EASY – PLAIN – ACCESSIBLE

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The Dictionary of Accessible Communication

Frank & Timme

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

PART I: TOWARDS A DICTIONARY OF ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

1 Terminology on Accessible Communication 9

2 The Handbook of Accessible Communication (Maaß/Rink 2019) 11

3 Translating the Handbook of Accessible Communication 15

4 Terminology management for the translation project 17

5 How to use the dictionary 21

Literature 22

PART II: DICTIONARY OF ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

GERMAN – ENGLISH 29

ENGLISH – GERMAN 115

Index 199

Part I: Towards a Dictionary of Accessible Communication

1 Terminology on Accessible Communication

The field of Accessible Communication is consolidating in such a way that we can currently observe academic developments in several areas: there are new degree programmes (e.g. at the University of Hildesheim in Germany) or training programmes (e.g. organised by the German Federal Association of Interpreters and Translators – regarding the situation in other countries see Lindholm/Vanhatalo 2021). In addition, handbooks on Accessible Communication are gaining increasing traction (e.g. Maaß/Rink 2019, Hirvonen/Kinnunen 2020, Lindholm/Vanhatalo 2021). In the case of the German handbook edited by Maaß and Rink (2019), there has been an increasing demand for an English translation of the book since an equivalent standard has not been published in English so far. Furthermore, most of the handbook's contents can be regarded as language-independent and applicable to other recipient communities as well. For this reason, we decided to translate the handbook within the framework of a cooperative project.

In order to support this translation project, the terminology needed to first be extracted from the handbook. Since some terms do not have direct equivalents in other languages, substantial research had to be carried out in order to find cross-linguistic definitions and explanations in a primary step, followed by identification of suitable translation candidates. As a consequence, the bilingual set of terminology, which serves as the basis for this dictionary, was more or less a by-product of the translation project. In this sense, this book can be regarded as a mixture between a dictionary and a thesaurus since it presents bilingual translation candidates as well as explanations on the basis of bilingual definitions.

This is a very important fact, which we would like to elaborate in a little more detail: The authors of this book are experts in the areas of Translation Studies and Accessible Communication, they are by no means lexicographers or professional terminologists. This explains the pragmatic approach, which dominated the development and creation of the bilingual terminology. We are very much aware of the fact that this dictionary is the supportive output of a translation process, which in our opinion, however, is worth sharing with other researchers in the field of Accessible Communication.

So far, research on Accessible Communication has primarily evolved and been published within the borders of a given country with no or with only very little exchange across these borders. Since English can be regarded as the lingua franca of science, this first German-English dictionary will help to promote international exchange and an international discourse on this topic by attempting to define concepts that go beyond the scope of a single-country centered approach. However, this set of terms is still coined by German expert language. As a result, there will be concepts specific to Germany or German loan translations due to the absence of equivalent concepts or terms in English. This also holds true for the definition of the terms, which are shaped by a German bias. We nonetheless try to suggest solutions for those cases where we find inconsistent or dysfunctional terminology. We strongly believe that an increasing debate on standardised terminology will also promote the debate on research questions, results and contents in this important field on an international level. As a result, an international expert language will evolve, which will in turn enable the conceptual development of the research object of Accessible Communication. In addition, this will also enhance networking with other disciplines such as Applied Linguistics, Psychology, Translation Studies, etc.

Finally, we would like to stress that this dictionary is a work in progress and is by no means comprehensive. It can rather be seen as the very first step towards a standardised terminology. The more publications become available, the more advanced a terminology is needed. The more language communities deal with Accessible Communication and evolve research activity, the more language pairs should be included in the dictionary. The "final" product will be a comparable terminology across languages, which will in turn support the practitioners and target groups within their respective countries. Therefore, we hope that the cooperative spirit of this project will be embraced by other researchers in various countries and that this dictionary will be the first but certainly not the last step in the development of a standardised and international terminology for Accessible Communication.

The remainder of the first part of the book is structured as follows: Chapter 2 introduces the contents and rationale of the Handbook of Accessible Communication (Maaß/Rink 2019), which is the starting point for the terminological work presented in this dictionary. Chapter 3 explains the translation process of the English version of the Handbook. Chapter 4 deals with the terminological work in the context of the translation process. It explains the steps required to provide a consistent and high-quality terminology. Chapter 5 briefly explains how to use the dictionary, which constitutes the second part of this book.

2 The Handbook of Accessible Communication (Maaß/Rink 2019)

Accessible Communication has not, until recently, been perceived as a distinct research field. The formation of the field has been promoted by the totality of political and legislative as well as executive measures that establish accessibility for people with impairments to different areas of human existence and interaction. The concept of accessibility has gained attention and visibility in recent years, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) being an important landmark and incentive. The UN CRPD has led to a multitude of legislative measures in different countries aimed at achieving inclusion of people with disabilities.

