

# Plain English for Korean Non-Native English Speakers<sup>1</sup>

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## *Abstract*

This exploratory study investigates Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of plain English and recommends plain English guidelines that consider Korean non-native English speakers who are in the United States studying at university. This study has two parts. First, this paper explores how Korean speakers understand Latinate and phrasal verbs with a matching test and interview. The results demonstrate that Korean speakers generally prefer Latinate verbs. Second, this paper investigates whether or not plain English that works best for native English speakers also works best for Korean non-native English speakers. This study includes a usability test that evaluates Korean speakers' comprehension of six passages written in plain and non-plain English, excerpted from a variety of topics. The results indicate that using plain English help Korean speakers' comprehension of English in general, however; it does not always guarantee Korean speakers' better comprehension of English. Also, it implies that concise sentences could occasionally make Korean speakers less assured of their comprehension. This study recommends that technical communicators use Latinate verbs instead of phrasal verbs and they conduct usability tests of their writing, in that way they can make revisions as necessary, if their target audience includes Korean non-native English speakers.

*Keywords:* plain English, Latinate verb, phrasal verb, usability test, Korean speakers

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<sup>1</sup> The Institutional Review Board (IRB): Human Subjects Committee at the University of Minnesota determined that this study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR." (Study Number: 1402E48442 Findings and Discussion)

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## **Introduction**

In contemporary society, people convey and exchange knowledge and information with each other through various forms of media; thus, clear communication skills are essential. Unfortunately, knowledge and information are not always delivered clearly. Unclear communication can lead to miscommunication, which can cause serious and disastrous problems. For example, in 1993, the China Northern Airlines Flight 6901 accident killed and wounded dozens of people because of a miscommunication. While the plane was flying in zero visibility due to a heavy fog, the ground proximity warning system (GPWS) detected a possibility of a collision to the ground, so it warned the pilot with aural alarm, "Pull up." However, the pilot had limited English skills, and he did not understand the alarm. In fact, his last words as recorded by the black box were "What does the pull up mean? [sic]" According to Thrush's (2001) work, the Chinese pilot could not comprehend the phrase, "Pull up" because it was a non-standard term in aviation, therefore the accident could have been prevented if the GPWS had delivered a standard term such as "climb" or "ascend."

As the Flight 6901 accident shows, using comprehensible English is very important for clear communication. For more than forty years, many researchers and practitioners have explored how people process and use information. They conclude that plain English makes it possible for people to have clear and understandable communication. Also, various movements have started to encourage people to use English that is easily readable, accessible and usable. While previous researchers and practitioners' efforts focused on native English speakers, this paper examines how technical communicators can improve Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of plain English. Unlike Thrush's previous research that focuses on speakers of French and German languages, this paper

focuses on people whose native language's characteristics are highly disparate from English, specifically Koreans.

As technologies in transportation and telecommunications advance, international communication skills have become more important than ever for technical communicators. One of the key skills that technical communicators should have is an ability to tailor information to a specific audience. If the target audience is non-native English speakers, they should be able to transform original information into understandable information for these speakers. This paper provides technical communicators with guidance on how to present information for use by Korean speakers.

This research paper is organized as follows: first, this paper provides a background of plain English movements to achieve clear communication in English-speaking countries. Next, this paper identifies research questions and explains the methodology and procedures to investigate the questions. Lastly, this paper discusses findings and presents recommendations for technical communicators who want to improve communication with Korean non-native English speakers.

## **Background**

To have successful communication, writers and speakers should provide information that is comprehensible by their target audience. Only after analyzing their target audience successfully, are they able to design the information. The analysis includes their audience's language skills, educational background, interest, gender, age, and so on. Based on the analysis, they can design the information to fit their audience.

However, a large number of legal and medical documents use jargon, verbosity, and convoluted language without consideration of their audience. Legal documents such as lease contracts, insurance applications, website disclaimers, and end-user license agreements (EULA) should be understandable by a general audience. However, they are written in a language that is too difficult for not only the less educated but also the highly educated to understand. Even skilled lawyers take a long time to completely comprehend many legal documents. In addition, it is almost impossible for patients who seek medical information to understand medical documents. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) reports a major mismatch between the health information patients receive and what they comprehend, and it points out that the mismatch is the result of poor literacy skills. The IOM states “even highly skilled individuals may find the [healthcare] systems too complicated to understand, especially when these individuals are made more vulnerable by poor health” (Nielsen-Bohlman et al, 2004, p. 168).

To address the above problems, a number of movements and efforts have begun to produce more comprehensible documents in various fields. These include the Plain English Movement, Controlled English, and World English.

### ***Plain English Movement***

The Plain English Movement encourages the use of plain English with brevity and clarity. The movement mainly urges governmental officials and businesspersons to use plain English in their official documents. It aims to provide official documents in plain English to general audiences who need to access them such as taxpayers, consumers, and other non-specialist readers. According to *www.plainlanguage.gov*, if the audience can “find what they need, understand what they find; and use what they find to meet their needs” then the document is written in plain English.

In the United States, the plain language movement started in the 1970s. In 1976 and 1978, the Paperwork Reduction Act was enacted, and President Carter issued Executive Orders to produce government regulations “cost-effective and easy-to-understand by those who were required to comply with them.” However, as President Reagan repealed President Carter's Executive Orders, there was little progress during the 1980s (Locke, 2004). The plain language movement revived with the support of President Clinton. He set plain language as a major government initiative and asked new regulations to be written clearly by 1999. He stated as follows:

By using plain language, we send a clear message about what the government is doing, what it requires, and what services it offers.... Plain language documents have logical organization; easy-to-read design features and ... common, everyday words, except for necessary technical terms; ‘you’ and other pronouns; the active voice; and short sentences (*U.S. Government Printing Office, 1999, p289*).

In 1998, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) published a guideline, *A Plain English Handbook: How to create clear SEC disclosure documents*, and it compelled companies that register securities to comply with plain English writing style as a legal duty. In 2010, the Plain Writing Act was signed into law, and it mandated that all federal agencies achieve “clear government communication that the public can understand and use.”<sup>2</sup> In 2011, President Obama issued the Executive Order of “Improving regulation and regulatory

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<sup>2</sup> H.R. 946 (111th): Plain Writing Act of 2010, Available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ274/pdf/PLAW-111publ274.pdf>

review” which says that “[our regulatory system] must ensure that regulations are accessible, consistent, written in plain language, and easy to understand.”<sup>3</sup>

In the field of law, there have been efforts to refine difficult legal terms and sentences, or legalese, into comprehensible language. Many legal documents specify human rights and their responsibilities. It means that incomprehensible legal documents impede people to defend their rights and make it impossible to exercise their responsibilities. Since the 1970s, many law researchers have worked on the use of plain language to encourage lawyers to produce legal documents in plain English that does not lose accuracy and cause misinterpretation. As a result, most of the law schools teach how to draft legal documents in plain English and many books have been published:

