



Research Article

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New trends in translation and interpreting studies: Linguistic accessibility in Romania

<https://doi.org/10.1515/opli-2022-0217>

received May 30, 2022; accepted October 7, 2022

Abstract: Providing access to knowledge and information for all citizens, including the disadvantaged ones, is a constant preoccupation of the decision-making bodies of countries across the globe, particularly of developed and developing ones. In Europe, guidelines for creating accessible informational content have been created, being constantly improved and adapted to the new social realities. As a member state of the European Union, Romania also fosters social inclusion at various levels, including that of making information accessible to all people. Nevertheless, a lot still needs to be done in the field of linguistic accessibility as the analysis presented in the article shows. For example, research should be conducted to draft guidelines for using *accessible languages*. Then, the study of *accessible languages* should be implemented in “Translation and interpreting” study programmes for the purpose of developing skills that could be employed socially to increase knowledge accessibility, through interlingual and intralingual translation and interpreting services. In this way, awareness is raised in society and professionals specialised in linguistic accessibility are provided to the labour market to contribute, as language professionals, to the creation of an inclusive society.

Keywords: interlingual and intralingual interpreting, interlingual and intralingual translation, linguistic accessibility, inclusive society, accessible language, easy language, plain language

1 Introduction

In the previous century, the United Nations’ *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* marked the moment when awareness of the imperative necessity to treat each and every one equally was raised. Since then, a number of documents have been issued by the United Nations, such as the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, to draw the attention to the need of being respectful and kind towards any human being, in other words to place human dignity and access to material and immaterial goods at the centre of our actions and those of the governments, respectively. However, these documents go beyond raising awareness, they urge decision-making bodies to take action, to be pro-active and change the society in which we live, to turn it into an accessible place that comfortably accommodates us all, irrespective of ethnic origin or nationality, gender or profession, health status or age, social or financial condition, migrant or immigrant status, to mention but a few

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(Dejica et al. 2022, Dejica et al. 2022, Maaß 2020). To achieve this goal, the Information and Communications Technologies have contributed greatly since they have reshaped the entire society, they have developed new communication methods and changed the way in which we perceive reality or interact with it (Floridi 2015, Greco 2018, Stephanidis 2009), extremely important being the access people have gained, through these new technologies, to all types of information.

Originating in the human rights movement and being intensified by the Information and Communications Technologies, accessibility has developed into a field of its own, built on interdisciplinary research in various fields: engineering, architecture, geography, cultural heritage, translation, education, computing, tourism and transportation, to mention but a few. The knowledge gathered from this interdisciplinary approach has been put at the service of the community, offering accessible solutions to overcome various barriers, for example cognitive, sensory, physical, linguistic, social and cultural ones (Baños 2017, Bernabé Caro 2020, Bernabé Caro and Orero 2019, Buhalis and Darcy 2011, Dejica et al. 2022, Dejica et al. 2022, Janelle and Hodge 2000, Litman 2017, Maaß 2020, Orero 2004, 2012, Orero and Matamala 2007, Prodan 2017, Pullin 2009, Sanchez and Brenman 2007, Stephanidis and Emiliani 1999).

In Europe, a lot has been done lately to build an inclusive society, one of the preoccupations being to offer all of us access to information and knowledge, thus creating a framework within which all citizens can reach their full potential. For instance, directives have been adopted by the European Union that regulate the provision of accessible websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies, accessible audiovisual media services as well as accessible products and services (Directive (EU) 2016/2102, Directive (EU) 2018/1808 and Directive (EU) 2019/882 of the European Parliament and of the Council). Since Romania is a member state of the European Union, it also embraces the European cause, striving to create a society in which language use is no longer a communication barrier.

The article aims at highlighting some of the most important actions taken in the field of linguistic accessibility at a European level, focusing on the emergence of accessible languages used to translate and interpret both interlingually and intralingually, with the purpose of showing the stage Romania has reached so far. Thus, in order to offer an overview of the linguistic accessibility in Romania, the following aspects have been researched: linguistic accessibility for people with disabilities/impairments provided by the education system, public institutions and broadcasting companies, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the bachelor's and master's degrees in translation and interpreting studies functioning in Romania that form specialists in linguistic accessibility, including specialists in accessible languages.

2 Overcoming communication barriers through *accessible languages*

Building an inclusive society means, among others, creating appropriate solutions to overcome communication barriers caused by low “perceptibility, comprehensibility, retrievability and acceptability of texts and information” (Maaß 2020, 20). In other words, communication should be tailored to the needs of the target group they address, so that the code is perceptible and comprehensible, the channel is accessible, and the final communication product is considered acceptable both by the end-users and by the rest of the community, without stigmatising the former ones (Maaß 2020). To identify the target group's needs, eight communication barriers have been singled out, namely *sensory, cognitive, motor, language, expert knowledge and/or language, cultural, media* and *motivational barriers* (Lang 2021, Rink 2019, 2020).

