in Plain language contexts (Bernabé forthcoming) as it serves to assess the quality of the text. Validators are normally experts in Easy Language (rather than in Plain Language) content who check the quality of Easy Language texts before they are released (Inclusion Europe 2014: 9; ODI 2007:8). Plena Inclusión (2018)[13] defines the validator or advisor as a person with reading difficulties who is trained in implementing Easy Language guidelines and checks that the texts adapted into Easy Language comply with the guidelines. He or she is also tasked with validating text that have to be understandable to other people with reading difficulties. Validation is in fact a

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11 According to García Muñoz (2014: 24), the analysis of the source text preceding its adaptation should be very detailed. For those who might need it, he offers a comprehensive checklist of adaptation stages to follow before starting the writing stage.

12 "Test readers" in Slovenian (*testni bralci*).

13 "Persona con dificultad de comprensión lectora que está formada en pautas de elaboración de textos en lectura fácil y se dedica a comprobar que los textos adaptados en lectura fácil cumplen dichas pautas y a verificar que son comprensibles para otras personas con dificultades de comprensión lectora" (Plena Inclusión 2018: 15).

key stage preceding the release of an Easy Language text: during the validation process, a trained Easy Language user reads the Easy Language content and determines whether it fully complies with the established principles and can be released. Besides checking final texts and content, validators can participate in other stages of Easy Language content production offering advice on text development (e.g., decisions about the subject, about what to say on a subject, and about where to make the information available) and helping to overcome possible writing challenges (IFLA 2010; Inclusion Europe 2014; ILSM 1998; García Muñoz 2012, 2014; Plena Inclusión 2018). In all cases, in spite of the expertise of text professionals of the quality of the recommendations followed, and of the accuracy of the validation process, it is impossible to create a text that can be adapted equally well to all end users (García Muñoz 2012: 23).

1.3.4 Acceptability

The radical difference in complexity reduction between Plain and Easy Language makes them formally different but also considerably different in terms of acceptability – which "alongside with perceptibility and comprehensibility, [is] one of the pillars of functional accessible communication" (Maaß 2020: 193).

Plain Language is normally closer to Standard Language and for this reason this variant is more easily accepted than Easy Language by its users and by the general public. However, for the same reason, it is often not easy enough for some user groups. On the other hand, the high degree of linguistic and textual simplicity that characterizes Easy Language grants maximal comprehensibility but minimal acceptability. The potential that using Easy Language has to socially stigmatise its users, especially those with severe cognitive disabilities, is in fact very high (Maaß 2020; Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020).

The acceptability issue is an extremely delicate sociolinguistic aspect of Easy Language that has not yet received enough attention. It places text experts and researchers in a position where they must ask themselves whether it is better to prioritize text comprehensibility over acceptability, or, conversely, whether protecting end users from social stigma is more important than helping them understand content. The impact of the stigmatization of individuals' social identity of can in fact have devastating effects on people's lives, diminishing self-esteem and robbing people of social opportunities (Corrigan 2004).

Ultimately, stigma can offset the beneficial effects of Easy Language and the efforts made to produce it.

Negatively valued items in Easy Language varieties vary from language to language. In German, for instance, they comprise the hyphenation of compounds, which leads to incorrect spelling (Maaß 2020: 93) even though extreme word length is known to decrease comprehensibility especially among poorer readers. In general, specifying the pronunciation of common foreign words in an intuitive phonetic transcription would come at too high a price, provoking rejection from the general public and sharply reduced acceptability of the texts produced (Maaß 2020: 97). A text consisting exclusively of main clauses with no compound sentences enhances syntactic comprehensibility but is stylistically displeasing, thus endangering its acceptability.

The fact that broad acceptability and maximum comprehensibility cannot coexist (Maaß 2020: 91) certainly is a limiting factor that should be problematized more, and that deserves increased sensitization. Currently, in fact, we are facing a scenario where text professionals deal with a text practice that is problematic with respect to its full acceptability, which limits its implementation, poses several restrictions on its contexts of use and generates inconsistency regarding the policy adopted for the target groups (Maaß 2020: 72).

A recent study on the integration of Easy Language in audiovisual translation (Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020) shows for instance that the use of Easy Language in a translated product should always be announced and explained to prevent negative reactions from end users. An attitude that is also well known in the sector of accessible audiovisual translation, where accessibility is often associated with patronization[14] but applies to several scenarios where people with communication impairments, or other forms of disabilities, feel they are being addressed asymmetrically or in a condescending way when they are offered alternative accessible texts. "Unfortunately, texts rarely address

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14 This applies specifically to subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing. Deaf users in fact typically reject edited subtitles – which are tailor-made to match their average reading and processing speed, the same way standard subtitles are – in favour of verbatim subtitles, which report the unabridged version of the original soundtrack. Such negative response to a product that has been produced based on empirical results (e.g., Baker 1985 carried out a study with deaf children and concluded that edited versions were better comprehended than quasi-verbatim ones) is based on the assumption that the former type of subtitles deprives users of relevant content, and they are perceived as "editorialising" (Baker and Newell 1980: 99), rather than as faithful to the soundtrack (Neves 2008).

these fears and preconditions proactively. It would be sometimes helpful if they did. Unfortunately, the contrary is often the case" (Maaß 2019: 37). A scientific approach to Easy Language and to other comprehensibility enhanced varieties is therefore required (and we are partially going in this direction) to remodel rules that should be based on empirically-grounded results and reception studies conducted with target groups and which could therefore favour its recognition and acceptability.

1.4   Guidelines in Europe

Due to the complexity of the text simplification process, those who work in the field as Easy Language professionals follow standards or recommendations to write, translate or validate contents (Arfé et al. 2018; Bernabé forthcoming; Maaß 2020). Currently, a heterogeneous variety of materials on the implementation of Plain and Easy Language exists in Europe, especially in national publications. Offering a comprehensive list of all these publications is impossible, especially because each European country has its own assortment of documents that work as official or unofficial guidelines written in local languages. However, there are at least three established recommendations, which mainly pertain to Easy rather that Plain Language, and that are an important reference point. These materials are the result of joint work carried out by international bodies or under the framework of international projects, and that were translated into several languages to reach as many users and professionals as possible (Table 2).

First, in chronological order, the *Guidelines for Easy-to-Read Materials* produced by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. The IFLA Guidelines are the result of the work of the leading international body representing the interests of libraries, information services and their users (https://www.ifla.org/about). Revised in 2010 (after first publication in 1997) by Misako Nomura (Japan), Gyda Skat Nielsen (Denmark) and Bror Tronbacke (Sweden), members of the working group of IFLA's Library Services to People with Special Needs Section, the guidelines are designed to "stimulate and contribute to the publication of easy-to-read materials around the world and will provide useful information for editorial and outreach work" (p. 2). Originally published in English, the guidelines are now available on the IFLA website in Spanish, Arabic, Turkish and Japanese,

which enabled access to the rules for experts and users beyond Europe. The 31-page booklet focuses specifically on Easy Language, which is defined along with its target groups, i.e., persons with a disability and readers with limited language or reading proficiency. The focus is on general recommendations for editorial work with some broad language- and content-related guidelines and factors that make a text easy to read and understand also being identified and listed. Further specifications are offered regarding literary and newspaper works, as well as public documents and information. A section is devoted to illustrations, pictograms and design, which play a major role in the Easy Language context. The guidelines also include considerations on new genres such as media and other non-print formats that are also briefly listed and detailed. The publishing process of Easy Language material is explained and some marketing considerations are put forward. The guidelines further include a section on research and a glossary of terms. An example of the simplification process is offered at the end of the booklet.

A second set of European guidelines with the title *Make it simple* was published in 1998 by the ILSMH European Association. The ILSMH (International League of Societies for Persons with Mental Handicap) European Association works for the world's 50 million people with a mental handicap, their families and others in their lives. It was founded in 1960 by representatives of people with a mental handicap. The ILSMH European Association undertook a project to develop "'Easy to Read Guidelines' and to translate them into all European languages with the aim of combatting the exclusion of a large part of the European population from the provision of relevant, up to date information" (ILSMH 1998: 5). As specified on the cover page, the ILSMH *European Guidelines for the Production of Easy-to-Read Information* are meant for people with learning disabilities, for authors, editors, information providers, translators and other interested persons. The 20-page brochure is quite dense. It offers an introduction to information accessibility and defines Easy-to-Read Language along with its main target group and their needs. It then focuses on how to write Easy-to-Read documents, illustrating six major steps in the process, ranging from the need to detect the aim of the document to final quality checks. The importance of visual aids and of the publication layout are addressed, too. Interestingly, in spite of the title (*Guidelines for the Production of Easy-to-Read Information*), the authors often specify that the purpose of the guidelines is not only to produce printed information, which, as they claim, might not be the best solution for everyone (p. 7). Recommendations on how

to make other formats (e.g., audio, video or even interactive media) accessible are also offered. In line with the original purpose, the guidelines were translated into all official languages of the European Union: Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. As in the case of the Inclusion Europe standards (2014), no language-specific rules are proposed. As the authors claim, "Whilst recognising that cultural differences exist throughout the European Union, the guidelines aim to be relatively neutral and to be useful in any European Union context. The intention is that anyone in any European Union country will be able to use the guidelines to produce an accessible text on any subject matter from a short paragraph to a major publication. However, it would be best to start with a simple publication rather than writing a book. It is simple, short, everyday factual information in easy language that is most needed" (ILSMH 1998: 7).

A third important publication is the guideline brochure *Information for all. European standards for making information easy to read and understand*, published by Inclusion Europe (2014). The brochure contains standards, defined as "a list of rules which help people to do things in the same way and in the right way" (Inclusion Europe 2014: 5) that are available in 16 languages and are the main outcome of the three-year European project Pathways (2015–2018) on the employability and integration of people with chronic diseases (https://www.path-ways.eu/). The Inclusion Europe standards were completed to make information easy to read and understand for people with intellectual disabilities and to grant them access to information. From a terminological – and therefore conceptual – point of view, they adopt a modern approach and emphasize the broader horizon focusing on various formats that need to become more comprehensible: their title refers to making information easy to read and understand, and not just easy to read, as was the case in the past. They cover the most relevant aspects regarding the implementation of information that has to be easy to read and understand. Specifically, after highlighting its inclusive role, the booklet covers general standards, standards for written, electronic, video and audio information. The guide itself is written in large print Easy Language and offers a succinct list of clear and simple recommendations, with plenty of visual aids. The reader is immersed in Easy Language right from the beginning and starts learning accidentally while focusing on the content of the booklet. As specified in their title, these guidelines have the considerable advantage of focusing on accessible communication in general rather than only on easy to read

language, which, as we saw, has been a limiting feature in this field for a long time. However, language-specific rules are not included, which makes the guidelines very valuable but at the same time somehow broad when it comes to their implementation in a given language. The availability of the Inclusion Europe standards in 16 European languages (English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Croatian, Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Polish, Portuguese, Slovene and Slovak) makes them accessible and well known across Europe.

	IFLA 1997/2010	ILSM 1998	Inclusion Europe 2014
Arabic	■		
Catalan		■	
Croatian			■
Czech			■
Danish		■	
Dutch		■	
English	■		■
Estonian			■
Finnish		■	■
French		■	■
German		■	■
Greek		■	
Hungarian		■	■
Italian		■	■
Japanese	■		
Latvian			■
Lithuanian			■
Polish			■
Portuguese			■
Slovak			■
Slovene			■
Spanish	■		■
Turkish	■		
Swedish		■	

Table 2: Languages covered by Easy Language guidelines (in black)

The international recognition of the importance of Plain and Easy Language is demonstrated by the intense involvement of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), an international standard-setting body composed of

representatives from various national standardisation organizations, which is currently working on accessible communication. An ISO standard on making written text easy to read and easy to understand (ISO/IEC WD 23859-1) is currently in preparation, under the co-lead of Anna Matamala and Ester Hedberg[15]. Their work is also closely related to the ongoing work on Plain Language (ISO 24495-1).

On a different level, because not intended for users with cognitive and intellectual disabilities and focusing more of Plain Language rules, the EU publication *How to write clearly*, available in all EU languages, is specific to administrative language. It was published in 2016 by the European Commission staff with the aim of helping to write clear and more effective documents (including legislation, a technical report, minutes, a press release or a speech) in the official and working languages of the Commission. It offers "hints, not rules" to implement after taking into account the "target readers and the purpose of your document" (EU 2016: 2).

At the national level, on the other hand, some initiatives deserve to be highlighted. We will do so by focusing on a selection of works from the EASIT partner countries (cf. 2.3) that will be reported in alphabetical order, even though they are certainly not the only European countries involved and showing interest as well as rapid and substantial advances in the field[16].

Germany features a positively complex situation: Plain, Easy, and Simple language have been practiced and researched for a long time now. It was in the last decade though that research-based guidelines and recommendations started to appear. In particular, the 2015 digest of practical rules by Christiane Maaß (*Leichte Sprache*) was so successful, timely and needed that it was soon scientifically reworked into a more comprehensive academic publication resulting from joint efforts[17]. The resulting volume (Bredel and Maaß 2016a) contains comprehensive theory-based reflections on Easy Language along with detailed language specific principles on how to produce Easy Language content

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15 Anna Matamala, BA in Translation and PhD in Applied Linguistics, and TransMedia Catalonia's main researcher, is the coordinator of the EASIT project (Chapter 2). Ester Hedberg, project manager and journalist, with a BA in social sciences, currently works for the Swedish Dyslexia Association.

16 A handbook on Easy Language in all European countries is currently being edited by Ulla Vanhatalo and Camilla Lindholm of the University of Helsinki.

17 Christiane Maaß is a linguist, Translation Studies and Accessible Communication expert, while Ursula Bredel is a German linguist specialized in didactics and reading acquisition.

in German. This volume, *Leichte Sprache. Theoretische Grundlagen, Orientierung für die Praxis*, comes with an Easy Language Guide (*Ratgeber Leichte Sprache*, Bredel and Maaß 2016b) meant as a digest for translators and the broad public, and an exercise book (*Arbeitsbuch Leichte Sprache,* Bredel and Maaß 2016c) for hands-on activities. The three volumes were published as "Duden Easy Language", the most renowned authority and reference manual for the German language, and in fact "the commitment of Duden was a major gain for the shaping and the reputation of Easy Language in Germany" (Maaß 2020: 83). Other initiatives include the Easy Language Network (Netzwerk Leichte Sprache), founded in 2006 and counting among its members examiners, translators and other people who use Easy Language from five German-speaking countries all committed to Easy Language: they translate texts into Easy Language, check the texts for quality and give training courses and lectures on Easy Language. Rules in Easy Language on Easy Language (Netzwerk Leichte Sprache 2017) and on Easy Language quality validation (Netzwerk Leichte Sprache 2014) were produced and are an important and useful source in German.

Italy's official Easy Language guidelines are the Italian translation of the Inclusion Europe booklet sponsored by Anffas Onlus (Associazione Nazionale Famiglie di Persone con Disabilità Intellettiva e/o Relazionale), a National Association of Families of Persons with Intellectual and/or Relational Disabilities[18]. Publications on the subject in Italy however are not yet abundant and two valuable sources mainly pertain to Plain rather than Easy Language: the 2003 booklet by Daniele Fortis is highly informative, provides a historical overview of Plain Language and offers linguistic recommendations from a descriptive perspective. The more recent publication by Floriana Sciumbata (2017) focuses instead on the simplification of bureaucratic language and provides practical language-specific tips and advice on how to improve text readability, offering authentic examples of unnecessarily intricate Italian texts.

In Slovenia, besides the Slovenian translation of the Inclusion Europe guidelines (*Informacije za vse, Evropska pravila za pripravo informacij v lahko berljivi in razumljivi obliki*. 2012. Ljubljana: Zveza Sožitje), later disputed in

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18 Anffas Onlus is a major association created by parents, relatives and friends of persons with intellectual and/or relational disabilities, operating at local, regional and national level for the promotion and protection of human rights and working actively towards the ideals of equality of opportunity, non-discrimination and social inclusion.

Knapp and Haramija 2019, the following works are staples: Knapp and Haramija 2019 (an introduction on Easy-to-Read Slovenian) and Fužir et al. 2019 (guidelines on Easy-to-Read Slovenian) are both written in Easy Slovenian and are designed for laypeople and end users. Haramija et al. 2019 by contrast is a guide for professionals working in the field. The publications are recent and were developed within the project "It is easy to read: Development of basic guidelines, methods, didactic materials and related tools for easy-to-read in Slovenian" (Jan. 2018 to Aug. 2019), co-financed by the Republic of Slovenia and the European Social Fund. The project represents an important divide that brought Slovenia into a period of heightened awareness of and commitment to the topic (also thanks to the RISA Institute), and also triggered a more systematic and quality-oriented approach. On a further note, Easy-to-Read in Slovenia is structured into four levels, each catering to the needs of differently abled people. Level 1, "sensory reading", is meant for people who cannot read and only understand a few words. Sensory reading material is not written in words: a message is conveyed with objects and voice, but also through touch and smell. Level 2 is labelled as "very easy to read". In this case a message is conveyed through single words or very short sentences, or sometimes exclusively through pictures. Level 3 is a sort of a low-key version of Easy-to-Read, where words are always paired with pictures. Level 4 includes longer (but still easy) sentences and the use of pictures is not mandatory though certainly important especially in some cases.

Spain seems to have a considerable number of publications on accessible communication, which reflects its importance and the efforts of the country for its implementation. The works of García Muñoz (2012 and 2014), project manager in the Accessibility Department of Plena Inclusión Madrid, are reliable and detailed guidelines which offer practical advice backed up by theory. *Lectura fácil: Métodos de redacción y evaluación* (García Muñoz 2012) includes thorough sections on the creation and evaluation of Easy Language. *Lectura fácil. Colección Guías prácticas de orientaciones para la inclusión educativa* (García Muñoz 2014) provides rules and offers interesting checklists for the validation process. Validation, which is a very important but not yet fully regulated process, is the central subject of *Validación de textos en lectura fácil: aspectos prácticos y sociolaborales*, published in 2018 by Plena Inclusión Madrid, a network of organizations of people with intellectual disabilities. But there is even more: The short guide *Cómo elaborar textos de fácil lectura* (CRMF 2005) offers an idea of the difficulties that many people have when trying to access

written documents and helps readers to prepare content that is accessible to all. The guide offers practical suggestions for developing written texts with features that can facilitate reading especially for people with disabilities. Most specificities of written texts are addressed, such as the formal aspects pertaining to formatting (typeface, text composition, and illustrations), linguistic aspects (vocabulary, grammar, style or structure) and the format of the final document, including the choice of preferred paper or the best type of binding. Other useful publications include *Lectura Fácil. Puerta de acceso a la información, el conocimiento y la cultura*, issued by Down España, with a focus on facilitating the communication and inclusion of people with Down syndrome, and a more general set of recommendations for cognitive accessibility published by FEAPS (Federación de Organizaciones a favor de las Personas con Discapacidad Intelectual de Madrid) in 2014.

Sweden is a pioneering country in the Easy Language area, which has long contributed to making Swedish legislation and other official texts more comprehensible and easier to read for everybody, including the ordinary citizen (Ehrenberg-Sundin 1995; Tronbacke 1997). The first guidelines for clear language in laws appeared as early as in 1967. In spite of their simplicity, the recommendations that they advanced were sensational at the time (Ehrenberg-Sundin 1995). The Swedish Language Act (SFS 2009:600), Section 11, stipulates that "The language of the public sector is to be cultivated, simple and comprehensible." Although there are no officially recognized guidelines, several practice-based publications exist. A recent one is the outcome of the Begriplig text project (www.Begripligtext.se) outlining 19 tips to write in an understandable way (*19 råd för att skriva begripligt*), written in collaboration with the Swedish Dyslexia Association.

Overall, when talking of Plain and Easy Language, it is difficult to refer to fixed standards (García Muñoz 2012: 23). It is impossible to write texts that can be successfully adapted to the abilities of all people with reading, writing and understanding disabilities. The potential group of users of simplified texts is de facto too wide and heterogeneous. Some guidelines, such as the IFLA (2010) guidelines or the Slovenian guidelines, establish recommendations categorized by level of difficulty that might somehow aid in writing or adapting content to make it differently accessible to different broad categories of users. However, Plain and Easy Language are not universal – but instead partial – accessibility solutions (Cutts 2013: xiii; García Muñoz 2012: 25). Furthermore, as guideline designers admit, some "recommendations are not necessarily

evidence-based, but just the result of consensus between professionals in particular areas (e.g., librarians, web designers, or journalists)" (Arfé et al. 2018), which makes their official recognition very difficult. Furthermore, a theoretical reference model that can sustain their validity is still missing (Fajardo et al. 2014) and attempts to test and validate these standard guidelines have been very few (Arfé et al. 2018), though we are currently moving in this desired direction (Maaß 2020). Further research is needed in order to provide empirical support for the existing guidelines, especially when they are designed for readers with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. In addition, the extent to which a text fulfils a particular guideline or set of guidelines is not easily quantifiable (Fajardo et al. 2014). We should highlight that the text complexity issue as well as its measurement is certainly challenging but central, and deemed to become even more important if E2U is to be applied in semiotically complex scenarios, as the EASIT project is trying to do (Chapter 2).

Returning to the statement of scholars and guideline designers who admit that guidelines are the result of rules of thumb rather than of theoretically driven empirical research, we must point out that their "simplicity" and lack of scientific ground might be the result of a rational decision, guided by the need to produce accessible recommendations. Most recommendations are in fact produced involving people with a learning disability (e.g., MENCAP 2005).

1.5   Textual and linguistic features

Although texts in Easy Language attempt to be as simple as possible (Vollenwyder et al. 2018: 515), it is not easy to define, to obtain or to measure simplicity. What makes it even more complex is that we still do not know exactly how to quantify or operationalize this concept in different communicative contexts and in particular in contexts where accessible communication is implemented (Arfé et al. 2018). In spite of the current lack of a scientifically-grounded taxonomy of simplification devices, a close analysis of the current publications in the Easy Language field, all based on the experience of professionals and on the response of end users, shows that it is possible to identify at least five areas where successful implementation of simplification is applied and achieved (Table 3) (cf. EASIT 2019a; Maaß 2020). Overall, Table 3

shows that Easy Language recommendations include both language and content dependent strategies as well as language independent strategies (Bernabé and Orero 2019: 69).

Language and content dependent strategies focus on skilled and conscious use of vocabulary, proficient use of simple syntax and clear content organization. Language independent strategies focus on the design and layout of the page and on the implementation of different types and degrees of multimodality.

LANGUAGE AND CONTENT DEPENDENT

Skilled and conscious use of vocabulary

- Use core vocabulary items
- Use Easy-to-Understand words
- Provide definitions for new/difficult words
- Favour monoreferentiality
- Avoid/limit abbreviations
- Avoid/limit jargon
- Explain jargon

Proficient use of simple syntax

- Use short sentences
- Favour simple (unmarked) structures
- Follow unmarked word order
- Use primary punctuation
- Avoid complex phrases

Clear content organization

- Provide summaries
- Provide glossaries
- Exploit front-focus strategies
- Explain logical relationships
- Follow linear, chronological order
- Use bold character
- Chunk up information
- Add one idea at a time (i.e., per sentence)
- Write short paragraphs

LANGUAGE AND CONTENT INDEPENDENT

Design and layout of the page

- Functional use of spacing
- Large margins
- Headings/information labelling
- Bullet points
- No indentation
- No columns
- No text justification
- Number document pages
- Ensure legibility
- Clear typeface
- Large letters

Multimodality

- Use big clear pictures next to words
- Use images to express ideas
- Combine meaning-making formats, e.g.:
    - print
    - large print
    - braille
    - video
    - audio
    - image

Table 3: Easy Language strategies

To achieve text comprehensibility, a skilled and conscious use of vocabulary is central. Overall, guidelines suggest resorting to everyday simple words that your readers are likely to understand (see also Cutts 2013: 11–51), and they suggest providing explanations as often as necessary or giving examples of difficult, specialized, technical or new concepts, such as words that professionals use to communicate with each other, called jargon or argot. Monoreferentiality, which is a typical feature of special languages (Gotti 2003; Sager et al. 1980), is also recommended in the Easy Language contexts to avoid confusion: Standard 9 of Inclusion Europe (2014: 10) for instance urges us to "Use the same word to describe the same thing | throughout the same document": language variation is therefore to be avoided or limited in favour of a consistent use of terminology

(ILSMH 1998: 13). The list of don'ts is equally clear: abbreviations and initialisms should be avoided as well as any type of in-group expressions, metaphors or non-literal expressions, abstract concepts, borrowings from other languages, percentages and big numbers – which can easily be replaced with descriptive quantifiers (Inclusion Europe 2014: 10; IFLA 2010: 11, ILSM 1998: 12–13). In English, contractions should be substituted with full forms (Inclusion Europe 2014: 23). Easy English writers might consider checking the frequency of the words they use: there are free tools that enable them to do so, including the online British National Corpus, even though the Collins COBUILD English Dictionary is a similarly good source for word frequency offering information about the grammatical behaviour and combination tendency of each word (Cutts 2013: 33).

The proficient use of simple syntax can be a further important simplicity enhancer. Syntax normally refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. Although texts usually consist of long and coherent sentences linked together by connectives, authors of Easy Language texts should make a considerable simplification effort to meet the processing ability level of end users. To make syntax simpler, guidelines (but also Cutts 2013; Gunning 1964) suggest using short sentences, preferably speaking to people directly (through the "you" allocutive form, Inclusion Europe 2014: 11), using positive rather than negative formulations, using active language, and avoiding complex verb forms that might generate ambiguity, including modal auxiliaries (ILSMH 1998: 13). Punctuation, which is part of syntax, should be kept simple and limited to the use of full stops, thus avoiding secondary punctuation marks such as semicolons, hyphens and commas, processing of which might prove to be challenging. Overall, to favour simple syntax, the use of unmarked word order (SVO for English) or the avoidance of heavily modified phrases are encouraged.

Clear organization of content is crucial to its retrieval and helps to not overwhelm end users. In the Easy Language context, organizing information clearly refers to the provision of a simple overview of the topic through summaries and to the provision of glossaries, i.e. lists of words with an explanation at the end of the text. To ensure comfortable retrieval of the information, it is important not to assume previous knowledge about the subject (ILSMH 1998: 13) and to avoid cross reference. Explaining and describing "complicated relationships in a concrete and logical manner, where events take place in a logical chronological framework" (IFLA 2010: 11) is a further device conducive to enhanced comprehensibility as is gathering

information on the same topic together, repeating the same information frequently and delivering one idea per sentence (Inclusion Europe 2014: 11). Finally, fronting strategies[19] should be used to enhance cohesion and emphasise what is more important in the text – which will help readers remember it.

Moving on to language independent simplification devices, when we deal with written content (print, on screen or online), the design and layout of the page are major features that grant access to the text itself. In terms of design and layout of the page, most guidelines refer to the way information is arranged and presented to facilitate access: the use of broad margins and line spacing, the paragraph structure, the position of the pictures, are all language-independent factors that enable users to take their time while processing short and coherent chunks of texts without struggling with the page set-up. Short sentences and paragraphs, but also headings and bullet points, bold character for new words that will later be defined, can further contribute to making the page visually appealing and helping users find information more readily. Avoiding columns, text justification and indentation (Inclusion Europe 2014: 18–19) are other important precautions. The pages of a document should be numbered following the "page 2 out of 4" formula (Inclusion Europe 2014: 19). Legibility, which is the qualityof being clear enough to read, is another important aspect of page layout that should never be overlooked and can easily be achieved using clear typefaces, large letters and adequate contrast between the written text and its background (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Legibility

Explaining difficult words repeatedly (Inclusion Europe 2014: 11) or using bold character to make difficult words stand out are certainly information organization devices, even though they somehow overlap with what most guidelines consider lexical simplification devices. With no doubt, however, the use of bold fonts can facilitate location of specific objects in the text. Along the same line, breaking down information into chunks and writing short sentences that comprise one idea per

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19 Fronting entails optional divergence from the basic word order via preposing. Also known in English as front-focus or preposing (e.g., Erteschik-Shir 2007), it consists of anticipating word groups that customarily follow the verb at the beginning of a sentence. Fronting confers high cognitive accessibility and discourse relevance to the entity that is preposed.

sentence are syntactic strategies, although in actual fact they contribute facilitating the ability to access and search for recorded information, and overlap with what some guidelines consider information organization devices.

Finally, using non-verbal codes and paralinguistic information, and mixing them with language-based messages in the final text, is a highly beneficial strategy hinging on the power of multimodality. Multimodality refers to the use and particular combination of several semiotic modes to make meaning (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996; Thibault 2000; Taylor 2012, 2018). In the field of Easy Language, most guidelines recommend blending language dependent rules with non language dependent elements as well as different accessible formats to convey information in such a way as to make it more immediate, clear, and effective. This strategy naturally depends on the needs and preferences as well as on the type and extent of disability of the end users. Normally, guidelines recommend the use of big and clear pictures next to words, or a combination of (large) print, braille, video, audio (e.g., read aloud functions) to make a text easier to understand. Any combination of channels that conveys the same meaning can work well and should be used as a powerful comprehensibility enhancer.

1.6 Easy Language in audiovisual translation

Accessible communication can be implemented in several sectors and audiovisual translation is no exception. As a matter of fact, media accessibility is a relatively recent and expanding field (Greco 2016, 2018; Romero-Fresco 2018). While accessible forms of audiovisual translation (such as subtitling for the D/deaf and the hard of hearing (cf. Note 20) or audio description for the blind and visually impaired) have existed for a long time now (Perego and Pacinotti 2020), their comprehensibility has not been tested systematically and is not always guaranteed to work for sensorially disabled audiences (Romero-Fresco 2015). The idea of integrating Easy Language into audiovisual translation is recent and actually might be an effective way to enhance the overall comprehensibility of many translated products as well as to enlarge their use to people with reading, intellectual or cognitive disabilities but also to users that could greatly benefit from content simplification for different reasons. The introduction of maximal language simplification forms in audiovisual translation has never been considered seriously or implemented before and this was the premise for launching the EASIT project (Chapter 2, Matamala and Orero

2018). More research is needed and it is being conducted to understand if, when and how it is possible to apply Plain Language or Easy Language to audiovisual media and which audiovisual products lend themselves better to more or less extreme forms of simplification (Arias-Badia and Matamala forthcoming; Bernabé forthcoming; Bernabé and Orero forthcoming; Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020; Marmit 2020; Marsano 2017; Paunović 2017; Matamala and Orero 2019; Taylor and Perego forthcoming).

