

Overcoming language barriers on the way to knowledge. Linguistic reflections on German Easy Language as a tool for barrier-free information and participation

Julia Fuchs^{1,2,*}

¹Leipzig University, Geisteswissenschaftliches Zentrum, Beethovenstraße 15, 04107 Leipzig, Germany

²Laboratoire Savoirs, Textes, Langage (UMR 8163 – CNRS), BP 60149, 59653 Villeneuve d'Ascq Cedex, France

Abstract. The present article sheds light on the interplay between texts written in standard language, knowledge, and participation and, this way, makes aware of the fact that access to (action-enabling) knowledge largely depends on language and reading skills. Against this background, the article presents the concept of German Easy Language (“Leichte Sprache”) as a tool for barrier-free information and participation for individuals with limited language and/or reading skills and reflects critically its potentials and problems from a linguistic perspective.

Résumé. Le présent article met en lumière l'interaction entre les textes écrits dans la langue standard, le savoir et la participation et, de cette manière, fait prendre conscience du fait que l'accès au savoir (permettant l'action) dépend largement des compétences linguistiques et de lecture. Dans ce contexte, l'article présente le concept de langue facile allemande (“Leichte Sprache”) en tant qu'outil d'information et de participation sans barrière pour les personnes ayant des compétences linguistiques et/ou de lecture limitées et réfléchit de manière critique à ses potentiels et problèmes d'un point de vue linguistique.

1 Introduction

It is common practice to read different kinds of texts to acquire knowledge in certain areas. For example, people read newspaper articles to inform themselves about the latest events of the day, or they read a travel guidebook because they want to know about the sights and restaurants in a city. We read in order to acquire knowledge as if it was the most natural thing in the world. In many respects, knowledge is mediated by language. However, in these cases, language means ‘standard language’. Access to knowledge seems to be limited exclusively to those individuals who are able to read texts written in standard language. Individuals with

* Corresponding author: julia.fuchs@uni-leipzig.de

different forms of communication impairments who have difficulties with regular texts, on the other hand, are facing severe language barriers on the way to knowledge. As a tool for overcoming these barriers, forms of Easy Language in different languages have been developed, for example *Leichte Sprache* in German or *Facile à lire et à comprendre* (FALC) in French. Easy Language is often considered to be a variety of a language (Bredel & Maaß, 2016a: 24) that is reduced on different linguistic levels, for example on the lexical and syntactic levels.

The aims of the present article are twofold: 1.) Firstly, it seeks to shed light on the interplay between standard language, knowledge and participation and, this way, to make aware of the fact that access to (action-enabling) knowledge largely depends on language skills. 2.) Secondly, it presents the concept of German Easy Language as a tool for barrier-free information and participation for individuals with limited language skills and reflects critically its potentials and problems from a linguistic perspective. The article is structured as follows: Section 2 introduces the complex notion of knowledge and defines the understanding of knowledge in the present context. Section 3 sheds light on the interplay between standard language, knowledge, and participation. Section 4 is the heart of the present article: German Easy Language is introduced with a special focus on its (psycho)linguistic aspects. Section 5 presents conclusions with emphasis on problems and potentials of Easy Language as a tool for barrier-information and participation and gives an outlook on future research desiderata.

2 Knowledge – a multi-faceted notion

Intuitively, it seems to be clear what knowledge means. A closer look at the scientific literature, however, reveals that knowledge is a very multi-faceted notion on which consensus has not yet been achieved, because different disciplines define this notion partly differently. The present article does not claim to give an exhaustive overview of the different approaches to the notion of knowledge; it is, however, necessary to clarify what is meant by knowledge in the present context.