Messages may be communicated visually, orally or haptically. When one of these senses is essential to understanding the informational content, but it is not available to the receiver, then we speak of a *sensory barrier*. It is the case, for example, of blind persons that are not able to read messages that are written in an alphabet other than Braille for which they employ their tactile sense, or of deaf persons that are not able to listen to a spoken discourse and have to use other senses to communicate efficiently. When the informational content is too complicated for the receiver to understand it, then we speak of a *cognitive barrier*.

People with temporary or permanent motor disabilities might also face challenges when they need to access information that implies body movements, for instance when they need to use their hands to use the computer or telephone. In this case, people need to overcome a *motor barrier*. *Language barriers* appear when the communication partners do not share the same language. *Expert knowledge and/or language barriers* are those erected using field-specific terminology in the communication among persons that do not have the same specialised knowledge. Such a situation might be experienced by a large number of people, including people with no disability at all. Additionally, when two or more cultures get in contact, linguistic, discursal and behavioural differences that are not understood or accepted by one of the parties might emerge. Accessing media content might be difficult for senior citizens, for people with cognitive, sensory or motor disabilities, which means they encounter *media barriers*. Finally, we speak of *motivational barriers* when the users have had bad experiences with the discourse genre they have to understand and/or work with, and consequently tend to reject it.

Considering the aforementioned communication barriers, the people that need customised access to information are as follows: (a) people that are fully developed cognitively, but have some kind of motor or sensory disability, such as motor, hearing or visual impairment; (b) people with cognitive impairment, such as Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia; (c) people with intellectual disabilities; (d) people with learning, reading, writing and spelling difficulties, such as dyslexia; (e) people with limited language skills, such as immigrants and non-native speakers of a language; (f) people that are fully developed cognitively, but have to deal with a highly specialised discourse, such as the legal, medical or technical one; and (g) people with low literacy levels, or even functionally illiterate ones (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions – IFLA 2010, Garcia et al. 2010, Murman 2015, Train2Validate 2020, Yaneva 2015). Therefore, in order to foster social inclusion, accessible informational content is needed, in a large variety of situations, for people with or without disabilities or impairments. Some of the solutions found to provide it are often interdisciplinary, namely they are created in the field of translation and interpreting studies and of linguistic and cultural mediation, but also resort to the new technologies to make them available to the target group. Since translation may be *intralingual*, i.e. rewording or paraphrase within the same language; *interlingual*, i.e. conveying meaning from one language into another; and *intersemiotic*, i.e. using non-verbal signs to convey the meaning of the verbal ones (Jakobson 1959), the creation of accessible informational content is also considered a type of translation (Bredel and Maaß 2016a, 2016b, Maaß 2019, Maaß and Rink 2020). Sometimes, however, for accessibility reasons, the translator makes use of *enhancing strategies*, such as adding “verbal or nonverbal semantic material as a simplification strategy” (Bernabé Caro 2020, 356). In other words, to make the information accessible for persons that are visually, aurally and/or cognitively challenged, the translator needs to employ a large range of simplification strategies that might be “both reductive and additive” (Bernabé Caro 2020, 350). The additions may be not only verbal, but also visual, such as pictograms, drawings and the like, hence the translation from standard language into *accessible language* varieties may also be intersemiotic, not just interlingual or intralingual (Maaß 2020).

Aiming at turning written and spoken discourses into accessible communication tools for us all, these *accessible language* varieties, also termed *easy languages* (Lindholm and Vanhatalo 2021), e.g. *plain language*, *easy language* and *easy language plus*, have emerged as deviations from the standard ones, the latter being defined as institutionalised and prestige language varieties widely understood by a community (Crystal 2005). Since the term *easy languages* refers to *easy to read and understand* (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), a written variety also termed *easy-to-read* (Inclusion Europe 2009, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions – IFLA 1997, 2010), as well as, more recently, to their spoken equivalents (Maaß 2020), the term *easy language* gains “broader conceptualisations of enhancing comprehensibility through language” (Maaß 2020, 56), be it written or spoken, but does not also include *plain language*. Therefore, we propose the term *accessible languages* because it is less confusing and most appropriate to describe all the existing or future language varieties, be they written or spoken, that aim at supporting people with various disabilities or impairments to communicate successfully in the inclusive society we want to build.

