



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

ELEMENT 2. LEGISLATION, STANDARDS, AND GUIDELINES

EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE IN ITALY: SPECIFICITIES, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND GUIDELINES

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: specificities, recommendations, guidelines.

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

Slide 2

In this short video lecture, I will focus on some linguistic specificities of Easy Italian. I will give you some examples and clarify the current standards and guidelines used in the sector.



Slide 3

In Italy, it is the National Association of Families of Persons with Intellectual and/or Relational Disabilities (known by the acronym Anffas) that normally participates in most activities linked to language simplification.

Slide 4

In fact, Anffas took part in the Inclusion Europe project and contributed to the creation of the 2009 *European standards for making information easy to read and understand*, which was translated into several languages, including Italian. These standards remain the reference point as far as Easy to read Italian is concerned. The Italian version is entitled *Informazioni per tutti. Linee guida europee per rendere l'informazione facile da leggere e da capire per tutti*.

They are available online.

Slide 5

The Inclusion Europe guidelines certainly represent a major step in a country that was lacking fundamental rules on the subject, even though they do not include language-specific recommendations.



Slide 6

In fact, comprehensive language-specific guidelines on how to produce Easy Italian are currently lacking, even though sparse recommendations do exist.

These are mainly included in publications by Cortelazzo and Pellegrino 2002, Fortis 2003 and Sciumbata 2017.

To mention just a few examples.

Slide 7

What are the language specificities of Easy Italian?

For instance,

1. the need to limit the use of the subjunctive mode;
2. the need to limit past and present participles (explicit forms are in fact preferred);
3. the need to limit impersonal forms;
4. the need to limit also Latin words or expressions.

Slide 8

Another specific guideline is to avoid the combination of the "d" consonant sound (*d eufonica*) with the conjunctions "e" (and) and "o" (or) preceding a vowel (so *e ora* - and now - is better than *ed ora*).



Slide 9

Given the tendency of Italian towards obscure means of expression, it is important that in Easy Italian common and concrete words (such as the verb *ricordare*, to remember, or the noun *segnali*, signs) are used instead of formal and low-frequency or abstract items (such as the verb *rammentare* and the noun *segnaletica*).

Slide 10

Similarly, simple verbs (such as the verbs *assicurare*, to ensure, and *pagare*, to pay) should be preferred to long and intricate circumlocutions with the same meaning (such as *provvedere alla copertura assicurativa* and *provvedere al pagamento*).

Slide 11

This applies to nouns as well: so *sfratto*, eviction, is better than the longer noun phrase *provvedimento esecutivo di rilascio*.

Slide 12

The double negation, which is frequent in Italian style (e.g. *non infelice*, not unhappy, in English) should be replaced by a single clear word (*felice*,



happy), which is more straightforward. In fact, in general, interpreting double negation sentences correctly as affirmative sentences takes a longer time to process, is more difficult, and could hinder comprehension.

Slide 13

Finally, the use of mild or indirect words or expressions substituting those considered too harsh, blunt, unpleasant or embarrassing is quite common – but not efficient when it comes to enhanced comprehensibility. In this respect, the use of the direct verb *morire* (to die) would boost text comprehensibility more than the use of euphemistic multi-word expressions such as *venire a mancare* or *passare a miglior vita*.

Slide 14

These are just very few recommendations.

Such recommendations, however, can be applied also to Plain Italian. In fact, Easy Language and Plain Language recommendations are often mixed or used interchangeably, at least as far as Italian is concerned.

Slide 15

All the pictures used in this presentation come from the Public Domain Vectors website, which gathers hundreds of royalty-free vector images



under the Creative Commons Universal Picture Domain Dedication (CC0 1.0) license.

Slide 16

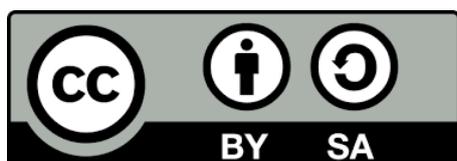
This video lecture was prepared by Elisa Perego and produced by Martina Atzeri, from Università degli Studi di Trieste.

Slide 17

You can reach me at eperego@units.it.

Copyright and disclaimer: The project EASIT has received funding from the European Commission under the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnerships for Higher Education programme, grant agreement 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Partners:

