

# Easy reading

## In brief



 SPA [Lectura fácil](#)

### origins

The first adapted book considered Easy-to-Read was published in Sweden (*lättläst*) in 1968 by the Swedish National Board for Education (*Sommaren med Monika*, de Per Anders Fogelström). The term was later coined and widespread by both the international organisation Inclusion Europe, which is based in Brussels and was founded in 1988 under the auspices of the EU, and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). Both have contributed to the elaboration of different Easy-to-Read adaptation guidelines and their translation into other languages. In Spain, Easy-to-Read first appeared in 2003 with the formation of the *Associació Lectura Fàcil*. The term was also included in article nine of the *International Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities*, passed by the UN General Assembly in 2006.

### other names

Easy-to-Read should not be confused with *plain language*, which seeks comprehensible information. *Plain language* is not aimed at collective groups with reading difficulties, but rather focuses on avoiding the obscurantism of specialised languages and, above all, seeks clarity so that judicial and [administrative](#) texts are comprehensible for all citizens (Montolío y Tascón [2020](#)). Literary texts are a fundamental part of Easy-to-Read production but have never been integrated into the concept of *plain language*. In relation to audio visual products, the term *Easy-to-Understand* is sometimes used. See the [EASIT](#) project.

### abstract


Easy-to-Read is a modality of intralinguistic translation (from text to text in the same language) and intersemiotic translation (from text to image) aimed at people with reading difficulties. The original

texts are adapted or created by following guidelines and recommendations gathered from internationally recognised texts, such as the translation into Spanish of the *Guidelines for Easy-to-Read materials* from the IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), *Information for All* by Inclusion Europe and FEAPS (today known as Plena Inclusión), and thirdly, the recent experimental Spanish standard UNE 153101 EX *Lectura Fácil*. The adaptation guidelines include important changes in four areas: format, linguistic simplification, inclusion of images (photographs, drawings, and pictograms) and the use of comments or other paratextual support. Linguistic simplification is comprised of syntactic, pragmatic or lexical transformations, always with the aim of maintaining the original meaning and intentions. The translation assignment is based on producing clear texts which are easily understood by the target groups, including people with intellectual disabilities, while also benefiting other groups. Originating in Sweden towards the end of the 1960s, Easy-to-Read is a relatively new field. Today it has strong institutional support ratified by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other binding national laws. In the Spanish-speaking field, we must highlight the boost it has received by [Plena Inclusión](#) and [Associació Lectura Fácil](#), and especially the works of García Muñoz (2012, 2014). This accessibility translation modality is applicable to any type of text: literary, medical, administrative, judicial, informational, tourist or educational. Some Easy-to-Read strategies can also be used in the elaboration of audio visual and digital products. In translation studies, Easy-to-Read is found under the accessibility framework and is interrelated with other disciplines such as psychology and pedagogy. Easy-to-Read is also considered a support product for cognitive accessibility (Jiménez Hurtado & Medina Reguera, 2021).

## record

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 [https://www.aieti.eu/enti/easy\\_reading\\_ENG/](https://www.aieti.eu/enti/easy_reading_ENG/)

# Entry



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## Easy-to-Read: a complex process

The adaptation of texts into Easy-to-Read (ETR), which guarantees the right of access to written information on equal terms, has gained enormous social and conceptual development in [Europe](#) over the last number of years. In Spain, international directives and recommendations and their translations (IFLA 2010; Inclusion Europe 2013) have been reflected in some important texts: on the one hand, [Lectura fácil: Métodos de redacción y evaluación](#) [*Easy-to-Read: composition and evaluation methods*](García Muñoz 2012) y [Lectura fácil, en el marco de las Guías prácticas de orientaciones para la inclusión educativa](#) [*Easy-to-Read within the framework for practical guides of orientation for educational inclusion*] (García Muñoz 2014); and on the other hand, the [UNE 153101 EX](#) standard and its corresponding Easy-to-Read version, [UNE 153102 EX](#), both from 2018. These directives understand ETR as an adaptation tool (from source text [ST] to target text [TT] in Easy-to-Read) or a creation [European Easy-to-Read logotype](#). tool (an ST in ETR), and subsequent [assessment](#) of texts for [cognitive accessibility](#).