In the following paragraphs we will discuss subtitling for the D/deaf and the hard of hearing and audio description for the blind and visually impaired to identify what type of interventions could be implemented effectively in terms of these accessible forms of audiovisual translation. Case studies will be reported and discussed and examples in English will be analysed to offer a first round of possible strategies for empirical testing in the near future.

1.6.1   Subtitling for the D/deaf and the hard of hearing

Subtitling for the D/deaf and the hard of hearing[20] (SDH) is an accessible form of intralingual subtitling consisting of the adapted transcription of the soundtrack for the benefit of people with a disabling hearing loss (Matamala and Orero 2010; Romero-Fresco 2015). Most literature and guidelines on the subject agree that SDH should not be a verbatim version of the soundtrack. This in fact would be impossible to read and process for any viewer. On the other hand, an edited version, also including specific precautions to turn sounds into words, would be more readable and easier to process.

When they were first introduced in the USA in the 1940s (Neves 2005), based on the fact that "the average graduate from an educational program for deaf and hard of hearing students read at about a third-grade level […] the word count was cut by about a third and the reading level was cut from roughly the sixth-grade level to the third-grade level" (Jensema et al. 1996: 284). Furthermore, specific language changes where implemented to ensure reduced text complexity and smoother processing: in English, "All passive-voice sentence construction was removed, contractions were eliminated, clauses were converted into short declarative sentences, and even jokes and puns were changed if it was felt the deaf and hard of hearing audience would not

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20 The term "D/deaf" is used to refer to two distinct groups: "people who are deaf but who belong to the social context of the hearing majority and relate to the oral language as their mother tongue, and the Deaf, a social and linguistic minority, who use a sign language as their mother tongue and read the national language as a second language" (Neves 2008, Note 2).

understand them" (Jensema et al. 1996: 284). Approximately the same measures are used today, and, in fact, studies demonstrate that edited subtitles are more digestible and enable D/deaf and hard of hearing viewers to follow the visuals of a film more easily while also better understanding its content (Szarkowszka et al. 2011). However, edited subtitles are not fully accepted by the deaf community who would rather access verbatim subtitles to avoid feeling left out of part of the information conveyed in the original film dialogues.

Overall, edited SDH are supposed to be simpler than standard subtitles on several levels, including the ortho-typographic, the linguistic, the technical and the textual level (e.g., Matamala and Orero 2010). SDH use a variety of punctuation marks and paragraphematic conventions, such as italics and capitals, to better reproduce relevant orality markers while at the same time eliminating those that are unnecessary and burdening. Example 1 (*Love Story*, 1970, E. Segal) shows for instance the elimination of the utterance launcher *listen* followed by the informal nickname *preppy*, with a clear attention-getting purpose and revealing the wish of the speaker to maintain a relationship in the conversation. Example 2 (from the same film) eliminates both a hedge (*just*) and the typical American English attention signal *hey*, familiar and impolite in its effect (Biber et al. 1999: 1108, 1088), thus expunging the traits of the two very different characters expressed through the interpersonal language function, but maintains the core message through the ideational language function.

Original transcript	SDH version
Listen preppy, I know you've got a few brains.	I know you've got a few brains.

Example 1: Elimination of attention getters in SDH

Original transcript	SDH version
Oliver: I'm not Barrett Hall. My great grandfather **just** gave it to Harvard. Jenny: So his not-so-great grandson would be able to get in? Oliver: **Hey**, if you are so convinced that I'm a loser, why did you bulldoze me into buying you coffee?	I'm not Barrett Hall. My great grandfather gave it to Harvard. So his not-so-great grandson could get in? If you think I'm a loser, why did you bulldoze me into | buying you coffee?

Example 2: Elimination of orality markers in SDH

SDH also verbalize non-verbal or extralinguistic information (e.g., randomly taken from the first Season of the BBC *Shelock*, Episode 2: (CHINESE FLUTES PLAY); (SIGHS); (THUD!); (CLUNK!); (LOCK CLICKS); (SIREN WAILS); (BEEPS); COMPUTER-GENERATED MESSAGE; (GRUNTING AND GROANING); (MOTORCYCLE ENGINE REVS); (CAR HORN BLARES); and many more, given the multimodal richness and intricacy of the product). The names of all talking characters precede their utterances when they are not visible. They simplify both the vocabulary and the syntax of the sentences, thus avoiding jargon and idiomatic expressions, as well as negative forms, passive voices or subordination, and retaining only the gist of the message – which is in line with most Plain Language and Easy Language rules. In Example 3 (*Love Story*, 1970, E. Segal), the intricacy of the "written to be spoken" film language is normalized, dysfluencies (with all their communicative load) are eliminated and so are repetitions, idiomatic expressions (*to bill and coo*), attention getters, and the imperative *let's* used as a pragmatic particle to make a proposal for a joint action by the speaker and hearer (Biber at al. 1999: 1117).

Original transcript	SDH version
Oliver: You don't understand. Jenny: **I think I understand quite a thing** more than you wish I did. **Did your father…** **Excuse me**, did the son-of-a-bitch at least get lousy grades? Oliver: He was a Rhodes scholar. Jenny: Ah-ah! **I think I notice a little** problem of overachievement **in ther Barret family**. Oliver: **Listen let's** forget about it, there's no problem **about it, ok ?** Jenny: Right, **no problem**. Oliver: **Hey**, do I call up my father on the phone? Do I **bill and coo and** say, "I love you, Phil?", **"I love you, Phil?"** Jenny: No. Oliver: There you are.	– You don't understand. – More than you wish I did. Did the son-of-a-bitch at least get lousy grades? – He was a Rhodes scholar. – Ah-ah! A problem of overachievement ! – Forget about it. There's no problem. – Right. Do I call my father on the phone? Do I say, "I love you, Phil?" – No. – There you are.

Example 3: Normalization of spoken-like style in SDH

Technically, SDH also pay particular attention to synchronization (in and out times) to improve lip-reading for those with residual hearing. These facilitating features should guarantee their usability. A recent case study (Bozzao 2016)

however demonstrated that SDH are in fact not totally effective and that following SDH rules might not be enough to enable understandability.

In the study, capitalizing on previous empirical research in the field of subtitle cognitive processing (Perego et al. 2010, 2015, 2016), an experiment was conducted on a sample of 36 Italian D/deaf and hard of hearing people (32% female; aged between 25 and 75 years old, mean age=54.11, SD=12.31). Viewers watched the first 11 minutes of the Lebanese film *Caramel* (*Sukkar banat*, 2007, N. Labaki) with the commercialized DVD SDH made by professionals in line with Italian standards. After watching the subtitled excerpt, they answered a questionnaire[21]. The video to which participants were exposed was moderately complex: its narrative was conventional (including a clear narration and linear events; Barsam 2007), its pace medium (as operationalized in Lang et al. 1999, 2000) and comprising 51.5 words per minute and a TTR of 54.50%. The film proved not to be too easy or too difficult to understand and to remember for both younger and older adults.

The results of the study show attention-grabbing outcomes. Even though D/deaf and hard of hearing viewers appreciated the viewing experience and the film excerpt as a whole, and even though they claimed that following the film had been an effortless activity, their actual performance on the general comprehension of the film excerpt, the recognition of lexical expressions contained in the subtitles and the ability to associate the name of the characters to their face were all poor in absolute terms and much poorer if compared with the performance results obtained with a sample of younger (age 18–26, and 20–28; Perego et al. 2015) and older (age 60–78, Perego et al. 2015) hearing viewers. This seems to be linked closely with the poor performance that the participants who were D/deaf or hard of hearing obtained in a vocabulary test demonstrating a reduced vocabulary knowledge[22] and confirming the findings of other

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21 The questionnaire comprised general comprehension questions, questions on the overall evaluation of the film experience, self-evaluation questions on their performance, questions on the recognition of specific expressions used in the subtitles, and finally a face-name recognition task and a visual scene recognition task. The former aimed at assessing whether participants could associate the face of a given character to their name; the latter aimed at assessing whether participants could recognize frames they were exposed to and discard similar frames that were never shown instead. Both tests assessed the competence of participants in visually-related activities (cf. Perego et al. 2010 for further methodological details).

22 The vocabulary test (Thurstone and Thurstone 1963) was carried out as part of the experiment. For this 50-item vocabulary test, the participants had to identify synonyms of a target word in

studies (Caselli et al. 2006; Fabbretti et al. 1998; Luckner and Cook 2010; Paul 2009).

Furthermore, the actual cognitive performance of the participants who were D/deaf or hard of hearing contrasted with their metacognitive judgement: they believed that they performed well in both film comprehension and recognition of lexical expressions contained in the subtitles, while in fact we observed that those who believed to have performed better in comprehension, actually obtained the poorest results.

On the positive side, the visually-related activities carried out during the film session were performed well: participants who were D/deaf or hard of hearing showed a high recognition rate of the film scenes, nearly as high as the rate obtained by young film viewers (as in Perego 2015, 2016). This is in line with the results obtained in the Raven's Progressive Matrices test (Raven et al. 1990; Raven 1995) used to measure abstract reasoning and regarded as a non-verbal estimate of fluid intelligence.

These results are not a criticism of existing SDH, but they clearly show that a further simplification of the subtitles carefully following the Easy Language principles might lead to better general comprehension of the audiovisual material. The fact that viewers enjoyed the film experience in spite of a reduced comprehension of its content is a seemingly positive : enjoyment is the primary goal of film viewing. However, SDH are also used extensively in important settings (news, political debates, etc.) where communicating the message successfully is decisive. This is why full attention should be devoted to making this accessibility service fully usable.

An attempt to adapt the *Caramel* SDH script according to the Easy Language principles was performed in a later study (Marsano 2017). Following and merging the IFLA (2010) and the Inclusion Europe (2014) guidelines, and keeping in mind that it is difficult for D/deaf and hard of hearing patrons to reach the same language competence of native speakers (Caselli et al. 2006), the first 25 minutes of the SDH script was adapted into an Easy Language SDH script. The simplification process covered 51% of the subtitles (N=101) and mainly applied to the syntactic and textual levels (Marsano 2017: 79). Syntactic interventions pertained to the transformation of negative sentences (whose processing is known to overload deaf receivers; Piemontese 1996) into positive sentences, the addition of the verb elements in elliptical sentences which are typical of spoken language

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their mother tongue within an eight-minute timespan. On average, participants could identify only 17 correct synonyms out of 50 (M=16.94, SD=12.02, min=0, max=49) (Bozzao 2016: 56).

(Nice shirt! > You have a nice shirt!), word re-ordering to restore unmarked phrasing and the restoration of pronominal or dropped subjects. Textual simplification, on the other hand, included the insertion of full stops to avoid secondary punctuation marks, the formulation of single short sentences containing single ideas, and the coherence of syntactic constituents (Do you think you are stronger than that | policeman? > Do you think you are stronger | than that policeman?). The lexical and morpho-syntactic levels were also altered to adhere to the principles of Easy Language. Although there were fewer of these interventions, they all aimed at favouring comprehension through the use of core rather than peripheral vocabulary, a choice that is known to make up for the lexical rigidity and poverty of most deaf people (Caselli et al. 2006; Fabbretti et al. 1998; Paul 2009).

This work shows that there is still room for further simplification in subtitles that should already be simple. Raising awareness among audiovisual translation professionals is crucial to accomplish this aim. As a matter of fact, most professional subtitlers are not aware of Easy Language principles and would be willing to implement them in their work if and when necessary as declared in recent interviews and focus groups on the subject (EASIT 2019b). The EASIT project (Chapter 2) will make sure this can happen soon and successfully.

1.6.2 Audio description for the blind and visually impaired

Audio description (AD) is another form of accessible audiovisual translation that enables blind and visually impaired patrons to access and understand products that make sense through a visual component alone or in combination with other semiotic channels (Perego 2019b). AD is versatile and multifaceted, it is offered with different types of arts and media content (ranging from "static" visual arts, such as paintings and sculptures, to "dynamic" arts, such as videos or live events) and, accordingly, has to fulfil different requirements (Remael et al. 2015: 9–10).

Depending on what is being audio described, the level of language complexity/simplicity of the AD script can vary extensively. Given its specific constraints, screen AD for instance, tends to require a certain extent of concision (short, simple, paratactic sentences), particular attention to timing (the text has to be inserted between stretches of pre-existing dialogue that can be fast-paced) and to synchronization (the text has to be synchronised with the moving pictures) (Fryer 2016; Perego 2019b; Rai et al. 2010; Remael et al. 2015;

Snyder 2014). The nature of screen, or rather film AD, is well represented in Example 4[23], featuring mainly very simple SVO, SVC or even SV sentences[24] where the object or the complement element are normally two-word items.

10:02:58 (Time and tide wait for no man, Mr Godby)

A woman spots a seated couple

10:03:21 (No please)

The doctor gets up

10:03:51

The couple exchange awkward glances

10:04:29 (Goodbye. Goodbye.)

Picking up his hat and coat he puts his hand briefly on Laura's shoulder. She watches as he hurries out of the door and it closes behind him. Dolly refreshes her makeup.

10:05:41 (ching!)

Dolly turns **(Oh!)** She looks around. Laura's chair is empty

10:05:47 (Where is she?)

The woman shrugs

10:05:51

Laura comes back

10:06:04

Dolly helps her to her seat

Example 4: Screen AD

These AD central features are not always necessary and implemented in static art description where art jargon, sentences that are longer than average, and high information density can easily characterize these texts (Giansante 2015; Perego 2018; Taylor and Perego forthcoming; Secchi 2014), as in Example 5[25].

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23 An excerpt of the AD script of *Brief Encounter*, 1945, D. Lean. Audio description written by Di Langford. Bold: cues and dialogue. Non-bold: narration.

24 In English, clauses are made up of a combination of clause elements. There are five clause elements with different functions within the clause: S (subject), V (verb), O (object), C (complement), and A (adjunct) (e.g., Ballard 2001; Biber et al. 1999; Quirk et al. 1985).

25 Excerpt of art AD script of Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* (1888). Audio description written by Louise Fryer.

> Vincent van Gogh's exuberant sunflowers, 'all in yellow' as he put it, fill this painting – three feet high and just over two feet wide – as they twist in all directions from their bulbous vase bottom centre against an extraordinarily luminous sulphur-lemon yellow.
> They're at various stages of their lifecycle, the different shapes and textures so convincingly depicted with thick, vigorous brushstrokes they look three-dimensional and almost real. By contrast the vase, on a surface suggested along the bottom of the painting by a band of ochre bordered by a horizontal blue line, is crudely outlined. The only suggestions of volume are a buttery highlight on its glazed dark yellow upper half and a downwards-curved blue line separating that from its pale yellow lower. Along the curve, on the left, it says in blue letters 'Vincent'.

Example 5: Art AD

If we quantitatively compare these texts that belong to different AD genres, we can certainly observe the difference between screen and art AD in English – though similar figures could be expected for other languages. To work on comparable texts, we extracted the same amount of running words from both AD genres.

	Screen AD (*Brief Encounter*)	Art AD (*Sunflowers*)
Tokens (running words)	137	135
Types (distinct words)	90	100
Type/Token Ratio	65.69%	71.43
Mean word length	4.64 (SD=2.08)	4.99 (SD=2.82)
Sentences	21	5
Mean in words	6.52 (SD=4.04)	28.0 (SD=11.73)
Lexical density	62.04%	58.52%
Gunning fog index	4.07	16.13
Passive voice	0%	20%

Table 4: Film vs. art AD: Quantitative data

Data (Table 4) (cf. Appendix 1) confirm that the English film and art AD share a substantially similar lexical diversity – thus respecting the general AD recommendations which suggest always conveying information through rich, imaginative, descriptive, but above all *varied* vocabulary (Perego 2014: 30 for a review) – but differ dramatically in terms of sentence number and mean length,

and therefore readability, which is further confirmed by the Fog Index and percentage of passive voice that show that the AD text is particularly difficult.

Given these circumstances, talking of a general AD simplification process via the implementation of Easy Language standards is not possible. Easy Language adaptations should be tailored to each specific type of AD as well as to the needs of the target users for whom that type of translation was prepared (Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020). Some interviews conducted with professional audio describers confirmed that these professionals believe that in fact "a simplified adaptation may be problematic or even impossible in some cases" (EASIT 2019b: 35) – they specifically thought of screen ADs with fast-paced dialogues, leaving hardly any space for AD at all. This is made worse by the fact that sometimes making a text more comprehensible implies elaboration, e.g., extra explanations and therefore more – rather than less – linguistic material (EASIT 2018b: 34).

English, in this respect, might be privileged given its textual and linguistic specificities that make it a concise language compared to other European (Romance) languages where the same information is normally expressed with more words, and, if translated from English, are subject to amplification (vs. reduction) or diffusion (vs. condensation) strategies (Malone 1988)[26]. However, it is also known that compressed formulations might be harder to process in general and even more so for struggling readers and people with a cognitive or intellectual disability or disadvantage with guidelines preferring to instruct professionals to use linear and diluted formulations.

The professional describers interviewed for the EASIT project further claimed that adding words to film ADs is normally not feasible. This is the reason why the idea of doing so could only be implemented by providing an "extended AD", that – according to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines – offers important and necessary information by manipulating the source text and exploiting extra time to insert descriptions (Bernabé forthcoming), or by providing an audio introduction prior to accessing the actual audio described screen product (EASIT 2019b: 37). The former process entails a high degree of adaptation of both the AD and the original text and the creation of an alternative AD, which might not be economically or technically viable and that might also suffer from an acceptability and authorship issue. The latter solution,

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26 I.e., respectively, strategies that imply the addition of some elements in the target text in order to allow for better understanding or the elaboration of the source text words especially through circumlocution without adding extra information (Taylor 1998; Venuti 1998).

on the other hand, is established (Fryer and Romero-Fresco 2014; Reviers 2015; Romero-Fresco and Fryer 2013) but not yet frequently implemented and would, in any case, require simplified audio introduction scripts.

A direct simplification intervention on a standard film AD, especially one that does not transform the AD script into a simplistic and patronizing text, might therefore be quite difficult to achieve. A possible way out is to consider purely lexical interventions. Syntax, for example, is already reduced. As film AD needs to be simultaneously informative and concise, "vivid", varied and imaginative (Fryer 2016; Perego 2019b; Snyder 2014), refined or literary-like words as well as particularly informative words tend to be preferred to accomplish this requirement. These normally include adverbials, adjectives in isolation, in a row or in combination with other adjectives, but also words that do not belong to the core of the English vocabulary (Biber et al. 1999; Jackson and Zé Amvela 2000). Decreasing the descriptive load of some words (Example 6a), excluding the informative power of adverbs (Example 6b) and giving up English serial adjectives (Example 6c) might be a feasible step towards increased comprehensibility of screen AD, as demonstrated by the following examples taken from the AD (copyright Di Langford) of the 1996 American epic romantic war drama *The English Patient* (A. Minghella):

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a)
01:35:09 Madox looks [~~puzzled~~ > <u>confused</u>].
01:43:18 He [~~scrambles in~~ > <u>enters</u>] through the hole in the wall. She steps back.

b)
01:12:16 They move forward ~~cautiously~~.
02:07:57 She turns ~~abruptly~~.

c)
01:12:30 He brushes aside the ~~loose sandy~~ gravel, revealing a metal disc.
01:23:48 The planes fly ~~side by side~~ above the ~~barren desert~~ valley.

Example 6: Lexical simplifications in AD

Art AD, on the other hand, seems to be the AD sub-genre that lends itself better to different levels of simplification processes. In fact, the idea of producing or adapting Easy Language art AD is actually promising. In a recent study (Paunović 2017), the AD of St Paul's Cathedral was analysed and a simplification attempt was made following the Inclusion Europe (2014) guidelines.

The original AD of St Paul's cathedral was drafted by VocalEyes, a British charity directed by Matthew Cock offering blind and partially sighted people the best possible opportunities to experience and enjoy art and heritage[27]. The simplification process of the original AD of St Paul's Cathedral (our source text) passed through several phases, confirming the difficulty of the Easy Language adaptation process and the need to become acquainted with its principles before adapting a text to a simpler version (as in Arfé et al. 2018; Maaß 2020).

As a final outcome, the original text – 14,240 words – was reduced to 11,936 words. Whether it was possible to do a better job in terms of quality and quantity is not the goal of this analysis. What did emerge, though, are a few interesting considerations.

First, the difficulty in reducing the word number of the original text is linked to the need to reword and explain difficult notions whilst taking out unnecessary information. This entailed the addition rather than the subtraction of material aimed at making the text more comprehensible. In Example 7, initials are replaced by full words (Inclusive Europe 2014: 10, standard 12), in Example 8, extensive additions explain technical terms used in the original text such as "keystone", "crypt" or "chapel" (Inclusive Europe 2014: 10 standard 7) or the same definition was repeatedly offered for terms that frequently appeared in the original text (Inclusive Europe 2014: 11, standard 20) (e.g., "alcove" (niche): "An alcove is a cavity in the wall of a room") in order to help end-users to memorize them with a presumable same-language vocabulary incidental acquisition effect.

Original AD	Easy English AD
This grand entrance is reserved for when visitors such as **HM** The Queen attend the cathedral.	Only visitors like **Her Majesty** The Queen use these doors.

Example 7: Full words replacing initials

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27 The mission of VocalEyes "is to increase those opportunities, make them as good as possible, and ensure that as many blind and partially sighted people as possible are aware of them, and that the arts and heritage sector know how to create them, and welcome blind and partially sighted people as a core audience" (https://vocaleyes.co.uk/about/).

Each arch has a keystone.
A keystone is usually a stone at the top centre of the arch.

This is a vent for the Crypts.
A crypt is a room under a church floor.

There is a chapel in the North path.
A chapel is a small place where you can pray.

Example 8: Jargon explained

Furthermore, this being an AD with the aim of making the visit to the cathedral an independent activity for blind and visually impaired visitors, a considerable part of the AD text is devoted to orientation instructions. In AD, orientation instructions provide blind and partially sighted visitors with information on how to navigate the building and locate the points of interest and ensure comfortable navigation (Giansante 2015). It was impossible to eliminate orientation instructions whilst maintaining the original purpose of this AD guided tour, designed to be listened to and guide blind patrons through the church. An example of the instructions on how to reach the Church Crypt via steps is given below (Example 9). The original English text guides visitors with a 30-word three-sentence instructive text, while the Easy English version uses a 24-word four-sentence text: the difference is not quantitatively dramatic. However, from a qualitative point of view, the Gunning Fog Index shows a drastic change in readability between the two seemingly equivalent texts, with the original displaying an index of 6, and the Easy English version an index of only 3.2.

Original AD	Easy English AD
Walk down two wide flights of stairs, with handrails on both sides. At the landing, turn left for the second flight. When you reach the bottom, turn right and press [TBC] [to 6.A].	Walk down 2 flights of stairs. There are handrails on both sides of the stairs. When you reach the bottom turn right. Then, press [TBC] [to 6.A].

Example 9: Orientation instructions

In some cases, the elimination of information was implemented to convey a shorter and more comprehensible text. This was based on the choice to not overload end users and on the assumption that "people who will use [a given] information might not know much about the subject" (Inclusion Europe 2014:

9 rule 4). In Example 10, the non-restrictive relative clause gives bonus but optional information and is removed.

Original AD	Easy English AD
The book symbolises the 'Word' of God, ~~demonstrating the Cathedral's Protestant emphasis on preaching rather than elaborate ritual~~.	It is a symbol for the 'Word' of God.

Example 10: Elimination of optional information

The major adaptations pertained to the text and sentence level due to the complexity of the original text. Keeping sentences short (Inclusion Europe 2014: 11 standard 11), using active language (standard 17) and putting information "in an order that is easy to understand and follow" (standard 18) implied co-occurring adaptations.

To better understand the extent of adaptation that an original text can undergo, we can consider an excerpt of the audio description of Nelson's Chamber and its Easy English adaptation (Example 11).

Original AD	Easy English AD
In front of you is a rectangular, grey, granite plinth about shoulder height, end on to you. Within this granite plinth lies the body of Lord Nelson. On top is a black and gold stand, the left side of which reads 'HORATIO VISC (short for Viscount) NELSON'. Above is a gently curving black sarcophagus with a slender base, about 3 metres long and a metre wide. Its tiered lid is topped by an enormous gold-tasselled pillow, supporting a red and gold crown. The crown is three times life-sized, with golden spheres the size of oranges adorning the outside. The sarcophagus dates from the early 16th century, and was commissioned for Cardinal Wolsey's tomb. Henry VIII confiscated it when Wolsey was disgraced, and it lay unused for hundreds of years.	In front of you there is a plinth. A plinth is a base supporting a statue or vase. The plinth is made of grey granite. On top of the plinth, there is a gold stand. On the stand we can read 'HORTIO VISC NELSON'. VISC is the short form for Viscount. Above the stand there is a sarcophagus. A sarcophagus is a stone coffin. On top of the sarcophagus there is a pillow. The pillow supports a red and gold crown. The crown is big and decorated. The sarcophagus dates from the early 16th century. It was made for Cardinal Wolsey, an English archbishop. Henry the Eighth took it with authority when Wolsey lost his reputation. The sarcophagus was not used for many years.

Example 11: Nelson's Chamber ADs

A close analysis reveals four major interrelated processes that took place when adapting the original AD text into an Easy English text. These include repetition of the full referents, definitions of technical words, substitution of complex formal with basic informal vocabulary and the untying or elimination of noun strings. A comparison between the source and the target text reveals that the repetition of nominal referents (e.g., plinth, sarcophagus) is favoured over the use of pro-forms in the Easy English version, which constellate the original text where they function as economic and powerful cohesive devices recapitulating references and pointing to surrounding text (Biber at al. 1999: 327; Quirk et al. 1985: 76; Halliday and Hasan 1976; Hoey 1991). The use of pro-forms certainly reduces linguistic material and thereby condenses information but can diminish the comprehensibility of a text. Because such referents in the text under discussion belong to the art or architecture jargon, i.e., to the specialized language realm, they would rather co-occur with a short and clear definition in an Easy English version, which is exactly what happens (cf. In front of you there is a plinth. | A plinth is a base supporting a statue or vase. | The plinth is made of grey granite). Along the same lines, the substitution of specialized with common language words (e.g., confiscated it > took it with authority) can ensure enhanced comprehensibility.

As shown through a quantitative analysis (Table 5), these choices lower the lexical variety of the Easy English text, which in turn increases its readability. Additionally, in spite of a comparable overall word number, the two texts differ in terms of lexical variety and number of sentences. This means that the Easy English text has favoured lexical repetition and managed to break down long text formulations keeping sentences short (Inclusion Europe 2014: 11). The slight difference in lexical density shows that the level of informativity has not dramatically decreased in the Easy English text in spite of a more favourable readability index, presumably obtained also thanks to the reduction of passive formulations (as per Cutts 2013: 63–72), based on the knowledge that a general preference for the active will significantly improve the readability of most texts (Cutts 2013: 67).

	Original AD	Easy English AD
Tokens (running words)	129	123
Types (distinct words)	92	67
Type/Token Ratio	71.32%	54.47%
Mean word length	4.62 (SD=2.47)	4.26 (SD=2.53)
Sentences	8	15
Mean in words	16.13	8.20
Lexical density	55.81	49.19%
Gunning fog index	10.48	7.18
Passive voice	50%	26.67%

Table 5: Nelson's Chamber ADs: Quantitative data

Avoiding English complex noun phrases is another Easy Language adaptation device that can have a dramatic simplification effect for end users. The language of art AD can in fact exploit the major informative load of noun groups (Biber at al. 1999) to enhance its informativity and vividness (Perego 2018) but at the detriment of immediate comprehensibility and smooth processability. The original Nelson text includes several complex noun strings with varying structures, mainly comprising a head noun that is both heavily pre- and post-modified (cf. Biber 1999: 574–656 for an overview). Although these structures normally fit in well in a standard art AD (though they pose some doubts regarding their listenability), they must be adapted for users who can access information through Easy Language texts only.

To analyse just a few examples, we can observe the 17-word noun phrase "a gently curving black sarcophagus with a slender base, about 3 metres long and a metre wide" (lexical density: 58.82%; fog index: 9.15), or the 10-word noun phrase "an enormous gold-tasselled pillow, supporting a red and gold crown" (lexical density: 70%; fog index: 16). In the text adaptation, we decided to convey minimal information for the former expression (Example 12) and to substitute the descriptive details with the definition of the sarcophagus:

Original text	Easy English translation
Above is a gently curving black sarcophagus with a slender base, about 3 metres long and a metre wide.	Above the stand, there is a sarcophagus. A sarcophagus is a stone coffin.

Example 12: Adaptation of a complex noun phrase

This manipulation lowered the word number from 17 to 13, the lexical density from 58.82% to 38.46%, and the fog index from 9.15 to 8.75.

For the latter complex noun phrase, we opted for a similar strategy: to retain only the gist of the message (Example 13). As a result, this time the word number slightly increased from 10 to 12 (confirming that simplification can occur via elaboration and addition rather than only via subtraction). The lexical density decreased from 70% to 50%, and the fog index from 16 to 2.4.

Original text	Easy English translation
…an enormous gold-tasselled pillow, supporting a red and gold crown…	…there is a pillow. The pillow supports a red and gold crown.

Example 13: Adaptation of a complex noun phrase

A further important consideration pertains to a specificity of English, the written mode of which tends to be lexically denser – especially if compared to its sparse spoken mode – but grammatically more linear rather than intricate (Halliday 1989; Halliday and Hasan 1976). The linearity of written grammar however does not necessarily reflect a simple morphosyntactic scenario. In one of the sentences of the Nelson excerpt (The crown is three times life-sized, with golden spheres the size of oranges adorning the outside), the linear English SVC structure is used, where a simple subject consisting of a determiner and a head noun (the crown) and a semantically light verb are followed by a complex complement, consisting of a compound adjective and an elaborate post-modifying prepositional phrase: "three times life-sized, with golden spheres the size of oranges adorning the outside". Despite the abundance of visual details that the original text conveys for the benefit of the blind and visually impaired end users (Giansante 2015; Perego 2018), its adaptation into Easy English shall do without most of these enriching details (Example 14):

Original text	Easy English translation
The crown **is three times life-sized**, with golden spheres the size of oranges adorning the outside.	The crown is **big**. It has golden spheres that decorate the outside.

Example 14: Reformulation in Easy English

Avoiding noun strings is a Plain Language recommendation, too (Cutts: 2013: 73). According to such rules, "in most well written sentences nouns tend not to lie next to each other" (Cutts 2013: 79): to obtain "lucid" or "crystal-clear" texts, we should break them up after figuring out "what the noun string means, then add new words to help readers get the idea. Usually the result will be longer, but clearer" (Cutts 2013: 80).