- *Plain English for lawyers* (Wydick, 1979)
- *Writing readable regulations* (Murawski, 1999)
- *A dictionary of modern legal usage* (Garner, 2001)
- *Legal writing in plain English* (Kimble, 2005)
- *Lifting the fog of legalese: Essays on plain language* (Kimble, 2005)

Recently, plain English in law has been studied within various fields. Bivins (2008) and Hammel (2008) discuss the technical communicators’ roles and benefits in producing legal documents in plain language. In particular, Bivins argues that technical communicators are able to work with legal professionals to contribute plain language use in legal writing because they are the language experts. Spencer (2011) demonstrates that using plain English makes it possible for laypersons to access law and he argues that it invigorates

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<sup>3</sup> Order 13563 - Executive Order 13563 of January 18, 2011. Improving Regulation and Regulatory Review, Available at <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title3-vol1/xml/CFR-2012-title3-vol1-eo13563.xml>

small businesses. These recent studies show that legal documents in Plain English have various advantages.

Many medical institutes such as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Health and Human Services (HHS), and National Institutes of Health (NIH) recognize that using plain language is crucial for consumers to obtain information that is clear, informative, and effective in improving or maintaining their health. According to Locke (2004), the FDA realizes that low health literacy with chronic diseases such as diabetes and obesity leads to a serious public health problem. In order to deal with low health literacy, they urge the use of plain language. HHS, as of 2012, has required all health insurance issuers and group health plans to provide customers with an “easy-to-understand” summary, written in plain language, about the health plan’s benefits and coverage. HHS expects this regulation to not only help customers better understand the health insurance but also to broaden their health insurance choices (Department of Health & Human Services). In an effort to reach all Americans with health information they can use, the NIH also supports the Plain Language initiative. The NIH produces all new documents in plain language which written for the public, other government entities, and fellow workers (National Institutes of Health). It has also provided Plain Language Online Training (<http://plainlanguage.nih.gov>) to provide clear and concise communication in public health.

Plain English suggests the following:



**Table 1 Don'ts and dos in plain English**

Don't do	Do
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jargon and legalese</li> <li>• Hidden verbs</li> <li>• Passive voice</li> <li>• Long sentences or paragraph</li> <li>• Abbreviations</li> <li>• Unnecessary words</li> <li>• Information the user doesn't want</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical organization</li> <li>• Informative headings</li> <li>• Active voice</li> <li>• Use pronouns</li> <li>• Common words</li> <li>• Use lists and tables</li> </ul>

(Source: [www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov))

The following are the before-and-after examples of plain English.

**Table 2 A before and after example of plain English**

Before	After
Firearm relinquishment is a mandatory condition.	You must hand over your guns.
High-quality learning environments are a necessary precondition for facilitation and enhancement of the ongoing learning process.	Children need good schools if they are to learn properly.

(Source: Mindlin, 2010, and Plain English Campaign - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk>)

### ***Controlled English***

Controlled language is a limited version of natural language. Controlled English restricts English grammar and vocabularies used in documents, so that it minimizes ambiguity and complexity of documents. Documents written in Controlled English have higher readability

than those written in natural English (Reuther, 2003). Moreover, Controlled English makes it reliable for computers to conduct semantic analysis (Mitamura & Nyberg, 2001).

A number of industries use Controlled English to improve the quality of their technical documents and enhance the reliability of machine translation. Most of the aerospace and defense industries, which require high reliability in their works, mandate the use of Controlled English for maintenance manuals. Each industry has a different name for Controlled English as follows:

- Aerospace and Defense (Industries Association of Europe): Simplified Technical English
- Caterpillar: Caterpillar Technical English
- International Business Machines (IBM): IBM's Easy English

According to O'Brien (2003), most of the Controlled English guidelines ask the following rules in common:

- Keep sentences short
- Avoid the use of pronouns
- Only use dictionary-approved words
- Use only the active voice

According to Tedopres (Technical documentation company), using Controlled English leads to considerable savings of 30% to 50% in translation costs and reduces risk of damage

and liability claims. It also says that using Controlled English may reduce the number of words 30% to 40%, resulting in shortened time to produce quality documents.<sup>4</sup>

### ***World English (English as Lingua Franca)***

World English is the use of English as a means of global communication and aims at setting English as an international standard for the language. English has been discussed as a means of global communication by many researchers. Although they have named it differently like International English, Global English, Common English, General English, Globish, and Lingua Franca, all of them accept English as a major means of communication in the global world. English became a language that people whose native language is not English use to talk and work together, regardless of their cultures and countries.

There are many examples of English as a means of global communication. Not only English is the most used language in trading but also most of the multinational companies set English as their official language. When the German automobile company, *Volkswagen* built a factory in Shanghai, China, the German and Chinese businesspersons spoke English instead of German and Chinese. In academia, many researchers use English in their publications and most international conferences run in English. Furthermore, pilots and navigators in aviation and voyage use English to communicate with controllers or with each other as standard (Kim et al., 2009).

Since World English targets people whose first language is not English, it does not require them to comply with strict grammar rules in English. For example, third person singular rules and variant question tag rules in World English are not strict. Thus, “He look happy” or “You are happy today, isn’t it?” are allowed. World English also accepts modified

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<sup>4</sup> Benefits of Simplified English & HyperSTE, Available at <http://www.simplifiedenglish.net/Benefits-Controlled-Language>

pronunciations such as three as 'tree' or 'sree' ( /θ/ -> /t/ or /s/ ); or within as 'widin' or 'wizin' ( /ð/ -> /d/ or /z/ ).

## Research Questions

The plain English movement works to make English easily readable, accessible, and usable by developing various Plain English strategies and skills. However, they mainly target native English speakers. Since how technical communicators can improve Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of plain English has not been studied, this paper focuses on the following research questions:

### Research Questions

*How can technical communicators improve Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of plain English?*

#### Regarding Latinate & phrasal verbs

- *What types of English words should be recommended for Plain English to help Korean speakers' comprehension of English?*
- *What English verbs do Korean speakers in the U.S. understand and not understand? Can we generalize types of verbs from the verbs in the study?*
- *Why do the differences happen in comprehending certain types of verbs?*

#### Regarding writing in plain and non-plain English

- *Do differences in writing that work best for native English speakers also work best for Korean speakers in the U.S.?*

These research questions target Koreans currently living in the United States and whose English is their second language. Among numerous non-native English speakers in the United States, Korean people were selected because Korean is a very different language from English.

## **Methodology**

Eight participants were recruited, and two tests were developed to address the above research questions. This section explains the participants' characteristics, the details of the two developed tests, and the procedures.