For the technical committee CTN153/GT1, Easy-to-Read is a *method* which has gathered a group of guidelines and recommendations to transform content, design and layout (UNE 153102 2018: 7). To be considered as such, the translation needs to have been validated by at least one person with reading difficulties in a “guided evaluation process” (UNE 153102 2018: 6), after which the TT will usually include a European logotype which recognises it as an ETR text (see image 1). Easy-to-Read is aimed at people with reading difficulties stemming from an intellectual disability or other cognitive difficulties, although the results may benefit deaf or deafblind people, as well as people with specific diagnoses such as [autism spectrum syndrome](#), [mental illnesses](#), [attention deficit disorder](#), old people or those with [aphasia](#), [specific speech disorders](#), [cerebral palsy](#), etc. People with poor literacy levels due to socioeconomic reasons or lack of knowledge of the language can also benefit (IFLA 2010: 5-9; UNE 153102 2018: 7-8).

In addition to the important modifications relative to the ST format (size, font type and font colour, justification and spacing, position and paragraph structure, amongst others), García Muñoz (2012: 25) states that when the adaptation to an easier language is not enough, then one could resort to “oral transmission, through images and pictograms, sign language, alternative or augmentative communication or Braille”, giving these adaptations a strong intersemiotic component. The use of images appeals to the image-text coherence, where the image is understood as a support strategy to the verbal form (García Muñoz 2014: 20). The UNE 153101, for its part, exclusively uses the term *images* when referring to all non-verbal resources which offer a support function to the written text.

Resultados para 'gracias', 'comprender' y 'derechos' en varios sistemas pictográficos





*Results for thank you (first row); understand (second row) and rights (third row) in four different pictogram systems. Compiled by authors.*

In the field of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC), there is a quest for substitutes for natural speech for people without spoken language, either with messages based on graphic systems (perceived through sight and structured in a planned way on a board or communication device) or corporal systems (manual signs which are received in space and time through sight or touch). The broad trajectory of AAC in the United States and northern Europe is in stark contrast with the shortage of research in the Spanish-speaking world (Coronas & Basil 2013: 134, Alcantud 2020). However, Spain stands out for the growth of ARASAAC, the electronic library for graphic symbols, driven by the Government of the Aragon region. Other international pictographic systems include the Pictographic Communication System, Widgit, SymbolStix and Minspeak. These collections try to symbolise language representing objects, actions, ideas, time, space, feelings etc., and are common in Easy-to-Read texts. Some of these alternative languages have created symbols to include grammatical or non-lexical words, while others omit them, combine pictographic symbols with written words

or symbolise pragmatic functions of language (see PODD system, Porter & Cafiero 2009). There are some text-to-pictogram translation applications, such as Pictotraductor, Arasuit o Dictapicto. However, these are limited and have not been studied from a Translation and Interpreting Studies (TIS) perspective, but rather from a computational linguistic perspective (Sevens, Vandeghinste, Schuurman *et al.* 2018; Vandeghinste, Schuurman, Sevens *et al.* 2017; Vandeghinste & Bulté 2019). Research carried out on text-image relations in AAC have been centred around measuring the degrees of iconicity (similarity with what is represented), abstraction (cognitive capacity to achieve a socially constructed and shared meaning), and ambiguity, always using the so-called *transparency hypothesis* (Musselwhite & Ruscello 1984; Mizuko 1987; Mizuko & Reichle 1989), which means that the greater the iconicity, the greater the transparency and, as a result, the easier it is for the pictograms to be understood by people with disabilities (Miranda & Locke 1989; Huang & Chen 2011; Dada, Huguet & Bornman 2013; Bertola López 2017).

