



## **UNIT 2. EASY TO UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE (E2U)**

### **ELEMENT 2. LEGISLATION, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

#### **E2U LANGUAGE IN ITALY: AN OVERVIEW**

##### **Video Lecture Transcript**

### **Slide 1**

This is Unit 2, Easy-to-understand language, in short E2U. Element 2, Legislation, standards, and guidelines. Video lecture: Easy-to-understand language in Italy: An overview.

This is Elisa Perego, from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

### **Slide 2**

In this short video lecture, I will guide you through some key phases relating to E2U language in Italy.

### **Slide 3**

Easy and Plain Language are not equally known, established, and implemented in all EU countries. This is particularly so in Italy.



## Slide 4

Here, in spite of the steps taken, there is still a long way to go, and simplification is not applied consistently to all sectors. Research in the field is also patchy – though growing – and such inconsistency is somehow reflected in the way Easy Language and Plain Language (both user-centred varieties) are referred to in Italian.

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Various labels co-exist:

Lingua (or “linguaggio”) facile da leggere e da capire (in English: Easy to understand and easy to read language) stand for Easy Language, though shorter expressions are sometimes found, such as:

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Lingua facile, Lingua facile da leggere, Lingua facile da capire, Lingua semplice, Linguaggio semplice.

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On the other hand, we use both the loan term “Plain Language” or the expression “semplificazione linguistica” (In English: “language simplification”) to refer to Plain Language. “Clarity” is another term that is often found (as in Linguaggio chiaro e semplice, or in English: Clear and simple language).



## Slide 8

Although the most vigorous debate on the need for clear and effective writing only reached Italy in the 1990s, some significant milestones should be mentioned.

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Back in 1965, the well-known Italian journalist and writer Italo Calvino started to draw attention to the distinct disadvantages of the vagueness, opacity, and lack of standardisation of non-literary Italian – referred to as “anti-language”.

## Slide 10

In the 1990s, two relevant publications attacking the “verbose Italian style” were issued. The 1993 *Codice di stile* (or Style code) by the Italian Minister and Professor of Law Sabino Cassese, and the 1997 *Manuale di stile* (or Style manual) edited by Alfredo Fioritto. Both contributions advanced proposals on simpler ways to write administrative documents according to the different types of addressees, also tackling layout principles and general text organization.

## Slide 11

Starting from the 21st century, Italy has also begun to participate actively in national and European projects on the subject. The Chiaro! (or *Clear!*) project on the simplification of legal language was launched by the Italian Public Service Department.

## Slide 12

In a wider international context, joining the EU network Inclusion Europe provided an invaluable opportunity for Italy to compare itself with other countries.

## Slide 13

The current situation regarding the distribution of formats, activities and fields of application of EL and PL in Italy is illustrated in a publication by Perego (2020) based on survey data gathered for the EASIT project through an online questionnaire distributed to 19 Italian E2U experts.

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In a nutshell, the results show that:

- Easy Language is the modality that is produced more often compared to Plain Language;
- Printed content is the format almost all experts work with, while audiovisual content is still discounted;

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- Creation/writing of Easy Language content is the most performed activity (as opposed to, for instance, adaptation or validation)
- Most E2U content is created in the field of education, thus virtually overlooking crucial areas such as public administration and justice, culture and literature, and media and journalism.



## **Slide 16**

In terms of outcomes, the text types that are usually translated into EL include legal and administrative texts; didactic texts for vulnerable school-goers or for learners of Italian as a second language; health-related brochures; websites; occasionally also short stories.

## **Slide 17**

Anffas, the National Association of Families of Persons with Intellectual and/or Relational Disabilities, seems to account for a large share of the Italian material translated into Easy Language, including a children's book and – recently – focused information on Corona virus, too.

## **Slide 18**

However, substantial work in the sector is being carried out in one of the five autonomous Italian regions, Trentino-Alto Adige, a trilingual region (Italian/German/Ladin)

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with strong connections with the German-speaking countries. This region managed to capitalize on its network and the work carried out in Germany on Easy Language, and applied it to the more intricate and multifaceted Italian context.



## Slide 20

Interestingly, some private companies have started to offer a translation service into Easy Language of legal documents. This shows the growing awareness of the need to simplify legal language for all.

## Slide 21

Finally yet importantly, according to recent data emerging from the EASIT project (Perego 2020), in Italy there is still no systematic university or vocational training system for E2U text producers and translators. We know that only approximately half of the people who work in the Italian E2U sector received training, and that training mainly takes place outside the academic world, preferably in the form of in-house courses and even self-training sessions.

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## Slide 23

This video lecture was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Andreea Deleanu, from Università degli Studi di Trieste.



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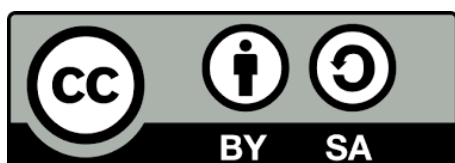


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