### ***Participants' Characteristics***

The test participants consisted of four males and four females. They share the following characteristics:

- Native Korean speakers
- Attended high school and university in Korea
- Current resident of at least one year in the United States
- Students at the University of Minnesota
  - 4 Ph.D. candidates / students, 3 M.S. students, and 1 B.S. student
- Between ages 24 or 34
- Studied English for more than nine years

In the preliminary questionnaire, the participants were asked to answer the following questions to understand their backgrounds and experiences about English and Korean languages:

**Table 3 Preliminary questionnaires**

Question	Year (Average)
How long have you studied English?	18.3
How long have you lived in Korean-speaking countries?	24.9
How long have you lived in English-speaking countries?	4.4
How many hours per week do you use Korean?	26.5
How many hours per week do you use English?	36.2

### ***Procedure***

All the tests were conducted in an individual setting. During the tests, the participants' reactions and gestures were recorded.

#### ***(1) Preliminary Questionnaire***

The participants were given the *preliminary questionnaire* to fill out and the *consent form* to sign. This questionnaire asked for demographic information and backgrounds pertinent to the test. The test overview and procedures were explained to the participants before starting the tests.

(Appendix A and B are the *preliminary questionnaire* and *consent form*, respectively.)

#### ***(2) Taking Tests***

The participants took two tests. During the test, participants used the “*think-aloud*” technique, wherein the participants spoke out loud about what they were thinking while taking the tests. This helped to indicate how they felt and what they comprehended during the tests. The participants' speaking and reactions were observed.

All participants took *Test #1 – Latinate and phrasal verbs*. After taking *Test #1*, half of the participants took *Test #2 – Plain and non-plain English (Type 1)*, and the others took *Test #2 – Plain and non-plain English (Type 2)* to compare the participants' comprehension of writing in plain and non-plain English. The details about the *Type 1* and *Type 2* tests are given in the next section.

(Appendix C, D, and E are *Test #1 – Latinate and phrasal verbs*, *Test #2 - Plain and non-plain English (Type 1)*, and *Test #2 – Plain and non-plain English (Type 2)*, respectively.)

### (3) Debrief Interview

After the tests, participants were asked about their experiences in an interview. They were also asked to pick product reaction cards, which contain a series of descriptive words, which describe their experience about the tests.

(Appendix G is the *debrief interview*.)

### ***Test #1 – Latinate and Phrasal Verbs***

Test #1 intended to study the participants' comprehension of English Latinate verbs and phrasal verbs. Thrush (2001) argues that the French have a better readability of Latinate verbs compared to Germans, but they are less capable of understanding phrasal verbs than Germans. She states that although *the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Plain English handbook* recommends using phrasal verbs instead of Latinate verbs (Table 4), using phrasal verbs is not always good for international audiences in terms of comprehension of English due to the influence of their native language on vocabulary preference.

**Table 4. The SEC Plain English handbook suggests using the phrasal verbs instead of the Latinate verbs (Thrush, 2001).**

Latinate verbs	Phrasal verbs
accelerate	speed up
aligned	lined up
ascertain	find out
assemble	put together
calculate	work out
circumvent	get around
complete	fill in
comprise	be made up of
constitute	make up
contemplate	think about
cumulative	added up
deduct	take off
defer	put off
delete	cross out
designate	point out
disburse	pay out
disconnect	cut off
establish	set up
exclude	leave out
expire	run out
implement	carry out
insert	put in
participate	join in
reimburse	pay back
represent	stand for

In this test, 25 Latinate verbs and their matched phrasal verbs, originated from Thrush's work and the *SEC Plain English handbook*, were given to the participants. They were randomized in order and the participants completed the following two tasks:

1. Mark the given Latinate verbs and phrasal verbs that they know.
2. Match the given Latinate verbs to their phrasal verbs, or vice versa.



Debrief Interview

Following debrief question were given to the participants:

- *What problems and challenges did you have in matching the verbs?*
- *Which verb type did you find easier to understand? (Latinate verb vs. Phrasal verb)*

**Test #2 – Plain and Non-Plain English**

Test #2 consisted of two types of tests: Type 1 and Type 2. Each type of the tests contains six passages excerpted from an insurance application, website disclaimer, legal document, caution message, email, and directive that are collected from the credible websites such as *www.plainlanguage.gov*. They are written in either plain or non-plain English as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5 Plain and Non-Plain English Test**

Passage Number	Content	Plain and Non-Plain English Test	
		Type 1	Type 2
1	Insurance application	<u>Plain English</u>	<i>Non-plain English</i>
2	Website disclaimer	<i>Non-plain English</i>	<u>Plain English</u>
3	Legal document	<u>Plain English</u>	<i>Non-plain English</i>
4	Caution message	<i>Non-plain English</i>	<u>Plain English</u>
5	Email	<u>Plain English</u>	<i>Non-plain English</i>
6	Directive	<i>Non-plain English</i>	<u>Plain English</u>

To compare Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of passages in plain and non-plain English, each type of the test had six questions about the passages. Four participants took Type 1 and four participants took Type 2.

### Debrief Interview

Following debrief questions were given to the participants:

- *Was this passage easy or difficult to understand?*  
*(Very easy) – (Easy) – (Neither easy nor difficult) – (Somewhat difficult) – (Very difficult)*
- *What problems and challenges did you have in comprehending the passage?*
- *Select five that you would associate with experience about the passage.*

Accessible	Complex	Exceptional	Organized	Time-consuming
Annoying	Confusing	Friendly	Overwhelming	Time-Saving
Approachable	Consistent	Incomprehensible	Poor quality	Trustworthy
Boring	Difficult	Inconsistent	Predictable	Unapproachable
Busy	Disruptive	Ineffective	Professional	Unattractive
Clear	Distracting	Intuitive	Reliable	Unconventional
Comfortable	Effective	Irrelevant	Stable	Understandable
Compelling	Efficient	Ordinary	Straight Forward	Usable

## Findings

### ***Test #1 – Latinate and Phrasal Verbs***

The participants answered that they know most of the verbs – 22.1 Latinate verbs and 22.6 phrasal verbs (average) of 25 from each list. However, in the matching test, they could only matched about half of them – 11.9 verbs (average) – correctly. While 7 participants

answered that Latinate verbs are easier to understand, only 1 participant, who obtained the highest score in the matching test, said that phrasal verbs are easier to comprehend. Table 6 shows the test result.

**Table 6 The result of the Test #1 (Sorted by score, P1 - 8 stand for Participant 1 - 8)**

Participant	Score (Total 25)	Occupation	Major	Gender	Years in Studying English	Years in the U.S.
P1	16	Ph.D. Candidate	Psychology	Female	20	6
P2	15	Ph.D. Candidate	Psychology	Female	25	8
P3	15	Ph.D. Candidate	Psychology	Female	20	2
P4	15	M.S. Student	Statistics	Female	20	8
P5	11	Ph.D. Candidate	Electrical Engineering	Male	20	5
P6	10	B.S. Student	Economics	Male	9	2
P7	8	M.S. Student	Electrical Engineering	Male	19	3
P8	5	M.S. Student	Electrical Engineering	Male	13	1.5

### Difficulty of Phrasal Verb

In the debrief interview, the participants made the following comments for the reasons why Korean speakers consider phrasal verbs difficult.