A distinction has been made between explicit knowledge on the one hand and implicit and tacit knowledge on the other. Explicit knowledge is “knowledge that has been articulated and, more often than not, captured in the form of text, tables, diagrams, product specifications and so on” (Nickols, 2000). Explicit knowledge has to be distinguished from implicit and tacit knowledge. Implicit knowledge is knowledge that can in principle be articulated but has not (yet) been. And tacit knowledge is knowledge that cannot be articulated. This kind of knowledge is often associated with the famous statement made by Polanyi (1966: 4): “We know more than we can tell”. An example is the ability to recognize faces – we can hardly explain how we do it. With regard to this typology, it is explicit knowledge that is relevant in the present article. A similar typology of different types of knowledge is the one distinguishing between declarative and procedural knowledge: declarative knowledge is similar to explicit knowledge; it “consists of descriptions of facts and things or of methods and procedures” (Nickols, 2000). Procedural knowledge, on the other hand, “manifests itself in the doing of something [...]. We think, we reason, we decide, we dance, we play the piano, we ride bicycles, we read customers’ faces and moods (and our bosses’ as well), yet we cannot reduce to mere words that which we obviously know or know how to do” (Nickols, 2000). In what follows, *knowledge* refers to explicit or declarative knowledge since Easy Language is concerned with the transmission of this very kind of knowledge.

3 Language, knowledge, and participation

In order to define standard language, several criteria have been proposed in the linguistic literature: a standard language is standardized, codified, supraregional, accepted as significant, spread by media/authorities/institutions, taught at school, etc. (cf. Elspaß & Dürscheid, 2017: 89). It is in this very standard language that most texts that transfer knowledge are written. And this knowledge is action-enabling in the sense of participation. Participation is defined by the WHO (2001: 221) as “a person's involvement in a life situation”. However, more fine-grained definitions exist. A distinction can, for example, be made between political participation on the one hand and social participation on the other: political participation refers to activities performed voluntarily with the aim to influence political decisions or to participate in decision-taking. Social participation refers to human behaviour in different areas of life, for instance free-time activities, working life, social life or the social community (cf. Gabriel & Völkl, 2008: 269-271). The interdependence between standard language, knowledge and participation seems to be so self-evident that it must be brought explicitly to the surface: people read newspaper articles (usually written in standard language) to inform themselves about the latest events of the day. This enables them to participate in daily conversations. Manuals, written in standard language, contain instructions and enable to do work properly, for example in the context of working life. And brochures and programs, also usually written in standard language, inform us about our rights and duties or about the cinema program and enable us to participate in political and cultural life. Thus, linguistic skills are a prerequisite for knowledge and participation (cf. also Bock, 2015; Dönges, Stegkemper & Wagner, 2018). For individuals who have problems with regular texts, a form of barrier-free communication and information has been developed: Easy Language, which is topic of the next section.

4 Easy Language

After a brief overview of several important elements of the legal situation of German Easy Language (Section 4.1), the target groups are introduced (Section 4.2). After that, a model of knowledge transmission in the context of Easy Language, comprising the elements text producer, text, and text user, is presented (Section 4.3). The remainder of this section is structured according to the elements of this model: Section 4.4 is dedicated to the text producers, Section 4.5 to Easy Language texts, and Section 4.6 to the text users.

4.1 Elements of the legal situation

A detailed overview of the legal situation of Easy Language in Germany can be found in Maaß (2020: 56-64). In what follows, only the most significant elements of the legal situation are presented exemplarily in order to reveal that and in what way Easy Language is established in the German law. Initially, strong impulses were received from the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (UN CRPD) that underlines, amongst others, “the importance of accessibility to the physical, social, economic and cultural environment, to health and education and to information and communication” (UN CRPD, 2008: preamble, 22). It was in the BITV 2.0 (Accessible Information Technology Regulation; 2011) that the expression *Leichte Sprache* (‘Easy Language’) was mentioned explicitly for the first time in the German law; however, it merely mandates the use of Easy Language for general explanations of content and navigation for the start pages of federal agencies. The Federal Act on Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities (BGG (Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz) 2002/2016/2018), adopted in 2002 and amended twice in 2016 and 2018, goes significant steps further: since 2016, it contains a paragraph entitled