On the other hand, the communicative needs of people with disabilities have already previously been addressed, at least to a certain extent, in research on different aspects of communicative accessibility. These efforts have, however, not been perceived as belonging to one and the same field of interest.

When planning the Master programme “Accessible Communication” at the University of Hildesheim, which was launched in October 2018, Christiane Maaß and Isabel Rink realised that the theoretical grounds of the eponymous research field were still lacking. They decided to draft a German Handbook of Accessible Communication in order to compile the current state of research in the various individual disciplines, subjects and techniques that, as a whole, form the research field of Accessible Communication. Moreover, it was their goal to delineate the professional profiles of the market agents and to show how they act within the framework of their respective professional practice.

It quickly became clear that there are many different professions at work, both academic and non-academic in their training. Sign language interpreting, for example, follows an academic curriculum, degree programmes for sign language interpreting being offered at different German universities. Augmentative and Alternative Communication and text-to-speech interpreting, on the other hand, are non-academic training programmes; Easy Language translation and audiovisual translation (subtitling, audio description) began as learning-by-doing skills in a practical setting and have now entered academic curricula, inducing a professionalisation of these services. Other techniques of Accessible Communication (for example, Easy Language interpreting) are currently also undergoing professionalisation. Professionals and researchers alike are interested in networking, acquiring additional skills and insights and thereby consolidating the field. There are fields of action, like online communication, that will see a further corroboration of market demands, promoted by legislative actions such as Directive (EU) 2016/2102 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the accessibility of the websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies. It obliges public sector bodies, including government agencies, universities, churches etc. to provide accessible websites by September 2020; the next decisive step is the European Accessibility Act that has to be conferred into national law by June 2022 and will have to be implemented by June 2025.

Accessible Communication will grow as a field of action and research. Professionals will be required to produce high-quality Accessible Communication products, and those professionals will have to be trained. The question of the way in which communication products have to be designed in order to grant access to people with diverse needs will have to be further researched; and all this across country and language borders.

What is needed now to exploit the field of Accessible Communication is a carefully selected and systematically developed expert language. To provide Accessible Communication products, cooperation between the different experts with and without disabilities (on sign language interpreting, on Easy Language translation, on subtitling etc.) is needed in order to explore overlapping areas and identify complementarity. As Accessible Communication is pluridisciplinary, there will be a certain degree of divergence in terminology.

This is regularly the case in interdisciplinary fields and may become an asset if tackled methodically.

For the handbook project, Maaß/Rink (2019) followed a combined top-down / bottom-up approach. As a first step, they went top-down by securing the cooperation of research experts and practitioners currently working the field. They asked them to give an outline of their discipline or practical field, indicating central concepts and techniques and citing the groundbreaking literature of their respective expert field.

As a second step, they adopted a bottom-up procedure: They gathered the terminology used and the concepts forwarded and screened the material for domain borders. It turned out that there are in fact common conceptual bases for different disciplines within the field of Accessible Communication, for example in their common fall-back on perceptibility and comprehensibility research and their terminology (see Chapter 3).

The structure of the handbook was set top-down. The editors singled out four different perspectives that are each related to different, but overlapping types of terminology:

1. **Demands and standards of perceptibility and comprehensibility**: Starting from the idea that successful communication can be hampered by different types of barriers (language of a text, presupposed expert and cultural knowledge etc.) (Rink 2019), the handbook authors explore the legal situation with respect to accessibility (Lang 2019) and visualise perceptibility as well as comprehensibility as prerequisites for accessibility in communication (Alexander 2019, Christmann/Groeben 2019, Lutz 2019). These text qualities need empirical investigation (Hansen-Schirra/Gutermuth 2019) with different target groups (see Dobroschke/Kahlisch 2019 for visual impairment, Hennies 2019 for hearing impairment, Schuppener/Bock 2019 for cognitive disability). This perspective is centred on the target audience of Accessible Communication formats.
2. **Techniques of Accessible Communication**: Accessibility in communication can be explored from the angle of the different techniques applied: Easy Language translation (Bredel/Maaß 2019, Maaß 2019), speech-to-text interpreting (Witzel 2019), Subtitling for the Deaf and

Hard of Hearing (Mälzer/Wünsche 2019a), Augmentative and Alternative Communication and feedback systems (Folta-Schoofs 2019, Musenberg 2019), audiodescription (Benecke 2019), sign language interpreting (Benner/Herrmann 2019) and community interpreting (Otero Moreno 2019). This perspective is centred on the producers of Accessible Communication formats.