#### *1. Infrequent Use*

Korean non-native English speakers do not frequently use phrasal verbs.

- (Participant 6) *Phrasal verbs are confusing, so I don't use them. Since I don't use them, I don't know how to use them. Because I don't know how to use them, they are confusing. It is a vicious cycle.*
- (Participant 2) *I consider that I am better at English than others. I do not feel difficulty speaking and listening to English and have experience teaching TOEFL/TOEIC to students. But, I rarely use phrasal verbs in my conversation.*

## 2. Educational Environment

English education in Korea does not encourage Korean students to study or use phrasal verbs. In addition, they are not exposed to an environment where phrasal verbs are frequently used.

- (Participant 8) *"find out" and "figure out" are the verbs that I hadn't heard before coming to the U.S. I looked up these verbs after hearing them from professors. Now, I think these are frequently used in real life, but they aren't dealt with in English textbooks in Korea.*
- (Participant 1) *After coming to the U.S., I learned phrasal verbs from native English speakers while living and working with them. When I was in Korea, memorizing words means memorizing Latinate verbs.*

## 3. Lack of Motivation

English education in Korea rarely measures the capability of using phrasal verbs. Instead, it puts stress on knowing Latinate verbs. In addition, Korean non-native English speakers tend to not care about incorrect uses of prepositions associated with phrasal verbs in their lives, because native English speakers understand their meaning well in spite of the incorrect use of prepositions. Lastly, the meanings of some phrasal verbs are easily guessed

without studying. These lead to the lack of motivation to Korean students in studying phrasal verbs.

- (Participant 3) *In Korea, most of the English tests required me to memorize Latinate verbs. In retrospect, I didn't need to memorize phrasal verbs to obtain high scores in English tests. This would be the reason why I am poor at phrasal verbs.*
- (Participant 5) *In speaking, native English speakers understand my language well, even though I use wrong prepositions when using phrasal verbs. I think that this is one reason why I did not focus on the correct preposition in phrasal verbs.*
- (Participant 1) *I studied phrasal verbs roughly because I thought I could guess the meaning of them from the prepositions. For example, the verb "put together" does not require me to study.*

#### *4. Difficulty in Guessing and Memorizing*

Korean non-native English speakers have difficulty in comprehending phrasal verbs where its preposition changes the meaning entirely, such as "carry out" and "carry".

- (Participant 2) *While I can guess the meaning of Latinate verbs based on the root of the verbs, I cannot guess the meaning of phrasal verbs. For example, "carry out" and "carry".*
- (Participant 6) *I did not check the exact meaning of the phrasal verbs when facing them because the meaning of the phrasal verbs can be guessed based on the context.*
- (Participant 5) *It is very difficult to guess the meaning of some phrasal verbs that I do not use frequently.*

#### *Preference for Formality*

Participant 7 mentioned that some Korean speakers do not want to use phrasal verbs in real life because they regard phrasal verbs as a very informal language and they may not want others to consider him as an unprofessional or unqualified person.

- (Participant 7) *Papers do not use phrasal verbs, and I avoid using phrasal verbs. Using phrasal verbs is a way to be seen as unprofessional because phrasal verbs are used in spoken language or informal emails.*

### Easiness of Latinate Verb

Some of the participants made the following comments for the reasons why Korean non-native English speakers think that Latinate verbs are easier to use and study.

#### *1. Familiarity*

Many participants mentioned that they are more familiar with Latinate verbs than phrasal verbs because many papers and textbooks that they read everyday are written with Latinate verbs.

- (Participant 2) *Graduate students are familiar with Latinate verbs because they read many papers and textbooks written with Latinate verbs.*

#### *2. Possibility of Guessing*

One of the participants said that Latinate verbs' meanings are easier to guess because Latinate verbs have their roots.

- (Participant 4) *Latinate verbs are easier because I can infer the meanings from their roots.*

#### *3. Clear Meaning*

Many participants thought that there are fewer meanings in Latinate verbs and they are clearer, while phrasal verbs can be interpreted in different ways according to the context in where the phrasal verbs are used.

- (Participant 1) *Latinate verbs look difficult but they have clear meanings to memorize.*
- (Participant 4) *There are two types of Latinate verbs. One is what I clearly know and the other is what I completely don't know.*

The test results such as the number of Latinate and phrasal verbs that the participants claim that they know and the pairs of the Latinate and phrasal verbs that the participants matched correctly are in Table 11 and Table 12 of the appendix.

### ***Test #2 - Plain and Non-Plain English***

Test #2 consisted of two types: Type 1 and Type 2. In the test, the participants were given six passages and they were asked to answer six questions in each test. Table 7 shows the number of correct answers in each type of the test. Table 8, which is rewritten based on Table 7, demonstrates that participants have better understanding of the passages in plain English (the overall percentage of correct answer: 75%) than that in non-plain English (the overall percentage of correct answer: 58.3%), except for the passage 2, the website disclaimer. Half of the participants failed to find the correct answer of the website disclaimer although it is written in plain English. This result implies that using plain English does not guarantee a better comprehension of English for Korean non-native English speakers.

**Table 7 Plain and non-Plain English test - Type 1 and Type 2**

Passage number	Content	Test - Type 1		Test - Type 2	
		Style	# Of Correct Answer (Total 4)	Style	# Of Correct Answer (Total 4)
1	Insurance application	<u>Plain English</u>	3	<i>Non-plain English</i>	2
2	Website disclaimer	<i>Non-plain English</i>	4	<u>Plain English</u>	2
3	Legal document	<u>Plain English</u>	2	<i>Non-plain English</i>	0
4	Caution message	<i>Non-plain English</i>	1	<u>Plain English</u>	3
5	Email	<u>Plain English</u>	4	<i>Non-plain English</i>	4
6	Directive	<i>Non-plain English</i>	3	<u>Plain English</u>	4

**Table 8 The number of correct answers (Rewritten from Table 7)**

Passage number	Content	Plain English	Non-Plain English
1	Insurance application	3	2
2	Website disclaimer	2	4
3	Legal document	2	0
4	Caution message	3	1
5	Email	4	4
6	Directive	4	3
<b>A percent of correct answer</b>		75.00%	58.33%



