

Easy Language: empirical evaluation

Mariona González

Easy Language seeks to improve access to information for people with difficulties in communication, especially in the area of reading (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß, 2020). Texts in Easy Language benefit a wide and varied audience, but this linguistic variety requires more research to reach all of its potential users and achieve even better results (Maaß, 2020). Easy Language content should be understandable, perceptible, and accessible (Hansen-Schirra and Maaß, 2020; Maaß, 2020).

In recent years, Easy Language guidelines have been published for different languages. However, the content of the Easy Language guides and standards that we can access today is not based on scientific results but tends to be a product of practice. As mentioned earlier, a scientific approach based on empirical criteria is necessary to review and refine the method.

My research aims to demonstrate empirically the effects of adapting text according to Easy Language guidelines. Considering that Easy Language includes multiple recommendations, I have decided to focus on three aspects collected as specific objectives: one paratextual aspect (visual support) and two linguistic aspects (referent omissions, subordinate clauses). The effects that these recommendations have on the reader and its comprehension of the text's content are evaluated using a test that incorporates eye-tracking technology and comprehension questions. These are carried out on individuals with cognitive disabilities, who are among the main users of Easy Language.