Therefore, for Easy-to-Read, those which at first might seem an intralinguistic exercise of adaptation or lexical, syntactical and pragmatical simplification, is in fact a complex system of translational operations, in other words, cognitive operations, which involve at least two semiotic modes: verbal and visual. *Adaptation* is a modality of intralinguistic (text to text in the same language) and intersemiotic (from text to image) translation. Unlike other modalities, the translator should analyse what and how many images would be (best) suited to facilitate reading comprehension from the ST. In this sense, it can be useful to examine the works on the translation from visual code to verbal code (the opposite to ETR) in an illustrated album (Oittinen, Ketola & Garavini 2018), a comic (Zanettin in this same volume), in studies of representation of specialised knowledge through images (Prieto 2018) and in other modalities of film and [museum accessibility](#).

<p>Página núm. 2 BOJA núm. 56 Sevilla, 20 de marzo 2007</p> <p><b>O. Disposiciones estatales</b></p> <p><b>JEFATURA DEL ESTADO</b></p> <p>LEY ORGÁNICA 2/2007, de 19 de marzo, de reforma del Estatuto de Autonomía para Andalucía.</p> <p>JUAN CARLOS I, REY DE ESPAÑA</p> <p>A todos los que la presente vieren y entendiéren. Sabed: Que las Cortes Generales han aprobado y Yo vengo en sancionar la siguiente ley orgánica.</p> <p><b>P R E Á M B U L O</b></p> <p>Andalucía, a lo largo de su historia, ha forjado una noble y sólida identidad que le confiere un carácter singular como pueblo, asentado desde épocas milenarias en un ámbito geográfico diferenciado, espacio de encuentro y de diálogo entre civilizaciones diversas. Nuestro valioso patrimonio social y cultural es parte esencial de España, en la que andaluzes y andaluzas nos reconocemos compartiendo un mismo proyecto básico en los valores de justicia, libertad y seguridad, consagrados en la Constitución de 1978. En parte de los derechos y libertades de todos los pueblos de España.</p> <p>Andalucía ha compilado un rico acervo cultural por la convivencia de una multiplicidad de pueblos y de civilizaciones, dando sobrado ejemplo de mestizaje humano a través de los siglos.</p> <p>La interculturalidad de prácticas, hábitos y modos de vida se ha expresado a lo largo del tiempo sobre una unidad de fondo que encierra una pluralidad histórica, y se manifiesta en un patrimonio cultural tangible e intangible, dinámico y cambiante, popular y culto, único entre las culturas del mundo.</p> <p>Esta singularidad de una personalidad arcaica constituye sobre valores universales, marca excluyente. Es que Andalucía, asentada en el sur de la península ibérica, es un territorio de gran diversidad paisajística, con importantes cadenas montañosas y con gran parte de su territorio articulado en torno y a lo largo del río Guadalquivir, que abarca al Mediterráneo y al Atlántico por una dilatada fachada marítima, constituye un nexo de unión entre Europa y el continente africano. Un espacio de frontera que ha facilitado contactos y diálogos entre norte y sur, entre los arcos mediterráneo y atlántico, y donde se ha configurado como hecho diferencial un sistema urbano medido en clave humana.</p> <p>Estos rasgos, entre otros, no son sólo sedimentos de la tradición, sino que constituyen una vía de expansión de la cultura andaluza en España y el mundo y una aportación contemporánea a las culturas globales. El pueblo andaluz es heredero, por tanto, de un vasto patrimonio de civilización que Andalucía posee y debe aportar a la sociedad contemporánea, sobre la base de los principios inrenunciables de igualdad, democracia y convivencia pacífica y justa.</p> <p>El legítimo esfuerzo y sacrificio de innumerables generaciones de andaluzes y andaluzas a lo largo de los tiempos se ha visto recompensado en la reciente etapa democrática, que es cuando Andalucía expresa con más firmeza su identidad como pueblo a través de la lucha por la autonomía plena. En los últimos 25 años, Andalucía ha vivido el proceso de cambio más intenso de nuestra historia y se ha acercado al ideal de Andalucía libre y solicitaria por lo que luchara incansablemente Blas Infante, a quien el Parlamento de Andalucía, en un acto de justicia histórica, reconoce como Padre de la Patria Andaluza en abril de 1983.</p>	<p> Estatuto de Autonomía de Andalucía  Instituto de Lectura Fácil <b>7</b></p> <p><b>Preámbulo del Estatuto de Andalucía</b></p> <p>Andalucía es una comunidad autónoma situada en el sur de España, lugar de unión entre Europa y África.</p> <p>Desde hace cientos de años, Andalucía ha sido un lugar de encuentro y de convivencia de muchas civilizaciones.</p> <p>Esta variedad de culturas y pueblos que han vivido en nuestra tierra, ha hecho de Andalucía un pueblo con una riqueza y un patrimonio cultural único.</p> <p>El paisaje andaluz es muy variado con grandes montañas, una gran costa que da a 2 mares, el atlántico y el mediterráneo y un gran río, el Guadalquivir, que pasa por muchos pueblos de Andalucía.</p> <p>Los andaluzes y andaluzas tenemos una personalidad propia como pueblo dentro de España, construida a lo largo de la historia.</p> <p>Compartimos los valores universales de justicia, igualdad, libertad, democracia y convivencia pacífica.</p> <p>Estos valores están recogidos en la Constitución Española.</p> <p>Los andaluzes y andaluzas han luchado desde hace mucho tiempo para tener una identidad como pueblo y una autonomía plena.</p> <p><b>Preámbulo: Introducción.</b></p> <p><b>Civilización: Conjunto de costumbres, ideas, cultura o arte de un pueblo o comunidad.</b></p> <p><b>Patrimonio: Conjunto de bienes, cultura, edificios, monumentos, artes, costumbres de un pueblo.</b></p> <p><b>La Constitución Española: Es la norma principal de España y todas las leyes deben respetar esta norma.</b></p> <p><b>Autonomía plena: Es la capacidad para gobernar Andalucía con sus propias leyes y organismos de la administración</b></p>
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*Fragment of an original judicial text and the ETR version. Statute of Autonomy of Andalusia.*

