



UNIT 2. EASY TO UNDERSTAND (E2U) LANGUAGE

ELEMENT 2. LEGISLATION, STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION TO THE SITUATION IN SPAIN: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS, GUIDELINES (PART 2)

Video Lecture Transcript

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This is Unit 2, Easy to Understand language. Element 2. Legislation, standards and guidelines: Introduction to the situation in Spain: overview, recommendations, guidelines (part 2).

My name is Piero Cavallo and I have prepared this video lecture in collaboration with Rocío Bernabé on behalf of the Internationale Hochschule SDI München in Germany.

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In this second part of the video lecture, we will focus on the national legislation of Spain that regulates the equal rights for persons with disabilities, as well as the use of Easy-to-Understand language.

We will review the fields of application of E2U language, both in the public sector and in the private sector. For both sectors, we will also review some of the manuals and guidelines published, along with some of their projects.

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From a national point of view, in Spain laws and decrees have been enacted to guarantee access to culture for everyone. In Spanish, a law is called "ley", and a decree is called "real decreto" and it is not dictated by the king but by the Government.

For example, the article 44 of the Spanish Constitution of 1978 establishes that: "The public powers will promote and protect access to culture, to which everyone has the right".

Law 51/2003 aims to establish measures to guarantee and fulfil the right to equal opportunities for people with disabilities.

The Royal Decree 366/2007 by which are established the conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination of persons with disabilities in their relations with the General State Administration. In particular, article 13 establishes that the documents and forms have to be written in a simple and direct language, without the use of acronyms or abbreviations. The most commonly used documents should have simplified versions for people with intellectual disabilities or problems with written comprehension. Generic guidelines are included in the "Orden PRE/446/2008".

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The Royal Decree 1494/2007 refers to the services related to the information society and social communication media.

The Royal Decree 1544/2007 regulates the basic conditions of accessibility and non-discrimination for access and use of modes of transport for people with disabilities.

The third additional provision from the law 10/2007 refers to the access to reading, books and libraries for people with disabilities.

Lastly, the 2003-2010 Accessibility Plan suggests a set of proposals to address problems in relation to accessibility to all types of environments, products and services.

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One of the first field of application of E2U language in Spain was the legal and public sector. The change began in the 1980s following the awareness of the need for a clearer and more accessible bureaucratic language for all citizens. Specialised journals on administrative language have been published since then, providing guidelines and models of documents in Easy-to-Understand style for all the co-official languages of Spain.

In 1990, the Ministry of Public Administrations first published the "Manual of administrative language style" ("Manual de estilo del lenguaje administrativo").

A few years later, the "Manual of Administrative Documents" ("Manual de Documentos Administrativos") and the "Charter of Citizens' Right before the Justice" ("Carta de derechos de los ciudadanos ante la justicia") were published.

A Commission for the Modernization of Legal Language was also created in 2009 during the Zapatero government. The commission drafted a report with a series of recommendations for the improvement of the legal language.

Other public and private institutions, such as universities, chambers of commerce, town councils and banks started to employ language experts to draw up, correct and translate their documents according to their style manuals.

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In the wake of the laws and manuals issued by state institutions, various associations have been created in Spain that deal with E2U language. These associations promote Easy-to-Read and Plain Language and are engaged in numerous projects also in collaboration with public institutions. As we will see in a bit, they have also produced several resources and guidelines.

Associations like: Cooperativa Altavoz, founded in 2013; Plena inclusión, an organization network; the Association "Lectura Fácil", first founded in 2003 in Barcelona, now with several members in some of the Autonomous Communities of Spain; and the "Instituto Lectura Fácil", are actively involved in the creation and adaptation of material, guidelines and local and national promotion of E2U language, also in collaboration with Public Administrations.

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Some of the projects concluded by these associations are:

- Easy-to-Read news portals like “Noticias Fácil”;
- books portals like “Léelo Fácil” and
- the Easy-to-Understand adaptation of classics of Spanish literature like “Don Quixote” or “La Celestina”;
- the E2U-adaptation of State and Public Administration documents, such as the Spanish Constitution, the “Norma Foral de Transparencia de Bizkaia” (“Regional Transparency Regulation of Bizkaia”), the First Municipal Plan for Citizens’ Participation, realized by the City Hall of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the Election Programs for the General Elections of April 2019 and the traffic tickets issued by the City Hall of Madrid.

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In Spain, there are no official guidelines regarding the creation or adaptation of documents in E2U language. In an initial phase, guidelines in Spain were directly translated from English, without taking into account that the style of the two languages was, of course, different. For example, with the syntactical structure of the Romance languages it is very difficult to form sentences in just 15 words (as the E2U guidelines for English suggest). Because of this, it could be said that the functional equivalent of 15 words in English is approximately 25 to 30 words in the Romance languages. Some of the associations listed before, as well as several experts of the field, published guidelines on how to make language more accessible, clear and easy to read. Some of them are:

- the “Decálogo sobre el lenguaje claro para las Administraciones Públicas” (“Decalogue on clear language for Public Administrations”) drawn up by Novagob;

- the “Guide to the right of access to information in the Region of Murcia”, and
- the “Practical guide to clear communication from the Madrid City Council;

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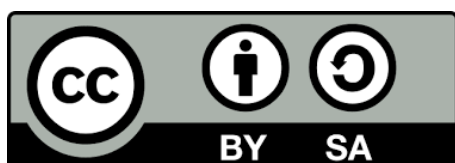
- also, the “Guide to Cognitive Accessibility, Easy-to-Read and Clear Language in the Local Public Administration”, issued by the Institute Lectura Fácil in collaboration with FEMP (Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces);
- and, lastly, the writing methods for an easy reading realized by Óscar García Muñoz from the association “Dilo Fácil”, the one realized for the CESyA (Spanish subtitling and audiodescription center), by Lourdes Moreno, and by Cristina Franco.

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