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Dipartimento di Scienze Giuridiche, del Linguaggio,  
dell'Interpretazione e della Traduzione

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# SOMMARIO

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<i>Katia Peruzzo</i>		
	<i>Goranka Rocco</i>		
7	Exploring language simplification and intralingual translation: insights, results and desiderata		
23	PARTE TEMATICA <i>Language simplification and intralingual translation: some reflections and case studies</i>		
	<i>Monica Randaccio</i>		
25	Museums, museum AD and Easy Language: some critical insights		
	<i>Christiane Maaß</i>		
	<i>Laura Marie Schwengber</i>		
43	Easy Language and Plain Language in Germany		
	<i>Elisa Perego</i>		
	<i>Goranka Rocco</i>		
63	The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: a comparative analysis of the Easy English, the Easy German and the Easy Italian versions		
	<i>Katia Peruzzo</i>		
89	I diritti di bambini e ragazzi: la Convenzione sui diritti dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza tra divulgazione e semplificazione		
	<i>Dolores Ross</i>		
	<i>Marella Magris</i>		
105	Semplificazione linguistica nei Paesi Bassi e in Germania: il caso della comunicazione istituzionale sul COVID-19		
	<i>Valentina Crestani</i>		
133	I connettivi nella <i>Leichte Sprache</i> tedesca e nella <i>lingua facile</i> italiana: la comunicazione museale fra oralità e sottotitoli		
	<i>Giulia Pedrini</i>		
151	Passive voice in the Italian translations of English simplified texts: a case study of layperson summaries of clinical trials		
	<i>Micaela Bertozzi</i>		
175	La Comunicazione Aumentativa e Alternativa: tradurre in simboli per persone con disabilità intellettive e difficoltà di lettura		

- 197 *Paolo Canavese*  
L'ordine canonico dei  
costituenti argomentali nella  
semplificazione della scrittura  
normativa
- 217 *Floriana Carlotta Sciumbata*  
Il linguaggio facile da leggere e da  
capire va all'università. Appunti  
da un corso di scrittura facilitata  
per il personale dell'Università di  
Trieste
- 235 PARTE MISCELLANEA
- 237 *Nadine Celotti*  
Des espaces péritextuels  
d'œuvres philosophiques  
de Judith Butler traduites  
en français : un laboratoire  
privilegié pour s'interroger sur  
l'apport du sujet traduisant à  
l'élaboration de la pensée du  
traduire
- 253 *Federica Fragapane*  
Diccionarios español-italiano:  
sentido figurado y marcas  
pragmáticas en el tratamiento de  
las locuciones verbales
- 273 *Anne-Kathrin Gärtig-Bressan*  
Verben zum Ausdruck der  
Modifikation von Objekten –  
Lexikalisierungsstrategien und  
Präferenzen im Deutschen und  
Italienischen
- 303 *Paola Gentile*  
Il rinascimento della letteratura  
neerlandese in Italia e la (ri)scoperta  
dei classici. Nuove tendenze  
editoriali nella traduzione dal  
neerlandese in italiano
- 323 *Giacomo Klein*  
German proficiency measures in  
a Greek L1 attrition context
- 333 *Maurizio Viezzi*  
I titoli del commissario Maigret:  
traduzioni in lingua italiana e in  
lingua inglese

# Exploring language simplification and intralingual translation: insights, results and desiderata\*

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## 1. GROWING INTEREST IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF LANGUAGE SIMPLIFICATION AND INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION

In recent decades, there has been a growing awareness of the need to make communication more accessible, i.e. to meet anyone's information needs in a more efficient and effective way, and also to make institutional and other information accessible to persons with communication impairments, such as individuals with cognitive or reading difficulties, migrants learning the language of the host community,<sup>1</sup> etc. This turn in the communication culture has not occurred uniformly in all countries and regions or evenly over time.<sup>2</sup> The Scandinavian countries, for example, can look back on a long tradition of producing texts in Easy and Plain Language as well as in Sign language (cf. Leskelä 2021; Lindholm & Vanhatalo 2021: 13), while many other European countries and regions have

\* Both authors contributed to the full article. However, for the formal division of the writing process, Katia Peruzzo was responsible for Sections 1 and 3, Goranka Rocco for Section 2, and both authors for the Overview of the free section.