Given that this is a transversal operation, applicable to any type of text produced in natural language, the areas of application of ETR are as numerous as those produced in different fields of knowledge, such as education (curricular texts for students), leisure and culture (Carlucci & Seibel 2020), natural science (platforms like [DesGranando science](#), science museums), politics and jurisprudence ([laws](#), [sentences](#), [political party programmes](#)), bio-sanitation (López & Tercedor 2017, Prieto and Montalt 2018) or [audiovisual media](#) (Bernabé & Oreo 2019; Bernabé 2020, [EASIT](#)). In the literary field, some associations have archives with some 300 literary pieces adapted in Spain (see [Associació Lectura Fàcil](#), [Planeta Fàcil](#) or [La Mar de Fàcil](#)), although there is no known scientific production in TIS specific to the translation of literature to ETR. In the following images you can see two examples of translations to ETR.


*Don Quijote de la Mancha de Fácil Lectura*

**DON QUIJOTE DE LA MANCHA**

En un pueblo de la Mancha,  
de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme,  
vivió no hace mucho tiempo un **hidalgo**.

Nuestro hidalgo se llamaba Alonso Quijano.  
Tenía muchos años y era muy delgado.  
Don Alonso poseía un caballo flaco,  
unas tierras y una casa muy grande.  
El hidalgo vivía con su joven sobrina  
y una criada.

Un **hidalgo** era una persona que había heredado tierras y vivía sin tener que trabajar. Era un noble.



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*Don Quijote de la Mancha de Fácil Lectura*


**LECTURAS DEL HIDALGO**

A don Alonso le gustaba mucho cazar y leer.  
El leía durante muchas horas. Día y noche.  
Leía libros de aventuras de **caballeros andantes**,  
de gigantes y magos.  
En los libros se decían cosas que nadie entendía,  
como esta:

*La razón de la simrazón  
mi razón enflaquece.*

Don Alonso se volvió loco de tanto leer.  
Creyó que las historias de caballeros andantes  
ocurrían de verdad.

Los **caballeros andantes** eran los protagonistas de los libros de caballería y andaban por el mundo buscando aventuras.



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## **Research potential**

Despite the great efforts by institutions, the academy needs to resolve many questions raised by this translation practice. Beyond the general notion of simplification of linguistic structures, there are very few scientific studies, especially if we focus on the Spanish-speaking world, which validate the complex process of creating a text in ETR by analysing and describing different perspectives. Firstly, the affirmation that ETR texts are in fact easy to read and understand is still controversial (Hurtado, Jones & Burniston 2014, Rivero & Saldaña 2020). Empirical studies by León, Jastrzebska & Martínez-Huertas (2018a: 73-77) conclude that, within the “intellectual and developmental disabilities” group there is an increased variability relative to performance and the strategies employed, as well as to how (reading) time, motivation and other extrinsic supports can positively influence the comprehension outcome. According to textual genres, for some users, they can be (somewhat) easier to read, and in other cases, the adaptation is insufficient (Fajardo, Tavares, Ávila *et al.* 2014; Buell, Langdon, Pounds *et al.* 2020). The IFLA (García 2012: 23; León, Martínez-Huertas & Jastrzebska 2018b: 117) has established three levels of adaptation to Easy-to-Read, although in the last number of years “universal easy reading” has prevailed, a sort of “common minimum” or “design for all” in a, in the case of the Spanish language, neutral or pan Hispanic style, without hardly any theoretical-linguistic reflection about what this entails (with the exception of easy reading in the German-speaking world, see Maaß 2019, & Maaß and Rink 2020). The concepts easy, universal and equivalent are alternated contradictorily in the thin bibliography: “[...] easy-to-read is not a simplification or a summary. [...] The objective is to offer the same information in which sense and sentiment from the original author are recreated (García 2015: 154; IFLA 2010: 20).

On the other hand, the relation and coherence between the written texts and the images (photographs, pictograms and illustrations), should be studied more in depth. Barely any attention is paid as to how to culturally “access” pictographic symbol resources in its translation into other languages (Huer 2000; Chompoobutr, Potibal, Boriboon *et al.* 2013; Kang, Kim & Yeon 2019). Accessibility for different receiver groups should be measured for different types of images, from the most universal and simple, to the most cultural and metaphorical (Tercedor & Casado 2018). In the [\*Design Guidelines for Pictograms\*](#) publication, the comprehension of 60 graphic resources in urban settings was evaluated adhering to ISO 9186 (*Part 1: Methods for testing comprehensibility*). It was revealed that many images which were of supposedly universal quality are interpreted very differently and even incorrectly by different subjects. This coincided with the results of different authors (Poncelas and Murphy 2007; Sutherland & Isherwood 2016). A second step would be to focus on the semantic and pragmatic relationship between image and text, without previously determining which of the two should provide more textual context or useful support. It would be necessary to theorise about the roles of the images in this translation modality (interpretative, attentional, compensatory etc.), because some studies suggest that the cognitive load increases with illustrations, which negatively influence understanding (Yaneva, Temnikova & Mitkov 2015). This is, therefore, a job for an interdisciplinary research team made up of psycholinguistics, translators, psychologists and pedagogists as well as experts in different areas of knowledge (arts, judicial sciences, medicine, etc.).

From a solely traductological perspective, research on this translation process is in its infancy. The ST analysis must be undertaken from a top-down textual perspective, with the aim of going beyond an intuitive simplification of lexical or syntactical structures. It is imperative to describe the possibilities of simplifying the *diagram and cognitive (sub)domain* of the area of knowledge of which the text is part (for example, domain *archaeology*; subdomain *excavations*), the expression of the communicative function and speech acts activated in the text (describing, evaluating etc.) including the rhetoric structure of the text, leading to the logical order of events with the structure of the sentences (Faber 2015). This process of representation of macro textual knowledge should be the starting point of the simplification process since a text is more accessible when the readers-recipients can perceive the events it activates in an orderly way. This journey is complemented with a bottom-up analysis in which lexemes, syntagma, and simplified syntactic structures contribute to the activation of a mental representation of what the text describes.

In the case of specialised texts, the communication department of globalised industry have been leading the way towards simplification with the creation of controlled language in their speciality domain (O'Brien 2010). The simplified TT should not only be typologies of controlled languages, but also controlled constructions of the texts from each domain.

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