



Simplify Language – Capture Audience

Technical workshop, 24 Sep 2021

*J. Lowery-Kingston,
Head of Unit “Accessibility, Multilingualism, Safer Internet”
DG CONNECT, European Commission*

This topic matters!

- CNECT G3:
- Language Technologies: [language tools](#) available for free to the public sector & small & medium-size enterprises (SMEs)
- Web Accessibility ([Directive 2016/2012](#))
- Safer Internet for Children [#YouthPledge](#) age-appropriate terms & conditions
- A #UnionOfEquality : fighting discrimination, including discrimination against Persons with Disability (PwD) estimated at 15% of the population by the UN WHO

Potential of language technologies for PwD

- Automatic closed captioning
- Successful automatic translation of closed captions
- Text to speech
- Apps for sign language to text (multilingual)
- Haptics – e.g. deafblind community
- [Harmonised European Standard \(ETSI: EN 301 549 v3.2.1\)](#)
- World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [Web Accessibility Initiative](#)
- [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#)

Cognitive impairment

- **WCAG 2.1:**

Note that **even content that conforms at the highest level (AAA) will not be accessible** to individuals with all types, degrees, or combinations of disability, particularly in the **cognitive language and learning areas**.

- Working group [Cognitive and Learning Disabilities Accessibility Task Force \(COGA\)](#)

- COGA [Resources in development](#)

- [ETSI EN 301 549 v3.2.1](#) says:

Annex D (informative): It is evident that people with limited cognitive, language and learning abilities have diverse accessibility needs and preferences and that there is a need for further guidelines and standards. Research in this area is ongoing.

Literacy skills 1/2

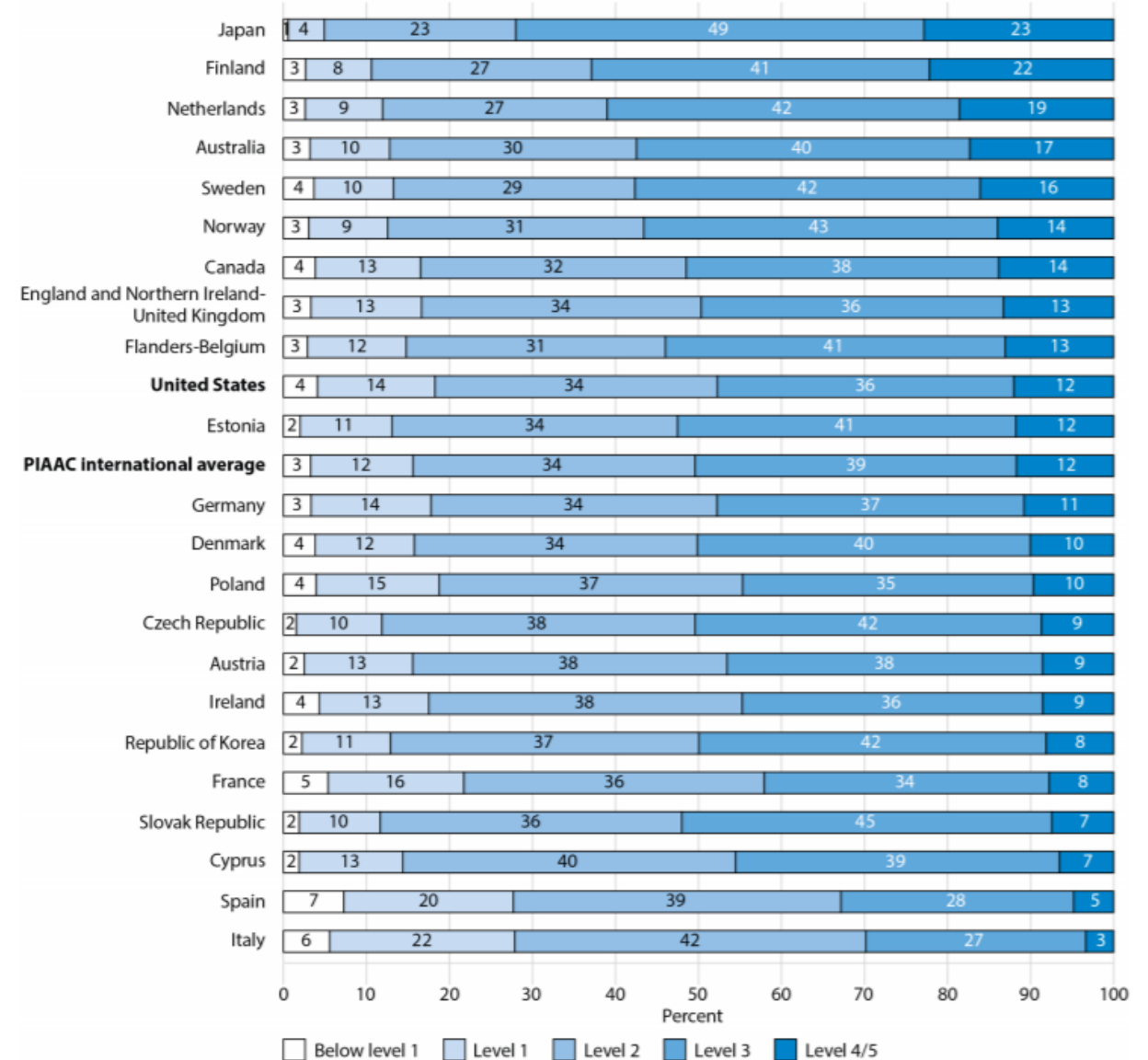
Text alone is not the complete answer:
Literacy levels in the general population in
PIAAC

Ca 50% levels 0-2

30-40% level 3

Minority (max 20% in Finland) levels 4/5

Data on international literacy levels from
[OECD Programme for the International
Assessment of Adult Competencies
\(PIAAC\)](#)



Literacy skills 2/2

- OECD report (2016) [What does low proficiency in literacy really mean?](#)
- 28% of adults scoring at or below Level 1 ranged from 5% in Japan to 28% in Italy.
- Adults proficient at Level 1 are generally able to solve reading tasks that require a knowledge of basic vocabulary, determine the meaning of short sentences and read paragraphs of text.
- => Implications for **all** public sector communication, not just PwD

Need for LT to help

- No silver bullet
- « easy to read » material is difficult for (many) humans to produce
- « easy to read » material is essential for the public & private sector
- How can LT help?

Challenge

- EU legislation: [Web Accessibility Directive 2016/2012](#)
- EU [summary of the WAD](#)
- Can you produce an easy to read version?
- Please email me at CNECT-WAD-TEAM@ec.europa.eu
- Results will be shared with both the Member States WAD experts & with relevant European Commission colleagues

Examples of inclusive communication

- [Inclusion Europe](#)
- Inclusion Europe has 78 members in 39 European countries
- [List of all member associations](#)
- Examples of easy to read texts: [“explainers”](#)

Thank you



© European Union 2020

Unless otherwise noted the reuse of this presentation is authorised under the [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) license. For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the EU, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective right holders.

Slide 5: **element concerned** table, source of image unknown, data from <https://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac>