The *accessible languages* introduced above have been developed to create and offer accessible informational content. Although they have a common purpose, they address different end-users and follow

different guidelines (Cutts 2013, Inclusion Europe n.d., International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions – IFLA 1997, 2010, Lindholm and Vanhatalo 2021, Maaß 2020, Plain Language Action and Information Network – PLAIN n.d.). Thus, *plain language* does not necessarily address people with disabilities, but rather those with communication impairments of various origins or lay people without an expert-field background. The plain language texts should consider the average reading age of the population, which in the case of UK is about 13 (Cutts 2013, xiii), since its main aim is to translate expert language into lay language, i.e. a simpler language that anyone can understand. Moreover, people tend to fully accept *plain language* because it “is seen in the context of removing red tape from communication and making it comprehensible to non-expert everyday people” (Maaß 2020, 139). From this perspective, *easy language* is often rejected by the society as it deviates too much from the standard language, which could “possibly lead to resentments against the target groups, who are in danger of being stigmatised through Easy Language texts” (Maaß 2020, 68). Translating a text from standard language into *easy language* means employing “strong reductions in structural complexity on the one hand, but ... also extensive elaborations on the other hand. As a consequence, there is a relatively big amount of text conveying a relatively small amount of information on the subject” (Maaß 2020, 91). Additionally, visual support might be used to better convey the message in *easy language*. To sum up, *plain language* is “a linguistic variety with enhanced comprehensibility” (Maaß 2020, 53), while *easy language* is a “linguistic variety with *maximally* enhanced comprehensibility” (Maaß 2020, 53).

Considering the acceptability of the two language varieties among the population and the stigmatisation of the end-users in society, Christiane Maaß (2020) proposed *easy language plus*, in an effort to make the community embrace this *accessible language* as a solution for those who need it in order to be as autonomous as possible. *Easy language plus* is in fact a combination between *plain language* and *easy language*, which does not use the least accepted features of *easy language*, thus becoming “somewhat less comprehensible and perceptible (as the texts are closer to the standard), but much more acceptable” (Maaß 2020, 280).

3 Using *accessible languages* to extend the scope of translation and interpreting services

Translation and interpreting have been traditionally defined as conveying meaning and understanding from one language into another, in writing and speaking, respectively, considering the linguistic and the cultural conventions both of the source language and of the target one (Dejica and Dejica-Carţiş 2020, Nolan 2005, Pöchhacker 2016, Şimon 2017, Şimon and Stoian 2017). In time, translation and interpreting types have diversified to meet the needs of the ever-evolving society. Nowadays, in many countries across the globe, the inclusive society is being built striving to remove all the *sensory, cognitive, motor, language, expert knowledge and/or language, cultural, media* and *motivational barriers* (Lang 2021, Rink 2019, 2020) described above, by interlingual and intralingual translation and interpreting, among others (Arias-Badia and Matamala 2020, Bernabé Caro 2020, Bernabé Caro and Orero 2019, Dejica and Dejica-Carţiş 2020, Lindholm and Vanhatalo 2021, Maaß 2020, Pöchhacker 2016, Şimon and Stoian 2017, Witzel 2019). As such, spoken-language interpreting, sign language interpreting, interlingual subtitling, subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing (SDH), audio description for people with visual impairments, speech-to-text interpreting, film interpreting, opera or theatre supertitles/surtitles, respeaking, voiceover, dubbing, sight translation or sight interpreting, as Pöchhacker (2016) calls it, localisation, interpreting in a variety of contexts (business, media, community, conference interpreting) or transcoding text to Braille or the other way around are only some of the translation and interpreting types that have emerged lately, particularly in the field of Audiovisual Translation, broadly defined as “all forms of translation and interpreting between different modalities involving tertiary media of any type” (Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020, 131).

Although the aforementioned translation and interpreting types, except for sign interpreting and Braille translation, on the one hand and audio description on the other hand, have been developed to transfer

meaning interlingually, lately they have started to be used also to convey meaning intralingually, resorting to *accessible languages* (Arias-Badia and Matamala 2020, Bernabé Caro 2020, Bernabé Caro and Orero 2019, Hansen-Schirra and Maaß 2020, Lindholm and Vanhatalo 2021, Maaß 2020). Furthermore, in recent years, easy language interpreting (Schulz et al. 2020) as well as speech-to-text interpreting with complexity reduction (Witzel 2019) has been successfully practised for accessibility purposes, opening up new avenues for research, for translators' and interpreters' professional activity and, implicitly, for social inclusion.

Since the end-users of discourses in *accessible languages* have increased needs as compared to other audiences, the translators and interpreters specialising in accessible languages should also have additional competences from the ones they need to render the meaning from and into standard languages. Taking into account the recommendations of the PACTE group as well as those of Pöchhacker (2016) and Schulz et al. (2020), Maaß (2020, 172) points to the competences that translators and interpreters specialising in *easy languages*, i.e. *accessible languages*, should acquire in order to fulfil their professional duties at the highest standards:

- *expert domain and expert language competence* is a must in order to be able to translate or interpret accurately, while standard language translators and interpreters usually specialise in a domain, accessible language translators and interpreters do not, so they have to be quite proficient in the terminology of a large number of domains and seek expert support when they need it,
- *comprehensive knowledge of the accessible languages used and of the problems they might pose in the translation or interpreting process*, so that the translator or interpreter makes competent and effective choices that do not endanger the accessibility process,
- *knowledge of the target audience* is essential since it helps the translator or interpreter to better understand it and to make the best decisions when they translate or interpret intra- or interlingually into accessible languages,
- *competence to assess the target situation* is also essential in adapting the translated or interpreted content to the needs of the target audience,
- *translation and text competence* is connected to the other competences described above since, to translate or interpret professionally into accessible languages, besides knowledge of the accessible language rules and guidelines, one also needs to be able to assess the target situation and audience, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to preserve the genre and media features, particularly difficult to develop are the *accessible language* interpreting skills and the emergency strategies the interpreter might need.

Although the competences identified by Christiane Maaß (2020, 172) are in fact derived from those needed by standard language translators and interpreters, the former are much more difficult to acquire than the latter. This is proven by the fact that once the demand for accessible language translators and interpreters on the labour market increased, and the challenges faced by them seemed unsurmountable without proper academic training, master's degrees in accessible communication have been established in Europe, for instance in Spain, Portugal, Germany and Switzerland, offering courses in translation and interpreting from and into accessible languages (Eichmeyer 2018, Maaß 2020, Maaß and Hernández Garrido 2020, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Polytechnic of Leiria, University of Mainz/Germersheim, University of Hildesheim, University of Applied Sciences of Winterthur). Yet, this endeavour is timid and further research has to be carried out to develop a comprehensive educational framework within which translators and interpreters can acquire the necessary skills to foster interlingual and intralingual accessible communication at a high level of proficiency.

4 Increasing accessibility in Romania through interlingual and intralingual translation and interpreting

As a member state of the European Union, Romania has also adhered to the principles that lie at the foundation of the inclusive society, adopting national strategies aiming to increase accessibility, particularly

of the people with disabilities (Guvernul României. Ministerul Muncii si Solidarităţii Sociale. Autoritatea Naţională pentru Protejarea Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilităţi n.d.). Nevertheless, Romania is aware of the fact that it has a long way to go, from architectural to educational accessibility. So, raising awareness of the benefits of an inclusive society is one of the top issues, along with concrete accessibility measures that must be taken since Romania, in comparison with its European partners, offers little if any inclusive support to its citizens with a disability and/or an impairment (Guvernul României. Ministerul Muncii si Solidarităţii Sociale. Autoritatea Naţională pentru Protejarea Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilităţi n.d., Fărcaşiu et al. 2022, Grigoraş et al. 2021, Nicolae 2020).

In terms of linguistic accessibility, at the moment, printed or digital materials in *accessible languages* are scarce in Romania, no matter the age group they address or their communication purpose (Bolborici and Bódi 2018, Fărcaşiu et al. 2022, Guvernul României. Ministerul Muncii si Solidarităţii Sociale. Autoritatea Naţională pentru Protejarea Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilităţi n.d., Vršmaş 2014). However, although in Romania there are no easy-to-read periodicals, at the European level, the easy-to-read magazine and newsletter *Europe for us* is published, on the *Inclusion Europe* website, four times a year in several languages: English, French, German, Spanish, Romanian, Hungarian and Italian (Inclusion Europe. Europe for us, Figure 1).

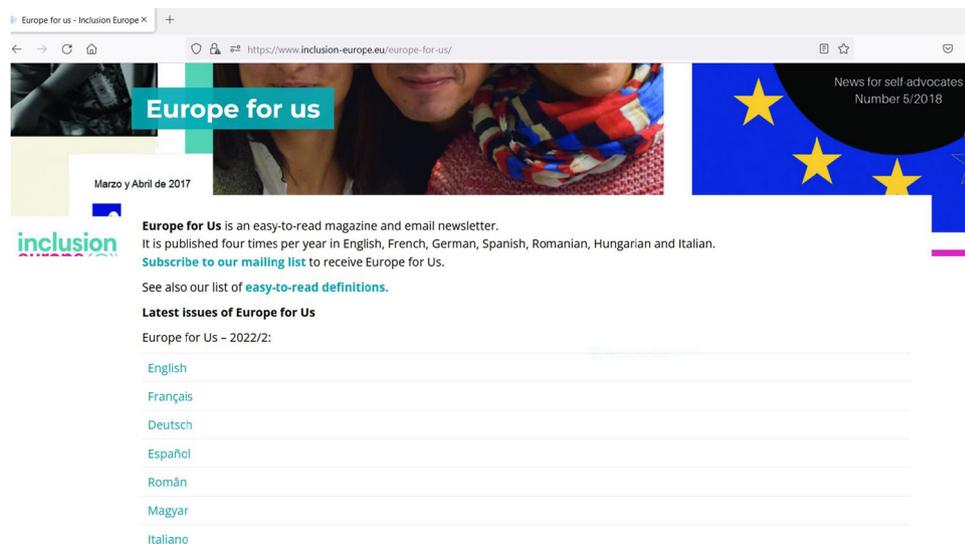


Figure 1: Availability of *Europe for us* in several languages.

