UNIT 2. EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE

ELEMENT 5. LEGISLATION, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

EASY-TO-UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE IN CATALONIA: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS, 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 Catalonia: overview, recommendations, guidelines. I am Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

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In this short lecture I will be talking about the situation of easy-to-understand language in Catalonia.

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The "Associació Lectura Fàcil" (Easy-to-Read Association) was created in 2003 in Catalonia and has become a reference organization on Easy-to-

Read in Catalonia. It is a founding member of the International Easy-to-Read Network, and it is part of the "Xarxa Lectura Fàcil" (Easy-to-Read Network across Spain), which includes associations from the Basque Country, Balearic Islands, Madrid and other Spanish regions, but also associations from Argentina and Colombia.

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I invite you to visit the Easy-to-Read Association website, at "lecturafacil.net", where you will see their main activities. The website includes a browser where you can find Easy-to-Read books in Catalan, Spanish, Galician, Basque and Portuguese. It also includes a repository of Easy-to-Read documents.

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The Association also adapts texts to Easy-to-Read and Plain Language, offers training, editing services and promotes Easy-to-Read clubs in libraries. In fact, there is a strong tradition in Catalonia of having these clubs to discuss books in Easy-to-Read language.

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In 2019, the Easy-to-Read Association organised a one-day conference to discuss Easy-to-Read from an international perspective. You can watch the videos on their Youtube channel.

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In respect of legislation, the Catalan accessibility Act from 2014 ("Llei 13/2014, del 30 d'octubre, d'accessibilitat") refers to easy language at different points.

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First, it includes the term "*materials de lectura fàcil*" (easy-to-read materials) in the list of definitions. According to this definition, Easy-to-Read materials are those that have been created following Inclusion Europe and IFLA guidelines, which promote a text simplification that aims to make texts accessible to all citizens. This simplification means using a plain and direct language, an accessible content for the target readers and a design which harmonises content and forms.

In the law, Easy-to-Read is explicitly mentioned

- in relation to educational environments, where Easy-to-Read materials should be guaranteed;

- in relation to public administration and public service providers, where the law states that they should promote "public interest texts and frequent forms to be offered in Easy-to-Read", among other systems, and

- in relation to public services, where it states that they should offer documentation in Easy-to-Read to those who require it.

In relation to cultural activities, sport events and leisure, the law indicates that information should be provided through an easy-to-understand language (literally, in Catalan, "*llenguatge entenedor*").

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An Easy-to-Read version of this law has been created and is available online, on the Easy-to-Read Association website.

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I would like to show you a couple of examples of Easy-to-Read Language in Catalan.

At the Liceu opera house a robust accessibility policy is in place. Among other services, they offer a summary of the plot both in Easy-to-Read Catalan and in Easy-to-Read Spanish. If your interest is more literary, the Catalan publisher La Mar de Fàcil publishes a wide array of books in Easy-to-Read.

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In respect of standards, the IFLA guidelines were translated into Catalan in 2012 and are available online. In 2006, Lídia Artigas, with the support of the Easy-to-Read Association, published a 20-page book with recommendations on how to produce Easy-to-read texts in Catalan. Spanish standard on Easy-to-Read ("UNE 153101EX: Lectura Fácil. Pautas y recomendaciones para la elaboración de documentos") can also prove useful in Catalan.

There are also specific recommendations that include Easy-to-Read: for instance, the Barcelona City Council published a document in 2016 on how to make accessible exhibitions that contains specific recommendations on Easy-to-Read.
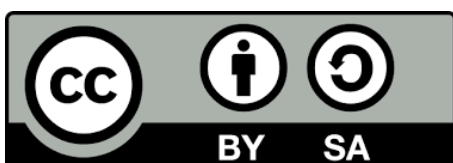
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In respect of Plain Language, Daniel Cassany in 2005 and Cristina Gelpí in 2006 published short articles on Plain Language in Spain, making reference to Catalan. More recently, in a 2017 book edited by Daniel Cassany on specialised discourse, Carme Gómez and Olga Erra refer to plain language as a way to make a legal text accessible and provide recommendations. It is in this area, especially in legal language handbooks, that recommendations to make tests easier to understand are found.

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This video lecture has been prepared by Anna Matamala, from Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. You can reach me at anna.matamala@uab.cat.

Partners: