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Promoting Inclusion by Easy-to-read Language

Producing and Analysing Religious Easy-to-read Website Material

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<p>The purpose of the thesis was to promote inclusion by easy-to-read language. In practice, this was done in the context of religious prayer texts. One aim of the thesis was to modify a set of nine Christian prayers into easy-to-read language. The prayers were intended for the website of Central Administration of the Church. In the analysis of the texts, the aim was to find answers to the questions 'Why are the selected prayers too difficult for many readers?' and 'What needs to be done to make the prayers inclusive and easy to read?' These aims were fulfilled, although, due to the limited extent of the thesis, only a few aspects could be brought forward. The analysis was carried out by categorising the content into themes, and the findings were presented under the different themes. One original aim was also to test the texts produced with potential users, but no results to be reported were achieved for this part.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the thesis was inclusion, which was first examined generally in different contexts and then specifically in the context of people with intellectual disabilities. The concepts of accessibility, equality, participation and wellbeing were also found to be relevant to the topic.</p> <p>On the basis of the text production and analysis work, a number of questions arose concerning the nature of the selected texts, user involvement, and need for training. It was noted that the topic is relevant to the social field because there are a large number of people who benefit from easy-to-understand language. Language is not merely language; it creates reality and constructs social life. There is a need for training in easy-to-read language both within the church and in the social field in general. This thesis intends to raise awareness of these aspects.</p>	
Keywords	easy-to-read language, religious text, social inclusion, (web) accessibility, people with intellectual disabilities

<p>Tekijä Otsikko</p> <p>Sivumäärä Aika</p>	<p>Päivi Turiainen Inklusion edistäminen selkokielen avulla - Uskonnollisen selkokielen verkkomateriaalin tuottaminen ja analysointi</p> <p>33 sivua + 1 liite Tammikuu 2018</p>
<p>Tutkinto</p>	<p>Sosionomi (AMK)</p>
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<p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena oli edistää inklusiota selkokielen avulla. Käytännössä tämä toteutettiin uskonnollisten rukoustekstien kontekstissa. Yhtenä opinnäytteen tavoitteena oli muokata yhdeksän kristillistä rukousta selkokielelle. Rukoukset oli tarkoitettu Kirkkohallituksen verkkosivuille. Tekstien analysoinnin tavoitteena oli löytää vastauksia seuraaviin kysymyksiin: ”Miksi valitut rukoukset ovat liian vaikeita monille lukijoille?” ja ”Mitä täytyy tehdä, jotta rukouksista saadaan inklusiivisia ja selkokieliisiä?” Nämä tavoitteet täyttyivät, vaikka opinnäytteen rajallisen laajuuden vuoksi vain joitakin näkökulmia voitiin tuoda esille. Analysointi tehtiin teemoittelun avulla ja tulokset esitettiin näiden eri teemojen alla. Yhtenä alkuperäisenä tavoitteena oli myös testata tuotettuja tekstejä potentiaalisten käyttäjien kanssa, mutta tältä osin ei saatu raportoitavia tuloksia.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön teoreettinen viitekehys oli inklusio, jota tarkasteltiin ensin yleisesti eri asiayhteyksissä ja sitten erityisesti kehitysvammaisten ihmisten yhteydessä. Käsitteet ”saavutettavuus”, ”tasa-arvo”, ”osallisuus” ja ”hyvinvointi” havaittiin myös aiheen kannalta relevanteiksi.</p> <p>Tekstintuotanto- ja analysointityön pohjalta nousi kysymyksiä valittujen tekstien luonteesta, käyttäjien osallistumisesta ja koulutustarpeista. Todettiin, että aihe on relevantti sosiaalialalla, koska suuri määrä ihmisiä hyötyy selkokielestä. Kieli ei ole pelkästään kieltä; se luo todellisuutta ja rakentaa sosiaalista elämää. Selkokielikoulutukselle on tarvetta sekä kirkon piirissä että yleisesti sosiaalialalla. Tämä opinnäytetyö pyrkii herättämään tietoisuutta näistä näkökulmista.</p>	
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>selkokieli, uskonnollinen teksti, sosiaalinen inklusio, (verkko)saavutettavuus, kehitysvammaiset ihmiset</p>

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Appendix. Prayer texts in standard and easy-to-read language

1 Introduction

The starting point for this thesis is that there are a large number of people who need information and other types of texts in an easy-to-read form. There are two terms referring to language that has been modified to be easily understood: 'plain language' and 'easy-to-read language'. According to Matausch, Peböck & Pühretmair (2014, p. 313), plain language is not intended for a particular user group, whereas easy-to-read language is intended for people with cognitive disabilities, i.e. "disabilities arising from cognitive impairments, developmental retardation and understanding".

In Finnish, the term '*selkokieli*' is used. The Finnish expert organisation Selkokeskus defines the term as being targeted at people who find it difficult to read or understand standard language. In Finland, this language form has been in use and under development since the 1980s. At first, the focus was on the needs of those with intellectual disabilities but it was soon observed that a number of other groups also needed easier language. Thus, the aim has been to create an easy language form common to all those who have difficulties with understanding standard Finnish, which, as noted by Selkokeskus, has required compromises and has not been an easy task. Nevertheless, a successful result has been achieved through compromises. (Selkokeskus 2015.) For the purposes of this thesis, the term 'easy-to-read language' will be used in line with the understanding of the Finnish term '*selkokieli*'. Different user groups will be presented on page 6.

My interest in easy-to-read language arises from the fact that I have studied translating and have been working as a translator for a number of years. While my education prepared me to produce clear and understandable texts, I have spent my career translating complex technical texts that can be described as highly "difficult-to-read". In my Bachelor's thesis, I wish to combine my interest in language and communication with needs of the social services field.

We are all exposed to a huge amount of text in today's society. The underlying idea in the thesis is that all people have a right to equal access in all spheres of life, which requires that more and more texts be translated into easy-to-read language. While even making rather a straightforward text more straightforward might not be an easy task,

even less easy would it be to simplify a philosophical text, for example. This is illustrated by Brian Garner cited by Stephens (2000):

What do we mean by "plain language"? I define it as the idiomatic and grammatical use of language that most effectively presents ideas to the reader. By that definition, plain language may be, in some sense, unplain. Who would call Kant's categorical imperative plain, despite the seeming simplicity of the words? "Act as if the maxim on which you act were to become, through your will, a universal law." On the other hand, who would volunteer to simplify it?

Volunteering to simplify religious language may be considered as challenging a task, as religious language is of a very specific type and has its own regularities: it has to do with something abstract and invisible and, moreover, something that is a matter of faith. Through my partner organisation, the Central Administration of the Church, I took on the challenge of producing some religious easy-to-read texts in Finnish for their easy-to-read website. The texts are seasonal prayers related to the liturgical year: the website is to be supplemented with texts related to each Christian season.

2 Partner organisation

The partner organisation for this project is the Central Administration of the Church (*Kirkkohallitus*). Kirkkohallitus is the administrative organisation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, formed of the General Synod, the Church Council, the Bishops' Conference, the Commission for Church Employers and the Council for International Relations (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland, n.d.). In addition, Kirkkohallitus includes an office divided into a plurality of departments.

The values of the church are defined in the report *A Church of Encounter - Guidelines for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland until 2020* and are based on the principles found in the Bible: faith, hope and love. The document also emphasises equality: the same values apply to all people and matters. Likewise, it is stressed that the church should be actively involved in current discussion about values in society. (A Church of Encounter..., n.d.)

In October 2017, the Advisory Board for Easy to Read granted a reward to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland for its long-term and target-oriented work to promote easy-to-read language. Easy-to-read language is included in the church's strategy, and

even abstract topics have been modified into easy-to-read language within the church. (Suomen evankelis-luterilainen kirkko 2017.)

3 Aim of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to promote inclusion of groups of people that need or benefit from easy-to-read language. This is done in the context of religious prayer texts intended for the website of Kirkkohallitus. The texts are in the Finnish language. Underpinning the aim is the notion that all spheres of life should be accessible to all to promote and realise inclusion and participation. The church uses easy-to-read language because everyone should have access to the gospel in the kind of language understandable to them (Kuusi 2016).

More specifically, the aim of the thesis is in two parts. Firstly, the aim is to find out answers to the following questions:

Why are the selected prayers too difficult for many readers?

What needs to be done to make the prayers inclusive and easy to read?

Findings are reported in chapter 8. Secondly, on the basis of the above, the aim is to produce easy-to-read versions of the selected prayers.