Nevertheless, a step forward was made in Romania at the end of 2018 when *Emergency ordinance no. 112/2018 regarding the accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public sector bodies* was adopted, thus establishing the framework that fostered the creation of accessible websites of official bodies. Consequently, public institutions started to turn their webpages into accessible ones (Figure 2), a process highly accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the distancing measures imposed in order to contain the disease (Şişu n.d.). For instance, 18 of the 34 public institutions listed on the website of the Government of Romania provide accessibility solutions for people with various impairments and/or disabilities (Guvernul României. Instituţii publice) (Table 1). However, no materials in accessible languages exist on the website of the Government of Romania.

Moreover, there are no official textbooks adapted to the needs of the children with disabilities or impairments. Hence, both teachers and parents have to adapt the teaching materials from the mainstream textbooks. In order to meet the needs of other people facing the same problems, they have even created websites (Figures 3 and 4) where such adapted materials may be uploaded for the use of the community (Chirciu 2019, Peticilă 2019, Cere un manual, Ema la şcoală). Still the need is higher than the materialisation of the actions taken.

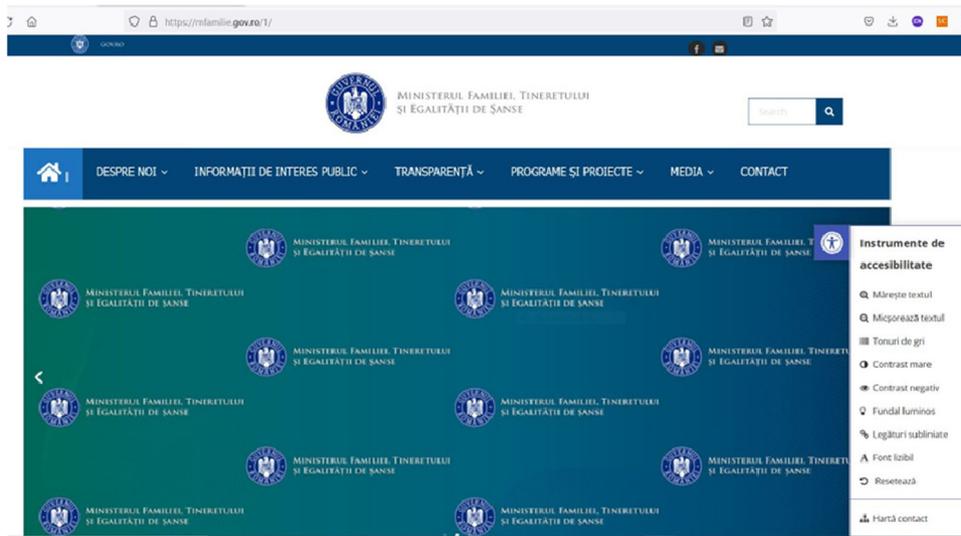


Figure 2: Ministerul Familiei, Tineretului și Egalității de Șanse [Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities] website.

Table 1: Website accessibility of the public institutions on the website of the Government of Romania

Public institutions on the website of the Government of Romania	Website accessibility
AGERPRES National Press Agency	YES
Authority for the Digitalization of Romania	
Constitutional Court	
Department for the Relation with Parliament	
Department for the Relation with Romanians Abroad	
General Secretariat of the Government	
Legislative Council	
Ministry of Culture	
Ministry of Development, Public Works and Administration	
Ministry of Education	
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Tourism	
Ministry of European Investments and Projects	
Ministry of Family, Youth and Equal Opportunities	
Ministry of Health	
Ministry of Interior Affairs	
Ministry of Justice	
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure	
Rador Press Agency	
Chamber of Deputies	NO
Competition Council	
Financial Supervisory Authority	
Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development	
Ministry of Economy	
Ministry of Energy	
Ministry of Environment, Water and Forests	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	
Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity	
Ministry of National Defence	
Ministry of Public Finance	
Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitization	
Ministry of Sports	
National Cybersecurity Directorate	
President of Romania	
Senate of Romania	

