

Languages and the Media  
Berlin, 7-9/11/2022

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# How easy are audio descriptions? Take 2

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# Why this research: the origins



<https://webs.uab.cat/easit>

<https://transmediacatalonia.uab.cat/easit>

# Easy-to-understand language

A continuum:

- Easy Language
- Easy Language Plus
- Plain Language

# Easy AD

Topic inspired by Bernabé and Orero (2020)

Focus groups with experts (Arias-Badia & Matamala, 2020)

- AD experts: reluctance (different target groups).
- AD experts: AD language is already clear and easy.

# Our first question

Are current AD already easy to understand?

LAM 2020 (2021): 9 film AD in Catalan.

Main result: vast ground shared by professional AD and Easy Language in Catalan.

# Our second question

What about other languages such as English and Spanish?

- Caveat 1: We are not saying AD should be easy.
- Caveat 2: We are aware that AD is included in dialogues which may not be easy.
- Caveat 3: A user evaluation is not included in this research.

# The language of audio description

Taylor (2015):

- “clear language and concrete vocabulary”
- “need for an intelligible style”
- “short sentences”
- “simple sentences”

# Methodology

Materials: 9 films

CA	EN	ES
46,908 tokens	82,711 tokens	52,243 tokens

EL materials as comparison:

Tools:

- Contawords
- Desktop applications
- Manual annotation





# What items?

- Sentence complexity:
  - Sentence length
  - Part-of-speech distribution
  - Verbs per sentence
  - Verbal periphrases in frequent bigrams
- Lexical analysis:
  - Aboutness
  - Lexical density (TTR)
  - Vocabulary richness (lemmas/tokens)
  - Information load (lexical words/tokens)
- Readability indexes

# Our focus today

- Readability
- Sentence length/verbs per sentence
- Information load
- Aboutness

+ some additional learnings

# Example of EL: Europe for us

## Stories from people with intellectual disabilities in Wales

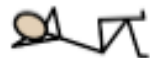
### Kelsey and Katy



Kelsey and Katy spend a lot of time together.  
They are doing a lot of activities.  
Kelsey is a volunteer at the self-advocacy group.



It is easier to be independent without the lockdown  
and safer to get on the buses.  
No need to rely on their parents.  
The bus service is pretty regular and reliable in their area.



They enjoy relaxing after a busy day.

# Readability: results

	EL-CA	AD-CA	EL-EN	AD-EN	EL-ES	AD-ES
GFI	15.1	12.9	10.33	5.7		
Fdez Huerta					“easy”	“normal”
Gutiérrez					“normal”	“normal”
Szigriszt-Pazos					“easy”	“normal”
INFLESZ					“quite/very easy”	“normal”

Significant differences when comparing AD in English and in Catalan, with English showing lower scores.

# Sentence complexity

	EL-CA	AD-CA	EL-EN	AD-EN	EL-ES	AD-ES
Sentence length	18.41	12.17	10.92	9.54	11.5	9.23
Verbs per sentence	3.09	1.67	1.97	1.20	2.18	1.49

- Sentence complexity EL-AD: EL always higher.
- Sentences, significantly longer in ADs in CA.
- ADs in EN, significantly fewer verbs per sentence. No significant differences CA-ES.

# Information load

EL-CA	AD-CA	EL-EN	AD-EN	EL-ES	AD-ES
0.60	0.45	0.63	0.57	0.59	0.54

Information load lower in AD.

Significant differences among languages:

- English > Spanish > Catalan

# Aboutness

All three languages show:

- Frequent vocabulary
- Short words: most words are 1 or 2-syllable words, except for frequent vocabulary such as “elevator” (EN), “ordenador” (ES) or “motxilla” (CA).
- Semantically coherent with previous studies: names of characters, body parts, locations, “look”.

# Some additional learnings about the language of AD

## Vocabulary richness

CA	EN	ES
0.17	0.17	0.14

- No significant differences CA-EN-ES.



# Some additional learnings: adj/adv

	CA	EN	ES
Adjectives	0.06	0.07	0.05
Adverbs	0.04	0.02	0.07

- Adj: ES significantly fewer adjectives than CA-EN.
- Adv: significant differences.  $EN > CA > ES$ .

# Conclusions

- Vast shared ground between AD language and EL.
- New insights into AD from a cross-linguistic perspective.
- Analysis based on linguistic features but Easy Language is more than that: Explanations? Repetitions?
- From readability to “listenability”.
- User needs: From Easy AD to easy audios (Matamala, 2022)

# Disclaimer

TransMedia Catalonia is a research group funded by Secretaria d'Universitats i Recerca del Departament d'Empresa i Coneixement de la Generalitat de Catalunya, under the SGR funding scheme (ref. code 2017SGR113, new code pending).

The project **EASIT** has received funding from the Erasmus + Programme of the EU under the call Strategic partnerships for higher education, grant agreement No 2018-1-ES01-KA203-05275

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