**Table 9 Passages in plain English - Five words associated with each passage**

Passage number	Style: Plain English	3 Times Selected Word(s)	2 Times Selected Word(s)
1	Insurance Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>clear</b></li> <li>• <b>organized</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>professional</b></li> <li>• <b>straight forward</b></li> </ul>
2	Website disclaimer	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>accessible</b></li> <li>• <b>efficient</b></li> <li>• ordinary</li> <li>• <b>reliable</b></li> </ul>
3	Legal Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>straight forward</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>distracting</i></li> <li>• <b>professional</b></li> <li>• <b>understandable</b></li> </ul>
4	Caution Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>effective</b></li> <li>• <b>time-saving</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>accessible</b></li> <li>• <b>clear</b></li> <li>• ordinary</li> </ul>
5	Email	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>approachable</b></li> <li>• <b>comfortable</b></li> <li>• <b>friendly</b></li> <li>• <b>intuitive</b></li> <li>• ordinary</li> <li>• <b>understandable</b></li> <li>• <b>usable</b></li> </ul>
6	Directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>organized</b></li> <li>• <i>unapproachable</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>clear</b></li> <li>• <b>reliable</b></li> <li>• <b>straight forward</b></li> </ul>

Participants were asked to choose five words that were associated with their feelings about each passage. Table 9 and Table 10 demonstrate the words that are selected by the participants, which they think are associated with the passages in plain and non-plain English, respectively. The bolded words indicate positive feeling, and the underlined italic words imply negative feeling about the passages. Overall, the participants connected the passages in plain English to the positive words, and they associated the passages in non-plain English with the negative words. However, even though they were written in non-

plain English, the website disclaimer and caution message were attached to many positive words.

**Table 10 Passage in non-plain English – Five words associated with each passage.**

Passage number	Style: Non-plain English	3 Times Selected Word(s)	2 Times Selected Word(s)
1	Insurance Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>confusing</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>annoying</u></li> <li>• <u>ineffective</u></li> <li>• <u>unapproachable</u></li> <li>• <u>unconventional</u></li> </ul>
2	Website disclaimer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>accessible</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• boring</li> <li>• <b>comfortable</b></li> <li>• <b>organized</b></li> <li>• <b>straight forward</b></li> </ul>
3	Legal Document	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>unapproachable</u></li> <li>• <u>unattractive</u></li> </ul>
4	Caution Message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>clear</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>difficult</u></li> <li>• <b>efficient</b></li> <li>• <b>intuitive</b></li> <li>• <u>unapproachable</u></li> </ul>
5	Email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>ineffective</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ordinary</li> <li>• <u>time-consuming</u></li> </ul>
6	Directive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>complex</u></li> <li>• <u>confusing</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>boring</u></li> <li>• <u>distracting</u></li> <li>• <u>unapproachable</u></li> </ul>

Even though the website disclaimers in plain and non-plain English had the same amount of information, the non-plain English version had more words. Thus, some participants evaluated the non-plain English version as *boring*. However, other participants judged it as *comfortable* and *straight forward* as shown in Table 10. Participant 4 mentioned as follows:

- (Participant 4) *Somewhat repeated sentences helped me to understand the meaning of the writing. I liked this because I could make sure of the meaning*

This comment implies that conciseness, which general plain English guidelines emphasize, is not always good for everyone. For those whose native language is not English, a proper amount of repetition of similar information may aid their comprehension of English because it reinforces uncertain information.

Regarding the caution message, some participants assessed the caution message in non-plain English as difficult and unapproachable. However, others viewed them as clear, efficient, and intuitive. The responses to the caution message in non-plain English were contradictory. Regarding the non-plain English version of the caution message, which is “Firearm relinquishment is a mandatory condition.”, Participant 3 said as follows

- (Participant 3) *Except for the word “relinquishment”, the sentence structure was easy. The only reason why I could not understand the sentence is the word. I would like to say this sentence is easy.*

With the selected words associated with the message – clear, efficient, and intuitive – this comment suggests that Korean speakers determine the feeling of whether a sentence is easy or not based on the level of grammar, not the level of the words. In fact, three out of four participants failed to find the correct answer.

## **Discussion and Recommendation**

This study examined plain English for Korean non-native English speakers, a part of the international audience, to find out how technical communicators can improve Korean non-native English speakers’ comprehension of plain English. First, the findings demonstrate that Korean speakers have a better understanding of Latinate verbs compared with phrasal

verbs. Next, the findings show that complying with plain English guidelines does not necessarily guarantee Korean speakers' better comprehension of the writing.

Based on these findings, this section recommends a guideline to accomplish the mission of the plain English movement, which is to make English easily readable, accessible and usable for everyone. All technical communicators may refer to this guideline if the target audience of their writing includes Korean non-native English speakers.

### ***Guideline - Latinate and Phrasal Verbs***

1. Use Latinate verbs instead of phrasal verbs, and choose the Latinate verbs frequently used in textbooks and papers.
2. Use phrasal verbs that can be guessed from their base verbs or preposition. The findings showed that the verbs below are very comprehensible by most of the Korean speakers.

<i>speed up</i>	<i>accelerate</i>	<i>pay back</i>	<i>reimburse</i>
<i>lined up</i>	<i>aligned</i>	<i>put together</i>	<i>assemble</i>
<i>join in</i>	<i>participate</i>	<i>hand over</i>	<i>yield, surrender</i>

3. Do not use the following Latinate and Phrasal verbs, because the findings showed that most of the Korean speakers have difficulty understanding them. (Only less than 37.5% of the participants answered that they knew the meaning.)

<i>make up</i>	<i>constitute</i>	<i>work out</i>	<i>calculate</i>
<i>find out</i>	<i>ascertain</i>	<i>put in</i>	<i>insert</i>
<i>put off</i>	<i>defer</i>	<i>point out</i>	<i>designate</i>
<i>take off</i>	<i>deduct</i>	<i>cut off</i>	<i>disconnect</i>
<i>fill in</i>	<i>complete</i>		

4. Avoid using the following verbs, because less than 62.5% of the participants answered that they knew the meaning.
  - pay out, get around, cross out, disburse, circumvent

***Guideline - Plain and Non-Plain English***

5. Conduct a usability test for non-native English speakers. As shown in the plain English version of the website disclaimer, using plain English does not always guarantee a better understanding of English for non-native English speakers. By conducting a usability test for writing, technical communicators can find out what paragraphs or sentences do not work for non-native English speakers, and they can improve them.
6. Repeat important information. Native English speakers might think that repeated words and sentences are always bad because they are redundant. However, for non-native English speakers, the repeated information occasionally works as a critical hint that helps their understanding. In particular, if the content is complex or it is written in a subtle way, non-native English speakers could become unconfident, nervous, uneasy, or overwhelmed easily. Thus, technical communicators may consider repeating certain information in a different way to assist their target audience to comprehend the content.
7. Do not use unfamiliar or difficult words. In the caution message, the word “relinquishment” was rewritten as “hand over”. As a result, all of the participants were able to understand the message.
8. Use a simple English grammar. The grammar used in writing determines non-native English speakers’ impressions about the writing. Using unfamiliar grammar may lead the audience to be timid, thus resulting in a hindrance to their comprehension of English.