3. **Media formats and text types**: The perspective with the largest number of items is the one focussing on different forms of texts in their respective media realisations. This category generates a potentially indefinite number of different realisations. There are some prototypical forms that have a certain relevance for the market or have reached a considerable level of standardisation, among them the following: Websites (Hellbusch 2019, Womser-Hacker 2019), audio introductions (Mälzer/Wünsche 2019b), visualisation of legal communication (Pridik 2019), alternative texts and image descriptions for the blind (Schütt 2019). In this perspective, the handbook authors also look at different discourse areas like the inclusive theatre (Mälzer/Wünsche 2019c) or museum (Rantamo/Schum 2019), at legal (Baumann 2019), administrative (Schädler 2019) and medical communication (Schindler 2019) as well as at technical communication (Heidrich 2019). This perspective is centred on the products of Accessible Communication and sheds light on technological solutions (Zehrer 2019, Kurch 2019, Capovilla 2019).
4. **Practical Perspectives**: Every research field of applied sciences is rooted in the reality of determined individuals or groups of people. This is also the case for Accessible Communication. The demand "nothing about us without us" has been put forward by people with disabilities for decades and implies that they be involved in legislative efforts, but also in formulating their needs for certain forms of Accessible Communication. This raises the question of how the target groups of Accessible Communication are to be included in researching the topic. They contribute in the role of test subjects and as co-researchers in inclusive forms of research. These are widely reflected by the contributors to the Handbook. In the Handbook of Accessible Communication they contribute to a section called "Voices from practice". This section contains contributions from the target groups and experts with disabilities

(for example Apel/Apel 2019, Widmayer 2019, Plagge 2019, Schruhl 2019, Scheps 2019), but also from practical experts without disabilities (Heerdegen 2019, Schwengber 2019, Hinrichs 2019, Kulikova/Şilfeler 2019) that are active on the market and provide insights into their practical experience. The target groups and practitioners also contribute terminology that overlaps only in part with the research terminology. For example, Easy Language interpreting would have to be considered Plain Language interpreting in terms of the characteristics of the variety that is produced; still, this form of interpreting in practice is never called Plain Language interpreting, but Easy Language interpreting. Another example is the fluctuating terminology on the naming of the group of people with cognitive disabilities; in German, the group itself prefers a different term ("Menschen mit Lernschwierigkeiten" = people with learning difficulties), which research reserves for another group. These discrepancies constitute a fascinating object of terminology research.

3 Translating the Handbook of Accessible Communication

The translation of the Handbook of Accessible Communication was organised as a cooperative effort between the translation departments of the universities of Mainz in Germersheim and Hildesheim. We applied an established and prominent method for competence-oriented learning in Translation Studies, in which simulated or authentic translation projects are implemented in the curricula of translator education programmes (Kelly 2005; Hansen-Schirra/Kiraly 2013; Kiraly et al. 2013; Kiraly 2013; Massey 2017). Many of these initiatives base their projects on the work of the Translation Studies scholar Donald Kiraly (1995, 2000, 2012), which in turn is derived from social constructivism and the concept of project-based learning (Knoll 1997, Markham 2011, Blumenfeld et al. 1991), and can be traced back to the first half of the 20th century manifested in the works of John Dewey (1938). The basic idea behind this learning approach is to move beyond basic skills and knowledge, exposing students to scaffolded problem-solving activities where they can practice the application of the basic skills they have acquired to realistic situations. The students are involved in simulated or authentic project work by tackling projects in a constructive way supported by facilitators rather than teachers (Massey/Brändli 2016).

Since the translation of the Handbook of Accessible Communication constitutes the ideal framework for such a holistic course approach, we organised the project as a classroom-based translation bureau offering the students the opportunity to practice their language and translation skills on the one hand and in addition acquire generic competencies on the other (Hansen-Schirra et al. 2018): The learners are directly exposed to a number of real market requirements including project, time, communication and quality management. Furthermore, through the project they gain the necessary high level of self-assessment proficiency to evaluate their own and their peers' actions and mistakes, setting high standards in terms of acquired competencies and quality of student participation. The cooperative approach led to a network of courses across the cooperating universities. The aim of this teaching network was to efficiently combine Hildesheim's theoretical expertise on Accessible Communication with Germersheim's practical knowledge on authentic problem-based learning and at the same time to achieve self-directed and collaborative learning processes (Hagemann/Neu 2013). The demand for learner-centered, collaborative and networked learning conditions also refers to the higher education reform within the Bologna Process (Hofhues et al. 2011).