“Comprehensibility and Easy Language” (§ 11 “Verständlichkeit und Leichte Sprache”) according to which public agencies must explain notices, general rulings, contracts under public law and forms in Easy Language to individuals with intellectual or psychological disabilities if they demand this. In addition, according to § 11, public agencies are supposed to offer information in Easy Language to an increasing degree; according to the paragraph in question, the federal government is working towards getting public agencies to use Easy Language more intensively and to build up and strengthen their competencies in writing texts in Easy Language. Maaß (2020: 61) calls the regulations of § 11 “a major breakthrough for the Easy Language movement in Germany”.

4.2 Target groups

Initially, Easy Language has been developed for individuals with learning difficulties and intellectual disabilities. Meanwhile, however, Easy Language targets a substantially wider group of individuals. Bredel and Maaß (2016a: 139) distinguish between a primary and a secondary target group: whereas members of the primary target group (e.g. people with learning difficulties, with intellectual disabilities, with dementia, with functional illiteracy) are dependent on Easy Language, members of the secondary target group encounter and use texts in Easy Language even though they could also read the corresponding regular text. A critique repeatedly mentioned in the literature concerns the tension existing between one single concept Easy Language that has to satisfy partly different communicative needs of the different target groups.

4.3 Modelling knowledge transmission in the context of Easy Language

Until now, no model of knowledge transfer has been developed for the context of Easy Language. A first proposition can be seen in Figure 1, where the elements in the angles of the triangle (text creator, text in Easy Language, text user) are associated with several features characterizing the respective elements.

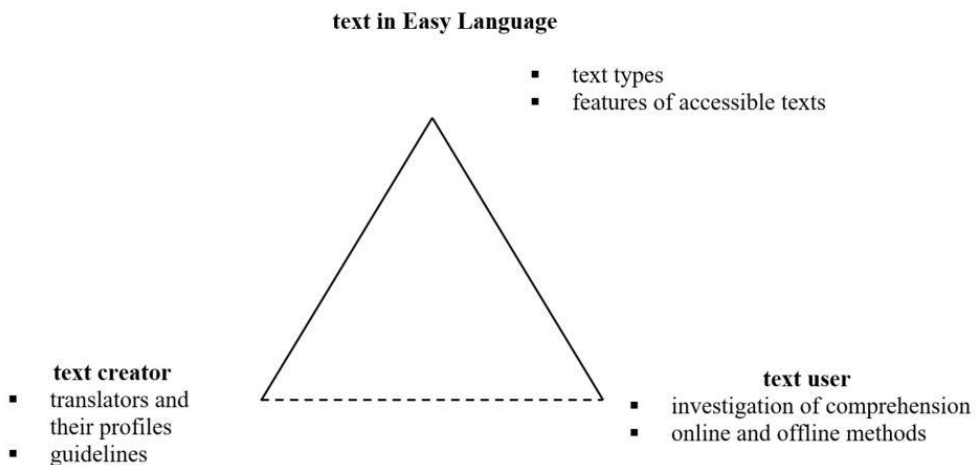


Fig. 1. Model of knowledge transmission in the context of Easy Language

What is important is that the connection between the text creators and the text users is an indirect one; the element connecting these two elements is the text written in Easy Language, the medium of knowledge transfer. For the sake of completeness, it must be pointed out that

Easy Language has only been restricted to the written medium in its beginnings; meanwhile, there are also oral forms of Easy Language, for instance guided city tours or Easy Language interpreting, for example in the context of events (also) addressing target groups (Maaß, 2020: 175). However, the written text remains the standard medium for knowledge transfer in Easy Language. The remainder of the present article concentrates on the three elements of the proposed model: text creators (Section 4.4), Easy Language texts (Section 4.5) and text users (Section 4.6).

4.4 Text creators

4.4.1 Translators and their profiles

Texts in Easy Language are mainly produced

- by people with different professional profiles that either make an intralingual translation of a regular text or that create a text in Easy Language from the very beginning;
- by accessibility activists that either belong to an institution or act as private persons (Maaß, 2020: 170).

The following profiles of translators can be distinguished (Maaß, 2020: 177-178):

- Employment in a translation agency affiliated to institutions for individuals with intellectual disabilities; often without profound expertise in (intralingual) translation.
- Expertise in the field of interlingual translation with extra training in intralingual translation in Easy Language; usually professional translation skills, but often without close contact to target groups.
- Academic studies in the field of accessible communication; as a part of the academic education, contact to and knowledge of target groups.
- Editors in media institutions with a special focus on accessible communication.

As pointed out by Maaß (2020: 179), systematic research in the field of Easy Language text production / translation is still lacking.

4.4.2 Guidelines

In principle, text creators have different guidelines for German Easy Language¹ at their disposal that differ with respect to their granularity. The guidelines often go hand in hand with specific quality seals (Table 1). Text creators usually adhere to one specific guideline and get the corresponding quality seal that often appears on a text as a proof of quality. The distinction made by Maaß (2020) between practical guidelines on the one hand and scientifically founded rulebooks on the other is included in Table 1. The practical guidelines are related to the empowerment movement and contributed to the public visibility of Easy Language. However, these guidelines are often lacking precision, the rules being vague and difficult to operationalize. Regarding the quality seals, there are striking differences: whereas Inclusion Europe and Netzwerk Leichte Sprache do not examine the texts carrying their logo, the quality seal “Leichte Sprache wissenschaftlich geprüft”, issued by the Research Centre for Easy Language at the University of Hildesheim, can only be acquired if the relevant texts have been examined systematically by the institution (Fuchs, 2019: 444-445). A major research gap pointed out repeatedly in the scientific literature concerns the empirical

¹ Due to limitations of space, the different guidelines cannot be presented and compared in detail in the present article; this has already been done elsewhere – the interested reader is referred to Bredel & Maaß (2016a: 82-116; in German) and Maaß (2020: 69-88; in English).

investigation of the effectiveness of the rules formulated in the guidelines; for this purpose, psycholinguistic studies including target groups of Easy Language have to be conducted – a research field that has only emerged recently.

Table 1. Overview of guidelines for German Easy Language

	Guideline / rulebook	Publication year	Institution / Author	Quality seal
Practical guidelines	Informationen für alle. Europäische Regeln, wie man Informationen leicht lesbar und leicht verständlich macht	2009	Inclusion Europe	European Easy to read logo
	Die Regeln für Leichte Sprache	2009	Netzwerk Leichte Sprache	Siegel Netzwerk Leichte Sprache
	Appendix 2 of BITV 2.0	2011	BITV 2.0	–
Scientifically f. rulebooks	Leichte Sprache. Das Regelbuch	2015	Maaß	Leichte Sprache wissenschaftlich geprüft
	Duden Easy Language – scientific book	2016a	Bredel & Maaß	
	Duden Easy Language – practical manual	2016b	Bredel & Maaß	

4.5 Texts

4.5.1 Text types

Texts in Easy Language are mostly available in the following forms (partly being hybrids):

- information texts, e.g. information brochures, news;
- interaction texts, e.g. subpoenas, payment requests;
- instruction texts, e.g. tutorials, manuals;
- entertainment texts, e.g. novels (Maaß & Rink, 2020: 50-51).