**Discussion on Koreans' Phrasal verbs**

In the debrief interviews of *Test #1- Latinate and Phrasal verbs*, many Korean participants pointed out the reasons why Korean speakers are not good at phrasal verbs:

1. Korean speakers are not exposed to an environment where phrasal verbs are frequently used (i.e. Participant 8 mentioned that he had never heard the verbs “figure out” and “find out”, which are frequently used in real life, before coming to the United States.).
2. Korean speakers lack in motivation to study phrasal verbs because English tests in school neglect comprehension of phrasal verbs.
3. Korean speakers tend not to use phrasal verbs because they think that using phrasal verbs make themselves seen as unprofessional and informal.

Not only are phrasal verbs frequently used in real conversations, but the comprehension of phrasal verbs also strongly affects speaking and listening skills in non-academic settings. Many participants mentioned that their English conversation skills are poorer than their English reading skills. They said that their lack of understanding of phrasal verbs is one of the reasons why they are not good at English conversation.

Therefore, to improve Koreans' spoken English skills, Korean English education should encourage Korean students to study phrasal verbs. Korean English textbooks need to deal with more phrasal verbs, and Korean students should be exposed to an environment where more phrasal verbs are used. In addition, English curriculum and courses should be developed to evaluate the students' knowledge of phrasal verbs and how to use them.

## **Conclusion and Future Work**

Based on the tests and interviews with Korean non-native English speakers, this exploratory research suggests that technical communicators use Latinate verbs for better Korean non-native English speakers' comprehension of English. In addition, this study strongly recommends conducting a usability test to evaluate readability of writing to produce English that is readable, accessible, and usable by an international audience. Lastly, this study advises repeating certain information so that non-native English speakers can receive hints to understand the information.

This study only tested and interviewed a limited number of Korean non-native English speakers. If the sample size is large enough and other non-native English speakers such as Chinese or Japanese speakers are studied, then the findings of this study may be generalized for international audiences whose native language's characteristics are highly different from English. In addition, there is a possibility that the Korean speakers' preference for Latinate verbs, which is one of the major findings in this study, resulted from their familiarity with academic papers and textbooks. Therefore, Koreans who do not receive a university-level education need to be studied to understand Korean speakers' verb preference in more detail.

The U.S. Census Bureau says that approximately 43-million people use English as their second language in the United States (Shin and Kominski, 2010). However, as the results of this study imply, the rules of plain English movements have so far not actively taken the comprehension of non-native English speakers into consideration. Therefore, advocates of plain English movements work on developing plain English guidelines that embrace international audiences, as a future task. Technical communicators, as experts of audience

analysis, also will be able to contribute to the movements by developing audience analysis methods and usability test methods for those whose native language is not English.

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## **Appendix**

- A. Preliminary Questionnaire
- B. Consent form
- C. Test #1 – Latinate and Phrasal Verbs
- D. Test #2 - Plain and Non-Plain English (Type 1)
- E. Test #2 - Plain and Non-Plain English (Type 2)
- F. Answers for the tests
- G. Debrief Interview
- H. Test #1 Results

## A. Preliminary Questionnaire

Please fill out the questionnaire to give us information about you that will help us in the Plain English test.

**1. Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Occupation:**

- (1) B.S. Student                      (2) M.S. Student                      (3) Ph.D Student / Candidate  
(4) Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Major:** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Gender:**

- (1) Male                                  (2) Female

**5. Native Language:**

- (1) Korean                              (2) Others: \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Did you attend high school in Korea?** YES / NO

**7. Did you attend university in Korea?** YES / NO

**8. How long have you studied English?** \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)

**9. How long have you lived in Korean-speaking countries?** \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)

**10. How long have you lived in English-speaking countries?** \_\_\_\_\_ year(s)

**11. How many hours per week do you use Korean?** \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s) per week

**12. How many hours per week do you use English?** \_\_\_\_\_ hour(s) per week

**13. Do you occasionally have difficulty reading English passages?** YES / NO

## **B. Consent Form**

***Title of Study:*** *Plain English for Korean Non-Native English Speakers: How Does “Plain English” Affect Korean Non-native English Speakers’ Communication and Comprehension of English?*

You are invited to be in a research study in which you are asked to take tests (1) to evaluate your comprehension of the Latinate verbs and phrasal verbs and (2) to measure your understanding of the passages written in non-plain and plain English. You have been identified as a possible participant because you are a University of Minnesota student and you are a native Korean speaker. I ask that you consider this research opportunity and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study.

This study is being conducted by students in *WRIT 8505: Professional Practice* in Technical Communication at the University of Minnesota under the instruction of Professor Ann Hill Duin in the Department of Writing Studies.

### ***Background Information***

The purpose of this study is to observe persons’ comprehension of the Latinate verbs, phrasal verbs and passages written in non-plain and plain English.

### ***Procedures***

If you agree to be in this study, your participation will consist of a questionnaire about your demography, the test of specified passages in either plain or non-plain English, and a short debriefing interview about your experience completing the specified tasks. Your participation will not exceed one hour of your time.

### ***Risks and Benefits***

There are no foreseeable risks associated with your participation in this study. Your participation will also help people learn more about plain English.

### ***Voluntary Nature of the Study***

Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you are not required to participate in this study. You can withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision to withdraw will have no affect on your relationship with the University of Minnesota.

**Confidentiality**

The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report that may be published, no information will be included that will make it possible to identify a subject. Pseudonyms or numbers will be used in place of your real name to protect your identity. If you agree to participate in interviews, your interviews will be recorded. Only student researchers will have access to these data.

**Contacts and Questions**

The researcher conducting this study is Changsoo Lee. You may ask any questions you have about the study now. If you have questions later, you may contact any of us through

e-mail: [leex6647@umn.edu](mailto:leex6647@umn.edu) Phone: 612-323-9870

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your files.

Professor Ann Hill Duin is instructor of this class. You can contact Professor Duin with any further questions at [ahduin@umn.edu](mailto:ahduin@umn.edu).

*If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s), you are encouraged to contact the Research Subjects' Advocate Line, D528 Mayo, 420 Delaware St. Southeast, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455; (612) 625-1650.*

**Statement of Consent**

I have read the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers to my questions. I consent to participate in the study.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Test #1 - Latinate and Phrasal Verbs**

<b>Name</b>		
<b>Start time</b>	:	:

- Please, check the word that you know the meaning of it.

	<b>Do you know the meaning of verb?</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
accelerate		
aligned		
ascertain		
assemble		
calculate		
circumvent		
complete		
comprise		
constitute		
contemplate		
cumulative		
deduct		
defer		
delete		
designate		
disburse		
disconnect		
establish		
exclude		
expire		
implement		
insert		
participate		
reimburse		
represent		

	<b>Do you know the meaning of verb?</b>	
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
added up		
be made up of		
carry out		
cross out		
cut off		
fill in		
find out		
get around		
join in		
leave out		
lined up		
make up		
pay back		
pay out		
point out		
put in		
put off		
put together		
run out		
set up		
speed up		
stand for		
take off		
think about		
work out		

➔ Go to the next page



- Please, find the phrasal verbs whose meaning is matched with the Latinate verbs. Write the number of the phrasal verb in the shaded boxes.  
(Some Phrasal verbs may have more than one matched Latinate verb.)

