Easy Language and Plain Language in Germany

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Abstract

This paper investigates the history and current situation of Easy and Plain Language in Germany. The development over the last decade has been breathtaking with its arrival in academia in both research and teaching. We give an overview of the development in Easy and Plain Language research and the translation and interpreting market that was decisively pushed by the developments within the legal requirements. At the moment, we are witnessing a professionalisation of text creation processes with inclusive forms of text production being required by the market, which leads to a vibrant supply and demand situation. After providing an outline of Easy and Plain Language research and academic teaching in Germany, the paper also addresses new conceptual developments: Easy Language Plus offers the possibility to create highly comprehensible yet acceptable texts with the option to tailor them to the needs and expectations of target user groups. We illustrate this development using the example of Sign Language-oriented Easy Language Plus.

Keywords

Easy Language, Plain Language, Easy Language Plus, Sign Language-oriented Easy Language Plus, intralingual translation

1. INTRODUCTION

With roughly 120 million speakers, German is at number eleven on the scale of biggest world languages. In the European Union, it is the language with the most native speakers (Bundesregierung 2020). However, for many of these people and for many more that speak German as a second language or learn it as a foreign language, normal written texts and other regular forms of information are too complicated to understand. This frequently happens if texts come from expert domains, including e.g., legal texts and medical or technical information (Rink 2020) or if the text users have special communicative needs due to e.g., an impairment or because they are from a non-German background. According to the LEO. study on low literacy (Grotlüschen et al. 2018), more than 40% of the adult population in Germany live with various degrees of low literacy and find it difficult to (or do not) understand written information directed to them by authorities, enterprises or news media. As Maaß & Hernández Garrido (2020: 28) point out, "[t]his affects not only the recipients but also the senders of the information, and indirectly affects social cohesion". Easy Language (in German: "Leichte Sprache", Maaß 2015) and Plain Language (in German: "Einfache Sprache", Baumert 2018; Bredel &Maaß 2016: 526ff.) are concepts that tackle this problem as they provide simplified access to content.

This paper describes the linguistic features of Easy and Plain Language (Section 2) and depicts their historical development and legal situation in Germany (Section 3). Easy and Plain Language have complementary qualities: while Easy Language is maximally comprehensible, Plain Language is comprehensible to a considerably lesser extent, even though both are more comprehensible than the original texts in the expert language. On the other hand, Easy Language is connected to the stigma of poor understanding and cognitive disability, which is not the case for Plain Language (Section 4). The paper will briefly touch upon the German market situation (Section 5) and will sketch the academic perspective of Easy and Plain Language in research and academic teaching (Section 6). It will conclude with an outlook to the group-related and target situation sensitive approach of Easy Language Plus (Section 7). Section 8 will discuss an example for all three varieties.

2. LINGUISTIC FEATURES

Easy and Plain Language are varieties of natural languages on the level of register (diaphasic variety; for a discussion, see Henning 2022). They are systematically reduced with regard to their linguistic features on the word, sentence, and text levels: long words and terms from expert contexts are avoided or, if they are required, are explained in the text. Sentences are short and the information structure is clear and straightforward. An information overkill is avoided and

the layout is straightforward (for an extensive linguistic description of Easy and Plain Language, see Bredel & Maaß 2016 in German, and Maaß 2020 in English).

The two varieties, however, differ in the extent that these measures are applied. Easy Language is strictly rule-based and aims at maximum comprehensibility. It is intended to make content accessible to people with communication impairments, especially with cognitive disabilities (Bock & Pappert 2020). Easy Language has become the symbol of pride for this group (Leskelä et al. 2022 and see below Section 4). Other primary target groups are people affected by aphasia, dementia-type illnesses, autism and severe and moderate forms of illiteracy (Bredel & Maaß 2016: 140ff). Easy Language presupposes that its users have severe comprehension problems, are weak readers and therefore need texts that are as comprehensible as possible on all linguistic levels.