Originally, one aim was also to test the easy-to-read versions produced with representatives of user groups in a feedback session. The original idea was to do the testing with two user groups: people with intellectual disabilities and immigrants. Later, the testing was confined to be done with people with intellectual disabilities. This was carried out with a small group of participants in a group home. However, the testing was not successful. The intention was to find out how the texts worked in practice and how the participants experienced them: whether the message was understood and whether there was still something that was too difficult. I did not find answers to these questions. It seemed that the participants were either automatically of the opinion that the texts were “really good” or then they expressed thoughts that seemed to stem from free association and had nothing to do with the questions. Nevertheless, the participants seemed to be pleased to be part of the ‘research’, so in this sense it was probably a meaningful experience from their point of view. From the viewpoint of the author of the thesis, however, the aim was not fulfilled, and therefore, this part is not reported in more detail. As Kartio

(2009, pp. 63-65, 70) points out, the interaction between people with intellectual disabilities and those without intellectual disabilities may be challenging, and sometimes a text or conversation may be too difficult or abstract for those with intellectual disabilities. A skilful approach is required in such situations. According to my assessment, the testing was not successful for these reasons: the topic was too abstract, and I as the ‘interviewer’ or ‘tester’ was not sufficiently experienced or prepared for the special nature of the discussion. Because of lack of time, i.e. since the original implementation plan for the thesis had already been extended timewise, I did not organise any further testing sessions.

4 Context of the thesis

4.1 Easy-to-read language

4.1.1 Need and grounds for easy-to-read language

As mentioned earlier, easy-to-read language is intended for those who find it difficult to understand or read standard language. Clear standard language is not the same as easy-to-read language; the purpose of the latter is to be significantly easier to understand than the former. Thus, easy-to-read language does not intend to replace clear standard language in various media but specifically to support special groups of people who experience challenges with standard language. The use of easy-to-read language is based on the principle of equality and accessibility. Equality and accessibility enable participation irrespective of an individual’s characteristics. (Virtanen 2014, pp. 16-17; 20.)

Citing the Ministry of Education (2004), Virtanen (2014, p. 20-21) lists eight domains of accessibility: accessibility in attitudes, physical accessibility, accessibility through different senses, cognitive/information-related accessibility, accessibility in communication, financial accessibility, social and cultural accessibility, and accessibility in decision-making. Making language easy to read and understand is particularly related to cognitive or information-related accessibility and accessibility in communication (Virtanen 2014, p. 21), and thus these aspects also have a particular relevance to the topic of this thesis. Further, social and cultural accessibility play an important role in the present case: language in general is culture-bound and even more so is religious language, here Christian language. Also, the social aspect is significant, as using religious language is closely

related to a community: a Christian community at large, a local parish or a smaller community sharing similar values and traditions and offering opportunities to participate in shared rituals, activities or the like.

According to Snow (2002, p. 11), reading comprehension can be seen as having three dimensions:

- “The *reader* who is doing the comprehending”
- “The *text* that is to be comprehended”
- “The *activity* in which comprehension is a part.”

Reading comprehension takes place in a broader socio-cultural context “that shapes and is shaped by the reader and that interacts with each of the three elements”.

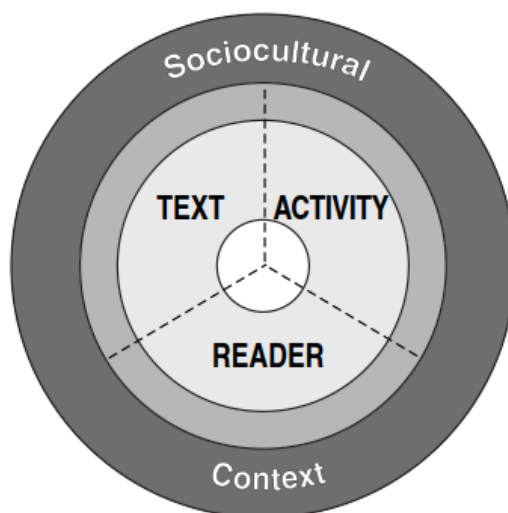


Figure 2.1—A Heuristic for Thinking About Reading Comprehension

FIGURE 1. Reading comprehension (Snow 2002, p. 12).

Reading comprehension can thus be seen as an interactive process requiring all three dimensions. None of the elements works in isolation. With regard to easy-to-read texts, reading comprehension involves the reader with special needs, the text that hopefully meets these needs, and the activity which reading comprehension relates to. These dimensions interact with the social and cultural factors present in each particular case.

4.1.2 User groups

There are a large number of people who need easy-to-read language or benefit from it. When referring to them, the term 'user groups' or 'readers' rather than 'target groups' is used in this thesis, as the texts under examination are prayers, i.e. they are closely linked to religious practice. The intention is to promote readers' participation and sense of belonging to a community. The readers are not passive 'targets' but active participants.

People who benefit from easy-to-read language include individuals who have challenges with perception, concentration and attention, for example ADHD and FAD; individuals with linguistic challenges, for example dyslexia and specific language impairment; individuals with delayed development, for example people with intellectual disabilities and people with learning difficulties; individuals with learning disabilities related to the autistic spectrum; individuals with memory disorders and some of the very old people; individuals learning Finnish as a second or foreign language, usually migrants; and others, for example individuals belonging to an ethnic or minority group, mental health rehabilitees and Finns living abroad. It is to be noted, however, that only a part of any particular group of people are involved. (Virtanen 2014, p. 39-40.) Due to the limited extent of the present thesis, the above groups of people will not be described in more detail.

In Finland, user groups are divided into three main categories based on the reason why a person's linguistic skills are insufficient: those who have permanently deviant linguistic skills due to neurobiological reasons, those whose linguistic skills have deteriorated because of a disability or an illness, and those whose linguistic skills are temporarily insufficient and are expected to improve. Since one single easy-to-read text may have several different readers, modifying a text may turn out problematic. For instance, migrants and people with intellectual disabilities may have very different background knowledge of the subject matter of the text. (Leskelä & Kulkki-Nieminen 2015, pp. 26-30.) Leskelä and Kulkki-Nieminen (2015, p. 30) emphasise that the reader should not be underestimated: the easy-to-read language text should not explain too much, and elements that can be considered self-evident should not be added to the text. Sometimes, however, explanations are needed. According to the authors, a good explanation is often discreet, pictures and captions being also a practical way to clarify the subject matter.

4.2 Background for inclusive thinking: equality and accessibility

There are a number of intertwined and even overlapping concepts closely related to the topic at hand: equality, accessibility, inclusion, participation, wellbeing and belonging to a community. In the following chapter, the focus is on inclusion, but a brief reference is now made to equality and accessibility to illustrate the background for inclusive thinking.

According to the Constitution of Finland (731/1999) and the Non-Discrimination Act (21/2004), people are equal and may not be treated differently or discriminated on the grounds of origin, language, disability or other personal characteristics (Constitution of Finland; Non-Discrimination Act). According to Thompson (2011, p. 5), “promoting equality means seeking to ensure that individuals or groups are not systematically treated unfairly, not barred from contributing fully to society and to gaining the full benefits of being a member of that society”. He further notes (2011, pp. 5, 9) that equality does not signify sameness and that equality and diversity are different aspects of the same phenomenon: “Equality involves valuing fairness, while diversity involves valuing difference - and these are entirely compatible.” To bring the concept to the context of the church, the following citation from the accessibility programme of the Evangelical Lutheran Church illustrates how equality is seen from a Christian point of view: “Two of the core teachings of Christianity are the equal treatment of all people and respect for life. Love for one’s neighbours and caring for others are motives for treating all people equally.” (Come - Church of Finland Accessibility Programme, n.d., p. 12.)

The concept of accessibility was already touched upon earlier, as it is one of the core concepts in the context of easy-to-read language. From the church’s point of view, “[a]ccessibility is realised when each person can, according to their own interests, receive knowledge, experience fellowship and, if desired, serve in an active capacity or otherwise be involved in a parish” (Come - Church of Finland Accessibility Programme, n.d., p. 12).

4.3 Web accessibility

Since the texts produced as part of this thesis are intended for a website, a brief overview of requirements of web accessibility is presented. According to Matausch, Peböck & Pühretmair (2014, p. 315), in order to be accessible, a website must meet two criteria: it must be technically accessible, and its content must be accessible. The authors note that not enough attention has been paid to accessible content on websites in Europe because those responsible for creating websites and their content do not know easy-to-read language sufficiently well. In addition, technical accessibility is regulated more than content accessibility. (Matausch, Peböck & Pühretmair 2014, p. 315.)

There are international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG 2.0, which are recommendations by nature. They contain four principles for accessible web content: the content must be *perceivable, operable, understandable and robust*. (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 2008.)

In Finland, the Non-Discrimination Act prescribes that providers of public services should make necessary adjustments to their services to enable people with disabilities to use the services equally. This can also be applied to websites. Further, in autumn 2018, the Directive on Web Accessibility will enter into force, according to which all organisations in the public sector should make their web services accessible. (Papunet 2017a.)

Since I was not responsible for the practical implementation of the Kirkkohallitus website, this area will not be dealt with in greater detail. It is to be noted that although the guidelines on writing easy-to-read language did not originally pay attention to the context of the web, the general guidelines on producing easy-to-read material are, to a great extent, similar to those on producing web content (Papunet 2017b).