Finally, a glance at the layout of the text confirms adherence to what the guidelines recommend: we arranged "words in a single phrase on a line" whenever possible (IFLA 2010: 11). The original and the Easy English texts are structurally very different. Even though this adaptation is of an AD text, i.e., a text that is meant to be listened to (vs. read), we decided to comply with layout recommendations as well. This in fact could be useful in a prospective further simplification of the whole AD of St Paul's Cathedral for consumption in different ways and formats and for different end users, including an abridged large print Easy English guide or a short, illustrated brochure for children. This could then ultimately open the doors to one of the most outstanding Anglican cathedrals and one of the most famous and most recognisable sights in London to all.

2 The EASIT project

2.1 Erasmus+ projects

When people talk or hear about the Erasmus Programme, they immediately associate it with the well-known European student exchange programme established 1987. This is correct, but incomplete. Erasmus refers to much more than this. In 2017, the Erasmus Programme turned 30 and in 2014 it had already evolved into Erasmus+, which provided people with the competences required to lead independent, fulfilling lives. It helped them find their place in our societies and developed a sense of European identity that complements our national, regional and local identities. Nowadays, Erasmus+ is the European Commission's Programme for education, training, youth and sport, succeeding the previous Lifelong Learning Programme, and offering more opportunities for mobility of learners and staff and cooperation across the education, training and youth sectors.

The Erasmus+ Programme implements three crucial actions. Key Action 1 (Mobility of individuals), still the most renowned implementation, provides a unique opportunity for teachers, heads of schools, trainers and other staff in education institutions to participate in international training courses in different European countries. Key Action 2 (Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices) provides a unique opportunity for innovation cooperation and the exchange of good practices: the actions under Key Action 2 make it possible for organisations from different participating countries to work together and to develop, share and transfer best practices and innovative approaches in the fields of education, training and youth. Key Action 3 (Support for policy reform) provides grants for a wide variety of actions aimed at stimulating innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, and the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth.

The focus of this chapter is on a Key Action 2 project that was recently financed. As illustrated in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission 2019), the key document for information on the Erasmus+ Programme, participation in Erasmus+ Key Action 2 ensures, among other things: cooperation between education and employment in tackling skills gaps with

regard to one or more occupational profiles in a specific sector, cooperation between higher education institutions and enterprises and cooperation between partners working towards the same aims. The focus of this action is on urgent tasks in particular such as education and training, social inclusion, fighting unemployment, a more democratic life, the empowerment of young people and their ability to participate actively in society and support for European transparency and recognition tools for skills and qualifications (European Commission 2019: 5–6). The above-mentioned scope has made Erasmus+ Key Action 2 the most suitable funding scheme for a number of European projects in the field of accessibility and audiovisual translation with course design and production of training materials as one of the main outcomes (Perego 2019).

Some types of audiovisual translation, such as subtitling for the D/deaf and hard of hearing, also in the form of live subtitling or respeaking, and audio description for blind and visually impaired patrons are fairly new fields of research and practice when compared with more established translation modalities (Bogucki and Deckert 2020; Pérez-González 2019). For this reason, they are not yet fully established or taught consistently throughout Europe. Furthermore, coherent training materials and specific settings for the formation of new skilled professional profiles in these fields are still scant or sometimes missing (ADLAB 2012; ADLAB PRO 2017a). In recent years, the need to fill this gap was the engine that generated a series of sequential and interwoven projects that are drastically changing the theory, practice and training environment of audiovisual translation in Europe.

To mention just a few, ACT (2015–2018, http://pagines.uab.cat/act/) proposed the definition of the Media Accessibility Expert (or Manager) for Scenic Arts and the various types of training activities associated with this new professional figure (ACT 2016, 2017). ADLAB (2011–2014, www.adlabproject.eu) established the first shared multilingual European recommendations for audio description to be used by professionals, trainers and trainees (Remael et al. 2015). ADLAB PRO (2016–2019, https://www.adlabpro.eu/) developed a course curriculum and training materials to cater to the training of audio description professional to be used both in academic and vocational contexts (ADLAB PRO 2018). ILSA (2017–2020, http://www.ilsaproject.eu/) will identify the skills and profile of the interlingual live subtitler and develop, test and validate the first training course on interlingual live subtitling thus providing a protocol for the implementation of this discipline in three real-life scenarios: TV, political/social settings, and the classroom (ILSA 2019).

The LTA project (2018–2021, https://ltaproject.eu/) aims to design an effective and certified curriculum for real-time intralingual respeakers and velotypists in order to meet both labour market and societal needs. EASIT (2018–2021, http://pagines.uab.cat/easit/en) will explore the effects of simplified ("Easy-to-Understand", E2U, EASIT 2018; Matamala and Orero 2020) language on a selection of audiovisual products and will develop three skills cards, curricula and relative training materials for three different professional profiles: the E2U expert in subtitling, the E2U expert in audio description and the E2U expert in audio visual journalism (EASIT 2019c, 2020).

Each Erasmus+ Programme has a fixed structure and a series of priorities to follow and accomplish. The most important features of the Erasmus+ Programme are the recognition and validation of skills and qualifications, the dissemination, exploitation and sustainability of project results, the promotion of an open access policy that enables sharing of all project outputs and research data, a strong international dimension (normally reached through cooperation with Partner Countries), especially in the fields of higher education and youth, multilingualism, which is "one of the cornerstones of the European project and a powerful symbol of the EU's aspiration to be united in diversity" (European Commission 2019: 9) as well as equity and inclusion.

In the following paragraphs, the main mechanisms of Erasmus+ Projects will be illustrated through the EASIT project. First, we will describe its premises, stages, aims and priorities. Then, we will focus on the EASIT consortium and its stages and conclude with a reflection on its sustainability and dissemination.

2.2   Premises, priorities and main aims

EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training) is a three-year (2018–2021) EU project funded under the Erasmus+ Programme[28] and led by Anna Matamala of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Spain. It is a strategic partnership of stakeholders from different countries and fields addressing innovation in higher education, with a major focus on one of the European priorities in the national context: social inclusion.

Inclusion is a core principle within the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), where it is defined as "a two-way

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28   Project ID number: 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

process: persons who have no disabilities should be open to the participation of persons with disabilities". According to the first entry of the Collins Cobuild dictionary, social inclusion is "the act of making all groups of people within a society feel valued and important". Although both are succinct definitions, they seems to encapsulate most of the notions that are in fact exposed, in deeper details, in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission 2019: 10), which emphasizes the promotion of equity and inclusion by facilitating access to participants with "disadvantaged backgrounds and fewer opportunities compared to their peers whenever disadvantage limits or prevents participation in transnational activities for reasons such as:

- disability (i.e., participants with special needs): people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities;
- educational difficulties: young people with learning difficulties; early school-leavers; low qualified adults; young people with poor school performance;
- economic obstacles: people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system or homeless; young people in long-term unemployment or poverty; people in debt or with financial problems;
- cultural differences: immigrants or refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families; people belonging to a national or ethnic minority; people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties;
- health problems: people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions;
- social obstacles: people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc.; people with limited social skills or anti-social or risky behaviours; people in a precarious situation; (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers; young and/or single parents; orphans;
- geographical obstacles: people from remote or rural areas; people living in small islands or in peripheral regions; people from urban problem zones; people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities)."

Disadvantaged patrons are in fact the final long-term beneficiaries of the EASIT project: they will be the end users of E2U audiovisual products produced based on the training path and training materials that EASIT plans to develop. The immediate project outcomes (the training materials) are however aimed at intermediary figures, who will learn how to produce more accessible audiovisual texts based on E2U principles in the long term.

EASIT unites seemingly unrelated fields for the first time, each with an established tradition but with non-existent or very limited overlap, i.e., audiovisual translation and multimodal communication on the one hand and language simplification on the other. This is done in an ambitious attempt to create and train new hybrid professional figures with the right skills for our digital and modern society that can provide new hybrid and more accessible forms of audiovisual content for the benefit of disadvantaged audiences (Bernabé forthcoming; Bernabé and Orero 2019). These audiences include people with mental and sensory disabilities or with learning difficulties, people with educational difficulties or cultural differences that might cause linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties, people with psychiatric conditions or living in poor conditions that prevent them from acquiring basic literacy (Gargiulo and Arezzo 2017).

As often happens, the group of primary end users of a respective new communication system can then be enlarged to include abled users that can equally benefit from the same content.

Specifically, such new hybrid and accessible forms of audiovisual content for the benefit of disadvantaged audiences include simplified subtitles, simplified audio description and simplified news, i.e., subtitles, audio description, and news that comply with the principles of E2U language, an umbrella term comprising several forms of comprehension enhancing linguistic varieties (EASIT 2019a; Bernabé forthcoming; Maaß 2020) such as Easy Language and Plain Language (cf. 1.2 and 1.3).

In order to create and train new professional figures that can provide new hybrid and accessible forms of audiovisual content, EASIT was conceived with the primary aim of designing a course curriculum and creating training materials for such experts, thus filling a crucial cultural, social and educational gap that still characterises most European countries (EASIT 2018).

The development of a course curriculum and the creation of training materials would be the final stage of the project, which in fact was planned to encompass multiple distinct and successive steps, each producing crucial

outcomes that would constitute the bases for the next working activities. In a nutshell, EASIT first defined an internal methodological framework and identified current experts in the E2U sector to gather information on their educational and working activities. Then, it interviewed experts in all the sectors involved in the project (E2U, audiovisual translation and journalism) to extract possible recommendations on the simplification of audiovisual content based on their feedback. Capitalizing on such results, EASIT defined the skills and competences of the new professional profiles for the market and designed a course curriculum that is the basis for the development of online free and open training materials with the goal of achieving certification.

The preparation of online free and open training materials is crucial to the project and at the same time meets some of the most important programme requirements. Erasmus+ in fact promotes open access of project outputs to support learning, teaching, training and youth work (European Commission 2019: 8). Not only is making the materials produced by the beneficiaries easily accessible, reusable and freely available for the public under an open license a commitment, but it is also an effective way of sharing outcomes, thus extending the impact of the project and improving its sustainability (European Commission 2019: 7) and allowing for wider inclusion.

Besides adopting an open access policy, the project applies multilingual, multicultural, multiformat and multimodal approaches to generate wide-ranging educational contents in different languages, including the minority languages represented in the project such as Catalan, Galician, Swedish and Slovenian. This will enable the project members to accomplish one of the specific objectives of the Programme, where foreign languages are considered to "have a prominent role among the skills that will help equip people better for the labour market and make the most of available opportunities" (European Commission 2019: 9). Consequently, the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity and the acquisition of language competence are seen as major tools to remove one of the main barriers to participation in European education, training and youth programmes. With a balanced blend of formats and languages characterizing each educational resource produced by EASIT, the project will offer the opportunity to contribute to the specific objective of the Programme.

In terms of international dimension, emphasized in the programme through a strong cooperation with Partner Countries, EASIT will certainly be able to meet the requirement thanks to the carefully selected, varied and balanced consortium (cf. 2.3). At the same time, the E2U contents that future experts will be able to

create should contribute to the same aim, reducing social inequalities and guaranteeing access to information to all, at least in a Western context.

E2U language can be used successfully by a wide spectrum of users who struggle with reading or understanding for diverse reasons, including age, disabilities and basic language competence (cf. 1.3.1). Traditionally applied to written texts, in this project E2U will be integrated in the most popular and modern formats for the first time (i.e., audiovisual content such as news) and services (such as subtitles and audio description), thus contributing to an innovative approach and tackling a modern need that was already identified in previous projects dealing with language simplification (e.g., the Pathways project, https://www.path-ways.eu/).

To conclude, we should highlight that the EASIT partnership addresses multiple "horizontal (vs. field-specific) priorities", i.e., priorities that are common (or "transversal", to use project jargon) to different subjects within the framework of Erasmus+ Projects . These include for instance the development of high-quality skills and competences in the fields that are central to the project, the personal development of prospective learners that should acquire such skills to foster their employability, the long-term promotion of social inclusion through innovative and integrated approaches, and the reliance on open education through innovative practices used to train new professional profiles. In fact, the training materials developed by EASIT will focus in particular on generating a cohesive range of skills and competences to boost employability and allowing for an easy job transfer or promotion. Concerning field-specific priorities, EASIT tackles a skills gap by proposing a curriculum that meets the needs of learners, society and the labour market.

2.3   The consortium

The strength and innovation of the idea behind the project is the result of a successful strategic partnership, a solid and varied consortium consisting of complementary partners from academia, the professional world and user associations.

The major benefits of a strategic partnership include the chance to build relationships with international partners and to work together to tackle shared problems, exchange ideas, skills and knowledge, and develop innovative new practices to achieve defined objectives.

EASIT consists of eight partners from different backgrounds (Table 6).

Abbreviated form	Full original name	English name
UAB	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona	Autonomous University of Barcelona
UNITS	Università degli Studi di Trieste	University of Trieste
UVIGO	Universidade de Vigo	University of Vigo
SUH	Stiftung Universität Hildesheim	University of Hildesheim
SDI	Sprachen & Dolmetscher Institut München	University of Munich
DYS	Dyslexiförbundet	The Swedish Dyslexia Association
RIZA	Zavod RISA	The RISA Institute
RTV	Radiotelevizija Slovenija Javni Zavod Ljubljana	Radio Television of Slovenia

Table 6: The EASIT consortium

The Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona is the leading partner. UAB is actively involved in research on accessibility, with a focus on audiovisual content, and is currently also involved in the processes of Easy Language standardization. UAB leads the project through its involvement in the interdisciplinary research group TransMedia Catalonia (http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/transmedia/) created by Pilar Orero and now directed by Anna Matamala. The other academic partners involved are the University of Trieste in Italy and the University of Vigo in Spain, both with extensive expertise in audiovisual translation and accessibility, and in Germany, the University of Hildesheim and the University of Munich, specialized respectively in the research and the training of E2U content (cf. the Research Centre for Easy Language at the University of Hildesheim, founded in 2014) and in accessible audiovisual translation.

The user associations that belong to the consortium are Dyslexiförbundet in Sweden, and Zavod RISA in Slovenia. Dyslexiförbundet, the Swedish Dyslexia Association, was founded in 1989 and is the largest national, not for profit disability organization that caters to people with severe reading, writing and calculation difficulties. The association offers counselling and support measures that contribute to making life easier for its members, allowing them to participate in society and becoming involved in different activities. It also

monitors and safeguards the interests of people with dyslexia, spreads knowledge and awareness of dyslexia and puts current research into practice in educational settings. The Swedish Dyslexia Association collaborates actively with other associations in the areas of standardization and cognitive accessibility. Zavod RISA, the RISA Institute, established in 2011, was the first organization in Slovenia to address the issue of accessible information for people with cognitive and intellectual difficulties in the country and is now specialized in producing and validating information in Easy Slovenian. The RISA Institute played a crucial role in the development of national standards for Easy Slovenian. Finally, Radiotelevizija Slovenija Javni Zavod Ljubljana, the Radio-Television of Slovenia, established by the Republic of Slovenia in 1991, is the national radio and television broadcaster in the country. RTV currently produces accessible content for audiences with different needs through intralingual subtitles, sign language and audio description. It is an active member of the European Broadcasting Union and collaborates actively with other European national radio and television houses, with independent producers, with universities and other institutions to improve their public media service.

2.4   Project stages: The "Intellectual Outputs"

A project is a temporary collaborative enterprise that is carefully planned by a project team to achieve a particular goal. Projects are normally divided into a series of actions or tasks that need to be completed to reach a specific and unique outcome (e.g., a product, a service or a result) with a defined starting and ending date, and under the lead of a project coordinator while respecting given cost, calendar and quality constraints (Juneia 2001).

The phases of a project make up the project life cycle. This is why it is convenient for the project manager to break down the project into phases for control and tracking purposes. The basic phases of a project are dependent on the aims and type of project that is being conducted (Juneia 2001). In the case of the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships, the project activities leading to innovative results and concrete products that are proportional to the funding that meet the needs of the target groups and are in line with the project objectives are called Intellectual Outputs (IOs). According to the Erasmus+ Programme Guide (European Commission 2019: 118), IOs should be "tangible deliverables" such as curricula, pedagogical and youth work open educational resources, IT tools

studies, peer-learning methods, etc. They should be substantial in quality and quantity to qualify for this type of grant support and they should prove their potential for wider use and exploitation, as well as for impact.

EASIT comprises six IOs that are summed up in Table 7 illustrating their original title, the Easy English title used on the project website and the project partner in charge:

IO	Full title	E2U title	Partner in charge
IO1	Common methodological frame-work for easy reading practice and training	Output 1. Practice and training	UNITS
IO2	Innovation in hybrid services: recommendations in audiovisual media	Output 2. Recommendations for audiovisual information	SDI
IO3	Skills cards for new professional profiles	Output 3. Skills cards	UVIGO
IO4	Curriculum and course design	Output 4. What experts must study	SUH
IO5	Open educational resources deve-lopment	Output 5. Teaching materials	UAB
IO6	Certification	Output 6. Certification	UAB

Table 7: Intellectual Outputs

IO1[29] focused on the practice and training of E2U in Europe, especially in those countries that were part of the project consortium. Taking stock on the state of the art in E2U training and practice in Europe was a crucial stage that preceded the subsequent project activities. These could draw from the results of IO1 to define the profile, skills and competences of the new professional figures in the media accessibility field, as well as to design a course curriculum and plan the production of training materials for their development. All IO1 activities were designed to make contact with E2U experts in order to collect information on how they create, adapt or validate E2U texts, how they learn this skill and how they think training in E2U can be improved. Although E2U guidelines and recommendations at

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29 Details on each IO are available on the project website in the form of IO final reports. These illustrate each IO's premises, objective, methodological apparatus and results.

European and national levels do exist (cf. 1.4), their variety, official recognition, language-specificity, level of detail and diffusion varies from country to country (Fortis 2003) and cannot provide adequate instruction on how training in the E2U sector should be carried out. To fill this gap, IO1 revolved around the construction of survey a questionnaire designed to identify shared cross-national practices for the implementation of E2U that could later be transferred into specific and concrete training content for future experts (EASIT 2019a).

IO2 focused on generating recommendations to implement innovative hybrid services in the audiovisual media sector. Traditionally, E2U information pertained to printed materials – consider, for example, that most labels refer to simplified written language content such as "Easy-to-Read Language" (cf. Table 1) – focusing on the reading process rather than on a more general understanding process. However, in our modern digital society, where audiovisual content is everywhere and key to social participation and inclusion (Taylor 2012), access to this type of content should be provided and prioritized. Unfortunately, guidelines or recommendations specifically developed to create E2U media content do not exist, just like training in this new area. In the field of audiovisual translation, important advances to create accessible audiovisual translation forms have taken place. Access services (such as audio description for persons with sight loss, standard subtitling for non-mother-tongue speakers and subtitling for patrons with hearing loss) are offered, but several segments of the population still find it difficult to understand audiovisual content (Bernabé and Orero 2019; Bozzao 2016; cf. 1.6). Starting from the compelling need to overcome this problem, IO2 worked towards developing an exploratory series of practice-based recommendations on how E2U content can be created or adapted from existing texts in the audiovisual media context, and explored innovative access services such as E2U subtitles, E2U audio description, and E2U journalism. Interviews and focus groups with a selection of audiovisual translation and journalism professionals were conducted to elicit provisional recommendations (based on real experience) for the creation of accessible E2U media content. The results of IO2 encapsulate interesting information on how existing professionals such as audio describers, subtitlers as well as multimedia, radio and TV journalists think that language and content simplification methods can be integrated into their everyday practice (EASIT 2019b).

IO3 focused on the creation of the skills cards (i.e., lists of specific competences, ECQA 2013: 4) for the new professional profiles linked to the creation of E2U media content. Such professionals include three figures: the

expert in E2U subtitles, the expert in E2U audio description and the expert in E2U audiovisual journalism. If subtitling and audio description are two media accessibility modalities that seem to lend themselves better to simplification, audiovisual journalism adds a new element to the project. E2U audiovisual journalism in fact entails making access to content easy to understand but also making the journalistic content itself easy to understand (EASIT 2019c: 19), thus posing a further challenge to partners. The activities of IO3 revolved around the comparison of existing skills cards created for other professional profiles (i.e., in the projects ACT, ADLAB PRO, ILSA, LTA) and the listing of all the new skills that are needed to train experts in E2U subtitles, experts in E2U audio description and experts in E2U audiovisual journalism (EASIT 2019c).

IO4 focused on the development of three separate but partially overlapping course curricula to train the three different expert profiles identified in the project. Besides offering specific training paths, the course curriculum developed under IO4 will contribute to expanding the know-how of experts who already work in the sector of media accessibility but need to specialize in given sectorial or micro areas that they never had to previously deal with. Hinging on the skills cards developed under IO3, IO4 also assigned an estimated number of ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) (cf. 6.2) for each component of the program of study, based on the work load required of the students. The curriculum explored how the new E2U skills can be integrated within existing academic and vocational curricula in the field of accessibility, such as those derived from the projects ACT, ADLAB PRO and ILSA. The ultimate aim of IO4 was to develop a modular curriculum (i.e., involving modules or elements that can be freely mixed depending on the learners' needs and learning styles; Matamala et al. 2019; Perego 2017, 2019a) that can be implemented beyond the life of the project in different learning situations. This curriculum organization guarantees full transferability and represents a solid framework upon which the open educational resources will be developed under IO5 (EASIT 2020).

IO5 will put theory into practice. It focuses on the creation of open access multilingual training materials both for general E2U content and for hybrid services, following the curricular structure formulated under IO4. The training materials developed under IO4 will be digital, easily accessible and retrievable without cost or limitations both on the project website and in an open repository and will guarantee the full sustainability of the project. They will be designed to allow for self-learning as well as for their inclusion in existing courses across Europe and beyond, as flipped learning materials or class

content, both in academic and in vocational settings. The promotion of linguistic diversity and multilingualism will be ensured by the fact that the training content will be created in English or in local partner languages and adapted into different project languages such as Catalan, Galician, German, Italian, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish. All the open educational resources produced by the consortium will be highly innovative in terms of content delivered, as there are currently no digital materials available on E2U applied to audiovisual translation and audiovisual journalism.

IO6 will focus on certification. Although the project will not implement the curriculum and the corresponding certification, and certification will not be provided to those using the EASIT materials, IO6 will take certification aspects into account from the very beginning. IO6 will explore certification avenues to make sure that the outputs developed can be implemented in real-life situations in order to guarantee their transferability potential and higher impact. In this regard, the project will capitalize on existing projects (Perego 2019a) to define the best certification procedures and will design a specific strategy that can be implemented in the future. The certification strategies adopted in previous projects (ACT, ADLAB PRO and ILSA) will be shared and discussed before developing new ideas and strategies. For this IO, the ECQA (2013) approach was agreed, ECQA (the European Certification and Qualification Association) being in fact one of the project stakeholders.

2.5   Sustainability and dissemination

The sustainability of a project is its ability to continue its mission or programme far into the future. All projects have to end eventually, but the project impact should continue and outlive the direct involvement of a project's donors and partners.

EASIT will persist thanks to most traditional dissemination means such as its website and YouTube channel, scientific publications and collaborations that will continue after the lifespan of the project as well as thanks to the presentation of project results at conferences. The website will contain all project information, reports, publications and open access materials even beyond the lifespan of the project, in the hope that they will be used for many years to come. The consortium will also continue to disseminate project results by publishing widely and drawing from the data generated constantly as project outcomes. Furthermore, project partners have already strengthened their synergies and agreed on future actions.

Exploiting "Multiplier Events" will be a decisive dissemination strategy. Multiplier events, which can take place in any consortium country , are events organised to share the results with as wide an audience of stakeholders as possible, to develop project activities, to foster networking and elicit new ideas and to promote awareness of a specific topic. EASIT has planned six multiplier events mainly designed to explain the overall project scope and to present IO-related results obtained at different project stages. Each event is related to one or more overlapping intellectual outputs. The programme of each multiplier event organized by EASIT includes speeches – from partners, from stakeholders, from selected experts in the filed – on topics that are cutting-edge and approached from different perspectives, including the perspectives of the end users, trainer or practitioners. Networking sessions are always organized during multiplier events where participants have the opportunity to exchange their views and ideas on current developments in the field, to learn and give feedback in order to enhance the content of future IOs or to finalise ongoing IOs. Hands-on sessions are often organized to move from a more theoretical approach to an applied moment.

However, the most relevant sustainability measure of the EASIT project has its main foundations in its primary output: a course curriculum and open access training materials for the training of new professional figures who will be able to apply E2U principles in the fields of subtitling, audio description and audiovisual journalism. This will fill a major market gap, ensure more skilled and qualified professionals in service provider roles, and will offer new educational material to higher education institutions that wish to align themselves with the modern labour and market needs (EASIT 2018: 69). In the long run, new audiences will be created thanks to a raised awareness about the needs and benefits of creating accessible and usable content for all – thus also fulfilling a primary human right.

2.6   Easy Language on the EASIT website

In addition to being a decisive dissemination and sustainability tool for the project results, the EASIT website reflects the views and rationale of the project through its specific language choices. The website is multilingual (includes all project languages) and in Easy Language. Its content was drafted following the main Easy Language guidelines and recommendations (IFLA 2010; ILSMH 1998; Inclusion Europe 2014) and was validated by the RISA Institute. A pre-recorded spoken version of the website texts, in all project languages, is available

for those who are not comfortable with reading. On the website, the whole project is therefore presented in an accessible manner and aims to enable "struggling readers" (Arfé et al. 2018: 2192) and users with other disabilities to become acquainted with research activities and project outcomes that are ultimately intended for them.

We decided to write the website text in Easy rather than Plain Language to reach a broader spectrum of users with disabilities but also to present this maximal form of linguistic comprehensibility enhancement while providing content information. By simply accessing the website, any user can access a language variety that is easier to experience than to explain.

The default language of the website is English due to its role as a lingua franca and the whole content was drafted in English and then translated into the project languages.

The content of the website is mainly based on the project application form (EASIT 2018), which was adapted and converted into the Easy English website text. This entailed selecting the information to retain from the source text based on the target users, summarizing it into short sentences, checking the logical structure of each text according to guidelines, drafting a first English version and having it read by a group of people with learning disabilities. Comments were then implemented and the draft was amended before the final version could be validated, translated and published in other languages (ILSMH 1998).

In this paragraph, we will focus on the Easy English website text and will compare it to the application form to highlight the main features of both. The communicative purpose and intended target audience of a text determine the way the text is structured, the type of rhetorical strategies used, the nature and specificity of the content and the type of text components (or "moves", Bhatia 1993). The two texts under analysis were conceived for different audiences and with different communicative purposes and were written according to opposing levels of comprehensibility. To highlight these differences, we chose two excerpts related to the description of one of the project Intellectual Outputs: IO4, Curriculum and course design. One is the text used in the project application form (Example 15, our bold), the other (Example 16) is the text used for the website. We will briefly analyse each text separately and then compare the two, focusing on their main distinguishing features from a qualitative and from a quantitative point of view.

The IO4 application form text (EASIT 2018: 57), the source text, was intended for assessment by an evaluation committee consisting of a pool of expert readers

(i.e., a selected group of evaluators from the National or Executive Agency receiving the application who are meant to evaluate it exclusively on the basis of the criteria described in the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide* and who are supported by independent experts) (European Commission 2019: 260). The text was written accordingly, following the unwritten rules of project writing. Given this context, the text is in English. It is quite succinct and straightforward but delivers content through technical terms and exploits the economy devices of the English language to comply with the application form word limit.

Curriculum and course design

Based on the input from **IO**1, IO2 and IO3, this IO will define what type of curriculum should be developed to train an expert (or the different expert profiles) in **ER** and also to expand the training of **media accessibility** experts, taking into account the multiple situations that may arise from previous IOs. IO4 will identify the **learning outcomes**, the possible curriculum and course(s) structure, and the number and type of **credits** for the different situations, and will provide informed advice on the best strategies for curriculum development in the field of ER. IO4 will also will explore how the new **skills** could be integrated within existing curriculum designs in the field of accessibility, such as those derived from the projects ACT, ADLAB PRO and ILSA.

The ultimate aim is to have a curriculum proposal, ideally of a **modular** nature, that could be implemented beyond the life of the project in different situations. To that end, a more dynamic approach to curriculum and course design will be sought. This IO will establish the framework upon which the different open educational resources will be developed. The aim is that the **open educational resources** will be able to be used in different learning situations, which guarantees a greater **impact** and **transferability** potential after the life of the project.

In order to design the curriculum, the following steps are suggested:

- SHI will suggest a **template** for designing the curriculum and will give some methodological advice to all partners.
- **Partners** will comment on the template and agree on a final template to be used.
- Partners will discuss on the relevance of using **ECTS** and/or **ECVETS** depending on the curriculum approach.
- A general curriculum structure will be proposed by SHI and discussed by partners, based on IO1 and IO2.
- The curriculum design will be distributed among partners according to their expertise.
- Based on the list of skills identified in IO3, the following items will be suggested: learning outcomes, suggested number of credits (based on the number of **working hours**) and possible **teaching methods** and materials.
- Different revision phases will take place, with SHI acting as the coordinator and revising partners' input.
- Partners will discuss how this curriculum (or part of it) could be integrated in existing **curriculum designs**, mainly concerning **audio description** (ADLAB PRO project) and **subtitling** (ILSA project).
- SHI will issue a **final report**, with a curriculum design, that will be revised by partners.

Example 15: Application form excerpt

At first glance, we notice that the text displays plenty of features that are characteristic of specialized discourse. We know that "the lexicon of special languages is their most obvious distinguishing characteristic" (Sager et al. 1980: 230), and the text under scrutiny comprises a large number of monoreferential technical terms that enable the writer to communicate information unambiguously and with the necessary precision (Gotti 2003; Sager et al. 1980). Some (emboldened) pertain to project language (Intellectual Output, along with the initialism IO, impact, transferability, partner, final report). Others belong to the fields of educational thinking and learning paradigms (curriculum, curriculum design, modular curriculum, teaching methods, open educational resources) and to the EU accreditation system (credits, learning outcomes, ECTS, ECVETS, working hours, cf. European Commission 2015), which are the main semantic fields of IO4. Terms relating to audiovisual translations can also be found (media accessibility, audio description, subtitling) along with the specialized acronym ER (Easy Reading) used in the application form. Moving from lexicon to the syntax, we can notice that it is simple (in line with the typical unmarked style of English), it favours coordination, and it comprises long nominal groups without phrasal elements such as articles or prepositions (Biber et al. 1999): cf. for instance complex noun groups such as "expert profile", "different revision phases", "different open educational resources". In terms of textual features, the organization is linear in an attempt to provide evaluators with a background of and the reasons for the IO goals, which are then broken down into tasks. Lexical repetition can be observed as a cohesive device, but some pronouns are used with the same function, too.