4.5.2 Features of accessible texts

An accessible text is characterized by several features, each one being a prerequisite for the following feature: retrievability, perceptibility, comprehensibility, linkability, acceptability, action-enabling potential. In other words, a text must be retrievable in order to be perceived, it must be perceptible in order to be comprehended, it must be linkable in order to be linked to previous knowledge and recalled, it must be acceptable in order to be action-enabling (Maaß, 2020: 26-48). Among these features of accessible texts, linguistics is most concerned with comprehensibility: which linguistic criteria does a text have to fulfil in order to be comprehensible for Easy Language target groups? As far as the scientifically founded guidelines (Section 4.4.2) are concerned, there are several techniques for reducing complexity on different linguistic levels in order to enhance comprehension; for example, on the morphological level, there are only three cases in German Easy Language (nominative, dative, accusative; the genitive is replaced by certain alternative constructions), there is only the active voice (no passive voice), the indicative (no subjunctive forms) and concerning the tenses, the future tense, the preterite and the past perfect are not licensed. Compounds, very typical of the German language, are separated by an interpunct (as in *Elefanten·baby* ‘baby

elephant’). On the lexical level, autosemantic words fulfilling criteria such as high frequency, denotative precision, connotative and stylistic neutrality and early age of acquisition should be used in Easy Language. Regarding the syntactical level, subordinate clauses are not licensed; rather, a sentence should only contain one single proposition. For conditional, causal, temporal, adversative, concessive and final subordinate clauses, the scientifically founded guidelines propose specific constructions satisfying the basic rule that the use of subjunctions is not allowed. This last aspect leads to the following section in which a corpus study investigating the factual expression of causal relations² in German Easy Language is presented.

4.5.3 Corpus study: causal relations

As the guidelines for German Easy Language do not allow the use of subordinate clauses or complex nominal structures, the question arises how several semantic relations like causal ones are expressed – if you can neither use *weil* (‘because’) nor *wegen* (‘due to’), how could you possibly express a cause-effect relationship? The scientifically founded rulebooks (Section 4.4.2) recommend using the adverbs *deshalb* (‘that’s why’) oder *nämlich* (‘in fact’) in order to express causal relations. However, these recommendations, as intuitively appealing as they may be, have not been derived systematically from psycholinguistic literature. Fuchs (2019: 453) partly questions the legitimacy of these rules, for example due to the high frequency of *weil* in contrast to *deshalb* and *nämlich* in spoken German, high frequency being an indicator of easy processing. The guideline published by Netzwerk Leichte Sprache (2009: 18) allows the use of the subjunction *Weil* sentence-initially in a syntactically autonomous sentence, as in “Today, I don’t go swimming. Because it’s raining” – which is not acceptable from a strictly grammatical viewpoint. Given the ban of linguistic devices typically used in standard language to express causal relations and the fact that different guidelines make partly different recommendations, the question arises how causal relations are de facto expressed in authentic texts in Easy Language. In order to address this question on an empirical basis, Fuchs (2019) compiled a corpus comprising 31,044 words with texts in German Easy Language following different guidelines – this ensured that the variation concerning the existing guidelines was reflected by the corpus. In a nutshell, the analysis of the corpus revealed a substantial number of different ways of realizing causal relations: among the conjunctions and subjunctions, *Weil* in syntactically autonomous sentences made up 36% of all ways of realizing causal relations (as in (1)):

- (1) Sie entscheiden jetzt Wichtiges für Ihr späteres Leben.
Weil Sie später vielleicht nicht mehr alles selbst entscheiden können.
(Now you make important decisions for your later life.
Because maybe you cannot decide on your own later.)

The conjunction *denn* (basically meaning ‘because’, but appearing in verb-second sentences and having a slightly different semantics) and *weil* appearing after a comma in a classical German main-subordinate clause structure only make up 10%. Among the adverbs, *deshalb* is used in 23% of the cases; other adverbs also meaning ‘that’s why’ (*darum*, *deswegen*) have a proportion of 11%. *Nämlich*, suggested by the scientifically founded guidelines, only makes up 5% of all ways of realizing causal relations; *dadurch* (literal meaning ‘through this’) is used in only 2% of the cases. Very few prepositions (for example *wegen*) (7%) and other expressions (for example juxtaposition, i.e., two sentences appearing

² In the corpus study, the factual expression of several further semantic relations was also investigated, for example the expression of conditional relations. However, in the present article, only the aspects concerning the causal relations are presented.

in succession without an explicit causal marker) (6%) are used for the expression of causal relations. The results show that factual texts in Easy Language are quite heterogeneous with regard to the expression of causal relations; no standard marker has reached consensus until now. It is doubtful whether target groups of Easy Language benefit from such a wide range of different realizations for one and the same semantic relation – this aspect leads to the next section focusing on the users of texts in Easy Language.