5 Theoretical background: inclusion

In their accessibility programme, the church expresses the idea of inclusion as follows: "Inclusion is built in interaction with the community. ... Inclusion is where each person offers their own personal gifts for the entire community to enjoy." (Come - Church of

Finland Accessibility Programme, n.d., p. 12.) Special weight is thus put on acting in a community. The term 'inclusion' is not unequivocal. It is used in a plurality of contemporary contexts, and even within one and the same framework it may be ambiguous. It is also closely linked to the term 'integration'. The importance of community and social life becomes apparent from different contexts.

In the following, there is first an overview of different contexts in which the concept 'inclusion' is typically used. Subsequently, the focus is on the social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.

5.1 Inclusion in different contexts

5.1.1 Inclusion in social policy

Firstly, in the context of social policy, inclusion frequently refers to the desired state of being included in society as opposed to being marginalised or excluded. Social exclusion, in turn, is frequently associated with such risk factors as poverty, unemployment and poor health. 'Inclusion' is seen, more or less, through the lenses of 'exclusion'. While it is important to address the issues of exclusion, it is also worthwhile to stop to reflect, in each case, to what extent the 'exclusion talk' is exclusive as such and whether it might contribute to creating a personal stigma where the real reasons are structural. Jehoel-Gijsberg and Vrooman (2007, p. 17) suggest a model of social exclusion divided into economic/structural exclusion (referred to as distributional dimension) and socio-cultural exclusion (referred to as socio-cultural dimension):

Insert 1 Characteristics of social exclusion

A. Economic/structural exclusion (distributional dimension):

1. Material deprivation:

Deficiencies in relation to basic needs and material goods; 'lifestyle deprivation'; problematic debts; payment arrears (a.o. housing costs).

2. Inadequate access to government and semi-government provisions ('social rights'):

Waiting lists, financial impediments and other obstacles to: health care, education (especially of children), housing, legal aid, social services, debt assistance, employment agencies, social security, and certain commercial services (such as banking and insurance); insufficient safety.

B. Socio-cultural exclusion (relational dimension):

3. Insufficient social integration:

A lack of participation in formal and informal social networks, including leisure activities; inadequate social support; social isolation.

4. Insufficient cultural integration:

A lack of compliance with core norms and values associated with active social citizenship, indicated by a weak work ethic; abuse of the social security system; delinquent behaviour; deviating views on the rights and duties of men and women; no involvement in the local neighbourhood and society at large.

Expressions that could be interpreted as stigmatising are found in the above model as well but there are also elements that are of particular interest from the viewpoint of this thesis. Insufficient social integration is defined to encompass “a lack of participation in formal and informal social networks, including leisure activities; inadequate social support; social isolation” (Jehoel-Gijsberg & Vrooman 2007, p. 17). Accessible material in easy-to-read language contributes to removing barriers to participation.

5.1.2 Inclusive education

Secondly, ‘inclusion’ is related to education and particularly to the field of special education. Inclusive education is based on the idea that all pupils irrespective of whether they have special educational needs or not go to the same school from the beginning. The required special education resources are brought to the ordinary school environment instead of putting pupils in special schools or special classes. The leading principles of inclusion are social justice, equality and democracy. There is some overlapping and even confusion in the use of the terms ‘inclusion’ and ‘integration’, particularly in international comparisons. In the Nordic countries the difference between the terms is more of an academic question, while in the United States it is perceived to have practical relevance. ‘Inclusion’ is seen to convey the idea that *all activities* in school are available to all students, so that it is not merely mainstreaming, i.e. physical positioning of students in the same place. In any case, *social* integration and participation by everyone are the ‘deepest substance’ of integration and inclusion. (Moberg & Savolainen 2009, pp. 84-85.) It is to be noted, however, that circumstances vary and an absolute, black-and-white inclusive thinking may be also be harmful (Vehmas 2009, 115-116).

The concept of inclusion has been broadened to concern not only children but people of all ages and backgrounds. Learning is ideally considered as a lifelong process. The whole community is involved, and active participation is emphasised. (Topping, n.d., p. 13; Topping & Maloney 2005, pp. 5-6.) Here, points of resemblance to the role of the church can be seen: the church also has the task of religious education of its members, and the intention is to enhance active participation in the religious community.

The following figure illustrates how the content of the concept has widened over time. (SEN = special educational needs.)

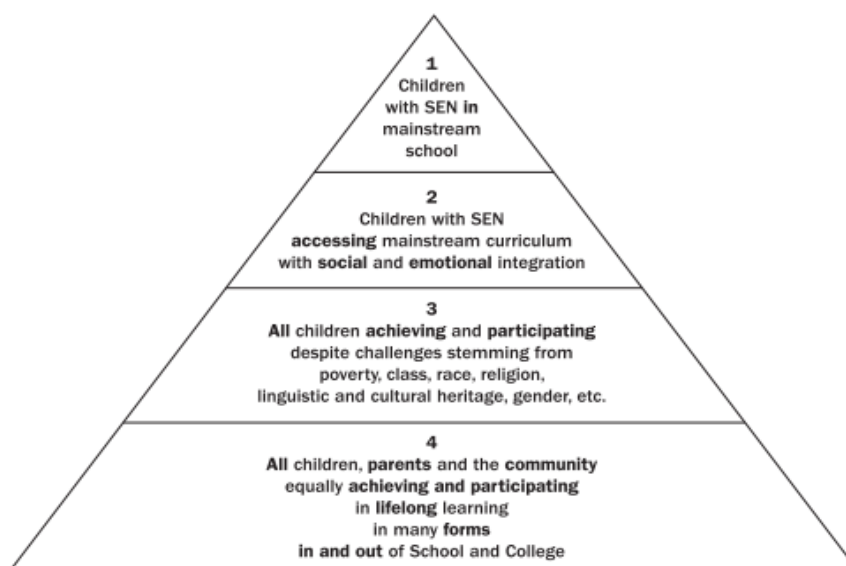


Figure 1.1 Expanding concepts of inclusion: four levels

FIGURE 2. Inclusion: expanding concept (Topping, n.d., p. 13; Topping & Maloney 2005, p. 6).

5.1.3 Inclusion in disability studies

Thirdly, inclusion relates to the field of disability studies. During the past few decades, the social model of disability has gained popularity, and people with disabilities have been campaigning for their rights themselves. The idea of the social model is that barriers to full participation are created by society and should be eliminated. ‘Disability’ is seen as *social exclusion* while ‘impairment’ is the physical limitation of a person. (Shakespeare 2013, pp. 214-216.) Ikäheimo (2009, pp. 85-86) argues that social inclusion of people with disabilities is about being included in *social life* and takes three forms: *technical inclusion* in social life, i.e. having access to tools, services and spaces that allow participation in social life; *institutional inclusion* in social life, i.e. having an institutionally recognised full status as a human being and citizen (e.g. human rights); and *interpersonal inclusion* in social life, i.e. being able to participate and having an opportunity to be respected and loved by other people.

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) has in their *World Report on Disability* given some recommendations to enhance inclusion of people with disabilities. The recommendation acknowledges the fact that both accessibility to mainstream systems and services

specially designed for those with disabilities are needed. According to their definition, mainstreaming is “the process by which governments and other stakeholders address the barriers that exclude persons with disabilities from participating equally with others in any activity and service intended for the general public, such as education, health, employment, and social services”. It is also strongly recommended that people with disabilities be heard in planning and implementing measures that concern them: they are the real experts in their own matters. (UN World Health Organization (WHO) 2011, p. 17-18.)

The leading principle in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is “full and effective participation and inclusion in society” (Article 3). In practice, this means, for instance, that people with disabilities have an equal access to the same services as others and that the needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the services (Article 19). (United Nations 2006.) Finland ratified the UN convention as late as in May 2016, and it entered into force in June 2016 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2016).

5.2 Social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities

People with intellectual disabilities are a large group of people to benefit from easy-to-read language. According to Riitta Kuusi, in modifying texts into an easy-to-read form, it has traditionally been the needs of this user group that has guided the work, although it is clear that the user groups are, in practice, much more versatile (Kuusi 2016).

The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) defines ‘intellectual disability’ as “a disability characterized by significant limitations in both **intellectual functioning** and in **adaptive behavior**, which covers many everyday social and practical skills. This disability originates **before the age of 18.**” (AAIDD American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities 2017.)

Referring to social inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities, Simpican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015, p. 19) note that the very concept of social inclusion is ambiguous. The concept is defined in a plurality of ways: it can be synonymous with social integration, social network, community participation and social capital. The authors present various definitions of social inclusion found in recent literature, pointing out that community participation and interpersonal relationships are elements common to them. However, the definitions differ from each other with regard to the scope (broad vs. narrow

definitions), setting (private vs. public), and depth (subjective vs. objective measuring). (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy 2015, p. 19-21.) The following figure illustrates various definitions found in literature, and as can be seen, the definitions are numerous. Column 1 shows the definition, column 2 the interchangeable terms, and column 3 the aims of social inclusion.