During the summer term 2019, winter term 2019/2020 and summer term 2020, the translation project involved practical translation courses, terminology courses, revision courses, computer-aided translation courses and theoretical seminars in the advanced BA and MA translation programmes in Germersheim and Hildesheim. In addition, the project work was accompanied by two MA theses (Ebert 2019 and Wallenstein 2020) to assess the quality of the translation products and processes (especially concerning terminology management). This course network provided theoretical input as well as translations into English on the one hand, but also the professional support in terms of terminology databases, translation memory and revision on the other hand. The team of teachers involved native speakers of German and English.

The following steps were carried out within the translation project:

1. Extraction of terminology and accompanying terminology management
2. Translation of articles
3. Peer-review of articles
4. Consistency check (of terminology, style, etc.)
5. Revision of articles
6. Final quality control

The students were involved in all steps of the translation process. The team of teachers was responsible for the final quality control. The first step, which resulted in the present dictionary, is described in further detail in the next section.

4 Terminology management for the translation project

In the following, we focus on the terminology management for the project since it is especially important within the context of this dictionary. The aim of the terminological work in this project was to support the translators and to assure the quality of the translated texts. This was crucial for the consistency of the terminology (Arntz et al. 2014) since a large number of translators were involved in the project and the translation took place over several semesters. A solid terminology management reduced the risk of inconsistencies and imprecise translation choices.

Before starting with the actual terminology work, we established a taxonomy for the domain of Accessible Communication (Ebert 2019). The purpose of taxonomies is to organise knowledge in order to facilitate localisation and retrieval of the domain-specific information in a transparent, logical and systematic manner (Lambe 2007). Thus, they serve as a classification system for terms that are related to each other. The classification is based on linguistic features such as semantic relations (hypernym, synonym, etc.), semantic similarity, functional proximity, causal relations, and so on (Lambe 2007). As a consequence, taxonomies represent a knowledge map, which comprehensively describes the terminological structure of the domain. Based on the Handbook of Accessible Communication as well as domain-specific secondary introductory literature (Bock 2014, Bredel/Maaß 2016, Maaß 2015), Ebert (2019) identified the following taxonomy in her MA thesis:

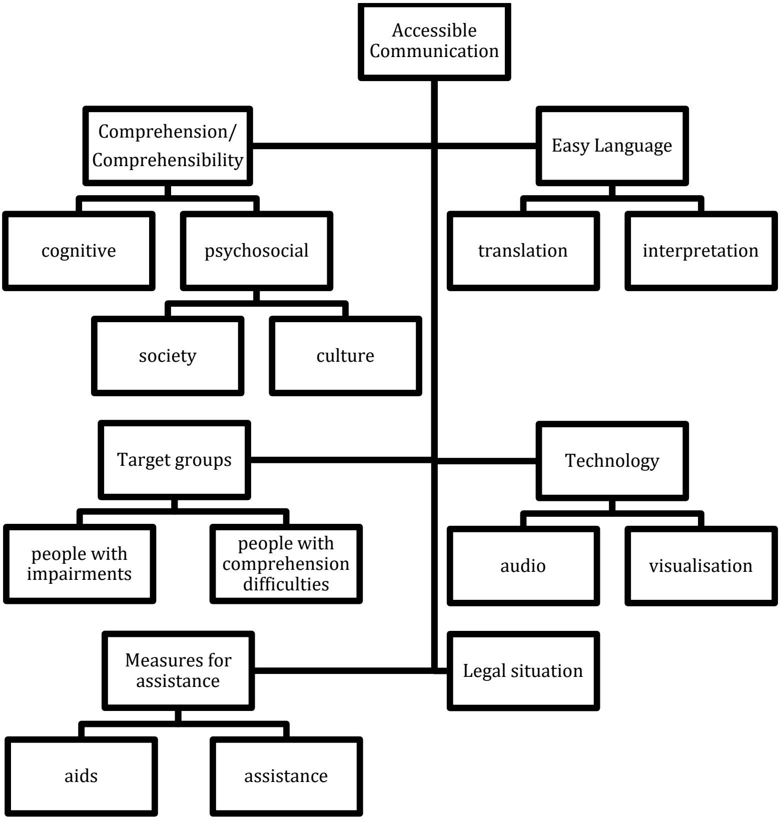
Accessible Communication
Comprehension/ Comprehensibility
Easy Language
cognitive
psychosocial
translation
interpretation
society
culture
Target groups
Technology
people with impairments
people with comprehension difficulties
audio
visualisation
Measures for assistance
Legal situation
aids
assistance

Figure 1: Taxonomy for the domain of Accessible Communication (adapted from Ebert 2019: 56)

In accordance with DIN 2342, we first extracted the terminology as part of our terminology management concept. This means that we filtered the relevant terms out of the corpus, i.e. the German texts of the Handbook of Accessible Communication, and built up a terminology database, which all participants of the translation project could access.

