



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

ELEMENT 1. UNDERSTANDING E2U

E2U, EASY-TO-READ (E2R) AND PLAIN LANGUAGE (PL) – AN OVERVIEW

Video Lecture Transcript

Slide 1

This is unit 2, Easy-to-understand language, in short E2U, Element 1, Understanding Easy-to-understand language. Video lecture: Easy to understand language, Easy-to-read and Plain language, an overview. My name is Christiane Maaß from the University of Hildesheim.

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In this short video lecture I will give an overview about the topic Easy-to-understand Language, or short, E2U.

We will talk about the origins of E2U and then go into an introduction and into the two language varieties for comprehensibility enhancement Easy-to-read (short E2R) and Plain Language (short PL).



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In recent years, the discourse about language varieties for comprehensibility enhancement has been growing worldwide. But the discussion about the use of a comprehensible language in different fields is not new. Already in the 1920s, several approaches were developed to increase the readability of texts. During this time, different readability tests were developed that are partly still in use today.

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In the 1960s, several attempts to develop comprehensibility-enhanced language varieties have been made, especially in the political and technical fields. In the Anglophonic world, two concepts have become firmly established: Easy-to-read, short E2R, and Plain Language, short PL.

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In order to define E2R and PL, we can imagine that all language varieties can be situated within a continuum of comprehensibility enhancement. E2R is on one end of the continuum, representing the highest comprehensibility enhancement possible in the spectrum. On the other end, there is the language variety used in expert contexts. PL is right of E2R, still being a language variety optimized for comprehensibility enhancement, but not as much as E2R.

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E2R, Easy-to-read Language, is a term predominantly used in the fields of accessible communication and inclusion. Comprehensibility-enhanced



language varieties such as E2R help vulnerable groups contribute to independent social participation. E2R addresses primarily persons with reading difficulties caused by cognitive or sensory impairment.

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E2R is the language variety with maximally enhanced comprehensibility in the framework of the standard language grammar. It is strictly normed. These norms strongly limit the grammatical structures that can be used. This encompasses a certain and recognizable linguistic feature and a typical visual layout. However, the term E2R is too narrow as it is linked to written language. It is therefore not suited for audio-visual formats. We therefore use the term Easy Language instead.

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The term “Plain Language”, or PL, comes from its equivalent in the English-speaking world: “Plain English”. PL, Plain Language, is not as strictly normed as E2R. It allows a broader grammatical and lexical inventory, depending on the group of people that is being addressed and the situation in which it is used. This language variety is more comprehensible than the standard, but its primary users are not persons with reading limitations caused by cognitive or sensorial disabilities, but rather non-experts in a given context.

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The EASIT project has decided to use the umbrella term “Easy to understand language”, short E2U, to cover all language varieties for



comprehensibility enhancement. Easy Language (EL), including E2R, and Plain Language (PL) are covered by this concept.

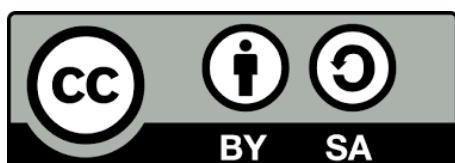
The different national languages have varying terms and delimitations in the area of Easy and Plain Language. So please check which terms are in use for your language. More details about Easy Language, including E2R and PL will be represented in the following videos of Unit 2.

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This video lecture has been prepared by Sergio Hernández and Christiane Maaß from the University of Hildesheim. You can reach us at easit@uni-hildesheim.de

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