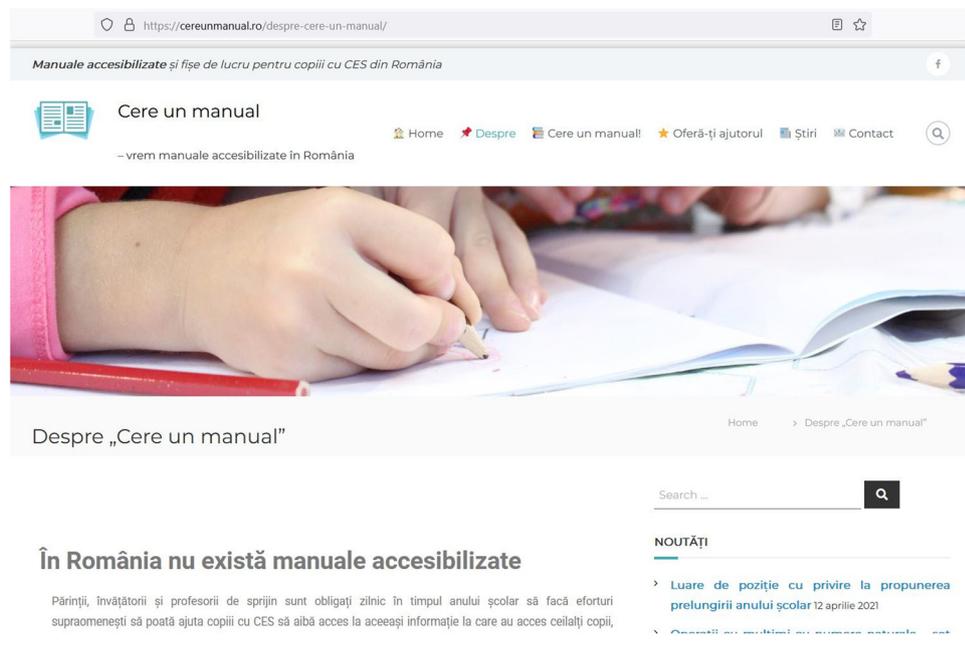


Figure 3: Cere un manual [Ask for a textbook] website.

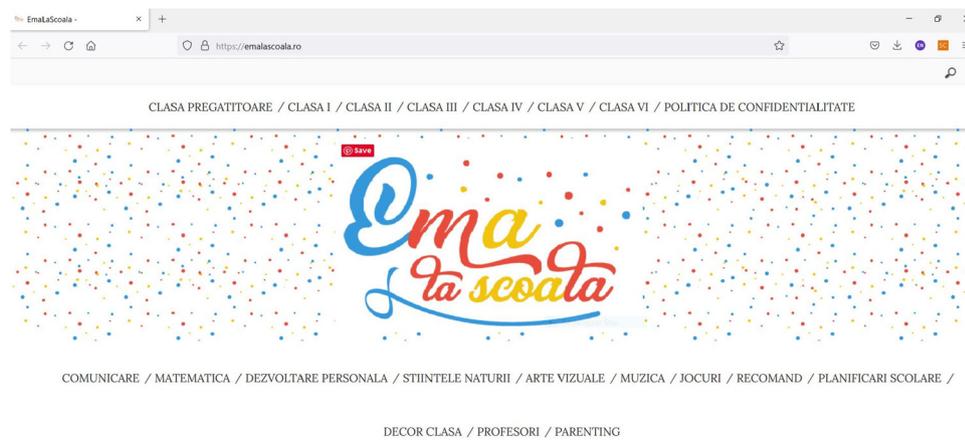


Figure 4: Ema la școală [Ema at school] website.

Furthermore, adults do not experience a better situation since also at the university level, accessibility solutions in general and linguistic ones in particular are rather desired than implemented. Hence, although red flags have been shown for the last few years, things are still moving extremely slowly in the direction of building an inclusive educational system in Romania that offers professional development paths for all citizens (Bolborici and Bódi 2018, Chirciu 2019, Cere un manual, *Diagnoza situației persoanelor cu dizabilități în România, Ema la școală*, Fărcașiu et al. 2022, Guvernul României. Ministerul Muncii și Solidarității Sociale. Autoritatea Națională pentru Protejarea Drepturilor Persoanelor cu Dizabilități n.d., Peticilă 2019, Vărășmaș 2014).

The audiovisual accessibility in Romania is also in its infant stage (Nicolae 2020, Sinu 2018, Varga 2017), although the legislative framework for implementing linguistic accessibility solutions was created in 2002 already (Legea nr. 504/11.07.2002 Legea audiovizualului). The interlingual translation is the most frequently encountered type since Romania is listed as a *subtitling country*. Intralingual subtitling is usually resorted to when regional pronunciation, unclear speaking, amateur films, audio or illegal recordings and spontaneous interviews are employed. From time to time, also SDH may appear on the screen. As for the

oral translation, voiceover is sometimes heard in pre-recorded programmes. Interlingual interpreting is used during live events and interviews, while intralingual interpreting takes the form of sign language interpreting and it can be noticed during the major news bulletins (Nicolae 2020, Sinu 2018, Varga 2017). The conclusion drawn easily is that most of the audiovisual translation forms are not seen on the Romanian screens yet. For accessibility purposes, only SDH and sign language interpreting are used by the major broadcasting companies in Romania (Diagnoza situației persoanelor cu dizabilități în România, Nicolae 2020, Sinu 2018, Varga 2017). Even the Romanian television broadcasting company (Televiziunea română) that relies heavily on public funding and, as such, should serve all Romanian citizens, focuses mainly on sign interpreting in Romanian, not in minority languages, as a form of linguistic accessibility, disregarding other solutions that might be employed (Figure 5).