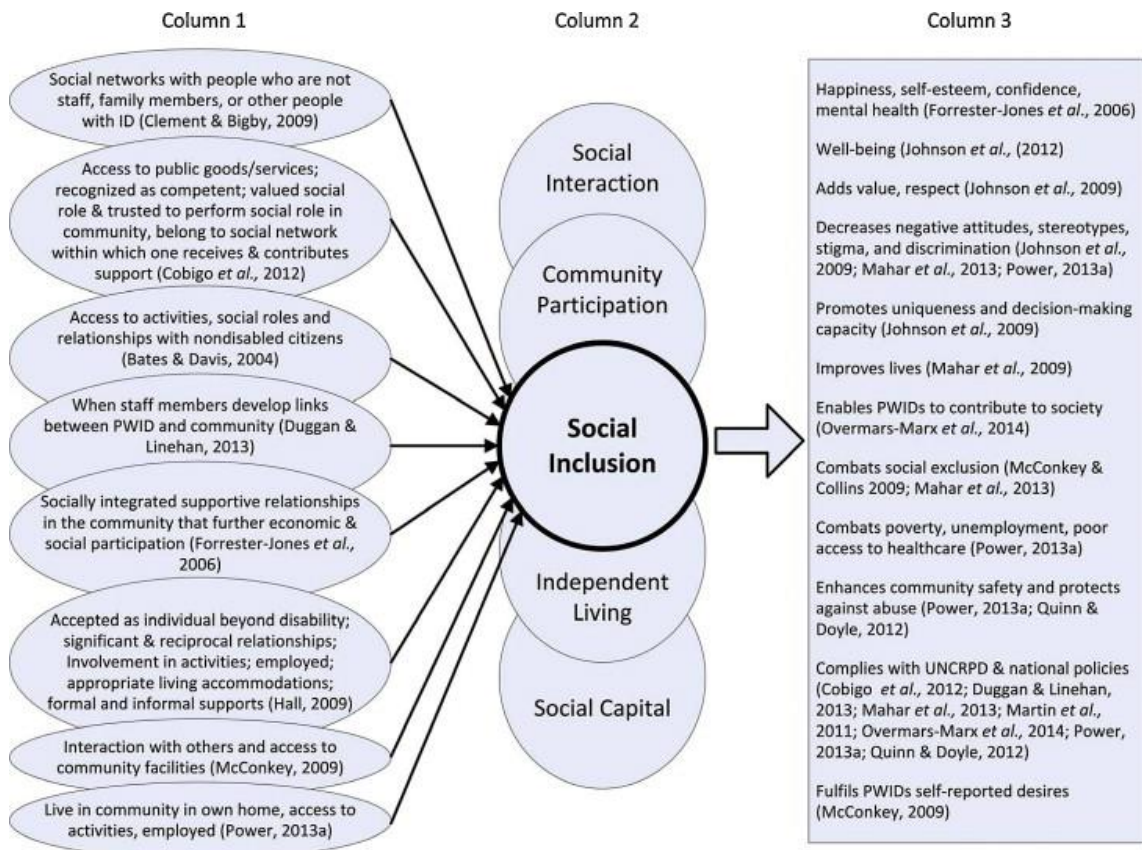


FIGURE 3. Social inclusion in literature (Simplican *et al.* 2015, p. 20).

5.2.1 Definition of social inclusion

Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015, pp. 22-25) strive for a definition clearer than the previous ones, suggesting a model of social inclusion which comprises the domains of interpersonal relationships and community participation. These domains are required for social inclusion, and they overlap and interact with each other. Each of the two domains contains more precise elements revealing the nature of the domain in question, as can be seen in the figure below.

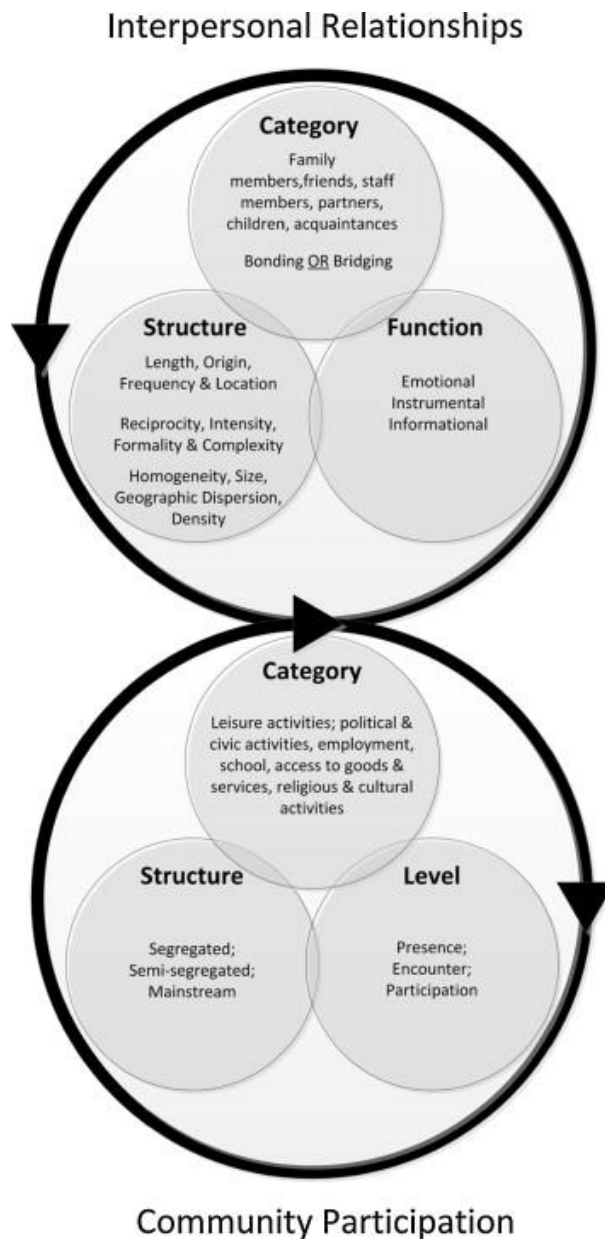


FIGURE 4. Interpersonal relationships and community participation in social inclusion (Simplican et al. 2015, p. 23).

The domain of community participation includes religious and cultural activities, which are particularly relevant in the context of this thesis. As for the setting in which it takes place, community participation can be seen as segregated, semi-segregated or mainstream. As the authors point out, mainstream settings are the ones to offer the best opportunities for raising awareness of social inclusion but, at the same time, the ones to present the greatest challenges. (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy 2015, p. 24.)

The authors divide the level of involvement into presence, encounter and participation. Although active participation is usually the most desirable form of involvement, it is acknowledged that even presence may be significant as it may precede more extensive participation. Community participation is defined as “involvement in community activities that promote the development of interpersonal relationships”. Thus, the domains of interpersonal relationships and community participation are closely intertwined. (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy 2015, p. 24-25.)

5.2.2 Model of social inclusion by Simplican et al.

Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy (2015, pp. 25-27) suggest what they call an ecological model of social inclusion, covering a number of *enabling* and *disabling* factors. The authors note that the same factors may have positive or negative effects. For instance, *individual* factors, including self-motivation and confidence, may enhance a sense of belonging or a sense of loneliness. Other factors presented by the authors are interpersonal, organisational, community and socio-political ones. Factors particularly relevant to the context of this thesis are the organisational and community ones as they have to do with such organisations as churches as well as with online facilities. The different factors interact with each other, and as the authors point out, positive organisational conditions may enhance the effect of individual and interpersonal conditions. The socio-political factors, in turn, include the laws that affect people’s everyday lives. The different factors are illustrated in greater detail in the following figure.

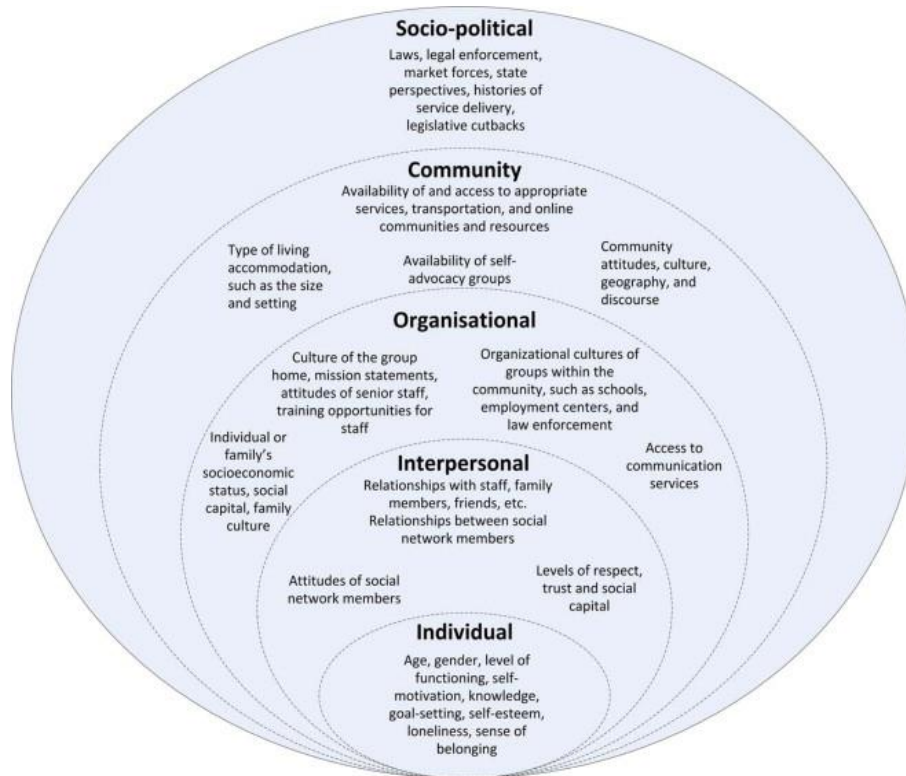


FIGURE 5. Pathways to and from social inclusion (Simplican et al. 2015, p. 25).