1 For theoretical considerations and insights on texts in Easy Language for migrants in Germany and Italy, see Ahrens and Fioravanti 2022.

2 For a detailed review of the historical development and a comparison of Easy Languages in Europe, see Lindholm and Vanhatalo (2021).



not experienced comparable scientific advances and practical developments in the field of language simplification and intralingual translation.

The increasingly central role of accessibility in institutional communication manifests itself in different ways in different geographical, temporal, and social settings and depending on various factors, such as the target user-group profile, the sender-receiver relation, and the function of the simplified information. This is testified to by, for instance, the enactment of international and national laws and regulations concerning accessibility and simplification, especially but not exclusively with regard to people with disabilities, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (see Magris 2018), the European Accessibility Act of 2019 and the Dutch *Besluit digitale toegankelijkheid overheid* (see Ross & Magris in this issue), the German *Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz* and *Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung* (see Maaß; Crestani; Ross & Magris in this issue), the USA Plain Writing Act of 2010,<sup>3</sup> and New Zealand's Plain Language Act 2022 (2022/54).<sup>4</sup> The attempts to regulate accessible communication have also led to the creation of simplified versions of these and other international and national legislative acts (see a discussion of the Easy versions of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Perego and Rocco in this issue, and a description of child-friendly versions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in Peruzzo 2022, in print, and in this issue).

The increasing attention for more inclusive communicative approaches has also prompted the creation of an array of guidelines for writing clearly, in Easy or Plain Language. This is the case, for instance, of the guidelines in 16 languages by Inclusion Europe (2009), the *How to write clearly* booklet in 24 languages by the European Commission (2016), the guidelines for writing in *Leichte Sprache* by Netzwerk Leichte Sprache (2013), by Maaß (2015), and Bredel and Maaß (2016a, 2016b), the guidelines for writing in *italiano facile da leggere e da capire* by Sciumbata (2022), and the guidelines for writing in Plain English made available online by PLAIN (2011) and Plain English Campaign (2018). Furthermore, a growing number of simplified texts have been published on institutional websites

3 Full title: *An act to enhance citizen access to Government information and services by establishing that Government documents issued to the public must be written clearly, and for other purposes*. Cf. <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-111publ274/summary> (accessed 1.12.2022).

4 Available at <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwj1pmW4fb7AhU5gPoHHV8oCaMQFnoECBIQAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.legislation.govt.nz%2FAct%2Fpublic%2F2022%2F0054%2Flatest%2Fwhole.html&usq=AOvVaw2E9roKnS9TVCltmlwBPCo6> (accessed 13.12.2022).

and news sites of several countries and regions,<sup>5</sup> as well as news,<sup>6</sup> magazines,<sup>7</sup> and literary works<sup>8</sup> in Plain and Easy Language.

In Europe, accessibility issues have attracted the attention of researchers in the fields of translation, interpreting and language mediation. This is evidenced by the relatively recent (in 2014) opening of the research centre dedicated to Easy Language at the University of Hildesheim, Germany, the *Forschungsstelle Leichte Sprache*,<sup>9</sup> where the abovementioned guidelines for *Leichte Sprache* (Bredel & Maaß 2016a, 2016b, 2016c; Maaß 2020) were developed and where the first Master's degree in accessible communication (*M.A. Barrierefreie Kommunikation*) was offered. The School of Applied Linguistics at the ZHAW Zurich University of Applied Sciences also opened a research centre dedicated to accessibility, the Swiss Centre for Barrier-free Communication, which in 2020 started offering a new profile in Accessible Communication/Audiovisual Translation within its MA in Applied Linguistics (*Schwerpunkt Barrierefreie Kommunikation*).<sup>10</sup>

As for internationally coordinated efforts in the field of translation and translator training in Europe, the recently updated *Competence Framework of the European Master's in Translation (EMT 2022)* reflects the changes affecting higher education and in particular language education and shows interest in accessible communication in comparison to the previous version, published in

