



UNIT 2. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE (E2U)

ELEMENT 3. PROCESSES

TRANSLATING CONTENT INTO E2U

Video Lecture Transcript

Slide 1

Translating content into easy-to-understand. This is unit 2, Easy-to-understand language, in short E2U, Element 3, Processes. Video lecture: Translating content into easy-to-understand language. My name is Christiane Maaß from the University of Hildesheim.

Slide 2

In this short video lecture, I will talk about the process of translating or adapting content in standard or domain specific language into easy-to-understand language, focusing on Easy Language and Plain Language. I will also examine samples of texts that were translated into easy-to-understand language.

Slide 3

In the project EASIT we differentiate between creating content from scratch and adapting or translating content into easy-to-understand language, that is Easy Language or Plain Language.



Slide 4

The main difference between creating and adapting/translating is whether we have a source text or source material from where we depart to produce content in easy-to-understand language. If we are formulating directly in Easy or Plain Language, we are in the realm of creating content. If we have a source text or source material that we translate or adapt into easy-to-understand language, we are in the field of adapting or translating content. The difference may seem trivial, but the approaches are different in each of these two scenarios.

Slide 5

The terms “translation” and “adaptation” into easy-to-understand language are synonymous. The difference between the two terms is just contextual: In some countries the term “translation” is preferred and in other countries the term “adaptation”.

Slide 6

At the end, the process that is referred to with both concepts is the same. A text in standard language or domain specific language is translated or adapted into easy-to-understand language for a specific target group.

Slide 7

Some approaches disprefer the term “translation” in this context, as the content can be changed considerably and the final product is not considered to be “faithful” to the original. Other approaches, especially from translation studies, apply broader translation concepts that also



cover the actions that are usually carried out in Easy and Plain Language translation. They refer to the classical approach of Jakobson who distinguished interlingual, intralingual and intersemiotic translation. According to this approach, Easy and Plain Language translation belongs to the realm of intralingual translation. Therefore, this discussion depends on how the term “translation” is defined.

Slide 8

We define translation as overcoming communication barriers. Communication barriers are discussed in the video lecture about the target groups of easy-to-understand language. Easy and Plain Language are two effective tools to overcome such communication barriers.

Slide 9

Definition of “translation” in functionalistic translation approaches place the function of the text in the target situation and the target groups in the centre of their interest. Such approaches are well-suited for Easy and Plain Language translation.

Slide 10

Translating into Easy or Plain Language requires reduction and addition processes that occur simultaneously.

Slide 11

Reduction entails, for example, that the final product in easy-to-understand language does not contain the whole information from the



source text in order to keep it manageable for the target groups. Only information that is relevant to the target groups and functional in the target situation is rendered. This means that the translator or adaptor has to be able to evaluate and choose the most relevant information from the source text while keeping in mind the context of the final product.

Slide 12

Addition processes are multiform. They entail, for example, that information must not be presupposed that is not obvious to the target groups in the target situation. They may not have the same background knowledge or linguistic knowledge and therefore need more information that has to be added in the target text in the form, for example, of exemplification or explanations.

Slide 13

In conclusion, when translating into easy-to-understand language, the following items are especially important for the translator or adaptor:

- Knowledge about the target groups and their communicative needs
- Knowledge about the target situation

Slide 14

- Training in easy-to-understand language
- Domain specific knowledge about the target text
- Soft skills



Slide 15

- Knowledge about the target groups and their communicative needs. Based on this information, the translator can first of all decide about the comprehensibility-enhanced variety needed.

Slide 16

- Knowledge about the target situation. The context in which the content in easy-to-understand language will be used is relevant for the translation process. Which function will the final text have in the target situation?

Slide 17

- Training in easy-to-understand language. Translators should be familiar with the concept of easy-to-understand language to implement it appropriately when translating for a specific target group and situation. They should also know the standards and rulesets of the easy-to-understand varieties of their specific language.

Slide 18

- Domain specific knowledge about the target text. Translators and adaptors must be familiar with the text topic. They must also be able to evaluate how much further information they will need on the source text and on the target situation.



Slide 19

- Soft skills. These are part of the professional behavior of the translators. They are the experts in this communicative scenario and they have to act accordingly. They must know the communicative needs of the target groups and adapt the content accordingly. They must also keep contact with the customer or contracting authority.

Slide 20

Bear in mind that translation into Easy Language is always an additional service to the original. The translated content is a tool to assist target groups that cannot comprehend the original text.

Slide 21

As an example of a text translated into easy-to-understand language we show you the brochure about German inheritance law made by the Research Centre for Easy Language in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice of Lower Saxony in Germany. This example shows how the translation is an additional to the original. You can find the original text on the one side of the brochure and if you start reading from the other side, you find the comprehensibility-enhanced version in Easy German. This brochure was made according to the rules for Easy German developed by the Research Centre for Easy Language in close collaboration with the Ministry of Justice. The texts were submitted to an inclusive validation process before publication.

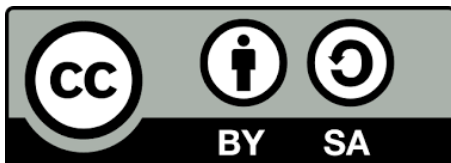


Slide 22

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