The authors recommend that future research focus on all the above interacting levels simultaneously. There is a need for a broad view on enabling and disabling factors affecting social inclusion. (Simplican, Leader, Kosciulek and Leahy 2015, p. 27.) In practical social field work, these interacting levels should also be considered simultaneously.

5.3 Participation and wellbeing in a religious community

Tiina Häkkinen (2011) has written her pro gradu thesis on participation of people with intellectual disabilities in the church. For her thesis, Häkkinen interviewed church workers who worked with people with intellectual disabilities. According to Häkkinen's (2011, p. 83) findings, various programmes and strategies that defined the official guidelines for participation within the church at the time were not necessarily followed in all parishes; Häkkinen saw the realisation of participation on a practical level as a vulnerable area.

Participation and the sense of belonging to a community are factors having an impact on an individual's wellbeing. Allardt (1993, pp. 89-91) suggests a wellbeing model divided into *Having*, *Loving* and *Being*: *Having* stands for "those material conditions which are

necessary for survival and for avoidance of misery”, *Loving* represents “the need to relate to other people and to form social identities, and *Being* refers to “the need for integration into society...”. Allardt’s model has also been exposed to criticism: for instance Niemelä (2006) as cited by Misukka (2009, p. 36) holds the view that the model lacks the presence of participation or inclusion (*osallisuus*). The aspects of participation and inclusion could, however, be assessed to be incorporated in the dimensions of *Loving* and *Being*. It is, after all, stated by Allardt (1993, p. 91) that the indicators of *Loving* include “attachments and contacts in the local community” and “attachments and contacts with fellow members in association and organizations”, while the indicators of *Being* measure “to what extent a person can *participate* in decisions and activities influencing his life” (italics mine) and “opportunities for leisure-time activities”.

Referring to the above dimensions of wellbeing by Allardt, Pessi (2010, pp. 77-94) writes about the Finnish Lutheran Church “as an agent of welfare and good life”. According to Pessi, the dimension of ‘loving’ plays a dominant role. She characterises the church’s role as an “encountering church” (*kohtaava kirkko*): the church is a unique organisation capable of being present for people “at a deeper and more holistic level” than other organisations. (Pessi 2010, p. 90.) In the light of the above-mentioned findings by Häkkinen (i.e. guidelines for participation not being fully followed), there might be reason to ask whether such a deep and holistic approach exists for people with special needs.

In the context of the present thesis, particular attention needs to be paid to the *spiritual dimension of wellbeing*. Kettunen (2003, pp. 364-365) argues that a person can only find the holistic nature and integrity of spiritual life in the interaction of three factors: the faith tradition of their church, individual growth and development, and the cultural, social and communal world. According to Elias (1993, p. 66), religious faith can be characterised by the metaphor of a journey: it is a “journey that a person travels with God, self, and others”. It is a personal journey but there are, as a rule, other people to support it and a strong tradition behind it. The research findings on connections between religion and wellbeing have been, for the most part, positive (e.g. Chatters 2000; Myers 1993; Chamberlein & Hall 2001; Levin 2001; Larson 2003 cited in Ojanen 2007, p. 247).

6 Linguistic aspects

Koskela, Lehtikoinen and Nuopponen (2009) have researched linguistic features of the easy-to-read language news on the internet. Although the language of the news is, in essence, very different from that of religious texts, there are features that are worth observing also in the latter context. Short words and sentences, words that are generally known, the active voice and logical text contribute to making a text easy to read (Koskela, Lehtikoinen & Nuopponen 2009: p. 41). Being brief and concise also allows a text to be easily skimmed through, which is particularly important in the case of a website.

6.1 Religious language

Religious language can be defined as language involving something that is experienced as *holy*. Thus, it is something that differs from everyday profane language. (Nissi & Mielikäinen 2014, p. 7.)

Various typical characteristics of religious language can be distinguished. Firstly, it is often subject to “explicit assessment and control” and involves “normative orientation and affective charges”. For example, only a given type of language may be accepted in a religious context, and religious language tends to remain unchanged more easily than standard language. Secondly, two different communication channels are intertwined: written language and spoken language “form...complex dialogical relations and intertextual networks”. For instance, in Finland, religious language is linked to the Finnish translation of the Bible, the spiritual vocabulary and syntax being largely based on this translation as well as on some archaic forms of Finnish. This also affects spoken language. Thirdly, religious language is linked to power relations that determine who is allowed to use given types of religious language and in which contexts. All of these aspects contribute to making religious language static: there are formulations that have remained nearly unchanged for centuries. At the same time, however, religious language is connected to the social reality and its changes. (Nissi & Mielikäinen 2014, pp. 9-13.) In the light of the above, changing religious language into an easy-to-read form might be considered almost revolutionary in the sense that it breaks such static patterns.

6.2 Religious texts in easy-to-read language

Easy-to-read material written for religious purposes already exists but there is a lack of theoretical research in the field. The Bible, for instance, can be found in easy-to-read language in Finnish and English, as well as in Swedish. The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland has an easy-to-read website containing material in easy-to-read Finnish and Swedish. Also the church service has been modified into easy-to-read language.

Leskelä and Kulkki-Nieminen (2015, pp. 164) present easy-to-read language usage in the context of various text genres, describing both characteristic features of different genres and instructions on modifying texts that represent particular genres. It can be noted that characteristics of poetry comes close to those of prayers. A poem is seen as focusing on one moment, insight or experience, which can open up a plethora of interpretations. A poem is “an image of a moment”. In their work, Leskelä and Kulkki-Nieminen (2015, p. 166) also give the floor to Ari Sainio, who has written easy-to-read language poems: Sainio argues that even if easy-to-read language instructions frequently emphasise concrete expressions and avoidance of symbolism, it is possible to write in a rich and vivid manner in easy-to-read language. The very point of poetry is to use metaphors and similes which are to evoke mental associations in the reader’s mind. Still, the symbolism should be simplified and reduced for easy-to-read purposes, simultaneously retaining some of the various layers and possibilities to different interpretations that make poetry poetry. Further, one characterising feature of poems is that they often refer to literature or some cultural aspects that are assumed to be familiar to the reader. Here, too, simplification is required: references should be to common phenomena that are known to as many people as possible. (Leskelä & Kulkki-Nieminen 2015, pp. 166, 192.) These are instructions that seem to be applicable for prayer texts as well. Poems and prayers share many characteristics. Religious texts are full of symbolism and references to other contexts within the religion.

7 Conducting the study

7.1 Text production process

With respect to the production of easy-to-read versions of the selected prayer texts, the present thesis is functional (*toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö*). Vilka and Airaksinen (2003, p. 51) specify that a functional thesis always results in a concrete product. In this case, the product is a set of Finnish easy-to-read prayer texts modified from the original texts in standard Finnish.

Riitta Kuusi, an expert in issues of accessibility and communication at the operational department of Kirkkohallitus, was responsible for selecting the texts to be used for the church's website. There are three volumes of texts (bible passages, prayers) used in alternate years in the church; the texts were selected from the volume currently in use (Kuusi 2016). Mrs Kuusi had a large number of prayers to be included on the website, out of which I selected the ones relating to Easter time to be used for my thesis. There are nine prayers, extending timewise from Easter Sunday to the 6th Sunday after Easter.

The text production process was intertwined with the analysing process, so these two were not, in practice, separate from each other. I met and emailed Riitta Kuusi several times, discussing the texts and receiving feedback. I produced several versions of the texts before the final one, i.e. the one used for testing with users. Not having done this type of modifying before, I adhered, to a great extent, to the original text in the first versions. On the basis of the comments and feedback from the contact person, I gradually got more courage to detach from the original. The contact person also drew my attention to aspects I would not have thought of without her, such as some theological aspects or aspects arising from the use of the original language of the Bible.

Sometimes the email correspondence caused challenges to the process, as it was not always easy to understand what the written comments on the margins of the draft versions meant. In such cases, I tried to clarify the intended meaning by asking further questions. Sometimes I did not completely agree with the comments, and also on these occasions, we exchanged some further emails. The final version attached to this thesis is the one used for testing. Kirkkohallitus has the right to modify the texts further, if required.