The Easy English website text (Example 16), on the other hand, is an adaptation. The target audience is different and might include readers with a variety of cognitive or intellectual disabilities or with limited reading skills (IFLA 2010; ILSM 1998; Inclusion Europe 2014; Maaß 2020; MENCAP 2005). The type of information selected for the website aimed at reducing reading and comprehension problems.

Output 4. What experts must study

TRANSLATORS

Many texts are difficult to understand.
Translators can translate those difficult texts
into easy-to-understand language.
Easy-to-understand texts are very important for society.
But it is difficult to translate into easy-to-understand language.
Translators must pay attention to many things
while translating into easy-to-understand language.

WRITERS

Writers can write directly in easy-to-understand language.
Then we can understand the texts better.
But it is difficult to write in easy-to-understand language.
Writers must pay attention to many things
while writing in easy-to-understand language.

Therefore, translators must learn
how to translate into easy-to-understand language.
Writers must learn
how to write in easy-to-understand language.
Output 4 will develop a **curriculum**

for the training of translators and writers.

A **curriculum** shows how to teach something
at school or at a university.

A **curriculum** contains all courses
that the students have to attend to learn something.

Our **curriculum** will show
how to teach easy-to-understand translation
and easy-to-understand writing.

Our **curriculum** will propose
which courses students have to attend
to learn easy-to-understand translation
and easy-to-understand writing.

Our **curriculum** will focus on easy-to-understand language
in audiovisual information.
Audiovisual information is the information
you can watch and listen at the same time.
For example, in television and videos.

Christiane Maaß leads Output 4.

If you want to know more about the document,
you can ask Sergio Hernández.
Sergio Hernández has written this information

Example 16: Easy English version

For those who are not yet acquainted with Easy English, or Easy Language in general, a glimpse at the text can suffice to notice the clean layout and the organized design of the page: blank spaces are used often and make the text more accessible. Paragraphs are presented in blocks, each comprising a limited number of short sentences (MENCAP 2005: 2) that encapsulate only one idea at a time. Some words are emboldened, paragraphs headers are used, full stops at the end of each sentence are preferred to other punctuation marks (IFLA 2010: 13). Long sentences are broken down to maintain the integrity of major constituents. Difficult language and specialized terms are avoided in favour of core language vocabulary; and when technical words are used, they are not only emboldened but also defined. Nominal structures are simple and repeated, while pronominal referents are avoided (only 0.75% of the words in the text are pronouns vs. 32.09% for nouns) (Table 8).

Parts of speech	Application form text	Easy English text
Nouns	30.32%	33.82%
Adjectives	9.95%	5.88%
Verbs	9.5%	15.2%
Adverbs	1.36%	1.96%
Prepositions	13.57%	10.29%
Pronouns	0.9%	2.45%
Auxiliary verbs	4.52%	3.43

Table 8: Parts of speech

The measurement of the parts of speech of both texts in Table 8 also reveals that the Easy English text uses fewer adjectives, thus favouring non-elaborated information and more verbs, especially linking verbs or redundant repeated verb forms.

Comparing the two texts can be useful to better perceive the extent of the simplification that took place in the adaptation process. Starting from the title, which should identify the following content and pique the reader's curiosity, a simple sentence (*Output 4. What experts must study*) was preferred over a compound string of nouns (*Curriculum and course design*) in the Easy English version, which made it possible to avoid embedded structures as well as jargon in favour of common words. A further adaptation is related to the type of

information delivered. We know that this is a thorny issue, because "the reading ability even within groups with the same reading problem can differ significantly. People with cognitive and intellectual disabilities are not a homogenous group and their capabilities range from the borderline normal intelligence to severe mental disability" (IFLA 2010: 14). In spite of the existing broad guidelines to make a text comprehensible on the content level, it is never easy to produce equally effective texts for all end users. Overall, Easy Language adaptation involves substantial content selection aimed at the needs of the new audience and their attention spans. In the case of the Easy English text under scrutiny, we observe an entirely different choice in terms of information type and organization as far as the opening paragraphs are concerned. The first paragraph of the application form text refers back to previous IOs and to other European projects that share a similar methodology and that will somehow be integrated in the new curriculum developed by EASIT. The text relies on the ability of its readers to link what is being said to previous information and to their background knowledge or to their ability to look for the information being referred to. Information structured along these premises is too overwhelming and unnecessarily technical for the new website audience. Therefore, the Easy English text makes a different textual choice: the core problem and its solution ("Many texts are difficult to understand. | Translators can translate those difficult texts | into easy-to-understand language.") are illustrated first and set the scene. Then, the importance of E2U texts is stressed, the difficult role of those who could make texts easier to understand, i.e., translators and writers, is explained and the need to receive adequate training is highlighted: writers and translators must learn to deal with E2U content (vs. "IO4 will identify the learning outcomes").

After introducing these important premises, delivered at different levels of simplification, both texts illustrate the project's main aim: to develop a training curriculum for the new experts in E2U digital materials. The application form text declares the central aim and then elaborates on it, including specifications regarding the nature of the future curriculum, which should "ideally [be] of a modular nature, that could be implemented beyond the life of the project in different situations". It refers to the possibility for the curriculum to be implemented in different situations and delineates the framework upon which the different open educational resources will be developed, thus partly overlapping with the goals of the next IO, IO5. All these details are omitted in the Easy English version, where the focus (both in terms

of content and in terms of layout) is on the technical word "curriculum", used here for the first time and therefore emboldened, defined, and then repeated at the beginning of each new sentence. The website text wants the term "curriculum" to be clear. The text then closes with reference to a peculiar and central aspect of this curriculum: it will focus on easy-to-understand language in audiovisual information, which is defined with simple words and examples, and by speaking directly to the reader: audiovisual information is "the information you can watch and listen at the same time. For example, in television and videos".

Although the Easy English text does not come with supporting illustrations, as it normally should (IFLA 2010: 10), it is linear and logical, concise, balanced in the use of difficult words and well organized in terms of layout.

Expert Language	Easy Language
The ultimate aim is to have a curriculum proposal, ideally of a modular nature, that could be implemented beyond the life of the project in different situations. To that end, a more dynamic approach to curriculum and course design will be sought. This IO will establish the framework upon which the different open educational resources will be developed. The aim is that the open educational resources will be able to be used in different learning situations, which guarantees a greater impact and transferability potential after the life of the project.	Output 4 will develop a **curriculum** for the training of translators and writers. A **curriculum** shows how to teach something at school or at a university. A **curriculum** contains all courses that the students have to attend to learn something. Our **curriculum** will show how to teach easy-to-understand translation and easy-to-understand writing. Our **curriculum** will propose which courses students have to attend to learn easy-to-understand translation and easy-to-understand writing. Our **curriculum** will focus on easy-to-understand language in audiovisual information. Audiovisual information is the information you can watch and listen at the same time. For example, in television and videos.

Example 17: Expert Language vs. Easy Language

On a quantitative level, Table 9 shows that although the number or running words in each text is almost the same, the number of distinct words is lower in the Easy English text, denoting a lower lexical variety, confirmed by the Type/Token ratio.

	English application form text	Easy English website text
Tokens (running words)	216	259
Types (distinct words)	112	97
Type/Token Ratio	51.85 %	37.89 %
Mean word length	5.00 (SD=2.84)	5.24 (SD=2.96)
Sentences	7	23
Mean in words	30.86 (SD=13.59)	11.13 (SD=4.03)
Lexical density	51.13%	56.86%
Gunning fog index	20.23	13.24
Passive voice	5 (71.43%)	0

Table 9: Expert and Easy Language texts: Quantitative data

In spite of a difference in lexical variety, the calculation of the lexical density of the texts shows that there is not a substantial difference: both texts are almost equally informative and descriptive (lexical words are used extensively in both texts), but the standard text is dramatically less readable.

3   A case study: Methodological considerations

A major objective of the EASIT project is to develop course curricula and training materials for the development of three new specialized and hybrid professional figures working in the audiovisual sector: the E2U subtitler, the E2U audio describer and the E2U journalist. Such professional figures currently do not exist as such, but will bring together expertise from two different fields: audiovisual translation and E2U language. While the research, practice and training of audiovisual translation are quite established (Bogucki and Deckert 2020; Pérez-González 2019), the same does not yet apply to E2U language. There is currently no structured European curriculum for the training in E2U digital communication and the implementation of simplified content in audiovisual productions is currently not ensured. This is exactly the gap that the EASIT project aims to fill. In Europe, there are countries where Plain Language and Easy Language are used, taught, implemented and researched inconsistently. So, before tackling the creation of the curricula and training materials intended to merge the skills and competences of audiovisual translation and E2U language, a crucial stage of the project was to obtain information on the current European scenario regarding general E2U training and practice. A specific Intellectual Output, the first of six (cf. 2.4), was devoted to this aim. This project stage was led by the University of Trieste. Its main objective was to understand the situation of E2U training and practice in Europe in order to identify shared or new practices to be implemented in a future curriculum. A further aim was to gather information that could be used as a starting point to profile the E2U expert and to obtain answers to questions regarding who E2U professionals in Europe are today, what their background is and what training they received, but also what they currently do in their jobs and what they think might be useful to improve future training settings. We achieved this by drawing on a sociological approach (Berneking 2017; Zheng 2017) and previous studies that applied this approach to the audiovisual translation and the interpreting fields (Pavesi and Perego 2008; Perego and Pavesi 2006 on the sociological profiling of film translators in Italy; Gentile 2013, Katan 2011 on the status of translators and/or interpreters). The idea behind the so-called

"sociological turn", which was developed in the field of Translation Studies in the 1980s, is that translation is a social practice and translations as products are the result of who translators are, how they work and where they work (Berneking 2017; Zheng 2017; see also Kiraly 2005). This entailed a shift in focus from the text to the agents of translation and to the context where the translation process takes place. Such an approach is crucial to the understanding of the professional field itself and to the development of new norms, theories, recommendations, but also training perspectives. The same idea was applied to the field of E2U language: in the first project stage, we aimed at targeting the agents of language simplification as the main purveyors of knowledge for the improvement of future training and the development of new hybrid professional competences. We decided to do so by resorting to an online survey, a versatile and effective tool for collecting data from several respondents that can provide a deeper understanding of the researched phenomena.

When the questionnaire closed, we cleaned and organized the data for analysis. We chose a descriptive analysis (Trochim 2000; Loeb et al. 2017) that enabled us to provide a thorough picture of what the data of our study showed through summaries and graphs. We know that descriptive statistical analysis limits the generalization to the particular group observed. However, the choice of this approach was linked to our research questions. We needed to obtain information about the capacities, needs, working methods, and practices of current professional E2U experts in order to transfer this information to the various stages of the project that led to the development of a new training curriculum. Because good description can be decisive in identifying unknown phenomena of interest or patterns in data that have not previously been recognized or studied (Loeb et al. 2017), we tried to offer as clear a picture of the E2U expert world as possible. This helped us to understand their activities, behaviours and patterns and to use that knowledge to take decisions for the future stages of the project.

In the following pages, we will report on the survey takers we expected to be the best respondents, on the procedure followed in the study and on the main research instrument we used: the questionnaire.

3.1 Sampling

Determining the prospective respondents to the survey questionnaire was a preliminary stage preceding the creation of the questionnaire to be used in the online survey. The identification of our target population was determined by the aims of the study: to gain data on the situation regarding E2U training and practice in Europe, we decided to address a specific group, i.e., professionals and experts in the field of E2U content or people who work in this area and who could contribute based on first-hand direct experience (EASIT 2019a). E2U professionals and experts include four broad categories of professionals: trainers, producers/creators/writers, translators/adapters, and validators/advisors (cf. 1.3.3). Because we were aware that some categories could overlap (those who identify themselves primarily as E2U writers sometimes translate content, and those who identify themselves primarily as E2U translators sometimes write content, and in both cases they might even teach E2U principles in diverse training settings or have a role in validation; e.g., Bernabé forthcoming; ILSMH 1998; Plena Inclusión 2018; Maaß 2020), and that some experts might find it difficult to identify with only one category, we enabled respondents to choose more than one answer to the question on their current professional status (Example 18).

What are you currently? (Here you can choose more than one answer)

- ☐ Currently, I am a **trainer**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **translator/adapter**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **producer/creator/writer**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **validator/advisor**
- ☐ **Other**

Example 18: Questionnaire item on the role of respondents

We knew that reaching a large number of respondents would be difficult: E2U practices are not consistent in Europe and many people who deal with E2U texts are not recognized professionals. However, we were interested in the quality of the sample and aimed to find those respondents who could provide a picture of the current situation.

3.2 Procedure

As mentioned above, we chose the online survey as the mode of administration of the questionnaire to collect data on the training, practice and preferred learning methods of E2U experts in Europe. The finalized questionnaire was distributed on the 14th of January 2019 and remained online for 3 weeks. Each project partner contributed actively to reach out to as many E2U experts as possible, compiling and resorting to an internal list of respondents that were contacted via email. A recruitment email in Easy Language, providing prospective respondents with essential information and the link to the online questionnaire, was prepared and circulated. The English version is below:

Dear ---,
I am writing to you
to ask for your help in our research.

I take part in the EASIT project (http://pagines.uab.cat/easit/).
This is a project about making content easy to understand
through Easy-to-Read Language and Plain Language.

In EASIT, we will create materials
to train experts on making content easy to understand.

To create these materials
we need to know the point of view of experts.

I am contacting you
because you are an expert.

If you wish,
you can help us
and answer the questions we have prepared.
We would be very grateful.

If you are interested,
you can access our questionnaire online here.
If you prefer to receive the questionnaire
in a different format,
let me know.

Many thanks for your help.

Example 19: Recruitment email in Easy English

The links to the questionnaire in all eight project languages were also made available via social media, including the project's Facebook page and Twitter account. Reminders were sent to respondents regularly.

The questionnaire was piloted and tested in order to finalize it, improve its effectiveness and prevent administrative errors that could have hampered the progress of the research and the reliability of the data. No factors that increase response rate were employed, such as offering participants incentives or prizes in return for completion. However, precautions were implemented to ensure responses (Boynton 2004). These included designing the questionnaire clearly, phrasing questions in a way that holds the participant's attention, providing a simple layout, but also notifying participants about the study in advance with a personalised invitation. With the help of the recruitment email, we made sure that the aim of the study and the means of completing the questionnaire were clearly explained and offered an alternative version as an accessible option to the online format as the text-based information may not be the best solution for everyone (ILSMH 1998: 7) and some respondents might need more time to complete the questions, or even require someone else to read the questions to them. Because respondents could include validators, who are normally end users (e.g., Bernabé forthcoming; Plena Inclusión 2014), we needed to consider that "abilities and understanding of people with learning disability can vary greatly" (ILSMH 1998: 9). This is why we aimed to draft a clear language text (Cutts 2013) and keep the questionnaire as understandable and focused as possible (cf. 3.3.3).

To upload and circulate the questionnaire we chose the Web Survey Creator platform. This is a web-based survey tool supported by Dipolar Pty Limited and developed with all the knowledge and experience gained from more than 15 years in the survey software business. Web Survey Creator enables the creation of online surveys and questionnaires with powerful functionality, respondent logins, data validation and flow control, and grants the possibility of producing a vast array of reports. Furthermore, it has crucial functionalities for the creation of multilingual pages, which was necessary for the nature and purpose of our survey and a priority of the project.

The questionnaire distribution complied with ethical research needs and consent issues (Orero et al. 2018; Trochim 2020; see also APA 2010). Based on the ethical protocol discussed with and approved by the ethical committees of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona as the project coordinator and of the University of Trieste as the leader of this study, we structured the text in order

to include the most important ethical requirements in accessible language right at the beginning. Specifically, we incorporated a yes button with instruction in Plain Language (Example 20) and gave participants Easy Language information on their voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity[30], as well as the right to withdraw (Example 21) (Appendix 2).

> Please, click on the "Yes" button if the following sentences are true:
> 1) I have read the information or someone has explained it to me in a way that is easy to understand;
> 2) I have been able to ask questions;
> 3) I want to take part in the survey.
> Explicit consent by clicking on "Yes" button:
> YES

Example 20: Plain English instructions for yes/no consent button

> You will fill in this questionnaire because you want to.
> You can stop when you want
> and you do not need to explain why.
> If you stop, there is no problem at all.

Example 21: Voluntary participation formula in Easy English

We knew that the requirements for obtaining consent might discourage participation and a reduction of respondents would threat the validity of the research. However, the importance of following ethical protocol could not be undervalued at all and we eventually received more answers than expected.

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30 To guarantee confidentiality, we selected the "anonymous" survey responses type in the platform: "This type of response is perfect for surveys where you want a single generic link to be provided to anyone who wants to complete the survey. The best feature of this link is its simplicity. No tracking information exists in the link – everyone uses the same link and is completely anonymous. Respondents must complete the survey in a single sitting as there is no way to get back to previously entered responses" (Web Survey Creator, 2017).

3.3 The questionnaire

We selected the online survey as the preferred research tool to collect the data needed for our study and due to its effectiveness in reaching to a large number of respondents. This is particularly important in a field where the number of experts is still scant and uneven in different European countries (Fortis 2003).

We developed a questionnaire (Foddy 1994, Gillham 2008; Munn and Drever 2004; Trochim 2000) that included items devised to gather the information needed to accomplish the aims of the study. To do so, we exploited cross-fertilization with other projects and capitalized on previous similar work done (ADLAB 2012; ADLAB PRO 2017a; see also the PACTE group works), which helped us to structure the questionnaire and to formulate items.

We chose a computerized questionnaire administration, where the items were presented on the computer because we believed that the online questionnaire would easily enable us to distribute and collect significant amounts of information in a relatively time- and cost-effective way. Furthermore, we knew that the online version would also enable us to easily transform information into numeric values that could then be analysed effectively (Ackroyd and Hughes 1981; Loeb et al. 2017; Trochim 2020). The online questionnaire was constructed in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data: the former were obtained through closed structured questions and the latter through open boxes where respondents could enter free texts. However, open questions, which have the advantage of offering authentic feedback, were limited given the difficulty in coding and analysing them.

The preparation of the questionnaire required multiple re-writing sessions to ensure that all the necessary items were included in order to obtain the necessary information that could offer a comprehensive picture of the practice and training situation of E2U experts in Europe. The study of the literature in the field of Plain and Easy Language (Chapter 1) served as a solid theoretical basis for the selection of the questionnaire items and consistently correct use of the right E2U terminology . It was also a means to identify the gaps this study aimed to close.

While drafting the questionnaire, we expected some difficulties. First, the length of the questionnaire could have been a limitation. Second, using structured questions would have certainly helped respondents to respond more easily and help us to accumulate and summarize responses more efficiently; but we knew that structured questions could also constrain the respondent and

limit the researcher's ability to understand what the respondent really meant (Trochim 2020). Last, we were aware that some hard-to-reach respondents would have benefitted from more traditional methods such as paper and pencil surveys or a face-to-face interviews. However, we decided to uniform the response process, especially given the need to distribute the same questionnaire in different European countries.

3.3.1 Structure

As illustrated in Table 10, the survey questionnaire (cf. Appendix 2 for a full version in English) is organized into five sections. After an introduction, it asks demographic questions to learn more about respondents and includes three thematic sections designed to enquire about the educational background and previous training of people working in the E2U field, their current activity and skills, and what they believe should be included in a E2U training scenario.

INTRODUCTION

- Project overview
- Terms of participation
  - Information sheet
  - Consent form
  - Data policy

SECTION 1: Demographic profile

SECTION 2: Educational background and previous training

SECTION 3: Current activity of the experts

SECTION 4: Skills

Table 10: Questionnaire structure

The introduction comprises a project overview and a terms-of-participations section. The project overview was made available both in Standard and in Plain Language to enable respondents to choose their preferred variety of language comprehension enhancement. It provides a brief description of the project, an outline of the questionnaire sections and aims, completion instructions and estimated completion time as well as an important terminological note (in Plain English in Example 22) that clarifies the way some key expressions are used.

In this questionnaire, the expression "easy to understand" means Easy-to-Read Language and Plain Language. Both are reduction varieties of the language that make contents easier to understand. They are especially useful for persons with disabilities, migrants and persons learning a new language. Easy-to-Read Language is a stronger reduction of the language than Plain Language. This means that Easy-to-Read Language is easier to understand.

Example 22: Terminological note in Plain English

The terms of participation, provided only in Easy Language to make sure that all respondents could understand them, were included to adhere to the code of ethics and practices while conducting survey research (APA 2010; Orero et al. 2018; Trochim 2000). They included a short information sheet on the project scope, main features and aims, a consent form (Example 23) and a note on the way the data of the respondents would be treated. Because the questionnaire was administered online, respondents gave their explicit consent on the decision to take part in the survey by simply clicking on a "Yes" button (as per Example 20 on p. 98).

CONSENT FORM
You will fill in this questionnaire because you want to.
You can stop when you want
and you do not need to explain why.
If you stop, there is no problem at all.
Data will be confidential.
This means that we will not use your name.
The person responsible for this questionnaire is Elisa Perego.
If you want more information about the project,
you can contact Anna Matamala.
Her e-mail is: …

Example 23: Easy English consent form

Four sections followed the introduction. Section 1 (*Demographic profile*) provided seven demographic questions aimed at learning more about the prospective survey takers and collecting personal information. All personal data were anonymized. Section 2 (*Educational background and previous training*) asked questions on the educational background of the respondents, their field of studies and their previous training in easy-to-understand language. The major aim of this section was to learn where individuals operating in the field of E2U come from, and to capture data that could contribute to a better outline of the sociological profiles of a professional

figure that is not yet equally established and recognized in all European countries. Section 3 (*Current activity of the experts*) was designed to collect information on the current activity of the survey takers as experts in E2U language and to ultimately obtain a picture of how the professional world in this sector is organized. It is not yet clear who does what in terms of E2U, what E2U modalities, formats and services are produced or adapted more often or in what fields E2U is normally implemented in Europe. Furthermore, information on the working habits of the individuals operating in the field would make a further contribution to round off the sociological profile and status of the European E2U expert that have never been investigated so far. To conclude, Section 4 (*Skills*) includes eight questions on the skills that an expert in E2U content should possess or learn to become a good professional. Skills (ECQA 2013; EASIT 2019c) are the ability to do something well. Currently, it is not clear what the E2U experts' view on the skills that should be emphasized in training is. Their point of view however is crucial especially if we keep in mind the broader aim of the project, i.e., designing a course curriculum for E2U experts in the field of audiovisual translation and web journalism. Questions in Section 4 were therefore all aimed at gaining this type of input in order to transform it in possible good training recommendations.

3.3.2 Response format

The survey questionnaire used close-ended questions, with a predominance of multiple-choice questions and a small number of scaled and open-ended questions (Kolb 2008). Multiple-choice questions were normally polytomous (vs. dichotomous), where the respondent had more than two unordered options he or she could select. They asked the respondent either to provide one response from a list of alternatives, or to check more than one answer where a checklist was present. In the latter cases, the respondents do not need to perform the mental effort of weighing which is the best answer (Kolb 2008). Although multiple-choice questions limit the respondents' input to the wording of answers, they are easier to answer and easier for researchers to analyse than open-ended questions (Sincero 2014). Open-ended questions were used occasionally: respondents found a text box for comments at the end of each questionnaire section. A multi-item scale was used only once in Section 4, where we decided that survey-takers should rate specific statements (Example 24).

Please, rate the following statement on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = of no importance
2 = of minor importance
3 = neither important nor unimportant
4 = important
5 = extremely important

To deliver a good quality easy-to-understand content, the following items are:

☐ Design and layout of the page
☐ Skilled and aware use of vocabulary
☐ Use of simple syntax (grammar) that helps to understand
☐ Clear organization of the information
☐ Use of multimodality, that is, of different channels that convey the same meaning (e.g., text and video, or text and picture)

Example 24: Multi-item scale question

Internally, the questionnaire was structured in such a way as to include some skips, i.e., instructions *within* the questionnaire that make respondents skip questions for which their answers are not required. Skip logic (also known as "conditional branching" or "branch logic") changes what question a respondent sees next based on how they answer the current question. Skip logic creates a custom path through the survey that varies based on a respondent's answers and also varies based on the rules that the researchers define for the respondent. An example of skip taken from the questionnaire is illustrated below:

Did you work in another profession before you became an expert in easy to understand content?

☐ Yes > Go to 3.2
☐ No > Go to 3.3

Example 25: Skip logic

3.3.3 Plain and Easy English

In line with the fundamental inclusive principles that underlie the entire EASIT project, we directed substantial attention to the language of the questionnaire and adapted it to improve its level of understanding. Given the heterogeneous nature of the expected respondents, ranging from E2U professionals to E2U validators and end users, we were aware that some respondents within the four categories for whom the questionnaire was designed might have intellectual disabilities, mild to severe language deficits, or underdeveloped reading literacy.

Consequently, after a thorough planning and writing phase (Department of Health 2010: 17; ILSMH 1998), we carried out a major rewriting (i.e., adaptation/translation) team-work and validation phase (supported by the Slovenian RISA Institute) aimed at text simplification, i.e., at its modification to make it "more understandable or readable for target groups of readers" (Arfé et al. 2018: 2191). In so doing, we were inspired both by linguistic and cognitive approaches to text simplification (Arfé et al. 2018; Bhatia 1983; Cutts 2013) and were guided by the main principles of Plain Language in order to provide a text that our audience could understand the first time they read or heard it (PLAIN 2010). We decided to clarify our questionnaire language decisions in the introduction, where we also offered survey takers the possibility to receive an alternative format of the questionnaire (Department of Health 2010: 24) depending on their needs:

> This questionnaire is written in Plain Language. The writer of this questionnaire kept in mind the needs of the target group of this questionnaire. However, if you think that you need help filling it in, you can always ask for help to another person. If you want to have a paper version of the questionnaire, please ask the person that sent it to you.

Example 26: Language note

Overall, in line with most recommendations, we always tried to explain difficult concepts to help more people understand the information. At the word level, we made sure to avoid technical terms, argot and jargon, or emboldened and defined complex lexical formulations and new words when these were used in the text for the first time (e.g., Department of Health 2010: 27) (Example 27).

> The aim of this survey
> is to get information on your experience when making **content** easy to understand.
> Content can be newspapers, books, TV news, etc.

Example 27: Key term explained

On a similar line, we avoided formal vocabulary. In Example 28, taken from the introductory paragraph of the demographic section of the questionnaire, the first draft (on the left) was translated into Plain English (on the right), avoiding the formal verb "to include" and replacing the technical expression "demographic profile" with a simpler, direct formulation.

First draft	Adaptation in Plain Language
This section of the questionnaire **includes** 7 questions on your **demographic profile**.	In this section of the questionnaire **we will ask you** 7 questions about **your personal information**.

Example 28: Avoiding jargon

We avoided acronyms and abbreviations even though according to some Easy Language (Department of Health 2010: 26) and Plain Language principles these can be retained if they are explained or well known by the target audience. The full phrase "easy-to-understand", which is central to the project and was central in the questionnaire, was therefore preferred to the E2U abbreviation that is used instead in most internal project documents. To maintain an acceptable level of morpho-syntactic simplicity, we favoured diffused rather than compressed noun groups, e.g., "experts in easy-to-understand content" vs. "easy-to-understand content experts".

In term of syntax, we ensured that complex syntactic structures were avoided. In Example 29 the first English draft of the questionnaire (on the left) displays an infinitive clause functioning as an adjunct as well as a main clause where the object element is a long and complex noun phrase. The text was therefore reformulated to exclude the infinitive clause, break a long sentence into two more digestible ones and avoid a relativizer preceded by a preposition ("in which", standing for "in the box") that is replaced by the repetition of the referent (Department of Health 2020: 28).

First draft	Adaptation in Plain Language
Following the questions, you will find a text box in which you can write your comments if you wish to do so.	At the end of this section, you will find a text box. In this text box you can write your comments if you wish to do so.

Example 29: Text rewriting

When presenting a checklist of multiple responses, we chose to offer readers the formulation of a full (vs. elliptical) sentence for each response. So, in Example 30, the theme, or semantic point of departure of the clause ("I have completed…"), is always explicit rather than omitted (as is the case in standard questionnaires), whereas the rheme, or the focus of the clause, is graphically emphasized through the bold character.

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed? If you are currently enrolled, what is your highest degree received?

- ☐ I have completed **no formal education**
- ☐ I have completed **primary education**
- ☐ I have completed **secondary education**
- ☐ I have completed **vocational courses**
- ☐ I hold an **undergraduate academic degree**
- ☐ I hold a **Master's degree**
- ☐ I hold a **PhD/doctorate degree**
- ☐ Other, please specify:
- ☐ I prefer not to answer

</div>

Example 30: Full sentences as questionnaire responses

Even in simpler contexts, full verbalization of the responses to the question was preferred ("between 20 and 30") over elliptical formulas ("20–30"):

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

What is your age?

- ☐ Under 20
- ☐ Between 20 and 30
- ☐ Between 31 and 40
- ☐ Between 41 and 50
- ☐ Between 51and 60
- ☐ 61 or older

</div>

Example 31: Unelliptical responses

We developed a working draft of the questionnaire in English. This enabled partners to read, share and work on the same document until the end of the drafting process, but also enabled us to exploit the substantial amount of English publications on E2U language as a theoretical background. The finalized version of the English questionnaire was translated into all project languages (Catalan, Galician, German, Italian, Spanish, Slovene, and Swedish) in order to increase the number of respondents and comply with the multilingual dimension of European projecting. Each project partner took care of the translation of the English matrix into their local languages, bearing in mind the need to apply language specific Plain and Easy Language rules whenever necessary. The specific facilities of Web Survey Creator enabled us to create eight versions of the same questionnaire in all the project languages. All are freely available on the EASIT project website.

4 Professionals in Europe: A profile

Finding out who current professional experts in the E2U sector are and obtaining information on their educational and professional background, their working practices and activities, their training experiences (cf. this chapter) and their training preferences and opinions (Chapter 5) was the main aim of the first stage of the project (2.4). This then fuelled all the following stages up to the creation of a course curriculum for three new professional figures (Chapter 6) and the development of training materials that can cater successfully to their needs. In this chapter, we will offer a description of some meaningful patterns that emerged from the answers of the professionals who responded to the online questionnaire and that enabled us to take the first steps to eliciting the skills and competences needed to be a professional and making decisions on what to include in a training course in such a new hybrid professional field.