4.6 Text users

The present article now turns to the third angle of the triangle in Figure 1, namely the text users. Regarding the investigation of comprehension, the distinction between online and offline methods is important. In psycho-, neuro- and experimental linguistics, a wide range of different methods, partly borrowed from other disciplines, has been and is being used for the investigation of comprehension. Some of these methods are called *online* because they measure comprehension in real-time as it unfolds; the relevant comprehension processes are very fast and mostly unconscious. The other methods are called *offline*: they measure the extent and the quality of comprehension after the comprehension process is completed (Christmann, 2002; Hemforth, 2006; Gillioz & Zufferey, 2020: 17). Christmann (2002) uses the expression processes of comprehension (*Verstehensprozesse*) for what online methods measure and products of comprehension (*Verstehensprodukte*) for what offline methods measure. A very important point is emphasized by Gillioz & Zufferey (2020: 19): “There are no good or bad measures in experimental linguistics”. Since online and offline methods measure different aspects of comprehension, they are complementary and not competitors. The choice of the method for a study depends on the relevant research question(s) and it can sometimes even be useful to combine offline and online methods in one and the same study. Table 2 gives examples of online and offline methods used in linguistic research.

Table 2. Examples of online and offline methods used in linguistic research

Online methods	Offline methods
Priming	Rating of comprehensibility
Lexical decision task	Questionnaires
Self-paced reading	Recall task
Eye-Tracking	Recognition task
EEG (electroencephalogram)	Multiple choice task
fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging)	Acting out

The challenge Easy Language research is facing is to choose methods suitable for the different target groups with their respective capabilities or to adapt or develop such methods. In general, it is not advisable to apply one to one the methods used with unimpaired participants to target groups of Easy Language. For example, in self-paced reading experiments, participants read sentences word-by-word or phrase-by-phrase and need to press a button in order to see the next part. This method does not resemble a natural reading situation at all, and the task might thus be too demanding at least for specific target groups of Easy Language. Eye-tracking is not suitable for all target groups either: as Fuchs (in preparation) reveals, there were substantial calibration difficulties in her eye-tracking study with adults with intellectual disabilities. She ascribes these difficulties to the high prevalence of visual impairment in this target group (Warburg, 2001; Splunder et al., 2006). EEG experiments, measuring the electrical activity of the brain, are relatively time-intensive in preparation since electrodes have to be placed on a person’s scalp in advance. In addition, during the experiment, participants must sit in a soundproof booth without moving, which

might be too demanding at least for certain target groups (Borghardt et al., 2021). However, not only do online methods have to be adapted thoroughly to the specific needs of Easy Language target groups. Certain offline methods cannot be applied one to one either: the rating of comprehensibility, for example, requires the ability to assign numbers to the perceived degrees of comprehensibility and to understand the logic of a scale, an ability that especially individuals with intellectual disabilities might be lacking.