7.2 Analysis of the material

As for the analysis of the material, this thesis represents qualitative studies. At its simplest, qualitative research signifies non-numeric description of material and analysis. In qualitative research, it is possible to use a material-based approach, i.e. to examine the research material starting from the material itself, “from down upwards”. (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, pp. 13, 19.) Such an approach has been used here.

The method for analysing the material, i.e. the original texts and the modified easy-to-read versions, was categorising into themes. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2014, p. 175), such an approach allows one to bring forward themes relevant to the research questions. It is also useful for solving a practical problem (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, p. 179).

In practice, I read the selected texts several times and picked up themes which were repeated in the texts and which were relevant to the ‘research questions’. I used felt-tip pens of different colours to make the different themes visible. The texts being short and concise, a single passage frequently contained elements representing more than one theme. The following chapter presents findings of the analysis. The prayer texts are attached to the thesis as an appendix containing first the standard-language original and after that the easy-to-read version.

8 Findings

The leading principle of modifying texts into easy-to-read language is to retain the basic idea of the text. In the following, different themes arising from the selected texts are presented with the aid of examples. The themes overlap with each other, so the examples and descriptions are not ‘pure’ examples of only one category. The intention is to find answers to the questions posed in chapter 3:

Why are the selected prayers too difficult for many readers?

What needs to be done to make the prayers inclusive and easy to read?

The texts are only in the Finnish language because the whole process concerns modifying Finnish texts. Translating them into English would be a completely separate process

and is not feasible in this context. Therefore, understanding the explanations relating to the examples requires knowledge of the Finnish language.

8.1 Difficult expressions and structures

In religious texts, things are frequently expressed by using complex expressions which are typical of religious language and not part of people's everyday language. Structures are often complex as well.

Sinä annoit kuolleista nousseen Poikasi
ilmestyä oppilailleen.
Avaa sydämemme tuntemaan hänet,
jotta ilomme todistaisi
hänen ylösnousemuksestaan.
Kuule meitä Jeesuksen Kristuksen,
meidän Herramme tähden,
joka sinun ja Pyhän Hengen kanssa
elää ja hallitsee aina ja ikuisesti.

The above passage as an easy-to-read version is as follows:

Kun Jeesus oli noussut kuolleista,
hän ilmestyi oppilailleen.
Oppilaat vakuutuivat siitä, että
Jeesus elää.

Auta meitäkin tuntemaan Jeesus ja
anna meille ilo hänestä.
Silloin muutkin uskovat, että Jeesus elää.
Kuule rukouksemme.
Aamen.

Religious expressions may be challenging not only for people with special needs but also for anyone not accustomed to religious language. In the above prayer, the structure is simplified and the connections between the elements of the text are clarified. First, the prayer recounts what has happened and then proceeds to the consequences. The Finnish verb *todistaa* ('to witness') typical of religious language and expressed here as part of rather a complex structure has been deleted, and the meaning of the expression is explained in another way, again emphasising the consequence. The complex expression starting with *Kuule meitä...* and requiring four lines in the original text has been simplified and contains only two lines in the modified version:

*Kuule rukouksemme.
Aamen.*

The following is another example of complex expressions:

Taivaan ja maan Luoja.

Me kiitämme sinua kaikista teoistasi.
 Avaa meille sanasi
 ja opeta meitä tuntemaan
 Kristuksen rakkaus,
 niin että ylistämme kiitosvirsin
 kunniaasi ja armoasi.

In an easy-to-read form:

Jumala, sinä olet luonut koko maailman.
 Kiitos, että sinä annoit
 Poikasi Jeesuksen tulla ihmiseksi.
 Opetä meitä tuntemaan
 Jeesuksen rakkaus.
 Me kiitämme sinun armostasi.

Here, the form of address *Taivaan ja maan Luoja* has been changed to explain the meaning of the expression. Likewise, the expression *Avaa meille sanasi* has been changed to an explanatory form: *sana* refers to the whole message of Christianity, and the easy-to-read version thus recounts the Christian core message. The expression ..., *niin että ylistämme kiitosvirsin kunniaasi ja armoasi*, again a typical expression representing religious elevated style, has been simplified into *Me kiitämme sinun armostasi*.

One of the factors making expressions of religious language difficult to understand is that they are ones not used in everyday language. It is not common to speak about opening one's heart to something - *avata sydämensä jollekin* - or praising someone with hymns of thanks - *ylistää kiitosvirsin*. For people with special needs, such expressions present a particular challenge. For instance, people with intellectual disabilities tend to understand expressions used in a concrete manner. The above expressions - or the whole of religious language in a way - can be understood in a metaphorical way. Religious language does not work without metaphors. Metaphors and similes are some of the core elements of religious language, and there is a separate section about them later. All in all, difficult expressions and structures require *simplification*, *concretising* and, in many cases, *explanatory elements* to make them easier to understand. Also *eliminating* elements not necessary to the core message is often required. Virtanen (2009, p. 91) emphasises being concrete and illustrative and avoiding abstract expressions when writing in easy-to-read language. As far as possible, these aspects should be borne in mind also when dealing with complex expressions in religious language. Difficult grammatical structures, such as rare cases (*sijamuodot*), difficult verb forms and passive voice, should also be avoided (Virtanen 2009, p. 94). These are aspects that the writer of any easy-to-read text must pay attention to.

8.2 Order of the elements in the text

One aspect to be paid attention to is the order in which the content of a text is presented. According to Virtanen (2009, p. 77), it should be borne in mind that the text should be logical to the reader and there may be reason to restrict the topic in one way or the other. The writer should consider what is important and what to emphasise.

In the following prayer, the order of things has been changed to reflect the chronological order of the story of Easter time. The original text starts with *salaisuus* and *ihme* (miracle, secret), whereas in the easy-to-read version, an addition is made to clarify what has happened before (Jesus died, was buried, and rose from the dead). This is followed by the notion of Jesus's tomb being empty and this being a miracle and secret to us. During the text production process, this was one of the first things I discussed with my contact person at Kirkkohallitus, and she drew my attention to this aspect: changing the order of things brings the reader or hearer closer to the original experience conveyed by the Easter story, i.e. finding an empty tomb, which is followed by great surprise and amazement. The example serves well to illustrate the importance of the order of things. Without the change in order, the relationship between the elements of the text might remain unclear to a reader with special needs.

Rakas taivaallinen Isämme.
 Kiitämme sinua
 pääsiäisaamun salaisuudesta.
 Ihme on tapahtunut.
 Jeesuksen hauta on tyhjä.
 Se mitä on tapahtunut, on niin suurta,
 että meidän on vaikea sitä ymmärtää.
 Ylistämme voimaasi ja rakkauttasi,
 joka on kuolemaakin suurempi.
 Täytä meidät kaikki
 pääsiäisaamun toivolla ja ilolla.
 Ole ylistetty ikuisesti.

Easy-to-read version:

Rakas Jumala.
 Jeesus kuoli ja haudattiin.
 Nyt hän on noussut kuolleista.
 Jeesus elää.
 Jeesuksen hauta on tyhjä.

Tämä on niin suuri ihme, että
 meidän on vaikea ymmärtää sitä.
 Se on meille salaisuus.
 Jumala, sinun rakkautesi voittaa kuoleman.
 Jeesus elää, ja
 me iloitsemme siitä.
 Amen.

In addition to emphasising the *chronological sequence* in an easy-to-read text, changing the order of elements may also reflect a *cause-effect relation* or emphasise the *core message* of the text, for example.

The following original prayer includes the metaphorical expression *et jättänyt meitä orvoiksi* at the beginning. In the easy-to-read version, the different order of the elements intends to explain the meaning of the phrase. The metaphorical expression has been replaced with a more common phrase *et jättänyt meitä yksin*.

Jeesus,
ylösnoussut Herramme ja Vapahtajamme.
Kiitos, että sinä et jättänyt meitä orvoiksi.
Kun nousit taivaaseen, Isäsi luo,
lähetit lupauksesi mukaan meille Pyhän Henkesi.
Kiitos, että olet koko ajan kanssamme,
vaikka emme näe sinua.
Tee meistäkin sinun todistajiasi.
Ylistys sinulle ikuisesti.

The easy-to-read version:

Jeesus,
sinä nousit kuolleista.
Sinä nousit taivaaseen Isäsi luo, mutta
et jättänyt meitä yksin.
Lähetit meille Pyhän Hengen
niin kuin lupasit.

Jeesus, sinä olet koko ajan kanssamme,
vaikka me emme näe sinua.
Me kiitämme sinua.
Aamen.

8.3 Metaphors and similes

Virtanen (2009, pp. 87-88) notes that the writer of an easy-to-read text should carefully consider when to use metaphors or other expressions that can be understood in a plurality of ways. If required, these expressions can be replaced with others to avoid misunderstanding. On the other hand, as was already touched upon in section 6.2, one should be able to write in a rich and vivid manner, retaining various layers and possibilities to different interpretations. In any case, simplification is required. As was also mentioned earlier, religious texts contain references to other texts and cultural conventions within the religion. (Cf. p. 20.)