4.1 Some demographic and sociocultural data

We administered the questionnaire online and targeted professionals and experts in the field of E2U language (cf. 3.1) based on the partners' existing networks. These were then further expanded for the purpose of our research. Given the specificity of this area and the limited implementation of E2U practices in some European countries, we were satisfied with the number of responses. In total, 128 survey-takers responded to the online survey questionnaire. Of these, 74.22% (N=95) were female, 57.03% were middle aged, 32.03% adults and no under-twenties responded to the questionnaire (Figure 3).
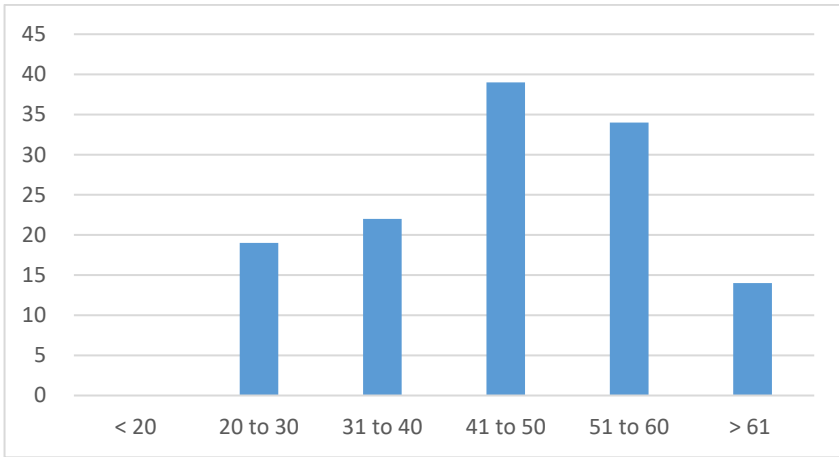
Figure 3: Age range distribution of the survey takers[31]

Most received formal education, mainly in the form of BA or MA degrees, with some holding a PhD as their highest level of completed education. Only a few attended vocational courses or only completed secondary education (Figure 4).
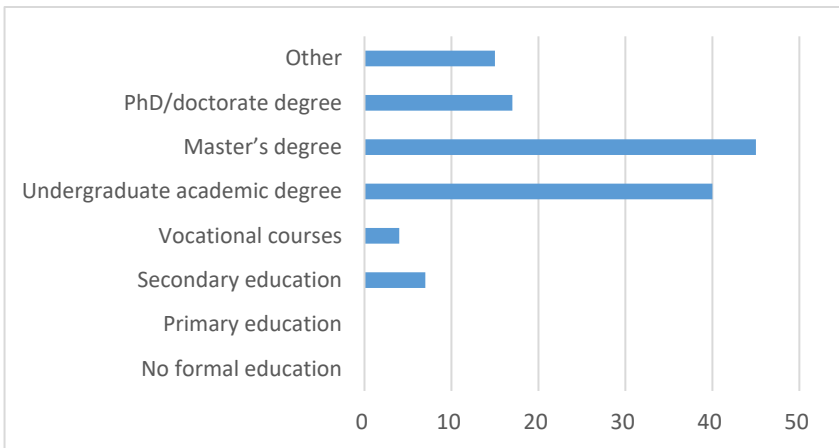

Figure 4: Highest level of education

....

31 Unless otherwise stated, figures display absolute values and not percentages. Furthermore, in the case of multiple-choice questions with the possibility of checking more than one answer out of a checklist, a star follows the figure's caption.

The bar charts on the distribution of the mother tongue of the survey takers (Figure 5) and that on the languages in which E2U content is being produced (Figure 6), show where E2U practices are more established and implemented in Europe.
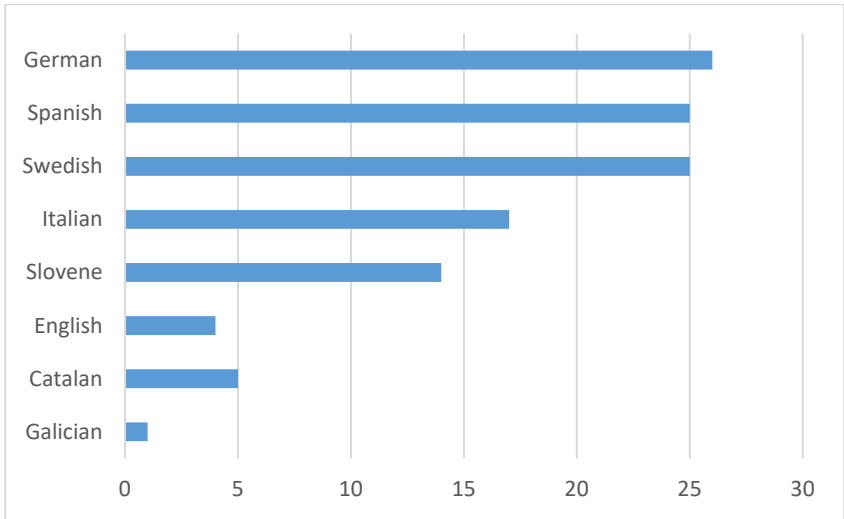
Figure 5: Mother tongue of the survey takers
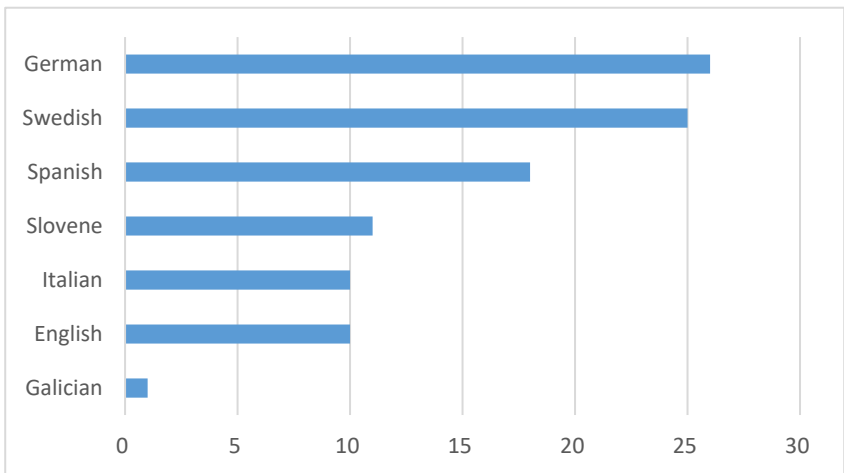
Figure 6: Languages in which E2U content is produced

In spite of the growing commitment to the delivery of information in accessible formats, and in spite of the recognition that people with cognitive, intellectual and learning disabilities should be able to access and understand information (e.g., Department of Health 2010: 8; United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006; World Report on Disability 2012), the implementation of E2U content is still uneven in Europe. Germany, Spain and Sweden are leading countries in this sector (Arias-Badia and Fernandéz forthcoming; Bernabé and Orero 2019; Ehrenberg-Sundin 1995; Fortis 2003; Bredel and Maaß 2016a; Maaß 2020; Tronbacke 1997), with others rapidly catching up, such as for instance Slovenia. In the rest of Europe, the implementation of E2U content is still under-practiced, or in some cases not practiced by language professionals (Sciumbata 2017).

Irrespective of where and in what language E2U content is produced, we observed that the same person normally assumes more than one role (Figure 7): writers are also adapters and adapters are also writers, and both typically teach. As a matter of fact, the core skills and competences needed to implement most E2U-related activities are the same and can be duplicated and adapted when necessary (cf. 1.3.3; ILSMH 1998). The lower number of validators reveals the peculiarity of this role, which is normally performed by trained end users and is slightly more specific (Bernabé forthcoming; Plena Inclusión 2018: 15). Some respondents (N=26) did not identify themselves as E2U professionals and do not perceive themselves as such even though they still have to deal with simplification when working. These respondent include people working in diverse sectors (e.g., information technology, language normalization and simplification, translation and interpretation, psychology and social work, publishing and proofreading) where language simplification in fact can be exploited fruitfully. Although this scenario shows the potential of E2U practices outside the cognitive and intellectual disability realms, where most forms of language comprehension enhancement originally initiated, it also reveals a general underestimation of the professional status of people who deal with accessible communication.
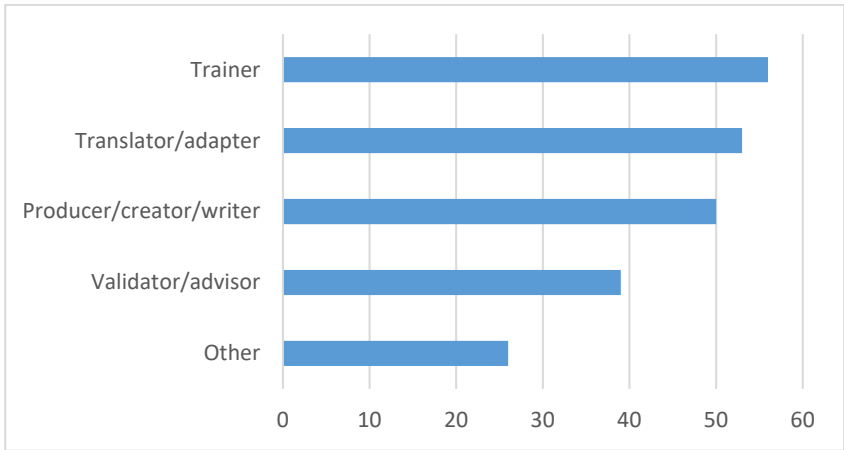
Figure 7: Roles assumed by the survey takers *

The years devoted by professionals to the E2U professional activity reveal that that official E2U content production has been practiced professionally only for approximately a decade (Figure 8). A closer look at the data shows that professionals that have worked for more than 15 years are Swedish (N=7), Italian (N=6) and English (N=4).
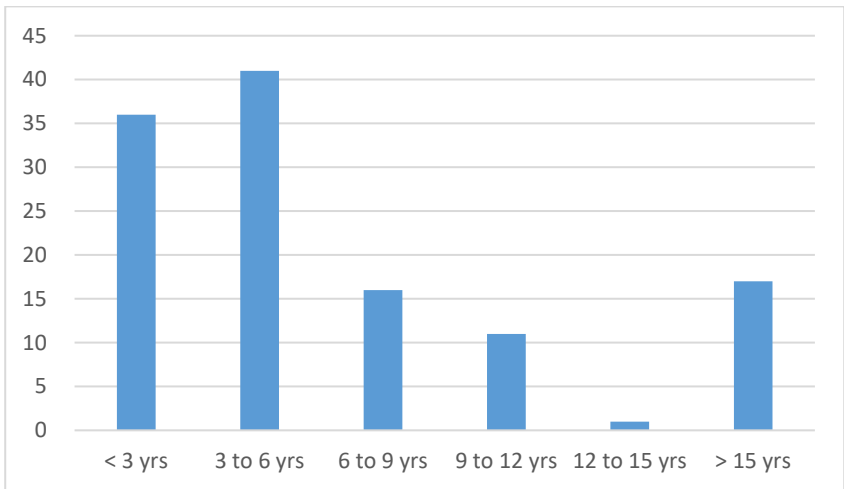

Figure 8: Years of E2U activity

Professionals (50 are paid part-time workers, 37 are paid full-time workers while the remaining 25 are unpaid volunteers) are typically freelancers, who are not committed to a particular employer, or who work for not-for-profit organizations (Figure 9). Data show that publishing houses and editing companies host some of the currently employed E2U experts, suggesting an interest towards written language simplification. Other areas where respondents currently operate are universities or research institutions, whereas public institutions do not seem to systematically employ E2U professionals – with the exception of Spain, as far as our sample is concerned (cf. Arias-Badia and Fernandéz forthcoming for data on Spanish respondents). Some in fact prefer to rely on internal employees even though they are not language specialists (Sciumbata 2017).
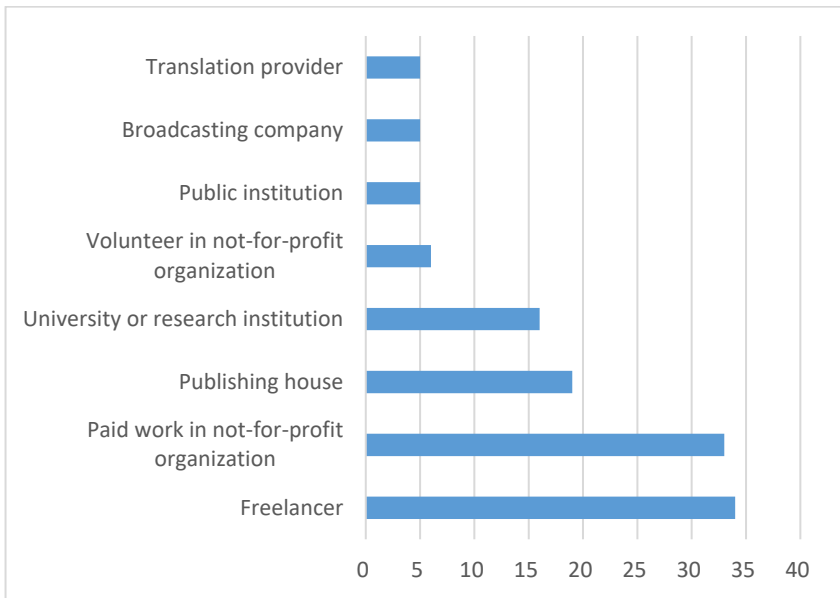
Figure 9: Working place *

Overall, these data reveal a varied situation and hint at the possible presence of interesting local idiosyncrasies that could be further analysed in the future. Data also reveal that E2U experts in Europe do exist with E2U content being produced in several languages – though unevenly – by professionals that usually assume diverse roles and perform diverse services. Not all experts perceive

themselves as professionals even though they find themselves dealing with simplification on the job. Furthermore, today, E2U has not yet entered the public sector – where it would be much needed – even though it is a much-researched discipline. In some countries this might be linked to the lack of establishment of the discipline and to legislation that is not yet ready to cater to the need of people who struggle to read or understand. Even the audiovisual sector does not yet seem ready to welcome and implement E2U principles: only 5 respondents work in a broadcasting company, and they are all German. Audiovisual professionals interviewed for the project in fact declared a total lack of awareness on how to apply E2U principles to audiovisual content, but at the same time a strong interest in such a practice (EASIT 2019b). This suggests the importance of raising awareness but also of going beyond the written word and starting to apply E2U strategies to audiovisual content, which was the EASIT project's starting idea (EASIT 2018; cf. 2.2). Finally, the fact that a scant number of respondents work at a translation provider proves that the adaptation of standard texts into E2U texts is not yet considered a form of translation, even though it is (cf. Jakobson 1959 and the idea of intralingual translation or rewording as one type of translation consisting in the interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language).

To conclude, a reflection on the recognition of these professionals is necessary. The fact that only 50 survey takers declared that they are paid workers reveals that, in spite of the importance of producing E2U content and in spite of the clear EU legislation on the subject, this activity is not yet practiced consistently as a primary or full-time job, and does not seem to be fully recognized as a profession[32]. The status of E2U professional is certainly different in each European country but our survey did not specifically aim at gaining data on this aspect. However, the emerged pattern advocates for the need for a stronger recognition of this figure and of the work performed.

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32 Defining professional and non-professional workers is difficult and beyond the scope of this book. Based on some critical sociological views that were recently also applied to the field of Translation Studies (Pym 2012; see also Gentile 2013; Katan 2011; Orrego-Carmona 2016) professionals are defined as individuals who received specialized training, who can provide a service that the buyers of the service cannot offer themselves and who are paid when offering the service.

4.2   Current activities

After establishing who the European E2U professionals are, we can move a step forward and focus on their main activities and working areas. We constructed our survey questionnaire specifically to collect information on what E2U modality and format professionals usually work with; what fields of application they find themselves more involved with; and what services they implement most often. Table 11 offers a concise overview of what is meant by terms such as modality, format, field of application and service based on research-grounded project work (EASIT 2019a), literature and guidelines (Bernabé forthcoming; Fortis 2003; ILSMH 1998; IFLA 2010; Inclusion Europe 2014; Maaß 2020; Plena Inclusión 2018).

Modality	Formats	Fields	Services
Easy Language Plain Language	Printed content Digital content Audio content Audiovisual content (including interpreting)	Education: for example teaching materials, etc. Public administration and justice: for example institutional and administrative documents, public and legal documents, government statements, contracts, etc. Media and journalism: for example news, press releases, TV programmes, film scripts, web content, etc. Culture and literature: museum brochures or audio-guides, opera librettos, theatre plays, other cultural events, novels, etc.	Creation/writing of E2U content Adaptation/editing/translation of E2U content (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into an easy-to understand text) Validation/revision of E2U content Quality control of the final texts

Table 11: E2U modality, formats, fields, and services

In the questionnaire, we used the term modality[33] to refer to any variety of linguistic comprehensibility enhancement of a natural language (cf. Maaß 2020;

....

33   But see Vollenwyder et al. (2018) who speak of approaches to reduce language complexity; Arfé et al. (2018) who speak of methods to address the reading comprehension needs of a giver target audience; Bernabé and Orero (2019) who speak of services.

Maaß/Hernández Garrido 2020). For the purposes of our survey, we only considered Plain Language and Easy Language, which are the two more established and know varieties although other varieties do exist (cf. 1.3).

With regard to the formats of information where E2U can be applied either in the form Plain or Easy Language, we identified four types: printed, digital, audio, and audiovisual content (including interpreting). These are in fact the information formats normally identified, reported and discussed in guidelines and that we normally find and use in our daily communication world and routines.

Concerning application of E2U, we identified four fields (cf. 1.3.2). These include education, public administration and justice, media and journalism, and culture and literature – details are summarised in Table 11. We made sure to select broad fields including areas (mentioned in the guidelines that were consulted) where content really needs to be made accessible to combat exclusion from the most relevant information (ILSM 1998: 5), to grant quality of life through equality, accessibility, democracy, informed and capable choices (IFLA 2010: 3), and, in general, to challenge information inequality (CHANGE 2016: ii).

Finally, we identified four services: the creation/writing of E2U content from scratch; the adaptation/editing/translation of standard or expert language content into E2U content; the validation/revision of E2U content and finally the quality control of the ultimate product (cf. 1.3.3).

With an eye to the future stages and major aims of the EASIT project, and keeping in mind the necessity to identify skills cards, develop course curricula for specific E2U experts in the audiovisual translation and journalistic world, and produce training materials, we needed to seek and gain information on whether there are modalities of linguistic comprehensibility enhancement, information formats, fields of application or even services that are more practiced than others and therefore deserve more emphasis in a prospective training setting. We trusted that results on the activities performed by respondents who work in the field could offer a useful picture and could help to detect those areas that need to be reinforced and expanded through focused training paths.

In the following pages, we will illustrate the results of our survey regarding the activity of the respondents. All the questions discussed in this section offered a checklist choice that enabled respondents to provide more than one response.

To begin with, Easy Language is the modality professionals work with more often. It is sometimes produced along with Plain Language, but only a minority of professionals deals only with Plain Langue (Figure 10).
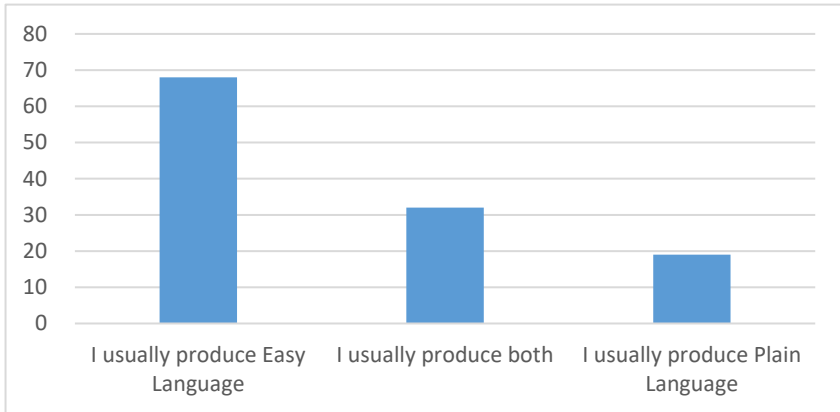

Figure 10: E2U modalities dealt with more frequently *

Regarding the format of information that usually accompanies language comprehension enhancement processes (Figure 11), printed content stands out (N=102), followed by digital content (N=77), while audiovisual content (including interpreting) is rarely produced or adapted (N=16). This also applies to audio content (N=7) in spite of the suggestions offered by some guidelines that printed material might not be suitable for all target users (ILSMH 1998: 7).
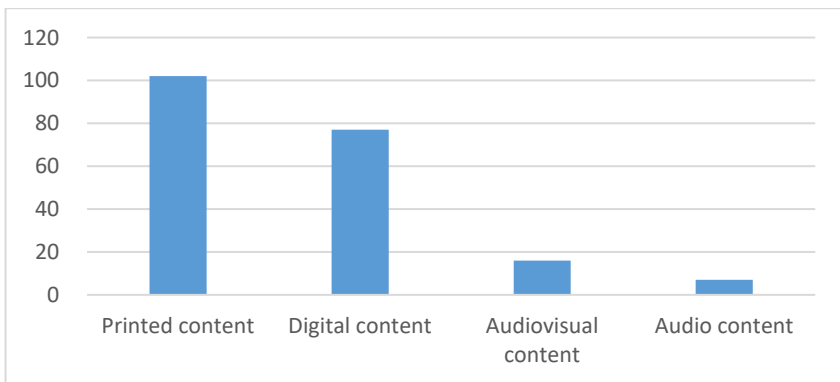
Figure 11: Formats normally associated with E2U processes *

The E2U fields of application where content is produced more often are all well represented, with content from public administration and justice as well as education standing out (Figure 12).
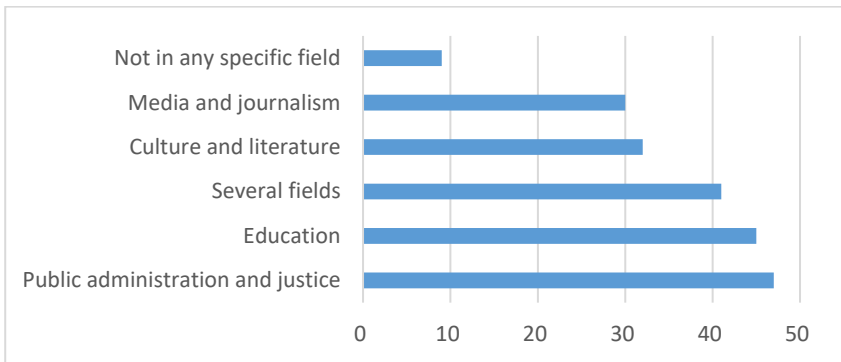
Figure 12: E2U fields of application *

Finally, as concerns services (Figure 13), the responses show a clear-cut situation where Easy Language is definitely practiced more frequently than Plain Language. Specifically, Easy Language adaptation outnumbers Easy Language creation, which in turn outnumbers Easy Language validation. The same trend is observed as far as Plain Language is concerned, though with a limited frequency.
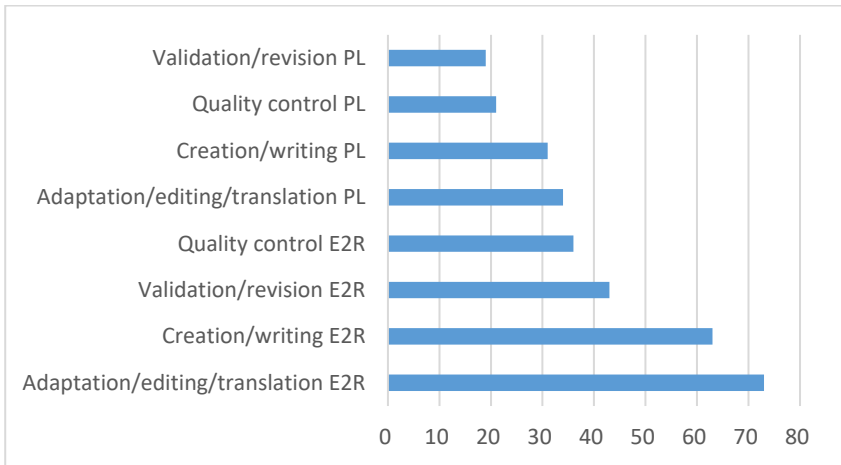
Figure 13: E2U services performed more often *

This overview of the distribution and type of the main activities of the professionals reveals interesting patterns that contribute to rounding off the picture of this sector and that can point to best future directions in the training field.

First, the fact that Easy Language is the most frequently applied modality of language comprehension enhancement, due to its nature, communicative purpose and target audience (cf. Bernabé forthcoming; Bredel and Maaß 2016a; Fajardo et al. 2014; Maaß 2020; Miesenberger and Petz 2014; Skaggs 2016) certainly explains its more established status. Furthermore, Easy Language has strict rules that must be acquired before implementing them and this is why professionals are required to accomplish this task (cf. 1.4).

Second, the fact that the major E2U format of information is typically still mainly restricted to printed content shows the dominance of a quite traditional approach to communication accessibility, in spite of the growing importance of multimodality in modern communication and in spite of the key role of audiovisual content in our digital society as a means for participation and social inclusion (EASIT 2019b: 8). The production of E2U digital content can be considered a step towards the simplification of audiovisual content in at least some of its forms, but much more still needs to be done in this respect. As claimed by the audiovisual professionals interviewed for the project, there is still considerable uncertainty on whether and how to integrate E2U language into audiovisual translation texts (EASIT 2019b; Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020 cf. 1.6): professional subtitlers, audio describers and even audiovisual journalists find it challenging to envision effective ways to simplify the texts they produce and they feel a need for specialized knowledge of or focused training in the main E2U recommendations. The EASIT idea of creating training materials that can contribute to expanding and fine-tuning pre-existing professional profiles or developing new ones (i.e., the specialized professional figures of the E2U subtitler, the E2U audio describer and the E2U journalist) therefore seems to be necessary and opportune. Overall, Plain Language and Easy Language could be used to create subtitles, audio descriptions, and news content. Current professionals are open to this scenario, though aware that not all modalities and types of content are feasible candidates for such a practice (EASIT 2019b: 15; Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020).

Third, data regarding the fields of application of E2U show that, if implemented, clear communication is not restricted to a specific field. Although professionals seem to produce simplified content mainly in the public administration and justice areas, followed by the education sector, the fact that they

produce E2U content in several fields suggests that they apply their E2U knowledge easily to content irrespective of its genre and that E2U principles are not field-dependent. From a training perspective, this is important and will enable us to focus on general rules rather than on specific sectorial language areas.

4.3   Team work and end user involvement

An important aspect regarding the practice of E2U professionals is their relationship both with peers and with end users. A relationship that can affect the final outcome positively or negatively. Literature in different but language-related fields, for instance, tells us that some writing and translating activities are quite solitary and do not take into account the involvement of end users or a direct exchange with peers (Perego and Pavesi 2006; Pavesi and Perego 2008). This can depend on the nature and the perceived status of the activity itself as well as on the impact of technologies on many working environments – e.g., favouring working from home – or on the practical difficulty of recruiting end users that are willing to collaborate. In the case of E2U content, we know that most guidelines emphasize the need to take into account the perspective of end users, for instance through the establishment of the validator figure (cf. 1.3.3). The Inclusion Europe (2014) guidelines have always been quite clear ("Always involve people with intellectual disabilities | when making your information"), but the idea of involving people with intellectual disabilities in the writing of texts that are easy to read and understand was developed even further in their publication *Do not write for us without us* (s.d.). According to the brochure, "People with intellectual disabilities know best what is good for them. | They know best what they need to understand information. | No easy-to-read text should ever be written | without people with intellectual disabilities taking part at some point" (p. 6).

Regarding the data from the survey, we observed that E2U experts do not follow a consistent pattern, in fact they work either alone or in a team with others (Figure 14): both conditions are accepted, and team-work is a realistic and non-stigmatized option. Professionals who work alone are distributed across all countries.
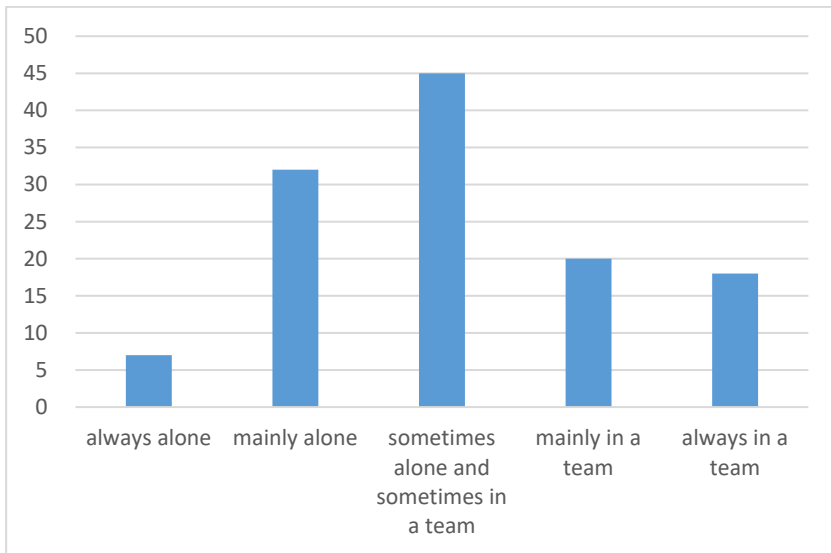
Figure 14: Team work with peers

When working in a team is not possible, direct contact among experts (Figure 15) is ensured by frequent direct exchanges: when in trouble, experts do not seem to hesitate to get in touch with peers and discuss openly. They are used to asking the opinion of other experts frequently and directly to solve problems, which seldom happens in other working fields[34].