- 5 For *Leichte Sprache* in German-speaking countries and regions, see Maaß (2020) and Rocco (2022a, 2022b).
- 6 For example, news in Plain English are available on *The Times in Plain English* (<https://www.thetimesinplainenglish.com/>, accessed 13.12.2022), in *Leichte Sprache on Nachrichten in Leichter Sprache* ([https://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/barrierefreie\\_angebote/leichte\\_sprache/Nachrichten-in-Leichter-Sprache,nachrichtenleichtesprache100.html](https://www.ndr.de/fernsehen/barrierefreie_angebote/leichte_sprache/Nachrichten-in-Leichter-Sprache,nachrichtenleichtesprache100.html), accessed 12.12.2022), in *Einfache Sprache on nachrichtenleicht* (<https://www.nachrichtenleicht.de/>, accessed 12.12.2022), and in Norwegian Easy-to-Read on *Klar Tale* (<https://www.klartale.no>, accessed 13.12.2022).
- 7 For example, the Swedish magazine with a long tradition *Sidor gör nyheter på lätt svenska* (<https://8sidor.se/>, accessed 12.12.2022), the English online magazine *Easy to Read Magazine*, which also publishes articles in Plain English (<https://www.easytoreadmag.com/>, accessed 13.12.2022), and the German magazine *LeichtSinn. Magazin in Leichter Sprache* (<https://schnell-und-steiner.de/produkt/leichtsinn/>, accessed 12.12.2022).
- 8 For example, Spaß am Lesen Verlag publishes literature in *Einfache Sprache*, Edizioni La Meridiana publishes accessible books especially for children (<https://www.lameridiana.it/categorie/libri-per-una-cultura-accessibile/libri-accessibili.html>, accessed 13.12.2022), the Swedish Agency for Accessible Media Myndigheten för tillgängliga medier produces and distributes literature, newspapers and periodicals in accessible format to persons with reading impairments (<https://www.mtm.se>, accessed 13.12.2022).
- 9 Cf. <https://www.uni-hildesheim.de/fb3/institute/institut-fuer-uebersetzungswissenschaftskommunikation/forschung/forschungseinheiten-des-instituts/leichtesprache/> (accessed 5.12.2022).
- 10 Cf. <https://www.zhaw.ch/storage/linguistik/forschung/barrierefreie-kommunikation/ma-studienschwerpunkt-bfk.pdf> (accessed 5.12.2022).

2017. The word *accessibility*, absent from the 2017 version, occurs three times in the 2022 edition. The first time it appears is in the Foreword, which states that “Catering to a diverse audience necessitates a focus on *accessibility* in both the production and reception of multilingual, multimedia materials” (EMT 2022: 2, emphasis added). The second and third occurrences are in the section dedicated to the strategic, methodological and thematic competence in translation (EMT 2022: 7, 8). A comparison between the 2017 and the 2022 versions is provided in Table 1 below, which also shows how in 2022 the focus has been expanded from mediation in intercultural contexts only to mediation in both intra- and intercultural contexts, thus explicitly including intralingual translation as well.

EMT 2017	EMT 2022
Applicants will be invited to specify the different types of domain-specific, media-specific and situation-specific types of translation that are included in their curriculum, including special areas such as public service translation and interpreting, localisation or audiovisual translation.	Applicants will be invited to specify the different types of domain-specific, media-specific and situation-specific types of translation that are included in their curriculum, including special areas such as public service translation and interpreting, localisation, multimodal translation or audio-visual translation and <i>accessibility</i> .
Students know how to [...] 8. Translate and mediate in specific <i>intercultural contexts</i> , for example, those involving public service translation and interpreting, website or video-game localisation, video-description, community management, etc.	Students know how to [...] 8. Translate and mediate in specific <i>intracultural and intercultural contexts</i> , for example, those involving public service translation (and interpreting), website or video-game localisation and <i>accessibility</i> , community management, etc.