We started out with machine-aided terminology extraction using the tool Sketch Engine (Kilgarriff et al. 2014). Sketch Engine is a text analysis and corpus management software that analyses words and sentences in a given corpus. In addition, it offers a function for term extraction, differentiating words and phrases that are specific to a particular domain and those that are found in many domains or in general language. The assignment of terms is based on the comparison of frequencies between focus texts and a general language reference corpus (Kilgarriff 2009). Sketch Engine creates two word lists with single-word and multi-word terms respectively; it creates links to concordances and to relevant Wikipedia pages for each entry.

After having automatically extracted a term list with approximately 1000 terms, we manually checked the accuracy and consistency of the terms in our terminology classes. We used the above-mentioned taxonomy for the distribution of labour. This led to the following improvements:

- We checked the corpus for terms that the software had not detected.
- We filtered out duplicates (with different spellings, capitalisation, gender-specific realisation or incorrectly lemmatised tokens).
- We excluded named entities that are not specific to the domain of Accessible Communication.
- We excluded general language terms that did not occur in the references corpus and were accidently labeled as terms.
- We excluded terms that are not specific to the domain of Accessible Communication but rather to text conventions (e.g. “Abbildung” – “Figure”).
- Multi-word terms, which had been split up into single-word terms by the software, were corrected.

The data structure was rather flat and not very detailed for two reasons: First, many translators, revisors and terminologists were involved in the project – most of them semi-professionals. In order to keep the operationalisation of the entries consistent and precise, we decided to use flat structures with low granularity. Secondly, after making some appropriate changes to our entry structure, we were able to import it into the terminology databank structure of our translation memory system, i.e. Memsource[1]. We chose Memsource because it allowed cooperative and online access to the translation project.

The final terminology list included 660 entries. The terminology consists of terms associated with Accessible Communication as well as related legal concepts. The next steps included

- research and entries of definitions, explanations, contexts of differing usage forms (including sources)
- research and entries of translations (including terms, definitions, explanations, context and their sources)

After researching definitions and explanations for the source language, i.e., German terms in the first step, the second step consisted of identifying English-language counterparts.

The search for appropriate contexts was largely restricted to the English terms to ensure target language equivalence. The dictionary itself no longer explicitly contains the contexts unless they are so-called defining contexts that were included as explanations. If, however, these defining contexts were deemed to be better than the German explanations, they were subsequently translated from English into German and can now be found in the German-English section of this book. For these translated explanations, the sources can be found in the source language entry. In other cases, the explanations and their respective sources were created individually as translations were deemed too unspecific. This was mainly the case for concepts that exist independently of each other in the two language areas. In general, we chose to use the term “explanation” as we did not adhere to the best practices of terminology work and the requirements for editing good definitions could not always be met. The sources listed here merely constitute a representative selection.

As a new field is developing here that is aimed not only at the international community but also at the various target groups of Accessible Communication and the empowerment movements, and as many of the terms are not yet established, some of the English entries had to be invented, borrowed or semi-literally translated. Finally, we want to highlight that the search for translated terms, their explanations as well as sources was not restricted to one single English-speaking country but includes contributions from across the English-speaking world.

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[1] https://www.memsource.com/ (last accessed: 26.04.2021)

5 How to use the dictionary

The second part of this book consists of the dictionary itself. Since the terminological work began on the basis of a German Handbook and many terms and definitions were translated into English, this is also the translation direction that appears first. Therefore, you will find the German-English entries first and in the second half, the English-German ones based on the same terms. German definitions are presented in the German-English part, English definitions in the English-German one.

The terms are listed in alphabetical order. Abbreviations are also included in the alphabetical term list referring to the entry of the full term, which also includes the definition. For instance, the abbreviation "AD" refers to the full term "Audiodeskription"; the definition can be found in the respective entry. Proper names of institutions, countries or other stakeholders are not included.

Germany-specific concepts are translated into English instead of presenting functional equivalents in the English-speaking world. This acknowledges the fact that different countries are based on different legal systems (with heterogeneous approaches in the Anglophone word). For instance, the Germany-specific term "Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz" is literally translated into English indicating that it is a German concept: "German General Act on Equal treatment".

Finally, the digital version of the dictionary uses hyperlinks to interconnect the cross-references between the language directions or abbreviations and full terms.