

## **Simplified English - New Application Fields**

As more and more companies profit from the internationalisation of their markets, small and medium-sized companies have been eager to jump on to the bandwagon previously ridden only by the large players.

However, new markets also bring new challenges. Differences in culture and mentality can give surprises. In the field of technical documentation, internationalisation means: translate, translate and, once again, translate. More versions of more documents in more languages...

***But: Must all these documents really be always translated?***

### **Simplify your language – and make yourself understood**

The aerospace industry has been demonstrating it: for many years now, service documentation has been written only in Simplified English. It can be understood without difficulty by technicians of different nationalities.

It seems that one language is enough to set the rules for the servicing of airplanes all over the world.

### **Simplified English – the idea**

Simplified English is a controlled form of English: vocabulary and sentence construction are limited, and writing rules must be strictly obeyed. The purpose is to provide texts in a clearly structured language, so that they can be easily understood even by those not particularly proficient in English. Non-native speakers of standard English can learn Simplified English in a short time. The limited vocabulary and the fixed set of rules gives them confidence in the knowledge that they are producing quality English documentation. Simplified English provides consistency and avoids ambiguities.

### **New application fields**

Other industries can profit from Simplified English too – but not without preparation. Current Simplified English solutions, like the ASD Simplified Technical English used in the aerospace industry (former AECMA Simplified English), cannot be transferred to different application areas without modification. In order to be accepted by the authors as well as by the readers, the solution should fit perfectly. Vocabulary and rule sets must be adapted to the particular area of application. But the basic idea remains the same: a set of style rules and recommendations offers a clear orientation frame in which to formulate understandable language.

## **Basis for translation**

Of course there are many cases in which Simplified English is not an alternative to translation. In most cases consumer products require localized instruction manuals, written in the national language. Yet even here, Simplified English can help to reduce costs, by providing an easy and unequivocal source language for the translation process. When using a translation memory you can keep the number of segments low. Even for new passages, the steady formulation patterns of Simplified English yield a high rate of fuzzy matches.

## **An example: Simplified English for servers**

Cognitas developed a special variant of Simplified English for the service documentation of servers. In a first step, lists of words were generated from a body of existing service manuals. The lists gave a good overview of words that are currently in use and their frequency of use. This was a good basis on which to create a restricted vocabulary set significantly smaller than the original one. Unnecessary variants in the meaning of words and synonyms were eliminated. Then the existing writing rules of Simplified English were reviewed. Were these special rules useable for the service documentation of servers? Did the expected improvement justify the expense of the conversion? The results were fed into a tool developed by cognitas: the Language Checker for FrameMaker. With the help of this tool, the existing documents were converted and the new documents created.

## **cognitas Language Checker – the handy tool**

There are various tools which support the production of texts in Simplified English. Most of these tools are however designed for the requirements of the aerospace industry. They offer a immense variety of functions, but are not quite cheap. Cognitas provides you with an inexpensive, easy-to-use and easily adaptable tool to introduce Simplified English: the Language Checker for FrameMaker. The Language Checker helps you in introducing Simplified English as well as in the writing of texts according to the rules of Simplified English.

You can easily create lists of words and sentences to improve vocabulary. The vocabulary set is made available to the Language Checker in the form of an Excel list. During the writing process, the Language Checker tests the use of the restricted vocabulary and the observation of writing rules. Appearance and the range of tests can be individually customized. If required, the allowed vocabulary can be complemented easily.

Of course, not all the rules can be checked by a tool. An example is the rule: "Each paragraph must have only one topic". Therefore training of editors is as necessary as a good check tool.

[www.cognitas.de](http://www.cognitas.de)

**Über cognitas GmbH:**

Die cognitas GmbH - das sind mehr als achtzig erfahrene Redakteure, Grafiker, Lektoren, Übersetzer, Online-Spezialisten und Tool-Entwickler. cognitas erstellt verschiedenste Arten von Technischer Dokumentation wie Bedienungs- und Betriebsanleitungen, Online-Hilfesysteme, Softwarebeschreibungen und Kataloge. Als großer Dienstleister für Technische Dokumentation bietet cognitas maßgeschneiderte Lösungen, vom Schreiben einer einzelnen Anleitung bis zur Neuorganisation Ihres gesamten Dokumentationsprozesses.

Die Tätigkeitsschwerpunkte liegen in den Bereichen der IT, der Pharmaindustrie, der Luft- und Raumfahrt, der Wehrtechnik, des Maschinenbaus sowie der Automobilbranche. Die cognitas GmbH ist eine der wenigen Dokumentationsfirmen in Deutschland, die nach der neuen Norm DIN EN ISO 9001:2000 zertifiziert ist. cognitas hat Niederlassungen in Paderborn, Stuttgart und Salzburg (Österreich).

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