Latinate Verb	No. of Phrasal Verb
accelerate	
aligned	
ascertain	
assemble	
calculate	
circumvent	
complete	
comprise	
constitute	
contemplate	
cumulative	
deduct	
defer	
delete	
designate	
disburse	
disconnect	
establish	
exclude	
expire	
implement	
insert	
participate	
reimburse	
represent	

No.	Phrasal Verb
1	added up
2	be made up of
3	carry out
4	cross out
5	cut off
6	fill in
7	find out
8	get around
9	join in
10	leave out
11	lined up
12	make up
13	pay back
14	pay out
15	point out
16	put in
17	put off
18	put together
19	run out
20	set up
21	speed up
22	stand for
23	take off
24	think about
25	work out

<b>End time</b>	: :
<b>Time to complete</b> <b>(=End time- Start time)</b>	: :

**D. Test #2- Plain and Non-Plain English (Type 1)**

**Name:**

<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
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If you fail to disclose any relevant matter and we would not offer you insurance if this matter were known, we may within three years (1) void the contract or (2) reduce the sum for which you have been insured. If your nondisclosure is fraudulent, we may void the contract at any time.<sup>5</sup>

(The word count: 53)

**1. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the contract?**

- (A) The contract may become void within three years of entering into it if you fail to conform to the duty of disclosure.
- (B) Your contract may be voided within three years if your non- disclosure is fraudulent.
- (C) The sum for which you have been insured for may be reduced if you fail to disclose to matters relevant to the contract.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete</b> <b>(=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.plainlanguagenetwork.org/Examples/samples.html>

<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
-------------------	-------------------------

This website provides information to help Michigan residents resolve their legal problems. The information on this website is not legal advice. Legal information is not the same as legal advice, which is the application of law to an individual's specific circumstances. The information on this website is not a substitute for and does not replace the advice or representation of a licensed attorney. Although the Michigan State Bar Foundation and the Michigan Poverty Law Program go to great lengths to make sure the information on the website is accurate and up to date, we make no claim as to the accuracy of this information and are not responsible for any consequences that may result from the use of this website. We recommend that you consult with a licensed attorney if you want assurance that the information on the website and your interpretation of it are appropriate for your particular situation. You should not and are not authorized to rely on this website as a source of legal advice. The use of this website does not create an attorney-client relationship between the Michigan State Bar Foundation or the Michigan Poverty Law Program and any user.<sup>6</sup>

(The word count: 194)

**2. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the website?**

- (A) The information on this website is available at your own risk.
- (B) You can consult with a licensed attorney if you want assurance that the information on the website and your interpretation of it are appropriate for your particular situation.
- (C) The information on this website can be a substitute for and replace the advice or representation of a licensed attorney in a particular situation.
- (D) The website contains legal information, but nobody can rely on it.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete (=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

<sup>6</sup> <http://michiganlegalhelp.org/terms-use>

You must follow this order unless the court changes or ends it, your case is finalized or dismissed, or you and your spouse make an agreement. Either spouse may ask the court to change or cancel this order, or to issue new orders.<sup>7</sup>

(The word count: 32)

**You CANNOT come back to this page after turning over this page.**

---

<sup>7</sup> Mindlin, Maria. (2010). *Readability*. Transcend Translations

**You CANNOT go back to the previous page to read the article.**

**3. According to the article, which one is NOT true?**

- (A) If the court does not change or end this order, you must comply.
- (B) Unless your case is finalized or dismissed, you must abide by it.
- (C) The court order is no longer valid if you and your spouse make an agreement
- (D) Either party may ask the court to change or cancel this order if both parties agree to the action.

Firearm relinquishment is a mandatory condition.<sup>8</sup>

**4. What is the meaning of the above sentence?**

- (A) Your firearms must be surrendered.
- (B) Your weapons must be inspected.
- (C) You need legal documentation for your firearms.
- (D) You can carry your gun in a concealed manner.

Thank you for your letter asking for permission to put up posters in the library. Before we can give you an answer we will need to see a copy of the posters to make sure they won't offend anyone<sup>9</sup>.

(The word count: 39)

**5. According to the passage, which one does the speaker imply?**

- (A) Displaying a poster at the library is violation of certain rules.
- (B) In order to display posters in the library, a review is necessary.
- (C) Most of the posters may cause disputes.

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<sup>8</sup> Mindlin, Maria. (2010). *Readability*. Transcend Translations

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/campaigning/examples/before-and-after.html>

<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
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TITLE 14--AERONAUTICS AND SPACE <sup>10</sup>  
 CHAPTER I--FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF  
 TRANSPORTATION  
 PART 39--AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES --

Subpart A--General

Sec. 39. 1 Applicability. This part prescribes airworthiness directives that apply to aircraft, aircraft engines, propellers, or appliances (hereinafter referred to in this part as "products") when-- (a) An unsafe condition exists in a product; and (b) That condition is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design. [Doc. No. 5061, 29 FR 14403, Oct. 20, 1964, as amended by Amdt. 39-106, 30 FR 8826, July 14, 1965]

Sec. 39. 3 General. No person may operate a product to which an airworthiness directive applies except in accordance with the requirements of that airworthiness directive.

Subpart B--Airworthiness Directives

Sec. 39. 11 Applicability. This subpart identifies those products in which the Administrator has found an unsafe condition as described in Sec. 39.1 and, as appropriate, prescribes inspections and the conditions and limitations, if any, under which those products may continue to be operated.

Sec. 39. 13 Airworthiness directives. All airworthiness directives contained in Sec. 507.10 of the regulations of the Administrator are hereby transferred to this section of the Federal Aviation Regulations.

Editorial Note: Airworthiness directives prescribed under this subpart were published in full in the Federal Register at 21 FR 9449, Dec. 4, 1956 . For Federal Register citations to amendments in 1957 and subsequent years, see former Sec. 507.10 of this title, in a separate volume entitled "List of Sections Affected 1949-1963." See also Sec. 39. 13 in a separate volume entitled "List of CFR Sections Affected, 1964-1972 and 1973-1985," and the List of CFR Sections Affected at the end of this volume.