Practical Easy Language rules have been developed by grass-root disability empowerment groups (see the rulebooks of Netzwerk Leichte Sprache 2013 and Inclusion Europe 2009). Another set of rules is contained in the Accessible Information Technology Regulation (Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung, BITV2.0 2011). The following table displays the rules that all three sets of practical guidelines have in common:

Visual and medial design	1.	Bigger type-size
	2.	Each sentence in a new line
	3.	No word truncation at the end of the line
	4.	Text is left-aligned
Word structure	5.	Short words
	6.	Separation of compound words with hyphens
	7.	No abbreviations
	8.	No passive voice
Vocabulary	9.	Easy-to-understand words
	10.	Preferably no foreign words
	11.	Foreign words are explained where they are needed
Sentence structure	12.	Short sentences
Semantics	13.	No negation
Text	14.	No lexical variation in the text: same designation for same concept
	15.	Relevant information first
	16.	Clear structure: subheadings are used
	17.	Readers are addressed directly

Table 1 – Common features of the practical Easy Language guidelines (Bredel & Maaß 2016: 89; English version in Maaß 2020: 75)

There are, however, also more elaborate science-based based rules (Maaß 2015; Bredel & Maaß 2016) that are being evaluated in various research projects with the primary target groups (first outcomes in Gutermuth 2020; Gros et al. 2021; Deilen 2022; and the research projects delineated in Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020a; Deilen et al. 2022).

While Easy Language uses the whole range of strategies to the maximum extent, Plain Language allows for slightly more complexity on all levels. For example, Easy Language does not allow for subordinate clauses at all and has a structure of simple sentences without any compound sentences. Plain Language, on the other hand, allows for simple main clause-subordinate clause structures, but avoids more complex sentences with more than one subordinate clause or even convoluted sentences. On the word level, Easy Language will explain concepts that go beyond a very basic everyday vocabulary, while Plain Language will only give definitions of outright expert terminology. On the text level, Easy Language dissolves the text structure to an extent where each sentence is in a new line, the font size is increased to approximately 120% with the same small range of sans serif fonts for all texts, and there is plenty of white space on each page in order to increase perceptibility and decrease information density (Bredel & Maaß 2016). Plain Language texts, on the other hand, come in a form that corresponds to the general principles of good layout as defined in the respective international norms, but do not have any striking layout features (Baumert 2018). They often go unrecognised and are just taken as fairly accessible texts for average readers.

Plain Language aims at making expert context accessible to non-expert users (Maaß 2020: 139ff.). It has no fixed rules but is instead defined as simpler and more accessible in relation to the source text. This leads to a situation where individual Plain Language texts have quite a varying degree of different features and complexity (Gutermuth & Hansen-Schirra 2018), with many still being quite hard to understand for non-experts. The reason is that Plain Language texts are often written by experts of the respective domain rather than by Plain Language experts (Maaß 2020: 196). Plain Language texts are, in many cases, not easy enough for people with cognitive disabilities or other communication impairments. Moreover, whilst most Plain Language concepts are user-centred on paper, the concrete measures to adapt texts to various target groups usually remain rather vague:

> The manuals show that Plain Language as a concept is adjustable to the needs of the audience; to do so requires a firm knowledge of these needs. If this knowledge does not exist and decisions are based on guesses, a style guide that gives suggestions of the type 'know your readers and you will know what means to choose' is not sufficient for a sound and helpful text practice (Maaß 2020: 143).

To adapt Plain and also Easy Language or other comprehensibility-enhanced varieties to special target groups' needs in a way that is really helpful requires user-centred research (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020b: 25ff; see Section 7 for first attempts).

3. Historical development, target groups and legal situation

The differences between Easy and Plain Language are related to their historical origins, the users they target and their fields of application. The latter are defined by the legal situation that has evolved over the past years (Lang 2021), such as including especially Easy Language (and to a far lesser extent also Plain Language) in the obligatory measures to be taken for communicative accessibility.