Figure 5: Televiziunea română [Romanian Television Broadcasting Company] website.

While authorised sign language interpreting courses are organised in Romania by the Romanian Association of Authorised Sign Language Interpreters in nine locations across the country and there is also one optional course taught at a master's level at Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, there is only one course in audiovisual translation that is taught at a master's level at George Emil Palade University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Science and Technology of Târgu Mureș (Table 2). As it can be noticed in Table 2, there are neither courses in accessible languages, nor accessible language translation and interpreting courses. This is a surprising, but somehow also expected result of the analysis of the curricula offered by the 7 bachelor's degrees and 19 master's degrees in Translation and Interpreting that are functioning in Romania at the moment. This situation partially explains the scarcity of linguistic accessibility in Romania because without an educational framework within which knowledge and skills are acquired, there are no experts in linguistic accessibility on the Romanian labour market.

Furthermore, whereas in many European countries, guidelines for *easy-to-read* have been created and published, in Romania there are no guidelines for any *accessible language, easy-to-read* included, which also contributes to the lack of specialists in *accessible languages* on the labour market, be they teachers, professionals or researchers. Even on the *Inclusion Europe* website, guidelines for *easy-to-read and understand* in Romanian do not exist (Inclusion Europe. Information for all: European standards for making information easy to read and understand, Figure 6).

Table 2: BA and MA degrees in the field of translation and interpreting studies in Romania and the course offer in the field of linguistic accessibility

University name	BA in the field of translation and interpreting studies	MA in the field of translation and interpreting studies	Courses in the field of linguistic accessibility
“1 Decembrie 1918” University of Alba Iulia	1 BA degree	—	—
Alexandru Ioan Cuza University of Iaşi	1 BA degree	1 MA degree	—
Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca	—	2 MA degrees	Sign language
“Dunarea de Jos” University of Galaţi.	—	2 MA degrees	—
“George Emil Palade” University of Medicine, Pharmacy, Sciences and Technology of Târgu Mureş.	—	1 MA degree	Audiovisual translation: dubbing and subtitling for the hard-of-hearing
Hyperion University of Bucharest	—	1 MA degree	—
“Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu	—	1 MA degree	—
Politehnica University of Timişoara	1 BA degree	—	—
Sapientia University of Cluj-Napoca	1 BA degree	—	—
“Ştefan cel Mare” University of Suceava	—	1 MA degree	—
Technical University of Civil Engineering of Bucharest	1 BA degree	1 MA degree	—
University of Bucharest	1 BA degree	4 MA degrees	—
University of Craiova	1 BA degree	1 MA degree	—
University of Piteşti	—	2 MA degrees	—
West University of Timişoara	—	1 MA degree	—
Sum total	7 BA degrees	18 MA degrees	2 courses taught at MA degrees

<https://www.inclusion-europe.eu/easy-to-read-standards-guidelines/>

Language versions of easy-to-read standards

The standards are available in many languages:

English: **Information for all:** [European standards for making information easy to read and understand](#) (.pdf)

čeština: **Informace pro všechny:** [Evropská pravidla pro tvorbu snadno srozumitelných informací](#) (.pdf)

Deutsch: **Informationen für alle:** [Europäische Regeln, wie man Informationen leicht lesbar und leicht verständlich macht](#) (.pdf)

eesti: **Informatsioon kõigi jaoks:** [Euroopa standardid informatsiooni lihtsalt loetavaks ja mõistetavaks muutmiseks](#) (.pdf)

Español: **Información para todos:** [Las reglas europeas para hacer información fácil de leer y comprender](#) (.pdf)

Français: **L'information pour tous:** [Règles européennes pour une information facile à lire et à comprendre](#) (.pdf)

hrvatski: **Informacije za sve:** [Europski standardi za izradu lako razumljivih informacija](#) (.pdf)

Italiano: **Informazioni per tutti:** [Linee guida europee per rendere l'informazione facile da leggere e da capire per tutti](#) (.pdf)

latviešu: **Informācija visiem:** [Eiropas standarti viegli lasāmas un saprotamas informācijas veidošanai](#) (.pdf)

lietuvių: **Informacija, skirta visiems:** [Europinės rekomendacijos, kaip rengti lengvai skaitomą ir suprantamą informaciją](#) (.pdf)

magyar: **Információ mindenkinek:** [A könnyen érthető kommunikáció európai alapelvei](#) (.pdf)

polski: **Informacja dla wszystkich:** [Europejskie standardy przygotowania tekstu łatwego do czytania i zrozumienia](#) (.pdf)