Table 1 – Comparison between the 2017 and the 2022 version of the EMT Competence Framework in relation to accessibility

Despite the efforts made to improve language accessibility both at the national and the international level, the concrete solutions to accessibility-related problems provided through guidelines so far, and the theoretical reflections advanced in the literature, accessible communication and the use of Easy and Plain Language still pose numerous challenges. These very challenges are the starting point of the thematic section of this *RITT* issue, which is meant to address some general theoretical aspects related to simplification, such as the possible ways to reduce complexity, the discrepancies between simplified versions in one or more languages, and to illustrate some desiderata regarding language simplification and accessible communication from a research- as well as a practice-oriented standpoint. Section 2 is meant to briefly review these aspects, in a systematic though non-exhaustive way, in order to contribute to raising awareness of the main challenges that need to be (further) investigated, within and across national borders, in relation to one or more languages. In Section 3, an overview

of the papers included in the thematic part of this issue is provided, starting with contributions of wider, more theoretical scope, followed by studies adopting a multi- or bi-lingual comparative approach dealing with simplified varieties of Dutch, English, German, and Italian, and finishing with studies with a narrower focus on simplified varieties of Italian only.

## 2. CURRENT LANGUAGE ACCESSIBILITY-RELATED ISSUES AND DESIDERATA

### 2.1. REDUCING COMPLEXITY WITHOUT INCREASING COMPLEXITY

Complexity in itself (intensively studied by the German sociologist Luhmann (1984, 1994, 2009) within his System Theory) and the need to reduce it can be seen as one of the fundamental theoretical problems related to accessibility. With regard to simplification of texts and intralingual translation aimed at the same purpose, the question is how to reduce text complexity without making some textual features or segments more complicated, opaque or even oversimplified, and without distorting the original meaning.

One of the frequent problems we can observe in practice is that trying to reduce complexity (or obscurity) at one level may increase complexity at another level. For instance, compensating for the readers' presumed lack of extralinguistic knowledge by inserting additional information may increase syntactic complexity. An example<sup>11</sup> can be found in a text written in *Einfache Sprache* (German Plain Language), where *Lego* becomes *Der Spiel-Waren-Hersteller Lego aus dem Land Dänemark* ('the toy producer Lego from the country Denmark'), with a visible increase in complexity at the syntactic level due to expansion of the noun phrase by means of pre- and post-modifiers (Rocco 2021).



11 The example is from the article “Lego mit Blinden-Schrift” published on 28.8.2020 on *nachrichtenleicht* (<https://www.nachrichtenleicht.de/lego-mit-blinden-schrift-100.html#:~:text=Der%20Spiel%2D Waren%2DHersteller%20Lego,einfacher%20lesen%20und%20 schreiben%20lernen.&text=Der%20Spiel%2D Waren%2DHersteller%20verschenkt,Kinder%2DG%C3%A4rten%20in%207%20L%C3%A4ndern>, accessed 12.12.2022).

If, on the contrary, explanatory elements are added in a glossary<sup>12</sup> rather than in the body of the text, the need to consult them will interrupt the reading of the text and may strain the working memory or hamper the understanding of textual cohesion devices.

Another factor impacting on the reduction of complexity is the use of a gender- and socially sensitive, inclusive, politically correct language. This choice generally tends to increase the length and the syntactic and/or lexical complexity of the simplified text (Rocco 2021; Rocco in preparation).<sup>13</sup>

As for the potential risk of oversimplification, if we assume that “tradurre significa sempre ‘limare via’ alcune delle conseguenze che il termine originale implicava” (Eco 2003: 93), and thus that *any* translation necessarily implies losing something of the original text, be it a nuance of meaning or a connotation, we can expect the same to happen in intralingual translation aimed at simplification, which, by definition, entails leaving something out. For this reason, any language simplification attempt requires a thorough examination of the function of the simplified text, the detailed profiling of its target group and the assessment of the necessary degree of simplification.