Internationally, Plain Language is the older of the two concepts and goes back to the early 20th century where it was used in literacy training for the working class (Maaß 2020: 140; Greer n.a.). The Plain Language movement has become influential since the 1970s (Adler 2012), predominantly in the English-speaking world (Cheek 2010). In the German context, "Einfache Sprache" (the German Plain Language equivalent) has become more visible during the last ten years. It was preceded by the concept of "Citizen-oriented Language" (Heckmann 1981), in German "Bürgernahe Sprache", which literally means "language that is close to the citizens" (Maaß 2020: 146). This variety was developed for the context of administrative communication in the 1980s (Schubert 2013). Plain Language is mentioned in various German laws, regulations, and action plans: In the Federal Act on Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz, BGG; 2016/2018), first issued in 2002 and later included in most of the respective laws on the level of the different German Federal States, Plain Language is mentioned as the first means to make legal and administrative content accessible to people with communicative impairments. But if the users do not find the Plain Language version easy enough, authorities must, as a second step, resort to Easy Language. This leads to a situation where authorities choose Easy Language immediately in order to avoid the double effort.

Plain Language is also demanded in the National Action Plan on Health Literacy (Schaeffer et al. 2018) in order to facilitate access to medical and health information for the broad public. More and more, such information is becoming available in Plain Language, alongside Easy Language material that is addressed to people with communication impairments, especially with cognitive impairments. The German Network for Health Competency (DNGK)[1] has issued a guideline for reliable accessible health information in both varieties.

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1 Cf. https://dngk.de (accessed 19.11.2022).

Easy Language, in a strict sense, addresses people with communication impairments. It goes back to the Empowerment movement of people with cognitive disabilities and has been advocated in Europe by Inclusion Europe. Some of the Northern European countries have long histories of Easy Language texts, especially in the field of newspapers or literature (for Finland: Leskelä 2021; for Norway: Bovim Bugge et al. 2021; for Sweden: Bohman 2021; O'Donnell & Ramdén 2021). In Germany, Easy Language was first conceptualised in a joint pilot project (1997–2001) of people with cognitive disabilities and their families ("Wir vertreten uns selbst" = "We represent ourselves autonomously, Maaß 2015: 19). It became more visible from 2006, when the "Netzwerk Leichte Sprache" (= "Network Easy Language", www.leichtesprache.org) was founded, another grassroot empowerment association that also developed a ruleset that is still influential on the German market (Bredel & Maaß 2016: 67). Easy Language was mentioned in a legal text for the first time in 2011, namely in the Accessible Information Technology Regulation (Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung, BITV 2011), a regulation linked to the Federal BGG (see above) on accessible communication that describes basic Easy Language rules and requires Easy Language to be available on the homepage of each Federal German ministry. In the following years, this obligation was extended to the Federal state level and the websites of all public organisations. By 2025, the private sector in Germany will also be obliged to provide information in Easy Language.

4.   Comprehensibility vs. stigmatisation

Through their optimised layout and complexity-reduced linguistic features, Easy Language texts are easy to perceive and to understand. On the downside, Easy Language texts are "over-explicit and make it very obvious that they require very low cognitive skills from the target audience" (Maaß in print). Not being able to understand or understanding much less than most others carries a stigma. Easy Language texts, therefore, carry the risk of stigmatising the primary target groups. This risk rises if Easy Language texts visibly differ from the usual text type expectations. This is increasingly the case in Germany, where Easy Language texts are more and more frequently produced in inclusive settings, thus adding to their "differentness": "Many of the Easy Language texts, moreover, show a blatant discrepancy from the established typical text layouts: very big font size, imagery that seems more appropriate for young children" (Maaß in print). As a consequence, users react with outrage to such texts or simply refuse to use them. Leskelä et al. (2022) points out that the stigma of disability can also be converted into pride:

> If we consider how the disability movement has recently actively influenced the rapid progress of EL in Europe (e.g. Bredel & Maaß 2016:108), we can conclude that

despite the general stigma related to disability, the need for EL is often approached with pride rather than shame (Leskelä et al. 2022: 205).

