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Adapting text into Easy Language – a Finnish-Swedish perspective

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What is LL-Center?

- Finland is a Nordic country with two official languages, Finnish and Swedish.
- Swedish is a minority language, spoken by less than 300 000 people in Finland.
- LL-Center is the Swedish-speaking centre for Easy Language in Finland.
- The expert centre for Easy Finnish is called Selkokeskus.
- LL-Center is part of the organization FDUV.
  FDUV supports people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

- Intra-language translation is a professionally important area for us from a methodological and practical point of view. Translation between languages can also be important, because later we can also translate easily understandable foreign language content into Hungarian

What is LL-Center?

- Our services include translations from Easy Finnish into Easy Swedish and adapting Swedish texts into Easy Swedish.
- We assess the quality of Easy Language publications made by others and give feedback on how to improve them.
- We publish the Easy Language newspaper Lätta bladet (Easy paper) and provide information and courses.
- We educate reading representatives, who read Easy Language books and materials together with persons with intellectual disabilities or elderly people in need of Easy Language.

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Easy Language in Finland

LL-Center jobbar med och för lätt svenska i Finland.
Alla har rätt till nyheter, information och litteratur som de förstår.

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Definition

When we talk about Easy Language or Easy-to-read in Finland, we talk about a language that is easier to read and understand than average Finnish or Swedish.

The content of the text is adapted, and the choice of words and structure as well. The adaptations aim to make the text easier to read and understand.

Swedish: lätt språk, lättläst.

Finska: selkokieli, selkosuomi.

Engelska: Easy Language, Easy-to-read (ETR)

Who needs Easy Language in Finland?

- Approximately 11–14 % of the population in Finland is estimated to have a need for Easy Language.

  That is between 632 000–812 000 people.

- Many others might benefit from information during certain periods in their lives.

- The estimated amount of people who need Easy Swedish in Finland are approximately 30 000–40 000 people.

Who needs Easy Language in Finland?

- Some need information in Easy Language and easy-to-understand-communication due to a condition they are born with. For example, people with intellectual disabilities, people with ADHD or Autism or people who have dyslexia.
- For some the need emerges during life due to for example a brain injury, a stroke or dementia.
- Some need or benefit from Easy Language for a period in their lives, for example immigrants who are learning the language, or persons who are in a challenging or stressful situation due to mental illness, heavy stress or trauma.

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Adapting text into Easy Language

The adaptation process

- What impacts the adaptation process?
- The goal is to give every person in the society access to information, culture and give them a chance to participate actively in the society.
- The goal is to make the text as easy as possible.
- But most of the time, the reality is that I also need to take the subject of the original text and the wishes of the organization or authority giving the assignment into consideration.

The adaptation process

- Specific for Finland is also that we mostly work with translations from Easy Finnish to Easy Swedish, much less with adaptations straight into Easy Swedish.
- Most of the texts we work with at LL-Center is society information, about for example health care, pensions, social benefits, politics or accessibility.
- These texts usually include difficult words or concepts that can not be totally avoided in the Easy Language text either. I try to think about the readers and explain possible difficult concepts and give examples.

The adaptation process

- I start with reading the original text to gain information on the subject.
- Then I check all the things I do not understand or look for more information on the subject if needed. I use encyclopaedias and dictionaries a lot.
- Then I try to rewrite the content using easier and more concrete words (if possible). If I need to use complicated words, I try to explain them in the running text.

The adaptation process

- I try to start with the most important content and then move on from there. If possible, I leave out parts of the content that can be considered less important.
- I also try to make the layout simpler according to Easy Language guidelines.
- If the text is going to end up on a webpage, I try to keep the sentences shorter and the paragraphs as well. If the text will be published in printed form, I use short rows and align the text to the left margin for increased readability.

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Thank you!

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