## 2.2. PROFILING TARGET GROUPS AND ESTABLISHING DEGREES OF SIMPLIFICATION

A key factor contributing to the efficacy of language simplification and intralingual translation in Easy and Plain Language is knowing who the target user group of a simplified text is. However, in many cases this is simply wishful thinking, since the users’ profile is unknown and identifying the degree of simplification required is almost impossible. A way to improve the situation could be to start from defining the degrees of simplification, nationally or internationally, in a similar way as the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR)* (CoE 2020) does with language proficiency levels. This is already happening with regard to certain languages, such as Finnish, Latvian, Swedish (Leskelä 2021: 163ff.; Anča & Meļņika 2021: 309), and German, where three varieties have been developed (German: *Leichte Sprache*, *Leichte Sprache Plus*, and *Einfache Sprache*; see Maaß 2020 and Maaß & Schwengber in this issue). However, this is beneficial only if such classification is well known both to the

12 For German, cf. the glossary of the German Convention on the Rights of People with disability (Perego & Rocco in this issue), online-dictionaries on the news website *Nachrichten* in *Leichter Sprache* in *Leichte Sprache* and on *Nachrichtenleicht* in *Einfache Sprache*.

13 For example, in German the so-called *Doppelformen* (‘double forms’) such as *Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmer/Teilnehmer und Teilnehmerinnen* are significantly longer than the generic masculine form *Teilnehmer* (‘participants’). The alternative gender-sensitive forms with special symbols such as \* are considered as difficult for persons with reading difficulties and have not been included in the guidelines regarding German (see Maaß 2015 and Crestani in this issue) yet.

drafters in charge of language simplification and to the target users of the simplified texts, who would thus be able to select the most appropriate text depending on their individual needs.

With regard to the designations used to refer to the varieties of simplified language (see, for instance, Maaß 2020 and Randaccio in this issue), however, it must be said that while in Germany an attempt has been made to systematise the terminology used, the absence of either a national or an international frame of reference inevitably leads to the proliferation of terms and to possible inconsistencies in their use (see for example Parpan-Blaser et al. 2021: 579ff.). To illustrate the variation related to the terminology referring to simplified language varieties, a passage extracted from the website of the Swiss Federal Department of Home Affairs on *Linguaggio semplificato* (emphasis added) is presented here:

*Il concetto di linguaggio semplificato può tuttavia variare in funzione della regione linguistica. Il tedesco distingue tra linguaggio semplificato («Leichte Sprache») e linguaggio semplice («Einfache Sprache»). Il linguaggio semplificato prevede regole relativamente più restrittive rispetto al linguaggio semplice, destinato a persone con competenze di livello medio nella lettura. Il linguaggio semplificato è spesso equiparato ai livelli di lettura A1-A2 secondo il Quadro europeo comune europeo di riferimento per le lingue, mentre il linguaggio semplice al livello B1. Nell'area francofona e italofofona, il linguaggio semplificato è definito in maniera meno restrittiva: viene fatta la distinzione fra i vari livelli di competenza nella lettura, ma non tra linguaggio semplificato e linguaggio semplice.<sup>14</sup>*

### 2.3. ADDRESSING SHARED PROBLEMS WITH POSSIBLY SHARED SOLUTIONS

As already mentioned, for some languages various guidelines or legislative acts – national, international or both – have been developed which do not necessarily converge in the ‘rules’ to be applied. For some other languages, on the contrary, legislation or guidelines are either still very recent and not well known or non-existent. This situation is further complicated by the fact that only very recently has the need for different types and degrees of simplification depending on the target group and the function of the text come to the fore, both in academia and in the professional realm.

Different target groups have different needs and therefore the same source text may inevitably be simplified in a vast array of ways (e.g. simplifying a legally-binding text in Easy Language for adults with intellectual disabilities is

14 Cf. *Linguaggio semplificato. Scheda informativa per l'Amministrazione federale*, version 2.1 (November 2021) by the Eidgenössisches Büro für die Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderungen (EBGB)/Bureau fédéral de l'égalité pour les personnes handicapées (BFEH)/Ufficio federale per le pari opportunità delle persone con disabilità (UFPD), [https://www.edi.admin.ch/dam/edi/it/dokumente/gleichstellung/infomaterial/Leichte\\_Sprache\\_de\\_ok.pdf.download.pdf/Linguaggio%20semplificato.pdf](https://www.edi.admin.ch/dam/edi/it/dokumente/gleichstellung/infomaterial/Leichte_Sprache_de_ok.pdf.download.pdf/Linguaggio%20semplificato.pdf) (accessed 20.9.2022).

not the same as simplifying for children with no such impairments; see Perego & Rocco and Peruzzo in this issue), which can also lead to a variety of possible outputs and formats beyond traditional texts, such as websites (see Ross and Magris in this issue), posters (see Peruzzo in this issue), texts accompanied by pictograms (see Bertozzi in this issue), and audiovisual products (see Crestani in this issue). The recognition of different varieties of simplified language and the diversification of degrees of simplification and formats are certainly to be encouraged, since they allow simplified texts to meet the target groups' needs. However, efforts should be (further) joined, in research and practice and both at a national and an international level, to find a common ground on how to address accessibility-related problems that are shared by different communities and on how to offer clear and consistent guidelines that account for the variety of target groups who may benefit from communication in simplified language.

#### 2.4. NARROWING THE GAP BETWEEN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Despite the ever-growing number of texts written in Easy or Plain Language, at least in certain countries or regions (see Section 1), on the one hand, and the surging research interest in accessible communication and intralingual translation for language simplification on the other, research and practice still seem to run on parallel tracks. This lack of cross-fertilisation can be observed, for instance, in German-speaking countries. Many texts written in *Leichte Sprache* and published on institutional websites do *not* follow exactly the scientifically based guidelines by Bredel and Maaß (2016a, 2016b) or other internationally recognised guidelines, and some tendencies observed in simplified texts betray a certain lack of linguistic expertise (Rocco 2021: 249ff., 2022a: 252ff., 2022b). However, there are also countries where theoretical reflections on and research in language accessibility are still in their infancy. This is the case, for instance, of Italy, where the scientific (Sciumbata 2022; Ondelli 2022 ed., Ondelli 2022) – but also training – efforts in this field are quite recent (Sciumbata in this issue) and do not find application in a systematic, institutional practice.

#### 2.5. FOSTERING HIGHER EDUCATION COURSES AND PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

The above-mentioned problems are also linked to a lack of professional training or, better said, to a lack of insight that linguistically simplified texts should be produced by professionals trained in language simplification and intralingual translation in Easy and Plain Language (Perego & Rocco in this issue). For instance, as already said, in German-speaking countries many institutional texts in simplified language fail to abide by the only science-based *Regelwerk* by Bredel and Maaß (2016a, 2016b) or any other guidelines and the available university de-



grees offering modules in accessible communication are still scarce. In Italy, the professional training in this field is still in an embryonic phase (see Sciumbata in this issue). However, hopefully in the near future new training opportunities will be generated to allow younger generations of professionals to narrow the gap between theory and practice and thus between institutional communication and its target user groups.

## 2.6. OVERCOMING RESERVATIONS

Despite the unquestionable steps forward made in the field of language simplification and accessible communication, some reluctance towards simplified forms of language is still encountered, both in institutional settings, which may benefit from the adoption of these language varieties to reach a wider public (see, for instance, Sciumbata in this issue), and in society at large. The reason for such reluctance lies, on the one hand, in the stigmatization associated with the use of Easy Language (see Maaß and Randaccio in this issue; Bredel & Maaß 2016a: 45-55), and on the other, in the perception that the inevitable and variable reduction of information in simplified texts results in losses that exceed the gains. These reservations could be overcome by raising awareness of the benefits of accessible communication beyond academic and specialist circles, for instance through specific higher education courses, professional training for institutional staff and librarians, and public awareness campaigns.

## 3. OVERVIEW OF THE THEMATIC SECTION

The thematic section titled “Language simplification and intralingual translation: some reflections and case studies” opens with a paper by **Monica Randaccio** dedicated to museum audio description (AD) (“Museums, museum AD and Easy Language: some critical insights”). The paper traces the development of the concepts of ‘accessibility’ and ‘inclusion’ in parallel with the development of the concept of ‘museum’ and focuses on the problematic relation between museum AD, i.e. a form of accessible audiovisual translation for the blind and the visually impaired, and Easy Language, which seems to make the simplification of the verbal component problematic.