To be proud of their differentness can stabilise groups, but is a form of othering (for the concept of "othering" see Mik-Meyer 2016). The group with a positive self-affirmation with regard to Easy Language are the people with cognitive impairments (Bock & Pappert 2020). Other potential readers like senior citizens or prelingually Deaf users are often repelled by Easy Language text offers (Rink 2020; Gutermuth 2020). They refuse to positively identify through the fact of non-understanding texts and find Easy Language texts unacceptable for themselves to use.

Plain Language texts, on the other hand, do not stigmatise their users as they remain within the boundaries of standard text expectations (Maaß 2020; Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020b). They are, however, not easy enough for many readers. Easy and Plain Language therefore have complementary manifestations of perceptibility, comprehensibility, acceptability and stigmatisation:
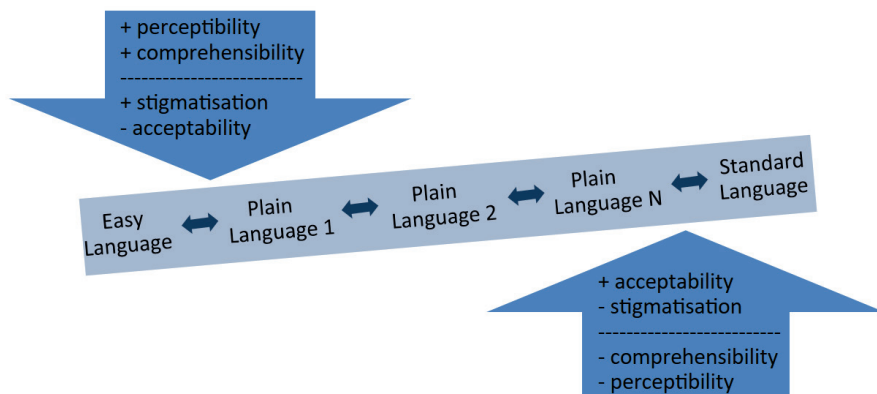

Figure 1 – Complementary features of Easy and Plain Language (Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020b: 24)

Easy Language Plus (see below Section 7) is a variety the aims to balance the scales.

5.   MARKET SITUATION

Plain Language is mostly produced by the different organisations and enterprises themselves and does not constitute, to a larger extent, a specialised market. The situation is different for Easy Language, where the legal situation has promoted the development of an Easy Language text market with companies

specialised in Easy Language translation. Institutions or administrative bodies often require texts from inclusive settings, so that many texts are not only translated, but, in a later step, validated by people with cognitive impairments (Hinrichs 2020; Schiffler 2022).

In Germany, most of the Easy Language texts are informative texts: texts for homepages of public institutions and enterprises; legal texts of all kinds, news texts, information on political parties, health information etc. Less frequent are interaction texts, that is, texts that require or enable action, for example in municipal services (for voting, claiming a new passport etc.; on party election programmes in Easy Language, see Bock 2021; for the range of text types in Easy Language on the market, see Maaß et al. 2021). Most Easy Language texts are written texts, although the primary target groups have low literacy and do not prefer reading information (Maaß 2020: 30ff). Audio-visual Easy Language texts are nonetheless still rare. There is some content in audio formats, for example audio tracks of Easy Language news texts read by professional speakers (Maaß et al. 2021: 205) or news texts via radio. This field (laid out in Maaß & Hernández Garrido 2020) still remains under-investigated in empirical and text-oriented research. Easy Language subtitles are still the exception (but see the fairy tales in Easy Language and Sign Language by the North-German Broadcasting Association NDR; an Easy Language subtitling project is described in Marmit 2021).