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34 In the field of dubbing adapters, for instance, communication occurs only indirectly, through access to translated materials: "According to some interviewees, watching films dubbed by colleagues is a genuine 'refresher course' which allows them to benefit from access to others' good solutions. It is therefore via finished products rather than during the process of adaptation, or through explicitly discussed issues that communication occurs" (Pavesi and Perego 2006: 105).
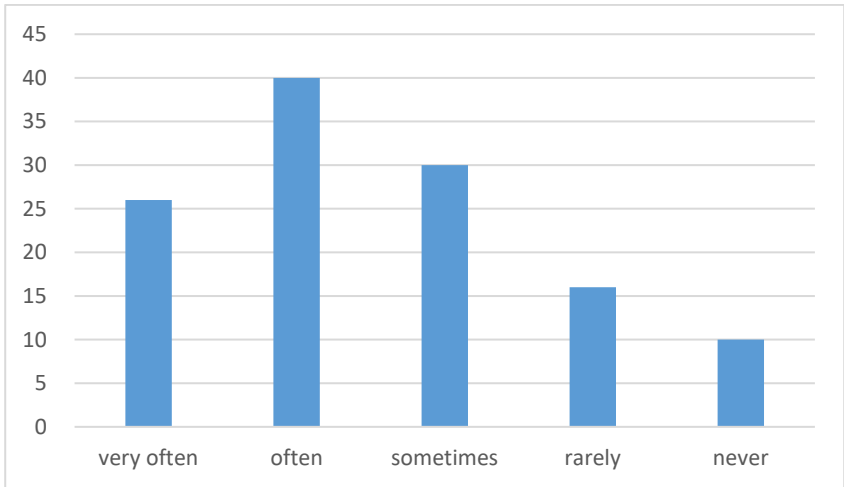
Figure 15: Direct exchange with peers

Successful indirect exchange occurs too: experts access finished E2U texts and analyse the solutions of others, a practice that they find considerably useful (Figure 16).
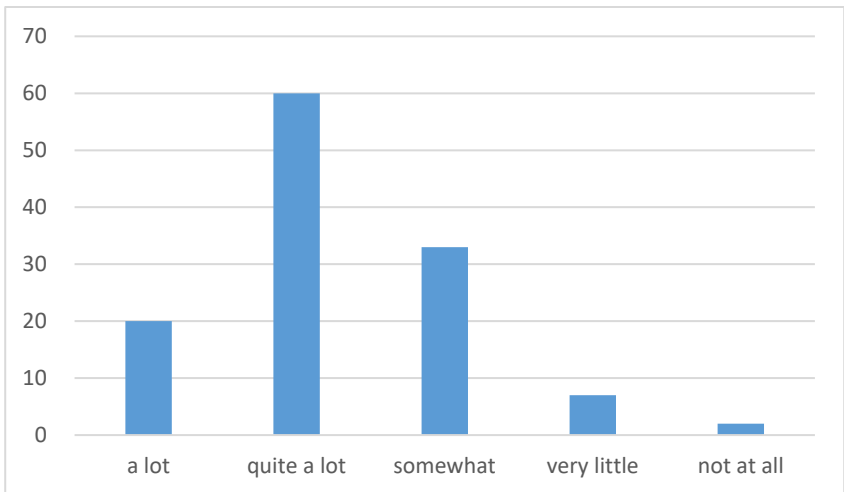

Figure 16: Frequency of use of peers' solutions

This shows that in this field, both direct and indirect forms of exchange between experts are not stigmatized, they exist and are accepted, and they seem to contribute positively to the final versions of many E2U texts. Accessing good-practice is considered instructive and examining the solutions of others a stimulus to inventiveness. It is useful especially when dealing with specialized or unknown subject areas in which jargon is difficult to deal with, or when clever ways of conveying abstract concepts which should be used sparingly (IFLA 2010: 11) or even avoided (ILSMH 1998: 12) are needed. In the texts of their peers, professionals look for solutions they cannot find elsewhere. Guide-lines in fact are an invaluable support and reference point, but they normally give general advice and fail to offer language-specific solutions. Analysing others' solutions has a strong didactic function and helps professionals learn strategies and new ways of expression. Well-written texts are therefore used as models to find "examples of good practice in translations, including good combinations of texts, pictures or photography, useful examples or readable formats" (anonymous comment). Experts always look for, and are open to, inspirational ideas and new wording, that is why they "use whatever works from other writers, editors, translators and practitioners" (anonymous comment). But professionals also feel the need to compare their solutions with those of others, which is a useful activity to learn the basic E2U principles especially in the early stages of practice.

Collaboration is not limited to teamwork or exchanges with peers. Working with people who need and use E2U content is practiced by many experts (Figure 17). We know from guidelines that this is a crucial stage in E2U production and validation, a stage users care about particularly (Inclusion Europe 2014: 9; Plena Inclusión 2018). As the ODI (2007: 10) booklet points out and sets as its first principle (of five), professionals should "ensure that disabled people are involved from the start", but they should also give them the necessary amount of time to contribute and involve as many as possible in order to obtain a comprehensive idea of what such a heterogeneous group of end users might really need. Understanding the needs of disabled people and of how they like to receive and access information and services is decisive, and directly involving them can support professionals in using the right tools (ODI 2007: 10–11).
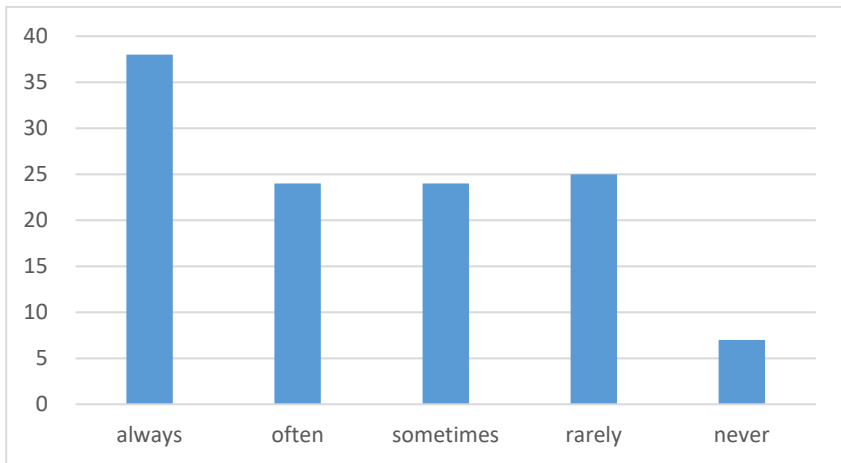
Figure 17: Collaboration with E2U end users

Besides contributing to the validation process, the involvement of end users takes different forms. Experts report for instance that they benefit a lot (16.39%) or quite a lot (49.18%) from the comments that end users make on their texts. These comments are therefore very often (67.86%) or often (27.38%) incorporated in the final texts. This confirms that professionals make an effort to ensure they eventually meet the user's needs and try to deliver information in the way users "would like to receive and access" it (ODI 2007: 11).

4.4   Educational and professional background

A further aspect we wished to investigate was the background of E2U experts in terms of education, previous working experiences and specific E2U training. Questions concerning these aspects were included in the survey questionnaire to round off the picture of current experts in Europe and to gain knowledge of the path that led them to work in this field.

With respect to their general education, respondents come mainly from language-related study fields such as language and linguistics, communication and journalism, but also teaching and learning (Figure 18), which is also confirmed by the open responses that we received. Some, by contrast, studied subjects that are unrelated to the current field of expertise such as economy and law, music, sciences and math, geography, natural sciences, even sports and

veterinary medicine, which in fact might ensure knowledge of sectorial content and related language specificities that in some cases could help them to cope better with comprehension enhancement processes in specific contexts. Not many experts, on the other hand, come from the areas of psychology, social work and special pedagogy, which might be linked to the strong professionalizing nature of such disciplines and to the fact that eventually students in these fields end up practicing the profession they have studied for.
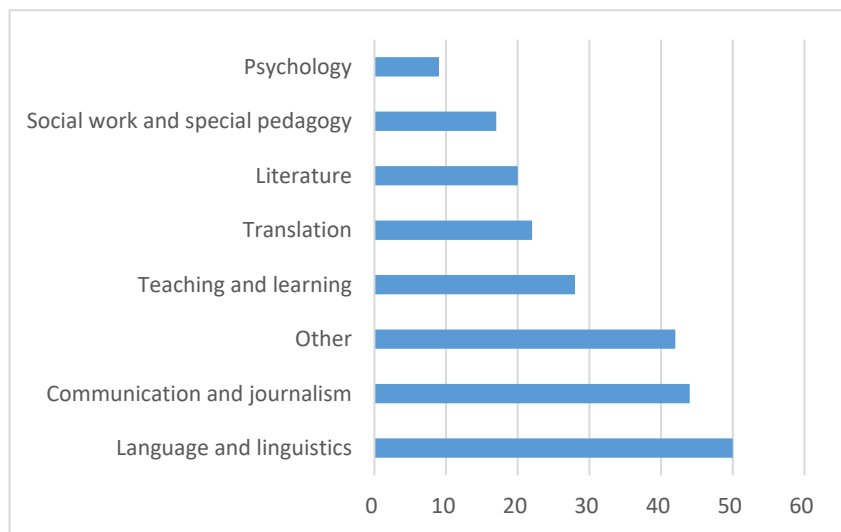

**Figure 18: Fields of study of E2U experts *

Regarding the previous working positions covered by the survey-takers, they are unrelated to E2U but closely linked to a skilled use of language. They comprise jobs in journalism, writing or teaching (Figure 19), but also (cf. "other", N=49) language and communication, with respondents having worked for instance in media, publishing or audiovisual sectors. Some respondents mentioned occupations in the area of psychology and social work but they represent a minority. Only in some cases was the job of the respondents totally unrelated to what they do today (cf. solicitor, art historian, librarian, tour guide, administrative secretary or financial manager). In total, 77.87% however worked in another profession before becoming E2U professionals, which might be linked to the fact that the establishment of E2U as a discipline and as a practice is quite new, especially in some European countries. Our questionnaire did not enable

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us to understand the reasons why such a high percentage of E2U experts come from unrelated working areas. However, responses show a promising dynamism in the field and possibly explain why most E2U experts currently become experts later in their working life (41–60 years old) (Figure 3, p. 108) and choose this profession as a second or third job.
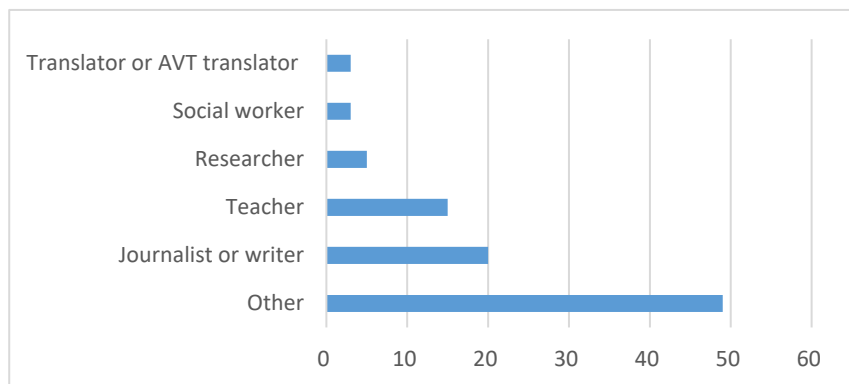

Figure 19: Previous jobs of E2U experts

4.5   Specialized training

Because the aim of the EASIT project is to develop a training curriculum and training materials for experts in E2U subtitling, audio description and journalism (cf. 2.2), we believed it was crucial to know what the current state of E2U training is in Europe. To do so, we structured our questionnaire is such a way as to obtain data on whether the current activities performed by professionals align with the type of training received, and to know how specialized E2U training is provided in Europe.

A first salient fact to be mentioned is that 71.88% of the respondents actually received specific E2U training. Of them, 57% were and 41% still are E2U trainers themselves. First, this fact shows the key role of training in the education of E2U and especially Easy Language experts. Even though text simplification might seem an intuitive and easy process, implementing accessible communication is in fact utterly complex and structured, an activity that cannot be improvised. Second, the fact that professionals often teach or have been doing so themselves indicates that (as in other language-related realms) E2U is taught predominantly by people

who are themselves expert on teaching (e.g., they are academic teachers), have practical experience in the creation or adaptation of E2U content (they are practitioners) and are interested in E2U also from a theoretical point of view (they are researchers)[35].

Regarding the training received by the survey takers, in the next paragraphs we will give a brief account of the survey results focusing on the modality that is taught more often as well as the formats of information, fields of application and services that are considered more relevant in the current European training context. Data on the training preferences of current professionals will be described separately in Chapter 5.

As fare as modality is concerned (Figure 20), training was received (and offered) mainly for Easy Language, or in some cases in both Plain and Easy Language, whereas training settings focusing only on Plain Language are not common. As we already mentioned, the fact that Plain Language is not fully standardized and does not have strict guidelines makes it more flexible to use but also more difficult to teach in a structured setting (Bredel and Maaß 2016a). Furthermore, this result fully reflects the working demand and current practice (Figure 10, p. 116) that favours the implementation of Easy Language in several sectors.
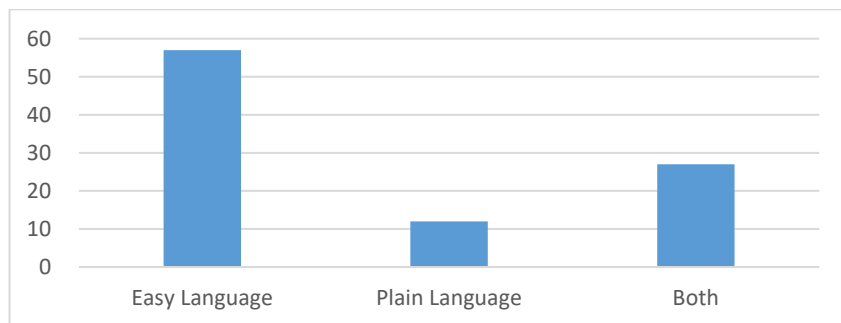

Figure 20: E2U modalities taught more frequently

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35 This links well to the concept of "practisearcher" a term that was popularised by Gile (1994) in the area of conference interpreting studies to denote practicing interpreters who started researching and teaching the process of conference interpretation. It is also in line with the results of a survey conducted among translation scholars (Torres-Simón and Pym 2016), which showed that the majority also work as translators; and it is in line with the results of a survey later conducted among audio describers (ADLAB PRO 2017), which also uncovered a very similar scenario in this area of accessible audiovisual translation.

The same applies to formats (Figure 21): printed and digital content are the formats that receive more emphasis in training and are also more frequently implemented in practice.
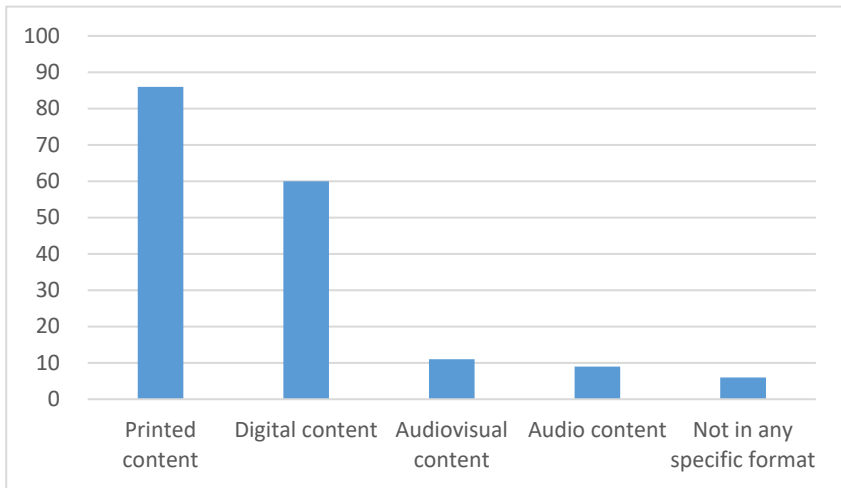

Figure 21: Information formats taught more frequently

In particular, the implementation of E2U language strategies in audiovisual content has not yet received due attention in training since it is a new realm that is still being explored (Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020). Current training is in fact still centred on more traditional formats rather than on modern ones, and the need for a curriculum that duly considers this aspect is crucial at this point in time due to the fact that audiovisual communication has become more and more prevalent and requires specific accessibility strategies.

Concerning the fields of application of E2U in training (Figure 22), we can observe that all are covered. Experts are normally trained in several fields, which prepares them to handle different types of texts once they start working. They will then acquire expertise and specialization on the job. A quick look at their current activity, however, shows that there seems to be a proper balance between what is taught and what is actually implemented, which might be the result of the expertise of trainers who are in fact "practisearchers" (cf. Note 34), i.e., trainers who know the field from the inside, with privileged access both to real practice and to end user needs, and who can bring their professional

experience into the classroom to use it as a fruitful source of inspiration and discussion.
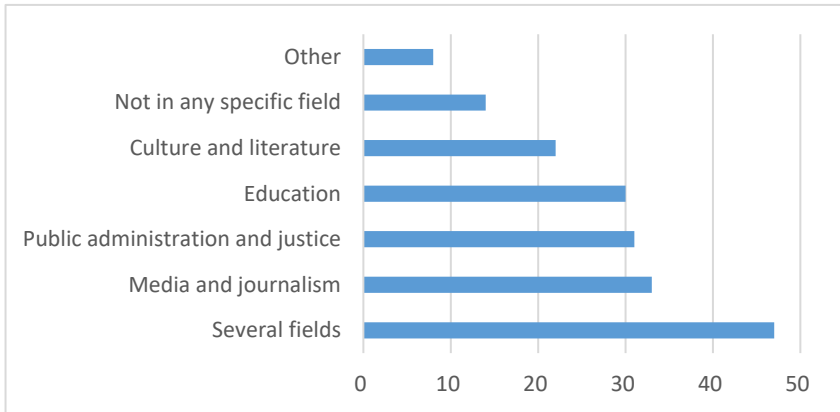

Figure 22: E2U fields of application covered in training *

Finally, concerning services (Figure 23), we can observe that the ones that are taught more frequently relate – again – to Easy Language, and they mainly pertain to its adaptation/editing/translation and creation/writing, followed by its validation/revision process.
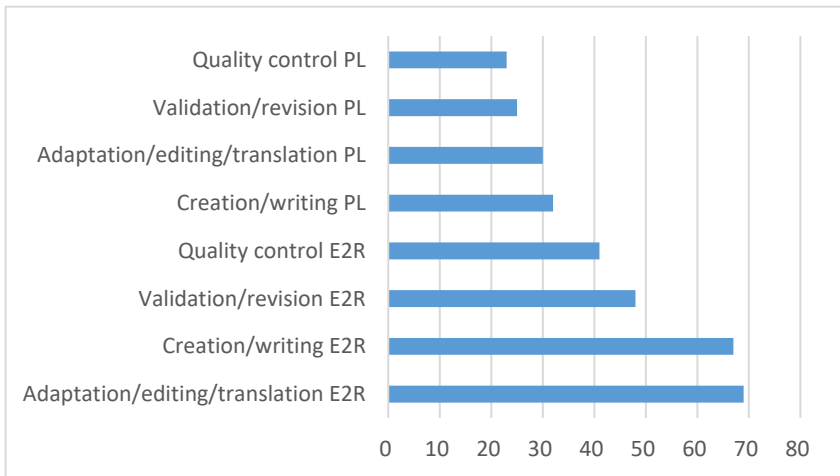

Figure 23: E2U services taught more frequently *

There is in fact an overlap between the services provided more often by the professional survey takers and the services they were trained for (Figure 24), which confirms the awareness of trainers in terms of what is needed and implemented on the market.
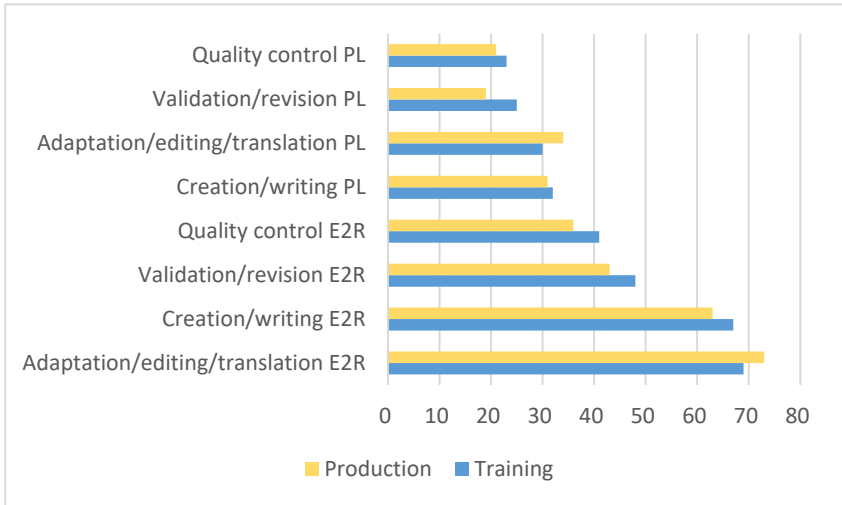

Figure 24: E2U services in training and in practice *

As a matter of fact, adaptation/editing/translation of E2U content was selected by most survey takers as the service that needs to be prioritized (Figure 25).
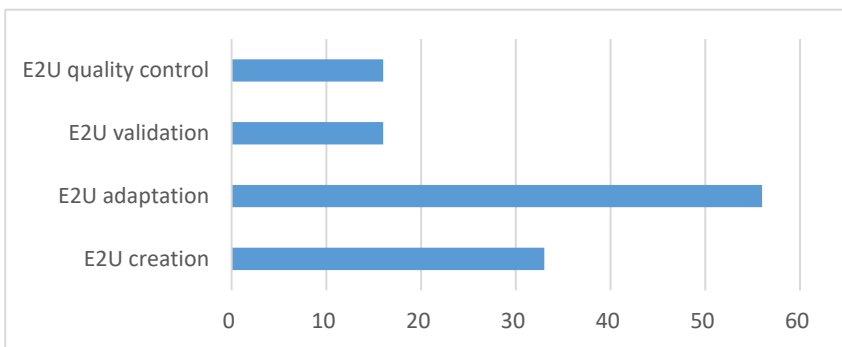

Figure 25: E2U services to be emphasized more in training *

From the data discussed above, the notion that training is essential becomes increasingly evident. The data can be complemented by quantitative data on the extent of training received and by data on the followed training methods.

Although training is important to learn the discipline and become experts, no full undergraduate or postgraduate university courses nor complete vocational course was mentioned by respondents. What emerged is that 41.30 % of the trained survey takers received more than 60 hours of training (Figure 26). It is not easy to interpret this piece of data. On the one hand, it could suggest that practice on the job can successfully complement what was not learned in a training setting. On the other hand, it can point to the current lack of systematic and institutionalized training in E2U language. As a consequence, this might be interpreted as a signal that institutions that implement forms of E2U content welcome professionals that are not fully qualified, and cater to their formation according to in-house instruction. And in fact, expertise seems to be considered more important than certified training by employers: of the 69.57% of respondents that received a certificate after training, only 20.31% were asked to show it when applying for a job.
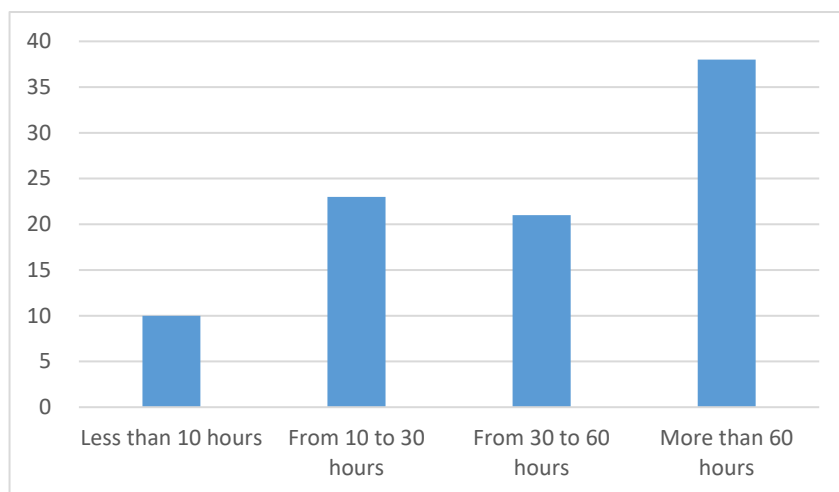

Figure 26: Hours of training received

In terms of training methods, we observed that those who received training were trained mainly outside academia (Figure 27): E2U does not seem to fall

within the sphere of competence of higher education institutions, with some excellent exceptions[36].
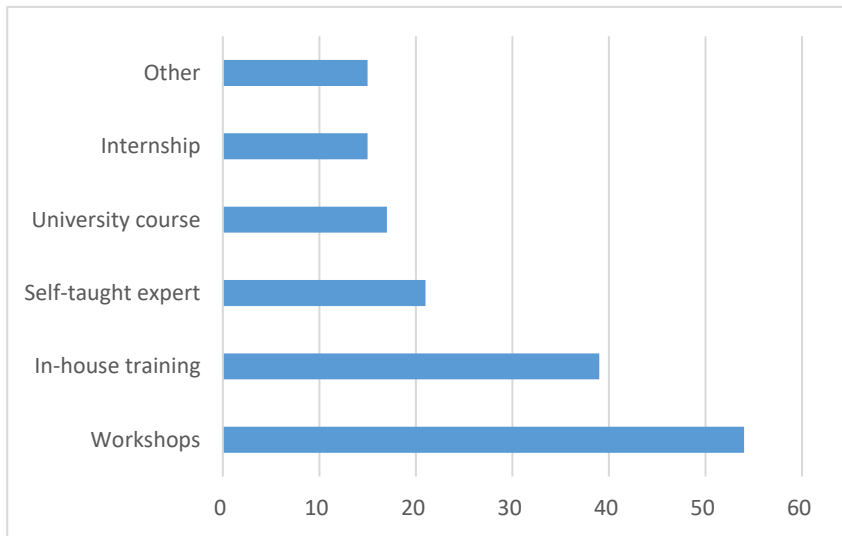

Figure 27: Training methods followed *

This suggests that academia still deals primarily with research rather than with practical professionalizing E2U training in the form of full modules or degree courses. As a matter of fact, training is received mainly through one-off workshops rather than through a structured series of lessons leading to a qualification. In-house training is another possible option. This shows that companies and institutions providing E2U services ensure the internal training of their employees. Training developed by an organization can in fact have several advantages, including the fact that real-life examples, problems and challenges encountered by participants at work every day can be used and discussed, or that learners can relate to the language and terminology that they should be using, or that they can develop the skills needed by their employer and cement their own knowledge of the topic day by day. Figure 27 shows that a number of self-taught experts also exists.

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36 E.g., the Research Centre for Easy-to-Read German in Hildesheim, Germany, also featuring a Master's programme on Accessible Communication.

The reasons why some experts have not undergone institutional or in-house training do not emerge from the survey. Overall, the data confirm the existence of a variety of training modalities and the current lack of systematicity in teaching and learning E2U language. For this reason, the EASIT curriculum should consider providing materials that are usable in a variety of different contexts.

On a concluding note, it might be useful to observe the role of E2U guidelines in training. Overall, guidelines are known[37] and used in training, and in fact the training received was mainly based on guidelines, with only 13.04% of the respondents having been trained without resorting to them. According to the answers of the experts, the guidelines used during training were mainly language specific or a blend of both, with the most spread in training being the Inclusion Europe standards (2014) developed by the Pathways project and the IFLA (2010) guidelines, both used extensively also when working.

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37 89% of the respondents are aware of the existence of guidelines regulating the implementation of E2U language and they know that these can take many forms, ranging from national guidelines, in-house guidelines, or even self-created guidelines.

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5 Professionals' views on training

In the previous chapter, we focused on the professional and the educational background as well as on the training experience of current European E2U experts and professionals. The data offered a snapshot of the current E2U training practices in Europe. In this chapter, we will analyse a separate set of results. We will concentrate on the professionals' point of view related to the training received in order to identify what they found useful. Knowing the preferences of trainees and knowing what was most beneficial for them in a training setting is crucial both to the final aims of the project and to existing training contexts. As far as the aims of the EASIT project are concerned (cf. 2.2), results guided us in the design of a course curriculum and will help in the creation of appropriate training materials that comply with the learning styles of prospective trainees. As far as existing training contexts are concerned, these results can direct current trainers in a more fertile direction, help them adjust or simply integrate their current teaching methods. They can also help them shape their activities toward what learners like to do, knowing that working in a stimulating and motivating environment is in fact a basic component in learning (e.g., Kyndt et al. 2011).

5.1 Useful training activities

As a first factor, we were interested in what training activities professionals considered most useful in their experience and we observed that practical training activities obtained higher preference scores compared to theory-based activities (Figure 28).
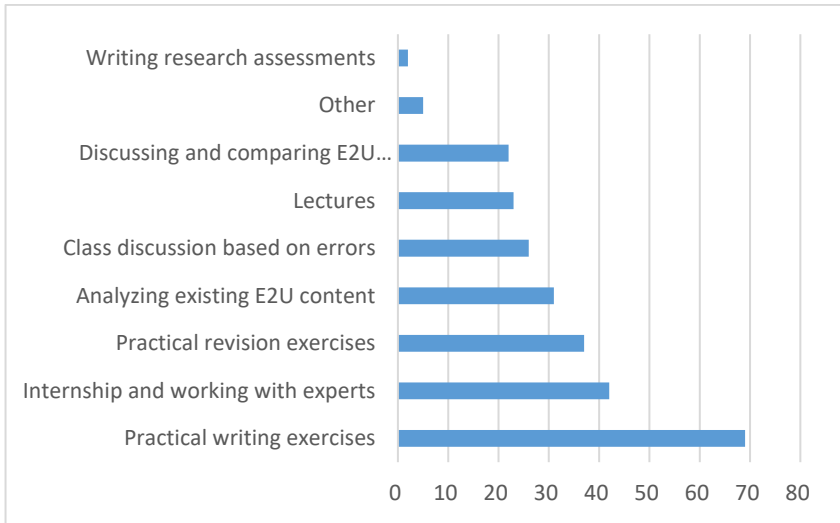
Figure 28: Preferred training activities *

Practical writing exercises were considered essential, which reflects the awareness of professionals that the actual working craft is the result of experience. This is confirmed by their second choice: internship and working with experts. Indeed, working with language implies a wide range of tasks that contribute to the development of practical yet essential skills. Besides active and direct writing, these activities include revision and critical analysis of the texts. This enables learners to confront several professional and unprofessional texts, develop a critical attitude towards them, spot possible inconsistencies and propose their own reformulations. Class discussion based on errors certainly helps them to better structure their thoughts and ideas and to formulate their own approach and toolkit of strategies. Indeed, this activity, though not among the top three, was considered relevant by those who are prone to experiential learning[38].

On the other hand, theory seems to be unpopular. Lectures and theoretical discussions (including those on the comparison of existing E2U guidelines) are regarded as unfavoured activities, but even more so are writing research assessments. This does not mean that such activities are deemed useless, but it

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38 Experiential learning, or "learning by doing", is a learning method which favours a hands-on and interactive approach that presents learners with real life (or job) problems and guides to solve them (DuFour et al. 2016).

reveals the practical inclination of E2U trainees. What emerged thanks to the open response box (5%) is that working with people who need Easy Language or with Easy Language validators was an extremely rewarding learning experience. As one respondent affirms, however, a blend of all the check listed activities would be essential, though in actual training settings a selection is normally made.