5 Conclusions and perspectives

In general, access to action-enabling knowledge is exclusive to those people capable of understanding texts written in standard language. Individuals with communication impairments, however, are facing severe language barriers on the way to knowledge and, thus, to many forms of participation. That is why Easy Language has been developed; in its self-image, Easy Language is a form of barrier-free information enhancing participation possibilities. The presentation of facets of German Easy Language with a special focus on its linguistic aspects has revealed several potentials of German Easy Language: it is established explicitly in the German law and the lawful right of many members of the target groups. In addition, the German Easy Language landscape is in the comfortable position to dispose not only of several practical rulebooks, but also and in particular of scientifically founded guidelines. Last but not least, the effectiveness of many of the existing rules is currently being investigated empirically in the context of a new research field. However, there are also several problems associated with the current situation of German Easy Language, reducing the power of the potentials: firstly, one single concept Easy Language is facing a wide range of different target groups with partly differing neuropsychological profiles and communicative needs; it is questionable whether one single concept can fulfil the demands of such a heterogeneous target group. Secondly, what is problematic is the partly scanty expertise of text creators in the field of Easy Language translations; in addition, systematic research regarding text production in Easy Language is still lacking. Thirdly, the apparent advantage concerning the coexistence of several guidelines for German Easy Language also has a strong negative side: strictly speaking, one single coherent form of German Easy Language does not exist. Rather, the fact that different translators or translation agencies partly follow different guidelines leads to the coexistence of partly differing forms of German Easy Language in the text practice – a fact corroborated exemplarily by the results of the corpus study conducted by Fuchs (2019), revealing a wide range of different expressions for the verbalization of causal relations. Finally, regarding the empirical investigation of the effectiveness of existing rules, experimental research is confronted with strong challenges: the existing online and offline methods often cannot be applied one to one to the target groups of Easy Language due to restricted working memory capacities etc. Taking all these aspects into account, the (research) desiderata for the future remain numerous: for example, the creation of texts in Easy Language should be reserved to well-trained translators. In addition, research in the field of the empirical investigation of the effectiveness of existing Easy Language rules should be intensified; depending on the results of the studies, it could be advisable to revise several rules based on empirical evidence. It would also be fruitful to intensify the international cooperation in the context of Easy Language research (Lindholm & Vanhatalo, 2021). For example, the French form of Easy Language, FALC, has hardly been considered in the German literature on Easy Language (Fuchs et al., 2021). Joint forces could possibly produce beneficial synergetic effects with regard to the optimization of Easy Language as a tool for overcoming language barriers on the way to knowledge and participation.