Differently from other Easy Languages, for example in Northern Europe, there is almost no literature in Easy Language. This is a field that is reserved for Plain Language, where there are some small publishing houses that are exploring the market (Spaß am Lesen Verlag, Naundob Verlag, Passanten Verlag, see Maaß et al. 2021: 206). Some of the books are translations, but most are original works in Plain Language. There is no funding of literature in Easy Language in Germany.

By contrast, there is quite a large number of Easy Language projects in museums and exhibitions (Rantamo & Schum 2020; Scheele 2021; Al Masri-Gutternig & Reitstätter 2017) and we find Easy Language in inclusive opera or theatre performances (Mälzer 2017). The latest newcomer is Easy Language interpreting (Schulz et al. 2020; Degenhardt 2021) and Easy Language speech-to-text interpreting (Witzel 2020) in order to provide "accessibility in live situations" (Maaß 2020: 206).

6.   Academic perspective

Plain Language has indirectly been a subject of research on comprehensibility, with the most successful model of comprehensible text creation (Langer et al. [10]2015, dating back to the 1970s) effectively being the equivalent of a Plain Language manual. Easy Language has been in the focus of academic research in

Germany in the last 10 years. In 2014, the Research Centre for Easy Language was founded at the University of Hildesheim, with the elaboration of science-based Easy Language rules (Maaß 2015; Bredel & Maaß 2016) that were later transferred to various text types (e.g. Rink 2020; Kröger 2020; Lang 2021) and medialities (Marmit 2021; Maaß & Hernández Garrido 2020) as well as empirically tested with various user groups (Keller 2020a, 2020b; Ahrens 2020). At the University of Mainz/Germersheim, the lab of Silvia Hansen-Schirra set the stage for user-oriented research on Easy Language (groundbreaking: Gutermuth 2020; Deilen 2022). The empirical user research made it obvious that regular methodology cannot be easily applied to users with communication disabilities, but needs to be adapted:

- Eyetracking fails because test subjects with cognitive disabilities will not sit still or need reading aids
- Standardised questionnaires come in language varieties that are too complex to understand
- Information sheets and consent forms need to be translated into Easy Language (or Easy Language Plus, see below) in order to ensure the test participants really understand
- Written language might not be the preferred communication form of the target groups or they might not have access to the internet
- Communities might be shielded by gatekeepers (for example teachers, who are, however, needed for communicative assistance) who involuntarily influence research results
- Vulnerable target groups might not be accessible at all because of the pandemic situation

These are only some of the difficulties that arise when conducting research with test participants with communication impairments. Such problems have to be addressed in order to enable reliable research findings. The methodological adaptation is hence another focus of recent Easy Language research (see for example Bredel et al. 2016; Gutermuth 2020; Deilen 2022; Rink & Schulz 2022; Schwengber in preparation a, b).

While the text perspective and text user perspective have been in the focus of research for a number of years now, we have only little insight into the tendering processes and the translator's perspective. The following two books are the opening of a new branch of research in this field: Husel's study (2022) gives insight into public administration processes of ordering and integrating Easy Language are in the institution's offers, Schiffler (2022) looks into the validation process of Easy Language text production in inclusive settings.

Research has solidified the academic perspective on Easy Language and thus paved the way for academic training. Easy Language is part of different academic Bachelor and Master programmes in the German speaking area, such as the Mas-

ter Programme "Barrierefreie Kommunikation" (= Accessible Communication) at the University of Hildesheim with a focus on Easy Language translation and interpreting (www.uni-hildesheim.de/leichtesprache). In Switzerland, there is a Master Programme of the same name and similar content at the University of Applied Science in Zürich (https://www.zhaw.ch/de/inguistic/forschung/kompetenzzentrum-barrierefreie-kommunikation/). Moreover, there are professional training and certification programmes for Easy Language, like the one of the Professional Association of Interpreters and Translators in Germany (BDÜ = Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer, www.bdue.de), which has more than 7000 active members. Also, there are qualification programmes with an Empowerment background that include people with cognitive disabilities as trainers in order to make their perspective tangible (a central site is https://www.leichte-sprache.org/).