The selected texts include metaphors and similes typical of Christian culture, such as references to Jesus as a good shepherd and faith or life as a journey or path.

Jeesus, hyvä paimenemme.
Tänään tahdomme kiittää sinua hyvydestäsi
ja huolenpidostasi.
Sinä olet pienten ja suurten paimen.
Sinä johdatat meitä koko elämämme ajan.
Me emme itse tunne tietä emmekä vaaroja,
jotka meitä uhkaavat.
Älä anna meidän joutua kauas luotasi.
Opetä meitä erottamaan sinun äänesi
kaikkien muiden äänten joukosta
ja sinun kutsusi niistä kutsuista,
jotka ovat viemässä meitä harhaan.
Jos lähdemme omille teillemme,
vedä meidät takaisin luoksesi.
Kiitos rakkaudestasi ja huolenpidostasi.

In the easy-to-read version, the metaphors have been retained because they are so essential to Christian culture and manner of speech. However, the metaphor of shepherd is explained by a further simile: *Sinä pidät meistä huolta niin kuin paimen pitää huolta lampaista*. Furthermore, the core message of the prayer is clarified by explanatory elements as well as restriction of elements. In the next chapter, it is examined in more detail what to do with too many elements in one text.

Jeesus, sinä olet hyvä paimen.
Sinä pidät meistä huolta niin kuin
paimen pitää huolta lampaista.
Me emme itse tunne tietä, mutta
sinä ohjaat meitä.
Me emme tunne vaaroja, mutta
sinä suojelet meitä.

Jeesus, pidä meidät lähelläsi.
Jos me eksymme omille teillemme,
kutsu meidät takaisin luoksesi.
Kiitos, että sinä rakastat meitä.
Aamen.

Metaphors of the above type could be considered less problematic because they are images frequently repeated within Christian culture and probably familiar to those who have lived in this culture or been part of it in some way. These metaphors also bring concrete images to one's mind: a shepherd or a path (or a mother, as in one of the selected prayers). What could be regarded as more problematic metaphors are ones to express abstract Christian ideas metaphorically in phrases that are, again, not part of people's everyday language or concrete experience:

Kaikkivaltias Jumala,
me kiitämme sinua,
että olemme saaneet viettää pääsiäistä
ja tulla osallisiksi ylösnousemuksen lahjasta.

Säilytä tämä ilosanoma sydämissämme.
Lahjoita meille voimasi,
että kuolisimme joka päivä pois synnistä
ja saisimme nousta uuteen elämään.
Kuule meitä Poikasi Jeesuksen Kristuksen,
meidän Herramme tähden.

The expressions *kuolla pois synnistä* and *nousta uuteen elämään* could be considered extreme Christian metaphors. It could be speculated whether this type of language usage might be one of the reasons why so many people have become estranged from religion.

As *synti* (sin) is such an essential concept in Christianity, it has been retained in the easy-to-read version but in a more common phrase, *saada synnit anteeksi*, while the latter expression has been deleted. Another metaphor, *ylösnousemuksen lahja*, has been replaced with a more concrete Christian phrase in an active verb form: *Jeesus on noussut kuolleista*.

Rakas Jumala.
Me olemme viettäneet pääsiäistä.
Jeesus on noussut kuolleista, ja
hän elää.
Siksi me saamme synnit anteeksi.
Me kiitämme sinua siitä.
Kuule rukouksemme Jeesuksen tähden.
Aamen.

Using metaphors needs *careful consideration*: the writer needs to decide *case-specifically* whether to *retain* a particular metaphor, to *replace* it with another expression, to *modify* it in some way or to *eliminate* it altogether. It needs to be considered how familiar the metaphors used are to the reader.

8.4 Too many elements in one text

Easy-to-read texts are often shorter than the original ones. The writer should consider how to restrict the text and which viewpoint the reader or hearer would be interested in (Selkokeskus 2016; Virtanen 2009, p. 77). The following example is the shepherd prayer used in the preceding section:

Jeesus, hyvä paimenemme.
Tänään tahdomme kiittää sinua hyvydestäsi
ja huolenpidostasi.
Sinä olet pienten ja suurten paimen.
Sinä johdatat meitä koko elämämme ajan.
Me emme itse tunne tietä emmekä vaaroja,
jotka meitä uhkaavat.

Älä anna meidän joutua kauas luotasi.
 Opeta meitä erottamaan sinun äänesi
 kaikkien muiden äänten joukosta
 ja sinun kutsusi niistä kutsuista,
 jotka ovat viemässä meitä harhaan.
 Jos lähdemme omille teillemme,
 vedä meidät takaisin luoksesi.
 Kiitos rakkaudestasi ja huolenpidostasi.

The easy-to-read version:

Jeesus, sinä olet hyvä paimen.
 Sinä pidät meistä huolta niin kuin
 paimen pitää huolta lampaista.
 Me emme itse tunne tietä, mutta
 sinä ohjaat meitä.
 Me emme tunne vaaroja, mutta
 sinä suojelet meitä.

Jeesus, pidä meidät lähelläsi.
 Jos me eksymme omille teillemme,
 kutsu meidät takaisin luoksesi.
 Kiitos, että sinä rakastat meitä.
 Amen.

There are many elements in one single prayer, and the writer of an easy-to-read version needs to consider how to *restrict* the elements and what to retain. Too many elements may cause confusion to the reader, and the core message may remain unclear. On the one hand, the easy-to-read version is more explanatory than the original. On the other hand, some elements have been deleted altogether. The intention has been to *highlight the original core message*. The result is a shorter text than the original, the emphasis being on the metaphors of a good shepherd and the path we are travelling, and their meaning.

The other prayer used in the previous section has also been shortened to contain the core idea of the prayer:

Kaikkivaltias Jumala,
 me kiitämme sinua,
 että olemme saaneet viettää pääsiäistä
 ja tulla osallisiksi ylösnousemuksen lahjasta.
 Säilytä tämä ilosanoma sydämässämme.
 Lahjoita meille voimasi,
 että kuolisimme joka päivä pois synnistä
 ja saisimme nousta uuteen elämään.
 Kuule meitä Poikasi Jeesuksen Kristuksen,
 meidän Herramme tähden.

The easy-to-read version:

Rakas Jumala.
 Me olemme viettäneet pääsiäistä.

Jeesus on noussut kuolleista, ja
hän elää.
Siksi me saamme synnit anteeksi.
Me kiitämme sinua siitä.
Kuule rukouksemme Jeesuksen tähden.
Aamen.

9 Discussion

The aim of this thesis was to produce easy-to-read versions of Christian prayers for the website of Kirkkohallitus as well as to find out answers to questions relating to the text production: *Why are the selected prayers too difficult for many readers? What needs to be done to make the prayers inclusive and easy to read?* Originally, one aim was also to test the texts with users, but this part was not successful, as explained earlier.

As for the above 'research questions', answers were found in the analysing and production process of the texts. However, due to the limited extent of the thesis, only a few aspects could be brought forward. Modifying texts into an easy-to-read form is a complex process requiring a plurality of aspects to be considered simultaneously. With regard to the findings, the approach in this thesis is linguistic, but it is noteworthy that language is not just language; it does not represent reality in a neutral manner. By contrast, as Eskola and Suoranta (2014, pp. 141-142) point out, language creates reality. "Texts...construct social life" (Eskola & Suoranta 2014, p. 141). Therefore, I see the topic of the present thesis relevant to the social field. The intention has been to emphasise that producing texts in easy-to-read language promotes inclusion of people with special needs; they need easy-to-understand language to be able to fully participate in all spheres of social life. Both easy-to-read written material and easy-to-understand verbal communication are greatly needed in the social field work. Therefore, workers in the social field should be aware of what producing such material and realising such interaction requires.

In this thesis, the easy-to-read texts are examined in the context of religion. The texts are Christian prayers, so they are linked to practising religion and participating in a Christian community. To enable inclusion and participation, religious language needs to be made understandable to all. The texts of this thesis serve as an example of extending easy-to-read language to abstract contexts in which the writer faces challenges of a particular type: how to retain the expressive power and 'poetic' characteristics while, at the same time, making the text sufficiently concrete and easy to understand. On the basis of

the analysis of the selected texts, it can be noted that there is no straightforward answer to this question and that careful case-specific consideration is required. Also, the dual nature of the texts needs to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, prayer texts are an individual's talk to God, and on the other hand, they are characterised by Christian communality: the texts are often recited in the gathering of members of a Christian community.

The texts selected for the thesis are intended for a website. The above-mentioned special nature of prayers raises the question of how these types of texts work in the context of the web and how much and in which ways people with special needs use the web for the purposes of practising religion - or whether there would be new ways to support this side of religious practice. These questions are out of the domain of this thesis but would perhaps be relevant for further study.