The paper by **Christiane Maaß** and **Laura Marie Schwengber** adopts a country-specific approach to review the history and current situation of “Easy Language and Plain Language in Germany”. The emphasis is placed on the development in Easy and Plain Language research and teaching and on the translation and interpreting market. The paper also addresses the new concept of ‘Easy Language Plus’, a variety offering the possibility to tailor highly comprehensi-



ble texts to the needs and expectations of target user groups, and illustrates it through the example of Sign Language-oriented Easy Language Plus.

The next two papers focus on intralingual translation applied to two international treaties – and thus to two legally-binding texts – to meet the needs of different target user groups. In “The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities: a comparative analysis of the Easy English, the Easy German and the Easy Italian versions”, **Elisa Perego** and **Goranka Rocco** compare three simplified versions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Easy English, Easy German and Easy Italian. The aim of the study is twofold: to identify similarities and differences in the implementation of the text design rules proposed by Inclusion Europe (2009) and to assess the degree of comprehensibility of each simplified text. Results show that each language seems to address a different target user group and to serve different communicative purposes.

The paper by **Katia Peruzzo** (“I diritti di bambini e ragazzi: la Convenzione sui diritti dell’infanzia e dell’adolescenza tra divulgazione e semplificazione”) on the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child analyses four posters in English and Italian intended for explaining the rights enshrined in the Convention to children and teenagers. The comparison of the child-friendly versions with the original Convention shows that the required simplification entailed a change in genre, a shift in focus, and various degrees of child-centredness.

Moving from an international to a national context, the paper by **Dolores Ross** and **Marella Magris** (“Semplificazione linguistica nei Paesi Bassi e in Germania: il caso della comunicazione istituzionale sul COVID-19”) reports on the considerable progress – both in the theory and in the practice – made by the Netherlands and Germany in the field of language simplification, also as a means to tackle low levels of literacy. To assess the level of simplified language used in the Dutch and German health sector, some examples of institutional communication in Plain and Easy Language on COVID-19 have been analysed. Some conclusions are also drawn on the convergences between intralingual translation for simplification purposes and a more traditional notion of interlingual translation.

Interlingual translation is also at the core of the next two papers. **Valentina Crestani** delves into the use of connectives (“I connettivi nella *Leichte Sprache* tedesca e nella lingua facile italiana: la comunicazione museale fra oralità e sottotitoli”). By adopting a contrastive approach, the study analyses a parallel corpus of twelve videos in *Leichte Sprache* and translated in *lingua facile* from the Naturmuseum in Bozen. In particular, the study focuses on the most frequent connectives in the German version (*und, aber, weil*) and the possible presence of their Italian equivalents (*e, ma / però, perché*), both in the spoken component and in the subtitles.

**Giulia Pedrini** (“Passive voice in the Italian translations of English simplified texts: A case study of layperson summaries of clinical trials”) examines verb

voice in layperson summaries of clinical trials, which represent a comprehensibility-enhanced text type written in Plain Language. Her study analyses a parallel corpus of original English layperson summaries and their Italian translations in order to identify the possible presence of both canonical passives and less prototypical ones, despite the fact that they are generally considered cognitively harder to process than active forms and thus less suitable for accessible communication.

The last three papers included in this thematic section present studies involving intralingual translation in Italian. **Micaela Bertozzi** (“La Comunicazione Aumentativa e Alternativa: tradurre in simboli per persone con disabilità intellettive e difficoltà di lettura”) shows how the children’s book *Favole al telefono* by Gianni Rodari has been made more accessible to both children and adults with intellectual disabilities and/or communication difficulties by first translating the original text in Easy-to-Read Italian (*italiano facile da leggere e da capire*) and then assigning a pictogram to each word, thus using what is known as Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).