7.   Towards new horizons: Easy Language Plus

Easy and Plain Language are not the only possible solutions to comprehension difficulties. As we have shown in Section 4, Easy Language is very perceptible and comprehensible, but is not acceptable to everyone and entails the risk of stigmatisation. Plain Language, on the other hand, is less stigmatising and more acceptable, yet less perceptible and comprehensible and may thus exclude some of the potential readers.

In order to find the equilibrium between the two opposite poles, the Research Centre for Easy Language has elaborated a third variety that is situated between Easy and Plain Language: Easy Language Plus (Maaß 2020; Hansen-Schirra & Maaß 2020b). Easy Language Plus departs from Easy Language and enriches it strategically. That is, Easy Language Plus is close to Easy Language but is somewhat more complex. It does not resort exclusively to simple sentences, e.g., short clauses with a maximum of one subordinate clause are allowed. More vocabulary can be assumed to be understood than for Easy Language, although Easy Language Plus vocabulary remains rather basic and avoids peripheral lexis for all but such words and concepts that the target users are supposed to be familiar with. The layout goes in the direction of the standard text expectation but does not pack too much text on a page and aims for high perceptibility (for a detailed list with Easy Language Plus features and discussion, see Maaß 2020: 236ff).

Easy Language Plus does not have the striking features of Easy Language but is more perceptibility- and comprehensibility-enhanced than Plain Language. It is therefore assumed to be more acceptable to the target groups while being almost as accessible as Easy Language. At the moment, a group of doctoral students are exploring those qualities of Easy Language with different user groups: German as a second Language (Ahrens in preparation), senior citizens (Keller

in preparation), prelingually deaf users (Schwengber in preparation a, b) or cognitive impairment (Schulz in preparation). As Easy Language Plus does not follow straightforward rules but is strategically enriched on the basis of Easy Language, it can be optimised for the needs of different target groups. This is currently being done at the Research Centre for Easy Language. Ahrens (in preparation) proposes possible features of Easy Language for people with German as a second language, while Schwengber (in preparation b) has modelled Sign language-oriented Easy Language Plus (SEL+, Gebärdensprachorienterte Leichte Sprache Plus, GLS +), a variety that is optimised for people with prelingual hearing loss, and implemented this variety in her empirical research (Schwengber in preparation a).

SEL+ departs from Easy Language and enriches it on the basis of Sign Language and German language as used by the Deaf sign language users. To give an impression, some of the features of SEL+ are now described: Easy Language is constricted to central vocabulary, and Deaf Sign Language users are indeed known to have a limited vocabulary in oral languages (in our case: German). But they will usually understand words that are included in mouth gestures of certain Sign Language vocabulary; they will understand complex words that are part of their everyday life ("Schweigepflicht" = professional secrecy, "Arbeitgeber" = employer, "gebärdensprachkompetent" = Sign Language competent) or have corresponding idiomatic expressions in Sign Language ("warm an deiner Seite" / "warm at your side" = "support", "Du hast locker Zeit" / "you have easy time" = there is enough time etc.). SEL+ can therefore use those resources and will greatly profit in comprehensibility and language economy (as those concepts do not need to be explained either).

On the sentence and text levels, Sign Language follows the figure ground principle; big items are named first and smaller items are placed on them, like on a stage in front of the signing person. This structure can be conveyed in Easy Language Plus and makes it much easier for Sign Language competent users to follow as the information structure complies with their expectations and practices.

SEL+ was used in a survey with prelingually Deaf Sign Language users (Schwengber in print and in preparation) and has generated a huge turnout; the free text answers prove that the questions were understood and the users felt encouraged to participate and give input.