5.2   Improving one's skills

The preference of experts for a practical approach in learning the job also emerges from the activities they undertake to improve their skills after training, from a perspective of "lifelong learning"[39]. Figure 29 shows, again, a marked preference for hands-on experience on the job and direct exchange with colleagues and end users rather than for passive, research-oriented activities.
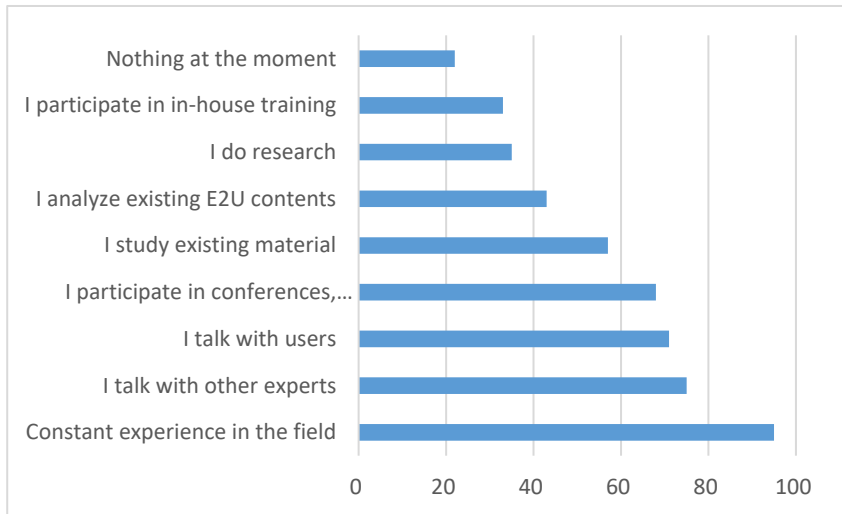
Figure 29: Ways of improving skills *

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39   A form of ongoing non-standardized self-initiated and self-motivated education that is focused on personal development and that occurs outside of a formal educational institute, for either personal or professional reasons (Department of Education and Science 2000). Lifelong learning can enhance social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development, but also self-sustainability, competitiveness and employability (Commission of the European Communities 2006).

Although some of the activities that were conducted in training settings continue to be undertaken, such as analysing existing E2U contents and, to some extent, studying existing material such as guidelines, academic articles, or books on E2U language, direct contact with peers and end users is given much emphasis: participating in conferences and workshops is common and enables experts to interact directly with peers and researchers, and sometimes with end users, and to get the much needed updates in the field. The cooperation with end users occurs more frequently after training, that is, when experts work and consolidate their skills, which might be associated with the need and increased opportunity to get in touch with end users especially as far as some Easy Language services, such as validation, are concerned.

Interestingly, research work as a form of personal development occurring outside the formal setting is conducted slightly more frequently: the complications of practice might be a trigger towards the wish to consolidate theoretical knowledge. Finally, although this does not represent a main form of skill development after training, in-house instruction might be a way for companies or institutions to take stock on the internal way of working.

5.3   The theoretical background

Although theory seems to be belittled by most respondents and not belong to the preferred areas of training, in our survey we devoted a section of the questionnaire to it in order to understand what experts think. Specifically, we wanted to know in what theoretical areas should an expert have solid knowledge to deliver good-quality E2U content. We identified eight broad areas (EASIT 2019a: 43; Bredel and Maaß 2016a; Maaß 2020) which were presented in the following order:

- Easy-to-understand history, status, and applicable scenarios
- Easy-to-understand principles, guidelines, recommendations and standards
- Target groups: types of disabilities, needs, perception and cognitive processing
- Studies on reading (print and multimodal texts) and in reading disabilities

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- Language and linguistics (for example, knowing the principles of text analysis, text cohesion and coherence, language complexity, simplification methods)
- Cognitive linguistics (for example, knowing the principles of language processing)
- (Media) accessibility (standards, legislation, guidelines, principles and applicable scenarios, technologies, etc.)
- Multimodality (including the role of paratextual information)

In thinking about these areas of knowledge, we focused on broad thematic areas that are somehow linked to the theory and the practice of E2U language (a highly interdisciplinary field), to its understanding and to its end user needs and specificities. Respondents could check as many responses as applied to them, without ranking them (Kolb 2008).
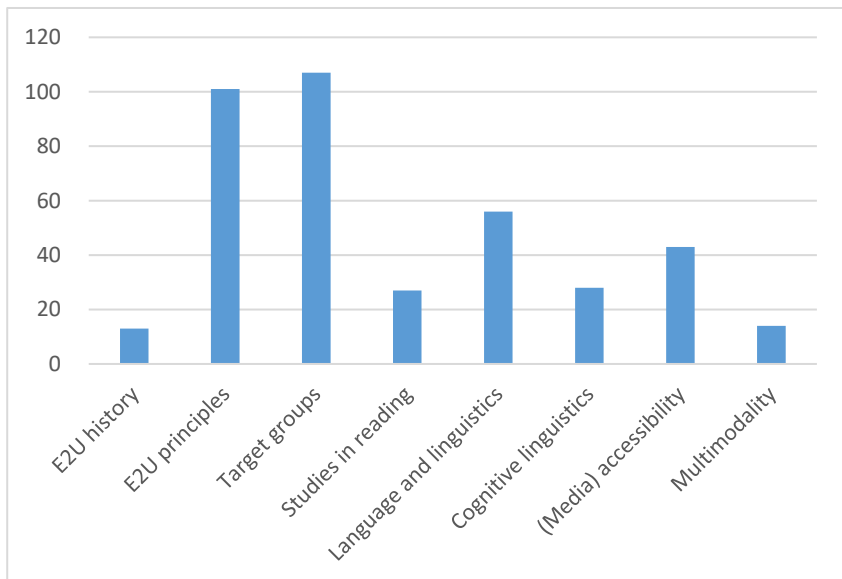

Figure 30: Needed theoretical knowledge *

The results (Figure 30) show a marked tendency towards the need to know the target group as well as E2U principles. These are the areas of knowledge that are perceived as most relevant by professionals, but also by guidelines. Inclusion

Europe (2014: 9), for instance, recommends you "Always find out as much as you can | about the people who will use your information | and about their needs" and later on the same page it recommends always involving them when making information accessible. ILSMH (1998: 10) dedicates a full page to illustrating what the information needs of people (or rather "citizens") with learning disabilities are. IFLA (2014: 5–10) dedicates five pages to portray target groups and gives a detailed yet succinct description of each. ODI (2007) tries to ensure disabled people are involved from the start and that information meets users' needs. The UK Department of Health (2010: 21) guidelines insist on involving people with disabilities at least as part of the in-house quality testing process.

Language and linguistics, along with media accessibility, are other important theoretical aspects that some respondents believe should be known. This partly confirms the practical orientation of experts who avoid (or do not have time for) metalinguistic reflections on subjects that are related to E2U content creation or translation. Linguistics might in fact help to verify and validate most of the Easy Language recommendations that exist on the market. It might also help to set up empirical experiments that confirm or refute their validity. This however should be the job of researchers. Finally, the interest of respondents regarding media accessibility shows their awareness that thinking in terms of written texts is outdated and limiting nowadays: accessible communication should be implemented through several formats and channels, especially to cater to the diversified needs of the end users in our multimodal society.

5.4   Language matters

Most guidelines, especially Easy Language guidelines, include straightforward language tips (or "standards", Inclusion Europe 2014) and recommendations that professionals refer to when preparing their texts. As illustrated earlier in the book (cf. 1.5), it is possible to broadly categorize language- and content-related information into wide-ranging macro categories, and this is what we did in our questionnaire (cf. Appendix 2, Section 4). After gaining information on the professionals' stance related to the theory and the practice of E2U, we focused on specific linguistic and paralinguistic parameters that characterize Easy Language in order to elicit their view on their importance and to learn from their experience. Specifically, we wanted to know what linguistic and

paralinguistic aspects they consider most important to deliver good quality E2U material.

Applying the necessary simplification measures and following the guidelines, we identified five categories that we presented in the survey questionnaire (EASIT 2019a; Appendix 2). These include 1) Design and layout of the page, which refers to the way in which information (words and pictures) is presented on the page to enhance accessibility; 2) skilled and conscious use of vocabulary, which refers to the ability to choose words that are easy to understand; 3) simple syntax and grammar that can help end users to understand, which refers to the way words are arranged to create well-formed but also easy to understand sentences; 4) clear organization of the information, which refers to the expert use of textual and narrative techniques that enable end users to cope more easily; and 5) multimodality, which refers to the use of multimodal meaning-making resources when delivering information, that is to say, of different channels that convey the same meaning in ways that can be closer to the needs of the receivers (e.g., text and video, or text and picture).

We asked survey takers to rank the importance of each item on the checklist on a 5-point Likert scale[40] . Results are summarized in Figure 31.

	1	2	3	4	5
Design and layout	0	1	11	35	81
Suitable vocabulary	0	0	2	37	89
Simple syntax	0	0	1	22	105
Information organization	0	0	0	17	111
Multimodality	2	4	23	60	39

Figure 31: Most important textual and linguistic aspects

The absolute values in Figure 31 show that (as we expected) experts were not able to prioritize one aspect over another. All are considered important, although multimodality appears slightly less salient. We know that a harmonious balance of all aspects is in fact necessary to produce good E2U content and experts need to have the knowledge, competence and skills in all sectors to be able to apply them properly depending on the context, the content and the

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40   1 = of no importance; 2 = of minor importance; 3 = neither important nor unimportant; 4 = important; 5 = extremely important.

target audience. Becauase we expected respondents to rank all the E2U practice aspects similarly, we broke down each macro category into finer levels and asked them to identify, according to their experience, the only one item per area that they find most useful in practice and in training.

As far as design and layout of the page are concerned, results (Figure 32) show that professionals particularly care for the conciseness of the text, which is better understood if consisting of short sentences, and the organization of the information on the page, which can contribute to making content visually appealing and engaging. Legibility, which refers to the ease with which a reader can recognize individual characters in a text, is hardly taken into account in spite of its prominent role. The Inclusion Europe guidelines (2014: 12–13) suggest for instance avoiding a background that makes a text difficult to read, such as a picture or a pattern, and choosing the right contrast between background and writing. The same is supported by the IFLA (2010: 14) and the ILSMH guidelines (1998: 16). In the latter, they add that illustrations should always be in sharp focus, too, and the quality of the pictures high (p. 17).
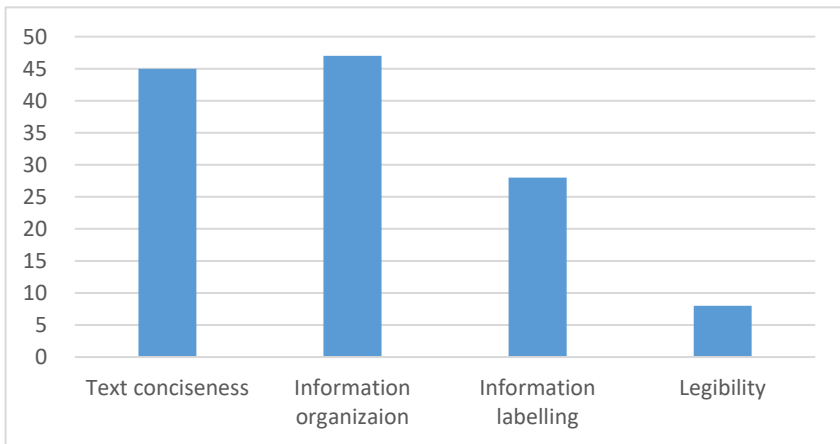

Figure 32: Design and layout of the page

As far as the skilled and conscious use of vocabulary is concerned, Figure 33 shows that learning to use simple words that are easy to understand is considered the most important factor when dealing with E2U content, although defining difficult or new ones and avoiding jargon were selected by some ex-

perts as important aspects as well. No concern is shown for the use of abbreviations, which are instead to be avoided according to literature (ILSMH 1998: 14; Inclusion Europe 2014: 10, 16).
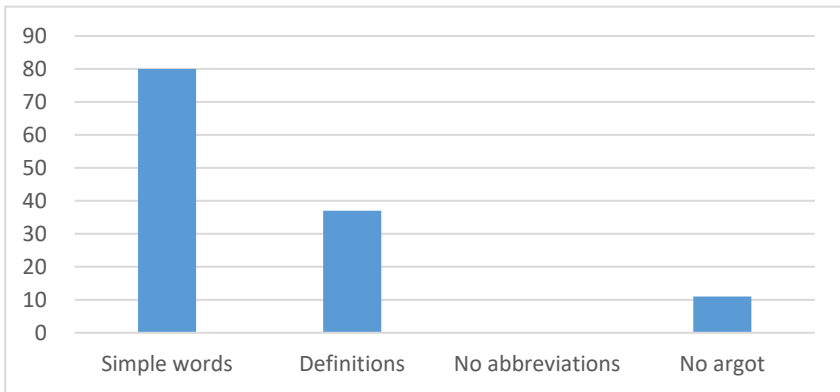
Figure 33: Vocabulary

Regarding syntax (Figure 34), respondents chose simple sentence structure as the most important aspect that can contribute greatly to comprehensibility. However, no one selected punctuation in spite of guidelines recommending avoiding secondary punctuation marks (but also special characters) that might be confusing, unnecessary, too complex to digest and might increase the complexity of a text (ILSM 1998: 13; Inclusion Europe 2014: 16).

Figure 34: Syntax

As far as the clear organization of the information is concerned (Figure 35), experts show a strong preference for information fronting as a focus strategy used to enhance cohesion and provide emphasis. Offering glossaries and summaries is considered useful, too, while the use of bold character is ranked as non-salie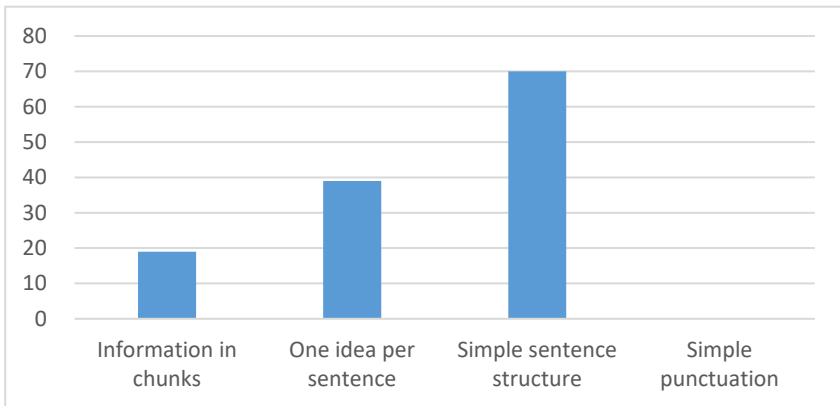nt, in spite of its relevance in the guidelines. Inclusion Europe (2014: 17) is very clear on this and promotes the use of bold (and other devices) to make sure important information is found easily.
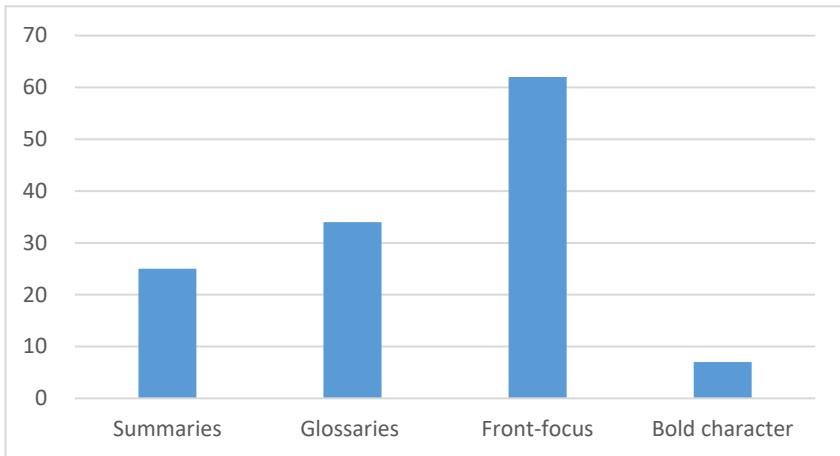
Figure 35: Organization of the information

Finally, if blending verbal and non-verbal signs and resorting to different formats to convey information are considered significant ways of making information comprehensible, data show that read aloud functions are still unrecognized (Figure 36). These are not at all focused in guidelines and in fact their importance has started to be emphasized only recently (cf. for instance the idea of easy listening). The importance of pictures, illustrations and symbols in Easy Language texts on the other hand has been highly stressed from the start. The *Make it Simple* guidelines (ILSMH 1998: 15) underline that "Regardless of whether people have significant difficulties in reading or can read a simple text, the use of easy-to-read language on its own has limitations. Photographs, drawings or symbols can transmit a message to those who cannot read and can enhance the understanding of those who can. Therefore illustrations are not only a decorative aspect of your publication but transmit information in their

own right. The use of illustrations should always be considered when planning and preparing easy-to-read material".
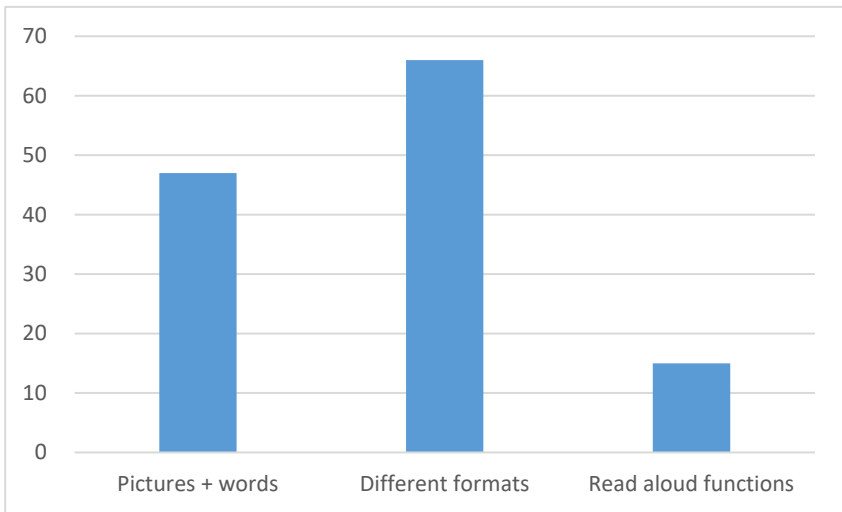

Figure 36: Multimodality

6   Towards a curriculum for new hybrid professional profiles

Chapters 4 and 5 provided an overview of the results of the survey conducted as part of the initial stages of the EASIT project (cf. 2.4) with the aim of taking stock of the state of the art in E2U training and practice in Europe. The results of the survey (EASIT 2019a; cf. Chapters 4 and 5) served as a starting point to define the profile, skills and competences of the new professional figures in the media accessibility field (EASIT 2019c), as well as to design a course curriculum for their training (EASIT 2020). The new professional figures the EASIT curriculum will cater to are the E2U subtitler, the E2U audio describer and the E2U audiovisual journalist.

In this chapter, we will observe the direct link between the results of the survey and both the skills cards and the course curriculum that were developed.

6.1   What the new experts must know

Skills cards are lists of skills "a learner must have in order to be considered as an expert in a specific field" (EASIT 2019c: 12). EASIT defined three skills cards based on the three professional profiles for whom three curricula (instead of just one) were designed. Each of the three skills cards consists of four units. Three of them, namely Unit 1 (*Media Accessibility Norms and Regulations*), Unit 2 (*E2U*) and Unit 4 (*The Profession*) are the same for the three different profiles, whereas Unit 3 is profile-specific and offers three separate paths: *E2U and Subtitling*, *E2U and Audio Description* and *E2U and Audiovisual Journalism* (Table 12) (EASIT 2019c: 26).

UNIT 1	Media Accessibility Norms and Regulations
UNIT 2	Easy-to-Understand
UNIT 3	Easy-to-Understand and Subtitling Easy-to-Understand and Audio Description Easy-to-Understand and Audiovisual Journalism
UNIT 4	The Profession

Table 12: Skills cards: Units

The titles of the units are self-explanatory and describe the types of skills and competences covered. In a nutshell, Unit 1 includes a series of learning outcomes[41] (formulated in accordance with the guidelines of Kennedy 2007) pertaining to human diversity, including disability and accessibility, universal design and media accessibility services. Unit 2 includes learning outcomes pertaining to the overall notion of E2U and is designed to ensure that learners become acquainted with E2U legislation, standards and guidelines, E2U processes, the language of E2U and the principles of E2U and visual presentation strategies. Unit 3 includes a series of learning outcomes pertaining to the processes, the linguistic and the technical aspects of each professional figure. Unit 4 includes six learning outcomes pertaining to personal skills, which are mainly related to the conditions of the contexts and environments where the expert will have to work (EASIT 2019c: 28).

In this chapter we will focus on Unit 2, which is the most closely related to the results of the survey. Unit 2 in fact took into account most of the experiences, educational and professional background information, preferences and needs of the survey-takers, as revealed by the description of the five different elements that constitute Unit 2, entitled "Easy-to-Understand", listed below (EASIT 2019c: 27):

1. "Understanding E2U" introduces the concept of E2U and discusses different services and modalities, such as Easy-to-Read and Plain Language, which are covered under the umbrella term "E2U."
2. "Legislation, standards and guidelines" revolves around current regulations and standards regarding E2U.
3. "Processes" has to do with the workflow in the creation, adaptation and validation of E2U content by expert end users in different scenarios.
4. "The language of E2U" focusses on linguistic aspects (grammar, syntax, vocabulary, etc.) with regard to E2U principles.
5. "Visual presentation" tackles different issues related to how the information created, adapted and validated following E2U principles should be presented.

....

41 According to the ECTS User's Guide, learning outcomes are described as "statements of what a student is expected to know, understand and/or be able to demonstrate after the completion of a process of learning" (European Commission 2015: 47).

Elements 1 and 2 were introduced to offer a solid yet varied and comprehensive E2U theoretical background to future professionals. Even though results on the training preferences of experts show their reluctance to theory, research and academic lectures, and even though studying E2U related material is not one of the ways to improve their skills outside official training, most experts recognize the importance of knowing the target groups they work for and the E2U principles. These are aspects that all international guidelines highlight and consider decisive (IFLA 2010; ILSMH 1998; Inclusion Europe 2014).

Furthermore, in a modular curriculum allowing for flexibility in terms of how the programme is implemented in a variety of settings and in response to the learner's needs, Elements 1 and 2 are essential for those professionals in the fields of subtitling, audio description and journalism who do not have a background in E2U content. As a matter of fact, the subtitlers, audio describers and journalists that were interviewed for the project (EASIT 2019b) all agreed on the need and benefits of further simplification – even in already accessible audiovisual translation forms – but they all revealed a lack of competence and a strong need to know more about the principles and the processes of Plain and Easy Language before being able to integrate them into their activity.

Finally, we believed that offering a comprehensive E2U theoretical background in the EASIT curriculum is also an advantage for those E2U professionals that received or will receive most of their training in-house or who are self-taught experts, as well as those individuals who have to deal with language simplification without being language experts (e.g., Sciumbata 2017).

Elements 3, 4 and 5 are more practice oriented. In particular, learning how to create, adapt and validate E2U content in different scenarios were considered important competences based on E2U guidelines, but also on the responses of the survey takers. These show in fact that adapting Easy Language texts is the lion's share of the job and is also a central moment in the training activities our respondents participated in.

Element 4 focuses specifically on language. Learners taking this unit are expected to identify significant information in a text, organize and include information according to E2U principles, make lexical, syntactic and pragmatic choices following E2U principles, and identify and use language variation. As emerged from the results of the survey, the ability to organize information adequately, and the ability to use simple vocabulary and simple sentence structures successfully are the most important skills when working with Easy Language

content. A focus on these aspects was therefore considered necessary, and will be catered to language-specifically when creating training materials.

Given the importance of visual presentation, especially in Easy Language texts, Element 5 focuses on the ability to format, choose and use images and choose and use other paratextual elements following E2U principles. In the survey, multimodality was considered slightly less important than other language-dependent aspects when it came to ranking it. This might be ascribed to the fact that those who work with Plain rather than Easy Language do not always use it. However, the need to be able to use different meaning-making elements effectively in a text was recognized as important by most respondents.

Table 13 (adapted from EASIT 2019c, Appendix I, II, III) summarizes all the learning outcomes (LO in the Table) associated to each element of Unit 2 and illustrates what learners are expected to know after completing learning.

Element 1: Understanding E2U	
LO1	The learner should be able to describe the notion of E2U
LO2	The learner should be able to distinguish different E2U services and modalities, such as E2R and PL
Element 2: Legislation, standards and guidelines	
LO1	The learner is expected to apply current national and international legislation regarding E2U
LO2	The learner is expected to apply current standards and guidelines regarding E2U
Element 3: Processes	
LO1	The learner should be able to create E2U content in different scenarios
LO2	The learner should be able to adapt E2U content in different scenarios
LO3	The learner should be able to validate E2U content in different scenarios
Element 4: The language of E2U	
LO1	The learner is expected to identify significant information in a text
LO2	The learner should be able to organize and include information according to E2U principles
LO3	The learner should be able to make lexical and pragmatic choices following E2U principles
LO4	The learner should be able to make syntactical choices following E2U principles
LO5	The learner should be able to identify and use language variation

Element 5: Visual presentation	
LO1	The learner should be able to format following E2U principles
LO2	The learner should be able to choose and use images following E2U principles
LO3	The learner should be able to choose and use other paratextual elements following E2U principles

Table 13: Learning Outcomes of Unit 2

6.2 The EASIT curricula

The analysis of the skills cards showed that the three new hybrid profiles that will be formed through the EASIT curriculum and training materials share a wide set of skills and only differ from each other regarding the specialization. For this reason, three curricula for the training of three different profiles were developed (EASIT 2020). The three curricula include the same modules and are in line with the structure of the skills cards, comprising three separate specialization modules depending on the expert profile in question (Figure 37).

Thinking of academic settings, each EASIT curricula was designed to cover one semester and to have a workload of 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System)[42], where each ECTS equals 30 working hours (European Commission 2015: 10, see also Matamala et al. 2019; Perego 2019). This is in line with most training paths recently developed for accessible audiovisual translation and digital media offered by similar Erasmus + programmes (ACT 2017; ADLAB PRO 2019; ILSA 2019; LTA 2019), and makes it easier to integrate them whenever necessary. Furthermore, such structuring of the curriculum might be implemented with more ease in most European universities, or otherwise adapted to the needs of each institution, country or course.

....

42 The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is an instrument "for making studies and courses more transparent and thus helping to enhance the quality of higher education" (European Commission 2015: 6). According to the ECTS User's Guide, "ECTS credits express the volume of learning based on the defined learning outcomes and their associated workload. 60 ECTS credits are allocated to the learning outcomes and associated workload of a full-time academic year or its equivalent, which normally comprises a number of educational components to which credits (on the basis of the learning outcomes and workload) are allocated" (European Commission 2015: 11).
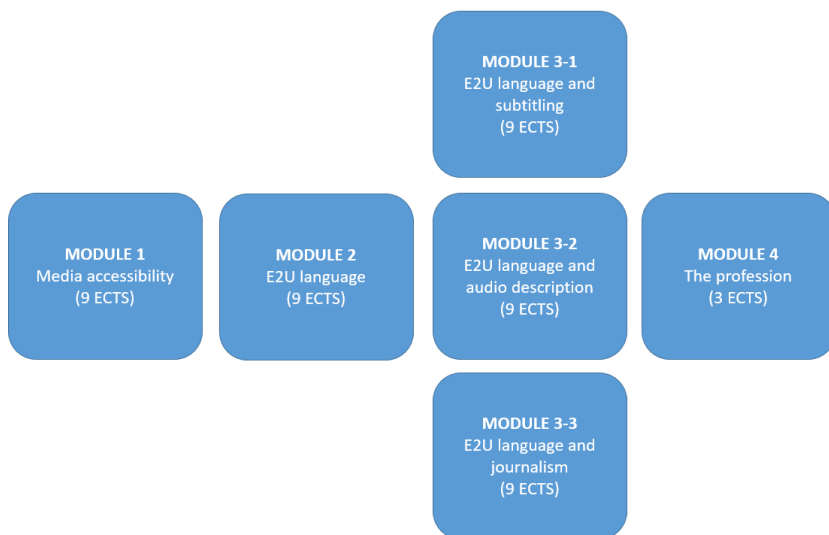
Figure 37: EASIT curricula

The nature of the curricula also makes them usable in vocational or work-based settings. Results from the survey (cf. 4.5) showed the importance of in-house training in the E2U sector and this made us think that creating a curriculum that could also be integrated outside academia would be more sustainable and effective.

Technically, the EASIT curricula will train experts in creating, adapting and validating E2U subtitles, E2U audio descriptions, and E2U news. It is therefore meant for prospective trainees with expertise in the audiovisual communication and translation sector, with expertise in the E2U sector, but also for trainees who have no background in these areas.

In a nutshell, trainees with previous theoretical knowledge and practical skills in intralingual and/or interlingual subtitling[43], audio description or journalism will be introduced to the notions of media accessibility and E2U language, and will learn to apply these new theoretical and practical notions to their previous skills. After successful completion of the 30 ECTS credits

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43 Intralingual subtitling is subtitling in the same language of the audio-track and is normally meant for D/deaf and hard of hearing users. Interlingual subtitling is subtitling in a language that is different from the language of the audio-track and is normally meant for users who wish to enjoy a product originally produced in a language they do not know.

programme, trainees are expected to become experts in E2U subtitling, E2U audio description or E2U journalism and to be able to deal professionally with the creation, adaption, and validation of these new hybrid accessibility services, as well as to apply their new hybrid competences to other scenarios of accessible communication and audiovisual translation.

The EASIT training programme does not include workload and credits for the theory and practice of subtitling, audio description or journalism. This is why trainees with theoretical knowledge and practical experience in these professional fields are expected to successfully complete this course with more ease and in less time. However, if such prerequisites are missing, trainees can acquire them through existing curricula and training materials (e.g., offered by the projects LTA or ILSA for subtitling and ADLAB PRO for audio description). This grants a high level of flexibility both to prospective trainees and to those institutions that will decide to implement the EASIT curricula in their offer.

Each curriculum was created in such a way as to be as complete as possible and reports the expected learning outcomes (based on the skills cards), the content to be taught and recommended teaching, learning and assessment methods. A reading list on all the topics tackled in the learning path is also offered, with references divided by module.