While still concentrating on Italian, **Paolo Canavese’s** paper (“L’ordine canonico dei costituenti argomentali nella semplificazione della scrittura normativa”) analyses a corpus of Swiss legislation translated into Italian in order to identify instances where the typical Italian subject-verb-object (SVO) constituent order is not employed. The quantitative analysis reveals that non-SVO structures constitute a minority and are either imposed by the syntactic nature of the verb or justified by pragmatic and textual reasons. The results suggest that comprehensibility is key in Plain Language and that translation plays a central role when reflecting on the textual construction of an institutional text.

**Floriana Carlotta Sciumbata** (“Il linguaggio facile da leggere e da capire va all’università. Appunti da un corso di scrittura facilitata per il personale dell’Università di Trieste”) closes the thematic section with a paper illustrating the contents, methods, and results of the first course on Easy-to-Read Italian for readers with intellectual disabilities and other reading difficulties, which was aimed at the staff of a university. An example of a text written by the participants is provided which shows how the principles of Easy-to-Read were put into practice. Some objections and remarks raised by the participants in class are also reported.

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In addition to the thematic part, this RITT issue features a free section containing some interesting contributions on diverse topics related to translation and language.

In her paper titled “Des espaces péritextuels d’œuvres philosophiques de Judith Butler traduites en français : un laboratoire privilégié pour s’interroger sur l’apport du sujet traduisant à l’élaboration de la pensée du traduire”, **Nadine Celotti** investigates the nature of translators’ interventions by analysing the peritexts (translators’ prefaces, notes and glossaries) of the French translations of four works by the American philosopher Judith Butler, which concern the performativity of gender. She also focuses on the word “perform”, which is a fundamental concept in Butler’s thought as well as an untranslatable word requiring a complex translating activity. She finally wonders whether translating is “performing”.

The paper by **Federica Fragapane** addresses Spanish-Italian dictionaries and focuses on how figurative meaning is recorded through various tags in them (“Diccionarios español-italiano: sentido figurado y marcas pragmáticas en el tratamiento de las locuciones verbales”). In particular, she observes the use of tags in a small corpus of multi-word units, trying to identify the underlying criteria, in order to illustrate the potential benefits of these tags especially for Italian speakers learning Spanish.

A contrastive study involving German and Italian is described by **Anne-Kathrin Gärtig-Bressan** (“Verben zum Ausdruck der Modifikation von Objekten – Lexikalisierungsstrategien und Präferenzen im Deutschen und Italienischen”). The paper explores the lexicalisation preferences in German and Italian verbs referring to drying and cleaning activities through an online survey involving 30 Italian- and 30 German-speaking subjects, who were shown nine short video scenes and animations in which a person was seen cleaning and drying various objects in different ways and were asked to verbalise this event in a simple sentence. The results show that German features a higher variation in the choice of verbs and a stronger bundling of semantic features and that it prefers verbs containing the ‘manner’ component, while Italian prefers verbs with the ‘result’ component.

**Paola Gentile** (“Il rinascimento della letteratura neerlandese in Italia e la (ri)scoperta dei classici. Nuove tendenze editoriali nella traduzione dal neerlandese in italiano”) illustrates two main trends that have recently developed in the field of translation from Dutch into Italian, i.e. the flourishing of Dutch-language literature in Italy and the second is the increasing tendency, since the 2010s, to (re)discover certain authors considered ‘classics’ that have been included in the Canon of Dutch-language literature.

**Giacomo Klein** is interested in language learning and languages in contact but considers a different setting. His contribution on “German proficiency mea-

tures in a Greek L1 attrition context” concerns first language attrition among Greek immigrants in Germany and discusses, adopting a qualitative approach, the results of two German proficiency tests administered to Greek immigrants in Germany and online (a reading comprehension and a cloze test).

The last paper in this issue is by **Maurizio Viezzi** (“I titoli del commissario Maigret: traduzioni in lingua italiana e in lingua inglese”) and analyses the Italian and English titles of Georges Simenon’s Maigret novels. The study shows that the translated titles exhibit the typical features of title translation in that they are the result of either literal/quasi-literal translation or new creation. A particularly significant role is played by retranslation, with 75 novels published under no fewer than 146 Italian titles and 168 English titles.