8.   AN EXAMPLE IN THREE VARIETIES

The following example is taken from a project of the Research Centre for Easy Language with the Apotheken Umschau issued by the German publishing house Wort und Bild Verlag (wortundbildverlag.de). The Apotheken Umschau ("Pharmacy Review") provides understandable information on different top-

ics of health and disease. The source texts are directed to lay persons with average reading abilities who desire information on diseases and their treatment, a typical Plain Language setting. The co-operation between the Research Centre for Easy Language and the Apotheken Umschau focuses on a highly comprehensible but not stigmatising version of these texts (target language: Easy Language Plus) and an empirical validation of their comprehensibility and acceptability for different Easy Language target groups. In the research, Easy Language versions of these texts were also drafted for comparative studies. The following is therefore one of the rare examples for versions of the same text in Plain Language, Easy Language and Easy Language Plus. It is taken from Schulz (in preparation).

The Plain Language version is the longest and contains the most information. It contains technical terms and gives explanations of anatomical features. It contains compound sentences with usually not more than one subordinate clause. The Easy Language Plus version is shorter; some of the information of the source text is missing. The text only gives such information that is directly needed in the following sections of the text in order to explain the treatment. The explanations are shorter and contain less information. The sentences are much shorter: no compound sentences. The term "Nagelbett-Entzündung" is separated with a hyphen according to German orthography. The Easy Language version contains only basic information. There are still a few technical terms, but only those that are absolutely necessary in order to understand the topic. All terms are explained. All complex nouns are separated with a mediopoint, that is, a typical dot to indicate the borders of lexemes in complex words. Both the Easy Language and Easy Language Plus versions do not contain anaphorical pronouns in order to facilitate information processing: processing anaphorical pronouns requires grammatical knowledge and attention focus (Bredel & Maaß 2016). This example does not contain images (for examples of Easy Language texts with images and English translations see Maaß 2020).

Plain Language	Easy Language Plus	Easy Language
Was ist eine Nagelbettentzündung?	*Was ist eine Nagelbett-Entzündung?*	*Was ist eine Nagel·bett-Entzündung?*
Das Nagelbett ist das Gewebe unter dem Finger- oder Zehennagel.	Bei einer Nagelbett-Entzündung ist das Gewebe vom Nagelbett entzündet.	Bei einer Nagel·bett-Entzündung ist das Gewebe vom Nagel·bett entzündet.
Keime wie Bakterien oder Pilze können zum Beispiel über kleine Wunden eindringen und entzündliche Reaktionen auslösen. Häufig ist bei einer Nagelbettentzündung nicht nur das Nagelbett infiziert, sondern auch die umgebende Nagelpartie mit Nagelfalz, Nagelwall oder Nagelhaut.	Durch kleine Wunden können Keime in das Nagelbett gelangen. Keime sind zum Beispiel Bakterien oder Pilze. Häufig entzünden sich auch der Nagelfalz oder die Nagelhaut.	Das Nagel·bett ist das Gewebe unter dem Finger·nagel. Und das Nagel·bett ist das Gewebe unter dem Zehen·nagel. Der Nagel besteht aus mehreren Schichten.
Nagelbett, Nagelhaut, Nagelfalz – wo liegt was?	Der Nagel besteht aus mehreren Schichten. Der Hauptteil des Nagels ist die Nagelplatte. Die Nagelplatte schützt das Nagelbett. Die Nagelplatte besteht aus Keratin. Keratin ist fest und hornartig. An den seitlichen Rändern der Nagelplatte ist eine Vertiefung. Die Vertiefung heißt: Nagelfalz. Am unteren Rand der Nagelplatte ist die Nagelhaut.	Der Hauptteil vom Nagel ist die Nagel·platte. Am unteren Rand von der Nagel·platte ist die Nagel·haut. Die Nagel·platte liegt auf dem Nagel·bett. Die Nagel·platte schützt das Nagel·bett.
Der menschliche Nagel ist aus mehreren Schichten aufgebaut. Die Nagelplatte bildet den Hauptteil des Nagels. Sie besteht aus Keratin – einer festen, hornartigen Substanz. An den seitlichen Rändern der Nagelplatte befindet sich eine kleine Vertiefung, der sogenannte Nagelfalz. Das zum Handgelenk hin gelegene Ende der Nagelplatte ist durch die feste Nagelhaut abgegrenzt. Sie schützt die umliegende Haut vor Verletzungen. Die leichte Hautwölbung rings um die Nagelplatte ist der Nagelwall. Die durchsichtige Nagelplatte liegt auf dem Nagelbett auf. Dieses ist ein gut durchblutetes Gewebe, das von vielen höchst empfindsamen Nervenendigungen durchzogen ist und den Nagel mit Nährstoffen versorgt. Durch die durchsichtige Nagelplatte schimmert das Nagelbett rosafarben hindurch.	Die Nagelplatte ist durchsichtig. Die Nagelplatte liegt auf dem Nagelbett. Das Nagelbett ist das Gewebe unter dem Fingernagel oder dem Zehennagel. Das Nagelbett ist gut durchblutet. Im Nagelbett sind viele Nerven-Enden.	