Português: **Informação para todos:** [Regras Europeias para fazer informação fácil de ler e de perceber](#) (.pdf)

slovenčina: **Informácie pre všetkých:** [Európske pravidlá tvorby ľahko čitateľných a ľahko zrozumiteľných informácií](#) (.pdf)

slovenščina: **Informacije za vse:** [Evropska pravila za pripravo informacij v lahko berljivi in razumljivi obliki](#) (.pdf)

Suomi: **Tietoä kaikille:** [Helppolukuinen ja ymmärrettävä teksti yleiseurooppalainen standardi](#) (.pdf)

Figure 6: European guidelines for making information *easy to read and understand*, available in several languages.

5 Concluding remarks

Being rooted in the accessibility movement started by the United Nations last century, the field of accessibility has emerged as an interdisciplinary one, getting more and more attention in Europe. Since the European countries have decided to pursue a common goal, namely that of building an inclusive society to the benefit of all citizens, many actions have been taken to improve the access to information and knowledge. To overcome sensory, cognitive, motor, language, expert knowledge and/or language, cultural, media and motivational communication barriers (Lang 2021, Rink 2019, 2020), interlingual and intralingual translation and interpreting may be used. Although interlingual and intralingual translation and interpreting offered in standard languages are the most popular linguistic accessibility solutions, lately, with the creation of *accessible languages*, as we have termed all languages that have emerged or will emerge in the future as deviations from the standard ones have been employed, too, in an effort to make communication accessible to all people, irrespective of their disabilities or impairments. Additionally, with the development of the audiovisual sector, several translation and interpreting types have arisen to serve linguistic accessibility purposes.

Apart from this, for the informational content in a standard language to be translated or interpreted into an accessible one, translators and interpreters specialising in accessible languages are needed on the labour market. For this purpose, some competences must be developed while pursuing an academic education. As such, in Europe, courses in *accessible language* translation and interpreting have been established at a master's level. Nevertheless, further research is necessary to develop a comprehensive educational framework for training specialists in accessible language translation and interpreting.

Romania, though a member state of the European Union, cannot boast about the same promising situation, in terms of linguistic accessibility, as the one existing in other European countries, neither regarding the formal education of the experts in linguistic accessibility, nor regarding the existence of linguistic accessibility solutions and products on the market and in the mass-media. Printed or digital materials in accessible languages are almost inexistent in Romanian, irrespective of the age group they address, although, at a European level, the digital easy-to-read magazine and newsletter *Europe for us* is published in Romanian as well as in several other languages. Regarding website accessibility, public institutions have turned institutional webpages into accessible ones as a result of the legislative measures taken in Romania. So, almost 53% of the webpages of the public institutions listed on the webpage of the Government of Romania are accessible to people with disabilities or impairments of various kinds. Still, no information in accessible languages is to be found.

Furthermore, adapted textbooks for people with various disabilities or impairments, in printed or digital formats, do not exist in Romania. Hence, parents and teachers had to create websites where such materials, conceived by themselves, can be uploaded and used for free.

As for the audiovisual accessibility in Romania, this is achieved through intralingual and interlingual subtitling, SDH, voiceover, interlingual interpreting, intralingual interpreting, i.e. sign language interpreting. Even the Romanian television broadcasting company offers sign interpreting services for the main news bulletins, but only in the Romanian language without considering the minority languages. However, in Romania, there are nine organisations that are authorised to teach courses in sign language interpreting, there is no course in accessible languages, and there are only two courses in audiovisual translation taught at a master's level. This is rather surprising considering the new trends in linguistic accessibility in the European Union and the Romanian educational offer in terms of BA and MA degrees in translation and interpreting, i.e. 7 BA degrees and 18 MA degrees. The lack of courses and guidelines for accessible languages in Romanian partly explain the scarcity of linguistically accessible materials available either in standard languages or in accessible ones.

Therefore, although the legislative measures taken so far in Romania support the social inclusion of the people in need of linguistic accessibility, linguistically accessible solutions are almost inexistent. One major reason identified is the lack of trained professionals in the field of linguistic accessibility. Obviously, further research needs to be done to draft guidelines for accessible languages in Romanian, to create an educational framework within which the necessary competences are acquired by translators and interpreters

specialising in accessible languages as well as to identify all the causes that have led to the disastrous situation of linguistic accessibility in Romania in order to find solutions to improve it.

Funding information: Authors state no funding involved.

Author contributions: All authors have accepted responsibility for the entire content of this manuscript and approved its submission.

Conflict of interest: Authors state no conflict of interest. D.D. is a member of the Open Linguistics Editorial Board. He was not, however, involved in the review process of this article. It was handled entirely by other editors of the journal.

Data availability statement: All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this published article.

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