Recommendations on teaching and learning methods include a variety of activities which can be restricted to just some or expanded to many more depending on the trainer or on the trainees' needs and learning style. In the list, however, we insisted on student-centred hands-on activities which seem to be more in line with the preferences of the respondents to the IO1 survey (cf. 5.1 and 5.2). We observed that experts favoured practical writing and revision exercises, and the analysis of E2U content over writing assessments and lectures. This is why the curriculum encourages activities such as seminars with presentations, exercises and discussions, laboratory work, group activities and role plays, practical writing exercises, peer assessed assignments and class discussions of created content, but also evaluation of existing E2U content. Lectures are also contemplated, as they can be useful especially if well-structured and concise. Interviews and exchange with experts is recommended given the importance of such activities as reported in guidelines but also in the responses of our survey takers (cf. 4.3): most in fact declared they actually collaborate often with end users and base their text revision on the comments received. Highlighting this aspect in a training path is therefore essential. Other

less practical activities are suggested, such as the comparison of E2U guidelines and writing research papers, which can be implemented in an academic setting and given less emphasis in vocational settings.

Finally, the reading list is a very useful tool that enables trainers, trainees and experts to quickly access a purveyor of references categorized by topics and in several languages (EASIT 2020). Most recommended literature is in English, but specific references in the project languages were also offered especially regarding E2U theory and practice. Although we observed that good guidelines can be language-independent, language-specific simplification strategies do exist, which is why we decided to highlight them in the reference list.

7   Conclusions

Plain Language and Easy Language are powerful means of accessible communication. Both exploit language and content simplification strategies to enhance the comprehensibility of texts, and they do so by resorting to more (Easy Language) or less (Plain Language) extreme forms of reduction. These forms of reduction make information comprehensible to more people, be they people with cognitive or intellectual disabilities in the former case, or laymen who feel excluded from some particularly difficult subvarieties of Expert Language in the latter.

When thinking in terms of language and content simplification, we must today do so while taking into account the multifaceted and multimodal context in which we live. If both Plain and Easy Language were originally implemented in written texts, today their employment cannot be limited to the written mode, but should infiltrate new communication services that are more complex and, above all, multisemiotic. The project EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training) (described in Chapter 2), which functions as a framework for this book, was devised to focus specifically on audiovisual communication. The main aim was to first learn and then teach how to integrate Plain and/or Easy Language (Easy-to-Understand Language – E2U – if we wish to include both varieties) in subtitling, audio description, and audiovisual journalism to increase their accessibility and their usability. Subtitling, audio description and audiovisual journalism were selected as relevant and promising services where E2U practices could be applied successfully. Subtitling, both in its different-language and same-language versions, is a reduced form of inter- or intralingual translation, often already encompassing various forms of text simplification dictated by the needs of its users: reading is a slower process than listening. Audio description for the blind and visually impaired audiences, which is an accessible form of audiovisual translation, includes a wide variety of subgenres (e.g., screen AD, art AD, live AD, etc.) that lend themselves to further simplification in different ways; a process that would enlarge the still broad end user group and extend it to new audiences. Audiovisual journalism is an important service that would benefit from simplification to reach weaker audiences and ensure their right to information. So far, these services are being explored thanks to the EASIT project and the research activities attempting to

assess how and to what extent simplification can work in such new realms. The results will be invaluable to reducing various forms of communicative exclusion.

To gain a betterer understanding of how to tackle the issue of E2U implementation in new realms requires an analysis of simplified texts and collection of data on those who work with them professionally. This is exactly the topic of this book.

In the book, after outlining accessible communication (Chapter 1) and the EASIT project's aims and objectives (Chapter 2), we focused on a study conducted during the initial project stages (Chapter 3) in order to gather information on those who currently work in the E2U sector in Europe, and collect information that could help us identify the skills and the competences of future hybrid professionals working as E2U subtitlers, E2U audio describers and E2U journalists (Chapter 4 and Chapter 5). We concluded these chapters by linking the results to the creation of three specific – and in some respect overlapping – curricula (Chapter 6) for the training of such new professionals.

For the first time, the results of the study give us a snapshot of a professional category that is not yet well-known, fully recognized, or even present in all European countries. The sociological approach we drew from, enabled us to construct and conduct an online survey and to reach out to 128 respondents that shared information on the current European scenario regarding general E2U training and practice. Identifying patterns in this realm enabled us to identify relevant practices to be implemented in a training path, but also to gather information used as a starting point to profile the E2U expert in terms of background, training received, current professional activity but also ideas, preferences and opinions on how to improve future training settings. Most data had direct repercussions on the decision regarding the three curricula devised in the project, including, for instance, offering a comprehensive E2U theoretical module to fill the gaps that many professionals recognized; favouring hands-on activities to meet the need for practical tasks clarified by respondents and to encourage the effective practice of learning by doing; emphasizing the E2U modality (i.e., Easy Language) and services (i.e., adaptation) that are currently more required on the European market.

This work, however, enabled us to also refine the theory and practice of Plain and Easy Language, and to focus particularly on Plain and Easy English. Plain style and clear writing have in fact always been praised in the Anglophone world and continue to be well-regarded and called for – sometimes excessively,

or even inappropriately – in several sectors. Undoubtedly, simplification has considerable benefits and the comparative analysis of diverse English examples enabled us to observe that applying E2U rules contributes to formally increasing the readability of a text and decreasing its complexity, as shown by measuring the texts' lexical variety, lexical density, and Gunning fog index (cf. Appendix 1 for a methodological note on text analysis). Working with texts, however, also confirmed that there is still much to do. To start with, reception studies. As most experts point out, E2U language is not an absolute and its sctualcomprehensibility will eventually depend more on the background and abilities of the receiver than on the features of a given text. The lack of reception research is an aspect that prevents guidelines being considered official standards in some European countries. The lack of reception research is also an aspect that prevents us from knowing what works best when enhancing the comprehensibility of a text. For these reasons, filling this gap is clearly on our near-future agenda.

Working with texts and comparing them also highlighted some intrinsic features of E2U processes. In many cases, we observed that reducing the linguistic material of the source text to create an Easy English text was not necessarily the best method. Most Easy Language guidelines emphasize the need to reduce text and content to make information comprehensible. Although this can be effective, elaboration, which increases the linguistic material in question, often brings more advantages than reduction – as proved for instance in acquisitional research, where both simplification and elaboration are known to facilitate comprehension especially for students at lower levels of proficiency. Furthermore, there is evidence that elaborated input can aid reading and listening comprehension. Stressing this aspect should therefore be prioritized in theory and implemented in practice.

A further aspect that emerged while working with texts and that deserves to be studied more is the difference between readability and "listenability". Research and practice in the E2U sector (and, in general, on textuality) have focused mainly on the readability of written documents. Whether the same E2U guidelines apply for texts to be read and texts to be listened to (e.g. audio description) definitely needs to be studied theoretically and empirically. Nowadays it is crucial to cater to non-readers as well meaning the oral impact of a simplified text needs to be taken into account in order to determine the pleasure and efficacy in listening to (vs. reading) it. Granting listenability can in fact ease the cognitive burden posed by a text. Integrating listenability recommendations

into E2U recommendations should therefore be taken into account, especially when thinking of services such as E2U audio description and E2U audiovisual journalism that will be tackled in the EASIT project but also in general terms because products that do not need to be read but might benefit from simplification are numerous. They range from audio guides to podcasts, audio books, audio subtitles, audio introductions but also lectures and teaching material and many more.

As emerged in the book, Easy Language texts can be the result of direct creation or translation of a source text (cf. 1.3.3). We saw that the latter activity is more frequent and according to some authors is possibly more complex because, as any translation process, it involves two texts and their relation, which potentially raises fidelity issues. As a matter of fact, E2U language falls into the category of what Jakobson called interlingual translation. In spite of this, it is seldom discussed and taught in translation courses, thus creating an educational gap that deserves to be filled. Additionally, as an intralinguistic translation process, the adaptation of a complex text in a language into a simpler one in the same language could be successfully used as a pedagogical tool in diverse settings, including first and second language learning, to enhance useful metalinguistic reflections.

Accessible communication is a core principle in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It is functional to human rights in the World Report on Disability. It is a universally inclusive concept hinging on the idea of availability. It is dependent on cognitive concepts such as usability and comprehensibility. It is multidimensional and its applications as well as beneficiaries are diverse and rapidly expanding. This book gave us the chance to highlight just some aspects that still need to be developed and that we are trying to implement. And even though it mainly focused on general aspects of E2U and on English specificities, each language has its own idiosyncrasies that need further research. We hope it will not take long until this takes place systematically.

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Disclaimer

Appendix 1: Text analysis indexes and measures

When we analysed texts, we considered specific indexes to assess their accessibility, i.e., the number of running words (tokens) and the number of distinct words (types) in a text which served to calculate the Type/Token Ratio and therefore the text's lexical variety, the mean word length, the number of sentences in a text and the sentence length, the lexical density of the text, the Gunning fog index, and the percentage of passive voice.

Lexical variation and lexical density were considered as important measurements of textual complexity (Castello 2008). Lexical variation, or vocabulary variation within a text (e.g., Richards 1987), is defined through the Type/Token Ratio (TTR), which is the total number of running words (types) divided by the total number of words (tokens) in a given segment of language (Castello 2008: 64): a high TTR indicates a large amount of lexical variation and a low TTR indicates relatively little lexical variation and therefore a simpler text. Lexical density is defined as the number of lexical words divided by the total number of words (Castello 2008: 97; see Didau 2013; Johansson 2008). Lexical words give a text its meaning and provide information regarding what the text is about. Their "repetition reduces the effect of density" (Halliday 1989: 64). In a Plain or an Easy Language text we expect reduced lexical variety and reduced lexical density if compared to standard texts. This would in fact decrease the general text difficulty.

The number of sentences and their mean length was calculated which we found useful especially from a comparative perspective. Given the need to break down information into short, single-idea and simple-syntax sentences, we expect Easy English texts that have been adapted from standard texts to comprise a larger number of shorter sentences. In English, the average mean sentence length is approximately 14 words, definitely fewer than 20 (Cutts 2013; Gunning 1964; Hearle 2011). Readability tables drafted by US press associations based on survey results for instance show that 8 words or less are considered very easy to read, 11 words easy, 14 words fairly easy, 17 words standard, 21 words fairly difficult, 25 words difficult and 29 words or more very difficult (Cutts 2013; Sanyal 2006).

Plain and Easy English also recommends short words. "Even if the average sentence length of a document is 15–20 words, readability is not guaranteed. Polysyllabic words are likely to make the meaning of the document difficult to

grasp." As a matter of fact, mean word length, calculated in characters, is a predictor of semantic and textual complexity. Word length can give us information on the nature of the words used in a text and, as a consequence, on the overall text complexity of the text and presumed perceived difficulty on the part of the user. Average word length in Plain English is 5.1 letters (Hearle 2011). We expect Plain and Easy English text to respect this measure.

The Gunning Fog Index was selected as a measure to calculate the readability of the texts analysed. The Gunning Fog Index is a readability test devised specifically for English writing. The index estimates the years of formal education a person needs to understand text on first reading. For instance, a fog index of 6 means that the text in question requires the reading level of a United States sixth grader (approximately 12 years) (Gunning 1952; The Writing Clinic 2006).

Finally, the amount of passive voice formulations was calculated knowing that they make sentences more difficult to comprehend because it is harder for the reader to determine who is performing the action. This is why most Plain (Cutts 2013: 63–72) and Easy Language (ILSMH 1998: 13; Inclusion Europe 2014: 11) recommendations suggest reducing their number or even to eliminating them all, which is also what subtitles for the deaf and hard of hearing tend to do to facilitate their audience based on their reading needs (Jensema et al. 1996: 284).

We used the software *WordSmith Tools* 6 (Scott 2009) for the total word count, the count of types, the standardized type/token ratio, and the total sentence count and the mean number of words per sentence. We calculated the average sentence length dividing the total number of words by the total number of sentences (Li 2000: 236). We used the online software *Analyze My Writing* to calculate lexical density, the Gunning fog index, and the percentage of passive forms. *WordSmith Tools* is a software package developed by the British linguist Mike Scott (cf. Scott 2009) primarily for linguists to work in the field of corpus linguistics. It is a collection of three modules for finding patterns in a language. *Analyze My Writing* is a free online text content and readability analyser. It provides basic text statistics and a break-down of text readability on five indices. The analysis includes listings of the most common words and most common word pairs used in the analysed texts. A listing of how frequently punctuation and punctuation types are used is included in the analysis provided, as well as the lexical density and the use of passive voice in your text. Most of these indexes were useful to quantitatively support the qualitative analyses of the excerpts under scrutiny, and to better perceive the nature of the texts and their level of complexity.

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Email for respondents:
Template to be adapted and translated

Dear ---,
I am writing to you
to ask for your help in our research.

I take part in the EASIT project (http://pagines.uab.cat/easit/).
This is a project about making content easy to understand
through Easy-to-Read Language and Plain Language.

In EASIT, we will create materials
to train experts on making content easy to understand.

To create these materials
we need to know the point of view of experts.

I am contacting you
because you are an expert.

If you wish,
you can help us
and answer the questions we have prepared.
We would be very grateful.

If you are interested,
you can access our questionnaire online here.

If you prefer to receive the questionnaire
in a different format,
let me know.

Many thanks for your help.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of the working activities of the European project EASIT (Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training). EASIT is designed to produce a curriculum and training materials for professionals who can create **easy-to-understand** contents, especially in audiovisual media (e.g., news, films with subtitles, etc.).

In this questionnaire, when we use the expression "easy to understand" we are referring to both Easy-to-Read Language and Plain Language.

This questionnaire has been created keeping in mind the principles of Plain Language and the needs of the target group of this questionnaire. However, if you think you might need support for filling it in, feel free to do so with a support person. If you prefer to receive a paper version of the questionnaire, please feel free to ask for one to the person who invited you to compile it.

Completing the questionnaire should take approximately 20 minutes. The questionnaire is divided into 4 sections. Section 1 focuses on your demographic profile. Section 2 will enquire about your educational background and previous training. Section 3 enquires about your current activity. Section 4 is centered on the skills necessary to become an easy-to-understand content expert. All sections include multiple-choice questions, and they have additional space for you to include comments on anything you consider of importance and which we have not addressed.

Your time and contribution to our research are very important. We would like to thank you for accepting to participate as a respondent.

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

Please note that completing the questionnaire implies consent. So, if you want to fill in the questionnaire, you will have to read the following information sheet and consent form.

Information Sheet
The project name is EASIT.
EASIT is the short form of Easy Access for Social Inclusion Training.
Anna Matamala is in charge of the project.
She is from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

The aim of this survey
is to get information on your experience when making content easy to understand.
Content can be newspapers, books, TV news, etc.
This survey will last approximately 20 minutes.
We will ask you to give us some personal data.
We will ask you questions on how to make content easy to understand.
We want to know what you think about easy-to-understand content.
If you have any questions,
please send an email to …

Now read the consent form.
A consent form is a document
in which you say you want to take part in the survey.

Consent Form
You will fill in this questionnaire because you want to.
You can stop when you want
and you do not need to explain why.
If you stop, there is no problem at all.
Data will be confidential.
This means that we will not use your name.
The person responsible for this questionnaire is Elisa Perego.
If you want more information about the project,
you can contact ….
Her e-mail is: …

Data policy
If you have provided personal data,
Anna Matamala will be responsible to keep them.
Personal data is your name and your e-mail address.
After 5 years,
we will destroy your personal data.

We will follow the European laws
that protect your personal data.

We will not give your personal data
to other people, companies or organisations.

You can ask …:

- for a copy of your personal data
- to delete your personal data
- to change your personal data

Her e-mail is: …
… will reply you.

You can also email the person
in charge of personal data at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
The e-mail is: …

Please, click on the "Yes" button if the following sentences are true:

- I have read the information
  or someone has explained it to me in a way that is easy to understand.
- I have been able to ask questions.
- I want to take part in the survey.

Explicit consent by clicking on "Yes" button:

YES

SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

In this section of the questionnaire we will ask you 7 questions about your personal information. At the end of this section, you will find a text box. In this text box you can write your comments if you wish to do so.

1.1
What country do you live in?
Drop-down menu

1.2
What is your mother tongue?
Drop-down menu

1.3
What is your age?

- □ Under 20
- □ Between 20 and 30
- □ Between 31 and 40
- □ Between 41 and 50
- □ Between 51and 60
- □ 61 or older

1.4
What is your gender?

- □ I am a male
- □ I am a female
- □ Other
- □ I prefer not to answer

1.5
What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed? If you are currently enrolled, what is your highest degree received?

- □ I have completed **no formal education**
- □ I have completed **primary education**
- □ I have completed **secondary education**
- □ I have completed **vocational courses**
- □ I hold an **undergraduate academic degree**
- □ I hold a **Master's degree**
- □ I hold a **PhD/doctorate degree**
- □ Other, please specify: _____
- □ I prefer not to answer

1.6
What are you currently? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ Currently, I am a **trainer**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **translator/adapter**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **producer/creator/writer**
- ☐ Currently, I am a **validator/advisor**
- ☐ **Other**

1.7
Where do you currently work? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ I currently work at a **University** or in **research institution**
- ☐ I currently work for a **public institution**
- ☐ I currently have a **paid work in a not-for-profit organization**
- ☐ I currently work as a **volunteer in a not-for-profit organization**
- ☐ I currently work in a **broadcasting company**
- ☐ I currently work at a **translation provider**'s
- ☐ I currently work at a **publishing house**
- ☐ I currently am a **freelancer**
- ☐ Other – specify: _____

1.8
Is there anything you would like to add? (Optional)

SECTION 2: EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS TRAINING

This section asks questions on your educational background, in other words, on your field of studies. It also asks questions on your previous training in easy-to-understand language. At the end of this section, you will find a text box. In this text box you can write your comments if you wish to do so.

2.1
What is your filed of study? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

☐   Language and linguistics
☐   Teaching and learning
☐   Literature
☐   Translation
☐   Psychology
☐   Social work and special pedagogy
☐   Communication and journalism
☐   Other (specify):

2.2
Have you received training in the production of easy-to-understand content?

☐   Yes > Go to 2.3 and on
☐   No > Go to 2.15

2.3
In what easy-to-understand **modality** have you been trained? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

☐   I have been trained in **Easy-to-Read Language**
☐   I have been trained in **Plain Language**
☐   I have been trained in **both** modalities
☐   Other, please specify: _____

2.4

What **type of training** have you received? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ I have attended **workshops**
- ☐ I have attended a **vocational course**
- ☐ I have attended a **university course**
- ☐ I have done an **internship** and have worked at a firm for a short period
- ☐ I have received **in-house training** (at my company/institution, etc.)
- ☐ I am a **self-taught** expert
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

2.5

In what **format** of easy-to-understand content were you trained? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ I have been trained in working with **printed** content
- ☐ I have been trained in working with **digital** content
- ☐ I have been trained in working with **audio** content
- ☐ I have been trained in working with **audiovisual** content (including interpreting)
- ☐ I have **not been trained** in working with any specific format
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

2.6

In what **field** have you been trained? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ **Education**: for example teaching materials, etc.
- ☐ **Public administration and justice**: for example institutional and administrative documents, public and legal documents, government statements, contracts, etc.
- ☐ **Media and journalism**: for example news, press releases, TV programmes, film scripts, web content, etc.

- ☐ **Culture and literature**: museum brochures or audio-guides, opera librettos, theatre plays, other cultural events, novels, etc.
- ☐ I have received a general training on **several fields**
- ☐ I have not been trained to produce easy-to-understand content in any specific field
- ☐ Other, please, specify: _____

2.7

In what **services** have you been trained? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ Creation/writing of Easy-to-Read Language
- ☐ Creation/writing of Plain Language
- ☐ Adaptation/editing/translation of Easy-to-Read texts (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into an Easy-to-Read Language text)
- ☐ Adaptation/editing/translation of Plain Language texts (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into Plain Language texts)
- ☐ Validation/revision of Easy-to-Read Language texts
- ☐ Validation/revision of Plain Language texts
- ☐ Quality control of the final Easy-to-Read Language texts
- ☐ Quality control of the final Plain Language texts

2.8

Which of the following **training activities** have been more useful for you? (Here you can choose 3 answers)
MULTIPLE CHOICE, MAX 3

- ☐ I have found **lectures** very useful
- ☐ I have found **practical writing exercises** very useful
- ☐ I have found **practical revision exercises** very useful
- ☐ I have found **class discussion based on errors** very useful
- ☐ I have found **writing research assessments** very useful
- ☐ I have found **analyzing existing easy-to-understand content** very useful
- ☐ I have found **discussing and comparing easy-to-understand guidelines** very useful
- ☐ I have found **internship and working with experts** very useful
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

2.9

Overall, for how long have you been trained?

☐   Less than 10 hours
☐   From 10 to 30 hours
☐   From 30 to 60 hours
☐   More than 60 hours

2.10

Were you trained using guidelines?

☐   Yes > Go to 2.11
☐   No > Go to 2.13

2.11

What type of guidelines did you use during your training?

☐   I used **Non-language-specific** guidelines
☐   I used **Language-specific** guidelines
☐   I used **Both**
☐   Other, specify: _____

2.12

What guidelines have you used exactly? Specify:
OPEN QUESTION

2.13

Did you get a certificate after completing the training?

☐   Yes > Go to 2.14
☐   No > Go to 2.15

2.14

Have you ever been asked to show that certificate when you applied for a job?

☐   Yes
☐   No

2.15

How do you continue to improve your skills? (Here you can choose more than one answer)

MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ To improve my skills I **undergo constant experience in the field**
- ☐ To improve my skills I **participate in conferences, workshops, etc.**
- ☐ To improve my skills I **do research**
- ☐ To improve my skills I **analyze existing easy-to-understand contents**
- ☐ To improve my skills I **study existing material (guidelines, academic articles, books on easy-to-understand language, etc.)**
- ☐ To improve my skills I participate in **in-house training (conducted at a company/institution, etc.)**
- ☐ To improve my skills I **talk with other experts**
- ☐ I To improve my skills I **talk with users**
- ☐ At the moment, I am **not doing anything specific** to improve my skills
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

2.16

Is there anything you would like to add? (Optional)

SECTION 3: YOUR CURRENT ACTIVITY

This section asks questions on your current activity as an expert in easy-to-understand language. At the end of this section, you will find a text box. In this text box you can write your comments if you wish to do so.

3.1
Did you work in another profession before you became an expert in easy to understand content?

☐   Yes > Go to 3.2
☐   No > Go to 3.3

3.2
What profession?

☐   I was a **journalist or writer**
☐   I was a **teacher**
☐   I was a **researcher**
☐   I was a **social worker**
☐   I was a **translator or audiovisual translator** (for example, subtitler, dubbing translator, etc.)
☐   I did something else, please specify: _____

3.3
How would you define your activity as an expert in easy-to-understand content?
☐   I work as an easy-to-understand expert **full time** and I get paid
☐   I work as an easy-to-understand expert **part time** and I get paid
☐   I work as an easy-to-understand expert **as a voluntary** and I do not get paid

3.4
What kind of easy-to-understand **modality** do you usually produce? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

☐ I usually produce **Easy-to-Read language**
☐ I usually produce **Plain Language**
☐ I usually produce **Both**
☐ Other, please specify: _____

3.5
In what language do you produce easy-to-understand content?
Drop-down menu, MULTIPLE CHOICE

3.6
How long have you been producing easy-to-understand content?

☐ Less than 3 years
☐ Between 3 and 6 years
☐ Between 6 and 9
☐ Between 9 and 12
☐ Between 12 and 15
☐ More than 15 years

3.7
With what **format** of easy-to-understand content do you usually work? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

☐ I usually work with **printed** content
☐ I usually work with **digital** content
☐ I usually work with **audio** content
☐ I usually work with **audiovisual** content (including interpreting)
☐ Other, please specify: _____

3.8
For what **field** do you usually produce easy-to-understand content? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ **Education**: for example teaching materials, etc.
- ☐ **Public administration and justice**: for example institutional and administrative documents, public and legal documents, government statements, contracts, etc.
- ☐ **Media and journalism**: for example news, press releases, TV programmes, film scripts, web content, etc.
- ☐ **Culture and literature**: museum brochures or audio-guides, opera librettos, theatre plays, other cultural events, novels, etc.
- ☐ I usually produce easy-to-understand content in **several fields**
- ☐ I do not usually produce easy-to-understand content in any specific field
- ☐ Other, please, specify: _____

3.9
Which of the following **services** do you perform more often (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ Creation/writing of Easy-to-Read Language
- ☐ Creation/writing of Plain Language
- ☐ Adaptation/editing/translation of Easy-to-Read texts (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into an Easy-to-Read Language text)
- ☐ Adaptation/editing/translation of Plain Language texts (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into Plain Language texts)
- ☐ Validation/revision of Easy-to-Read Language texts
- ☐ Validation/revision of Plain Language texts
- ☐ Quality control of the final Easy-to-Read Language texts
- ☐ Quality control of the final Plain Language texts

3.10
When you write easy-to-understand content, do you work **alone or in a team** with other experts?

- ☐ always alone
- ☐ mainly alone
- ☐ sometimes alone and sometimes in a team
- ☐ mainly in a team
- ☐ always in a team

3.11

How often do you **work with people who need and use easy-to-understand content** when you prepare your texts?

☐   always
☐   often
☐   sometimes
☐   rarely
☐   never
☐   comment box (you can give us the reason of your choice here):

3.12

Do people who need and use easy-to-understand content make comments on your texts?

☐   yes > Go to 3.13
☐   no > Go to 3.14

3.13

How often do you incorporate these comments in your texts?

☐   very often
☐   often
☐   sometimes
☐   rarely
☐   never

3.14

How often do you ask the opinion of other easy-to-understand experts to solve problems?

☐   very often
☐   often
☐   sometimes
☐   rarely
☐   never

3.15

How much do the solutions that you find in other easy-to-understand content help your work?

- ☐ A lot
- ☐ Quite a lot
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Very little
- ☐ Not at all

3.16

Would you like to tell us more about this? Please, specify how other easy-to-understand content helps you in your work.
OPEN ANSWER

3.17

Do you know of the existence of easy-to-understand guidelines?

- ☐ Yes > Go to 3.18
- ☐ No > Go to 3.23

3.18

What type of guidelines are they? (Here you can choose more than one answer)
MULTIPLE CHOICE

- ☐ **National** guidelines
- ☐ **In-house** guidelines
- ☐ Guidelines **from other countries**
- ☐ Guidelines **I created**
- ☐ I don't know
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

3.19

Do the guidelines you use only apply to **one** language?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

3.20

When you write easy-to-understand content, do you usually use existing guide-lines?

- □ Always > Go to 3.23
- □ Often > Go to 3.23
- □ sometimes > Go to 3.21
- □ Rarely > Go to 3.21
- □ Never > Go to 3.21
- □ Comment box: _____

3.21

Why don't you always use existing guidelines? OPEN QUESTION/OPTIONAL

3.22

What guidelines do you use exactly? Specify: OPEN QUESTION//OPTIONAL

3.23

Do you think we need shared guidelines for all Europe?

- □ Yes
- □ No

3.24

Have you ever been a teacher of easy-to-understand content?

- □ Yes
- □ No

3.25

Do you currently teach easy-to-understand content?

- □ Yes
- □ No

3.26

Is there anything you would like to add? (Optional)

SECTION 4: SKILLS

This section has 8 questions on the skills that an expert in easy-to-understand content should have. Skills are the ability to do something well. Your point of view on the skills that you think should be emphasized in training is important. It will give us important information of how to design our course.

4.1

To deliver good quality easy-to-understand content, an expert should have knowledge in the following areas: (Here you can choose 3 answers)
MULTIPLE CHOICE, MAX. 3 ANSWERS

☐ Easy-to-understand history, status, and applicable scenarios
☐ Easy-to-understand principles, guidelines, recommendations and standards
☐ Target groups: types of disabilities, needs, perception and cognitive processing
☐ Studies in reading (print and multimodal texts), and in reading disabilities
☐ Language and linguistics (for example, knowing the principles of text analysis, text cohesion and coherence, language complexity, simplification methods)
☐ Cognitive linguistics (for example, knowing the principles of language processing)
☐ (Media) accessibility (standards, legislation, guidelines, principles and applicable scenarios, technologies, etc.)
☐ Multimodality (including the role of paratextual information)
☐ Other, specify: _____

4.2

According to you, which of the following **services** needs more emphasis in training?

☐ **Creation/writing** of easy-to-understand content
☐ **Adaptation/editing/translation** of easy-to-understand content (i.e., starting from an original text and turning it into an easy-to understand text)
☐ **Validation/revision** of easy-to-understand content
☐ **Quality control** of the final texts
☐ **Other**, specify: _____

4.3
Please, rate the following statement on a scale from 1 to 5.

1 = of no importance
2 = of minor importance
3 = neither important nor unimportant
4 = important
5 = extremely important

To deliver a good quality easy-to-understand content, the following items are:

☐ Design and layout of the page
☐ Skilled and aware use of vocabulary
☐ Use of simple syntax (grammar) that helps to understand
☐ Clear organization of the information
☐ Use of multimodality, that is, of different channels that convey the same meaning (e.g., text and video, or text and picture)

We would like to know some more details.
According to your experience, what of the following items is most useful in practice and in training? You can choose **one item** per group.
TO BE ADAPTED IN WEB SURVEY CREATOR ACCORDING TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PLATFORM

4.4
Design and layout of the page

☐ To produce short texts and short sentences
☐ To organize the information on the page (for example, broad margins, broad line spacing, paragraph structure, position of pictures, etc.)
☐ To labele information in a clear way, so it is easy to find on the page (for example, to use headings, bullet points, etc.)
☐ To use clear typeface, large letters and bold, spacing, etc.

4.5
Vocabulary

☐ To use simple words that are easy to understand
☐ To define words that are difficult or new
☐ Not to use abbreviations
☐ Not to use special and difficult words that professionals use to communicate with each other

4.6
Syntax (grammar)

☐ To break down information into chunks
☐ To write short sentences (one idea per sentence)
☐ To use a simple structure of the sentence, so it is clear and easy to follow
☐ To use simple punctuation (full stops and no other punctuation)

4.7
Organization of the information

☐ To provide summaries
☐ To provide glossaries (lists of words with an explanation at the end of the text)
☐ To start a text with the most important information
☐ To use bold for new words

4.8
Multimodality

☐ To use big clear pictures next to the words that help to understand
☐ To use different accessible formats to convey information (print, large print, braille, video, face-to-face, website, etc.)
☐ To use read aloud functions

4.9
Is there anything you would like to add? (Optional)

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This was the last section of the questionnaire. Thank you very much for completing it and helping us with our research. Results and updates will be available on the project website http://pagines.uab.cat/easit/

If you are willing to give us more information about your experience as an expert or teacher of easy to understand content, please get in touch with (person who sent the link to the questionnaire). We will contact you and set a short interview.

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