In the context of both designing a website and producing an easy-to-read text, involvement of potential users would offer valuable information and viewpoints for the provider of a website or text. Unfortunately, this part of the aim was not fulfilled in the present thesis, but this would be a useful topic for further study. The voice of the users should be heard to realise inclusion and participation on a practical level. It is then to be noted that there are several different user groups. In today's societal situation where the number of immigrants is significantly higher than before, one of the useful research topics would be to involve immigrants in this work.

A practical proposal arising from studying the topic of easy-to-read language is that training in easy-to-read language should be increased. Easy-to-understand material and interaction are highly needed in the social field, so all workers should have some kind of training to be able to produce and use them in their work. Within the church, all workers would benefit from such training, which should then take into consideration the special features of religious language. Making religious language inclusive and easy to understand would make participation and practising religion more accessible to people with special needs - and might even make the basic message of religion more easily approachable to people who have become estranged from religion. As mentioned in section 6.1 of the thesis, religious language is static by nature. Training in the principles of easy-to-understand communication would raise awareness of how to break such static patterns and to convey the desired message in a simple and accessible manner.

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Prayer texts in standard and easy-to-read language

Pääsiäispäivä

Rakas taivaallinen Isämme.
Kiitämme sinua
pääsiäisaamun salaisuudesta.
Ihme on tapahtunut.
Jeesuksen hauta on tyhjä.
Se mitä on tapahtunut, on niin suurta,
että meidän on vaikea sitä ymmärtää.
Ylistämme voimaasi ja rakkauttasi,
joka on kuolemaakin suurempi.
Täytä meidät kaikki
pääsiäisaamun toivolla ja ilolla.
Ole ylistetty ikuisesti.

EASY TO READ:

Rakas Jumala.
Jeesus kuoli ja haudattiin.
Nyt hän on noussut kuolleista.
Jeesus elää.
Jeesuksen hauta on tyhjä.

Tämä on niin suuri ihme, että
meidän on vaikea ymmärtää sitä.
Se on meille salaisuus.

Jumala, sinun rakkautesi voittaa kuoleman.
Jeesus elää, ja
me iloitsemme siitä.

Aamen.

2. pääsiäispäivä

Taivaallinen Isä.

Sinä annoit kuolleista nousseen Poikasi ilmestyä oppilailleen.

Avaa sydämemme tuntemaan hänet,
jotta ilomme todistaisi

hänen ylösnousemuksestaan.

Kuule meitä Jeesuksen Kristuksen,

meidän Herramme tähden,

joka sinun ja Pyhän Hengen kanssa

elää ja hallitsee aina ja ikuisesti.

EASY TO READ:

Pyhä Jumala.

Kun Jeesus oli noussut kuolleista,
hän ilmestyi oppilailleen.

Oppilaat vakuutuivat siitä, että
Jeesus elää.

Auta meitäkin tuntemaan Jeesus ja
anna meille ilo hänestä.

Silloin muutkin uskovat, että Jeesus elää.

Kuule rukouksemme.

Aamen.

1. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Kaikkivaltias Jumala,
me kiitämme sinua,
että olemme saaneet viettää pääsiäistä
ja tulla osallisiksi ylösnousemuksen lahjasta.
Säilytä tämä ilosanoma sydämissämme.
Lahjoita meille voimasi,
että kuolisimme joka päivä pois synnistä
ja saisimme nousta uuteen elämään.
Kuule meitä Poikasi Jeesuksen Kristuksen,
meidän Herramme tähden.

EASY TO READ:

Rakas Jumala.
Me olemme viettäneet pääsiäistä.
Jeesus on noussut kuolleista, ja
hän elää.
Siksi me saamme synnit anteeksi.
Me kiitämme sinua siitä.
Kuule rukouksemme Jeesuksen tähden.
Aamen.

2. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Jeesus, hyvä paimenemme.
Tänään tahdomme kiittää sinua hyvyydestäsi
ja huolenpidostasi.
Sinä olet pienten ja suurten paimen.
Sinä johdatat meitä koko elämämme ajan.
Me emme itse tunne tietä emmekä vaaroja,
jotka meitä uhkaavat.
Älä anna meidän joutua kauas luotasi.

Opetä meitä erottamaan sinun äänesi
kaikkien muiden äänten joukosta
ja sinun kutsusi niistä kutsuista,
jotka ovat viemässä meitä harhaan.
Jos lähdemme omille teillemme,
vedä meidät takaisin luoksesi.
Kiitos rakkaudestasi ja huolenpidostasi.

EASY TO READ:

Jeesus, sinä olet hyvä paimen.
Sinä pidät meistä huolta niin kuin
paimen pitää huolta lampaista.
Me emme itse tunne tietä, mutta
sinä ohjaat meitä.
Me emme tunne vaaroja, mutta
sinä suojelet meitä.

Jeesus, pidä meidät lähelläsi.
Jos me eksymme omille teillemme,
kutsu meidät takaisin luoksesi.
Kiitos, että sinä rakastat meitä.

Aamen.

3. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Kristus, Herramme.
Usko sinuun on matka ja tie,
jota kulkiessa eteen avautuu
yhä uusia näköaloja.
Kiitos, että tämän matkan aikana
opimme tuntemaan yhä paremmin sinua.
Kiitos salaisuudesta, joka säilyy,

kunnes kerran näemme sinut
taivaan kodissa.
Me emme vielä voi aavistaa,
mitä kaikkea sinä olet
meitä varten valmistanut.
Pidä meidät tällä tiellä
ja vie meidät kaikki perille taivaaseen.
Ylistys sinulle ikuisesti.

EASY TO READ:

Jeesus.

Usko sinuun on kuin tie.
Kun me kuljemme tielläsi,
näemme aina jotakin uutta.
Tällä tiellä
me opimme tuntemaan sinua paremmin.

Me emme vielä tiedä,
mitä kaikkea sinä annat meille elämässä.
Me luotamme sinuun, vaikka
emme ymmärrä kaikkea.
Pidä meidät sinun tielläsi.
Tämä tie vie meidät viimein taivaan kotiin.
Me kiitämme sinua.

Aamen.

4. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Taivaan ja maan Luoja.
Me kiitämme sinua kaikista teoistasi.
Avaa meille sanasi
ja opeta meidät tuntemaan

Kristuksen rakkaus,
niin että ylistämme kiitosvirsin
kunniaasi ja armoasi.
Tätä rukoilemme
Herramme Jeesuksen Kristuksen nimessä.

EASY TO READ:

Jumala, sinä olet luonut koko maailman.
Kiitos, että sinä annoit
Poikasi Jeesuksen tulla ihmiseksi.
Opeta meitä tuntemaan
Jeesuksen rakkaus.
Me kiitämme sinun armostasi.
Rukoilemme tätä
Jeesuksen Kristuksen nimessä.
Aamen.

5. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Hyvä Jumalamme, rakas Isämme.
Kiitämme sinua rukouksen lahjasta.
Kiitos, että rukouksen tie
on aina avoinna meille jokaiselle.
Opetä meitä turvautumaan sinuun kaikessa
ja jättämään rukouksessa
elämämme pienet ja suuret asiat
sinun hoitoosi.
Kiitos, että sinä kuulet ja autat.
Auta meitä lepäämään lähelläsi
kuin lapsi äitinsä sylissä.
Kuule meitä Jeesuksen,
veljemme ja auttajamme tähden.

EASY TO READ:

Hyvä Jumala.

Kiitos, että me voimme aina rukoilla sinua.

Kiitos, että me voimme kertoa sinulle
pienet ja suuret asiamme.

Kiitos, että sinä kuulet rukouksemme.

Kiitos, että olemme turvassa lähelläsi
niin kuin lapsi äidin sylissä.

Aamen.

Helatorstai

Jeesus,

ylösnoussut Herramme ja Vapahtajamme.

Kiitos, että sinä et jättänyt meitä orvoiksi.

Kun nousit taivaaseen, Isäsi luo,

lähetit lupauksesi mukaan meille Pyhän Henkesi.

Kiitos, että olet koko ajan kanssamme,
vaikka emme näe sinua.

Tee meistäkin sinun todistajiasi.

Ylistys sinulle ikuisesti.

EASY TO READ:

Jeesus,

sinä nousit kuolleista.

Sinä nousit taivaaseen Isäsi luo, mutta
et jättänyt meitä yksin.

Lähetit meille Pyhän Hengen
niin kuin lupasit.

Jeesus, sinä olet koko ajan kanssamme,
vaikka me emme näe sinua.
Me kiitämme sinua.

Aamen.

6. sunnuntai pääsiäisestä

Pyhä, kaikkivaltias Jumala.
Sinä olet heikoissa väkevä.
Tyhjennä meidät omasta voimastamme
ja täytä meidät Hengelläsi.
Toteuta tahtosi elämässämme,
anna valtakuntasi tavoittaa kaikki kansat.
Tätä rukoilemme
Herramme Jeesuksen Kristuksen nimessä.

EASY TO READ:

Pyhä Jumala.
Anna meille Pyhä Henkesi.
Auta meitä luottamaan sinun voimaasi.
Me rukoilemme, että sinun tahtosi toteutuisi
meidän elämässämme ja koko maailmassa.
Aamen.