References

- BGG. (2002/2016/2018). Gesetz zur Gleichstellung von Menschen mit Behinderungen. <https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bgg/BGG.pdf>
- BITV 2.0. (2011). Verordnung zur Schaffung barrierefreier Informationstechnik nach dem Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz (Barrierefreie-Informationstechnik-Verordnung). https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/bitv_2_0/BJNR184300011.html
- Bock, B. M. (2015). Barrierefreie Kommunikation als Voraussetzung und Mittel für die Partizipation benachteiligter Zielgruppen. Ein (polito-)linguistischer Blick auf Probleme und Potenziale von „Leichter“ und „einfacher Sprache“. In F. Vogel, & C. Knobloch (Eds.), *Sprache und Demokratie. Linguistik Online*, **73** (4). <https://bop.unibe.ch/linguistik-online/article/view/2196>
- Borghardt, L., Deilen, S., Fuchs, J., Gros, A.-N., Hansen-Schirra, S., Nagels, A., Schiffel, L., & Sommer, J. (2021). Neuroscientific Research on the Processing of Easy Language. *Frontiers in Communication*, **6**, Article 698044.
- Bredel, U., & Maaß, C. (2016a). *Leichte Sprache. Theoretische Grundlagen. Orientierung für die Praxis*. Berlin: Dudenverlag.
- Bredel, U., & Maaß, C. (2016b). *Ratgeber Leichte Sprache. Die wichtigsten Regeln und Empfehlungen für die Praxis*. Berlin: Dudenverlag.
- Christmann, U. (2002). Methoden der Verstehens- und Verständlichkeitserhebung. *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, **32** (4), 76-97.
- Dönges, C., Stegkemper, J. M., & Wagner, M. (2018). Sprache als eine Barriere politischer Partizipation von Menschen mit geistiger Behinderung. In B. M. Bock, & P. Dressen (Eds.), *Sprache und Partizipation in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 177-192.
- Elspaß, S., & Dürscheid, C. (2017). Areale grammatische Variation in den Gebrauchsstandards des Deutschen. In M. Konopka, & A. Wöllstein (Eds.), *Grammatische Variation. Empirische Zugänge und theoretische Modellierung*, 85-104.
- Fuchs, J. (2019). Leichte Sprache auf dem Prüfstand. Realisierungsvarianten von kausalen Relationen in Leichte-Sprache-Texten. *Sprachwissenschaft*, **44** (4), 441-480.
- Fuchs, J., Canut, E., Delahaie, J., & Husianycia, M. (2021). Easy Language research beyond national boundaries. Comparing German ‘Leichte Sprache’ and French ‘FALC’. Talk held at the KLAARA 2021 – 2nd Conference on Easy-to-Read Language Research, Olten (Switzerland); 30.08.2021.
- Fuchs, J. (under review). Do adults with and without intellectual disabilities benefit from German Easy Language? Eye-tracking and recall studies on the processing of causal and conditional relations.
- Gabriel, O. W., & Völkl, K. (2008). Politische und soziale Partizipation. In O. W. Gabriel, & S. Kropp (Eds.), *Die EU-Staaten im Vergleich. Strukturen, Prozesse, Politikinhalt*. 3., aktualisierte und erweiterte Auflage, 268-298.
- Gillioz, C., & Zufferey, S. (2020). *Introduction to experimental linguistics*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.
- Hemforth, B. (2006). Psycholinguistische Methoden zur Untersuchung des Satz- und Textverstehens. In H. Blühdorn, E. Breindl, & U. H. Waßner (Eds.): *Text – Verstehen. Grammatik und darüber hinaus*, 205-221.
- Inclusion Europe. (2009). Informationen für alle. Europäische Regeln, wie man Informationen leicht lesbar und verständlich macht. <https://www.lag-abt-niedersachsen.de/uploads/migrate/Download/Infofralle.pdf>
- Lindholm, C., & Vanhatalo, U. (2021). Introduction. In C. Lindholm, & U. Vanhatalo (Eds.), *Handbook of Easy Languages in Europe*, 11-25.
- Maaß, C. (2015). *Leichte Sprache. Das Regelbuch*. Münster: LIT.

- Maaß, C. (2020). *Easy Language – Plain Language – Easy Language Plus. Balancing Comprehensibility and Acceptability*. Berlin: Frank & Timme.
- Maaß, C., & Rink, I. (2020). Scenarios for Easy Language translation: how to produce accessible content for users with diverse needs. In S. Hansen-Schirra, & C. Maaß (Eds.), *Easy Language Research: Text and User Perspectives*, 41-56.
- Netzwerk Leichte Sprache. (2009). Die Regeln für Leichte Sprache. https://www.leichte-sprache.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Regeln_Leichte_Sprache.pdf
- Nickols, F. W. (2000). The knowledge in knowledge management. In J. Cortada & J. A. Woods (Eds.), *The knowledge management yearbook 2000-2001*, 12-21. https://nickols.us/Knowledge_in_KM.htm
- Polanyi, M. (1966). *The tacit dimension*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday.
- Splunder, J. v., Stilma, J. S., Bernsen, R. M. D., & Evenhuis, H. M. (2006). Prevalence of visual impairment in adults with intellectual disabilities in the Netherlands: cross-sectional study. *Eye*, **20**, 1004–1010.
- UN CRPD. 2008. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Optional Protocol. <https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/convention/convoptprot-e.pdf>
- Warburg, M. (2001). Visual impairment in adult people with intellectual disability: Literature review. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, **45** (5), 424–438.
- WHO. (2001). International classification of functioning, disability and health: ICF. <https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/42407/9241545429.pdf> (21 January, 2021).