What is nail bed infection?	What is nail bed infection?	What is nail bed infection?
The nail bed is the tissue under the fingernail or toenail. Germs such as bacteria or fungi can, for example, penetrate through small wounds and trigger inflammatory reactions. In a nail bed infection, often not only the nail bed is infected, but also the surrounding nail area including nail fold, nail wall or cuticles. Nail bed, cuticles, nail folds – what is what? The human nail is composed of several layers. The nail plate forms the main part of the nail. It consists of keratin – a solid, horn-like substance. At the lateral edges of the nail plate there is a small depression, the so-called nail fold. The end of the nail plate towards the wrist is delimited by the firm cuticles. It protects the surrounding skin from injury. The slight curvature around the nail plate is the nail wall. The transparent nail plate rests on the nail bed. This is a well-perfused tissue, which is permeated by many highly sensitive nerve endings and supplies the nail with nutrients. Through the transparent nail plate, the nail bed shimmers pink.	In a nail bed infection, the tissue from the nail bed is infected. Germs can get into the nail bed through small wounds. Germs are, for example, bacteria or fungi. Often the nail fold or cuticle also become infected. The nail consists of several layers. The main part of the nail is the nail plate. The nail plate protects the nail bed. The nail plate is made of keratin. Keratin is solid and horn-like. On the lateral edges of the nail plate is a depression. The depression is called: nail fold. At the bottom of the nail plate is the cuticle. The nail plate is transparent. The nail plate lies on the nail bed. The nail bed is the tissue under the fingernail or toenail. The nail bed is well supplied with blood. In the nail bed are many nerve endings.	In a nail bed infection, the tissue of the nail bed is infected. The nail bed is the tissue under the finger nail. And the nail bed is the tissue under the toe. The nail consists of several layers. The main part of the nail is the nail plate. At the bottom of the nail plate is the nail skin. The nail plate lies on the nail bed. The nail plate protects the nail bed.

Table 2 – Apotheken Umschau: https://www.apotheken-umschau.de/, modified by Schulz (in preparation), English translation by the authors for the purpose of the present paper

9. CONCLUSION

In our contribution, we have investigated the history and current situation of Easy and Plain Language in Germany. The development over the last decade has been breath-taking with its arrival in academia in both research as well as teaching. At the same time, we have seen a dynamic development in the Easy Language translation and interpreting market, pushed by the developments

in the legal requirements. Text creation is being professionalised and inclusive forms of text production are also being required by the market, leading to a vibrant supply and demand situation. And we have seen new conceptual developments: Easy Language Plus offers the possibility to create more acceptable texts that are still very comprehensible, especially if they are adapted to the needs and expectations of designated user groups, like in the example of Sign Language-oriented Easy Language Plus.

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