(The word count: 282)

<sup>10</sup> www.plainlanguage.gov (Examples > Airworthy Directives Regulation: 14 CFR Part 39)

**6. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the airworthy directives regulation?**

- (A) If an unsafe condition exists in aircraft, aircraft engines, propellers, or appliances, airworthiness directives apply to them.
- (B) It is a violation of the above regulation to operate a product that does not meet the requirements of an applicable airworthiness directive.
- (C) Airworthiness directives specify inspections that you must carry out.
- (D) Airworthiness directives do not address conditions and limitations that you must comply with.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete</b> <b>(=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

**E. Test #2- Plain and Non-Plain English (Type 2)**

**Name:**

<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
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If you fail to comply with your duty of disclosure and we would not have entered into the contract on any terms if the failure had not occurred, we may void the contract within three years of entering into it. If your non- disclosure is fraudulent, we may void the contract at any time. Where we are entitled to void a contract of life insurance we may, within three years of entering into it, elect not to void it but to reduce the sum that you have been insured for in accordance with a formula that takes into account the premium that would have been payable if you had disclosed all relevant matters to us.<sup>11</sup>

(The word count: 115)

**1. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the contract?**

- (A) The contract may become void within three years of entering into it if you fail to conform to the duty of disclosure.
- (B) Your contract may be voided within three years if your non- disclosure is fraudulent.
- (C) The sum for which you have been insured for may be reduced if you fail to disclose to matters relevant to the contract.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete</b> <b>(=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

<sup>11</sup> Gammack, J.G., Hobbs, V., & Pigott, D. (2011). *The Book of Informatics*: Cengage Learning Australia.



<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
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This website provides legal information not legal advice. Using this website does not create an attorney-client relationship. If you need legal advice, talk to a lawyer. We do our best to bring you current, accurate information, but there’s no way we can keep everything current all the time. You use the information on this website at your own risk.<sup>12</sup>

(The word count: 59)

**2. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the website?**

- (A) The information on this website is available at your own risk.
- (B) You can consult with a licensed attorney if you want assurance that the information on the website and your interpretation of it are appropriate for your particular situation.
- (C) The information on this website can be a substitute for and replace the advice or representation of a licensed attorney in a particular situation.
- (D) The website contains legal information, but nobody can rely on it.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete</b> <b>(=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

<sup>12</sup> Plain Language Revision and Testing Examples -

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1QWYGlpgbkG78Q7HUu3flhzjE8Z05S1IMYEDq6ZIHqYU/edit?pli=1>

This temporary injunction remains in effect against both parties until the final decree of divorce or order of legal separation is entered, the complaint is dismissed, the parties reach agreement, or until the court modifies or dissolves this injunction. This injunction shall not preclude either party from applying to the court for further temporary orders, an extended injunction or modification or revocation of this temporary injunction.<sup>13</sup>

(The word count: 66)

**You CANNOT come back to this page after turning over this page.**

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<sup>13</sup> Mindlin, Maria. (2010). *Readability*. Transcend Translations

**You CANNOT go back to the previous page to read the article.**

**3. According to the article, which one is NOT true?**

- (A) If the court does not change or end this order, you must comply.
- (B) Unless your case is finalized or dismissed, you must abide by it.
- (C) The court order is no longer valid if you and your spouse make an agreement
- (D) Either party may ask the court to change or cancel this order if both parties agree to the action.

You must hand over your guns.<sup>14</sup>

**4. What is the meaning of the above sentence?**

- (A) Your firearms must be surrendered.
- (B) Your weapons must be inspected.
- (C) You need legal documentation for your firearms.
- (D) You can carry your gun in a concealed manner.

Your enquiry about the use of the entrance area at the library for the purpose of displaying posters and leaflets about Welfare and Supplementary Benefit rights, gives rise to the question of the provenance and authoritativeness of the material to be displayed. Posters and leaflets issued by the Central Office of Information, the Department of Health and Social Security and other authoritative bodies are usually displayed in libraries, but items of a disputatious or polemic kind, whilst not necessarily excluded, are considered individually.<sup>15</sup>

(The word count: 83)

**5. According to the passage, which one does the speaker imply?**

- (A) Displaying a poster at the library is violation of certain rules.
- (B) In order to display posters in the library, a review is necessary.
- (C) Most of the posters may cause disputes.

<sup>14</sup> Mindlin, Maria. (2010). *Readability*. Transcend Translations

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/campaigning/examples/before-and-after.html>

<b>Start Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
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Title 14: Aeronautics and Space

PART 39—AIRWORTHINESS DIRECTIVES <sup>16</sup>

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 106(g), 40113, 44701.

Source: Doc. No. FAA-2000-8460, 67 FR 48003, July 22, 2002, unless otherwise noted.

§ 39.1 Purpose of this regulation.

The regulations in this part provide a legal framework for FAA's system of Airworthiness Directives.

§ 39.3 Definition of airworthiness directives.

FAA's airworthiness directives are legally enforceable rules that apply to the following products: aircraft, aircraft engines, propellers, and appliances.

§ 39.5 When does FAA issue airworthiness directives?

FAA issues an airworthiness directive addressing a product when we find that:

- (a) An unsafe condition exists in the product; and
- (b) The condition is likely to exist or develop in other products of the same type design.

§ 39.7 What is the legal effect of failing to comply with an airworthiness directive?

Anyone who operates a product that does not meet the requirements of an applicable airworthiness directive is in violation of this section.

§ 39.9 What if I operate an aircraft or use a product that does not meet the requirements of an airworthiness directive?

If the requirements of an airworthiness directive have not been met, you violate §39.7 each time you operate the aircraft or use the product.

§ 39.11 What actions do airworthiness directives require?

Airworthiness directives specify inspections you must carry out, conditions and limitations you must comply with, and any actions you must take to resolve an unsafe condition.

§ 39.13 Are airworthiness directives part of the Code of Federal Regulations?

Yes, airworthiness directives are part of the Code of Federal Regulations, but they are not codified in the annual edition. FAA publishes airworthiness directives in full in the Federal Register as amendments to §39.13.

(The word count: 285)

<sup>16</sup> www.plainlanguage.gov (Examples > Airworthy Directives Regulation: 14 CFR Part 39)

**6. According to the passage, which of the following is NOT true of the airworthy directives regulation?**

- (A) If an unsafe condition exists in aircraft, aircraft engines, propellers, or appliances, airworthiness directives apply to them.
- (B) It is a violation of the above regulation to operate a product that does not meet the requirements of an applicable airworthiness directive.
- (C) Airworthiness directives specify inspections that you must carry out.
- (D) Airworthiness directives do not address conditions and limitations that you must comply with.

<b>End Time</b>	____(h):____(m):____(s)
<b>Time to Complete</b> <b>(=End Time- Start Time)</b>	____(m):____(s)

## F. Answers for the tests

### (1) Phrasal Verb Test

Latinate Verb	Matched Phrasal Verb
accelerate	21
aligned	11
ascertain	7
assemble	18
calculate	25
circumvent	8
complete	6
comprise	2
constitute	12
contemplate	24
cumulative	1
deduct	23
defer	17
delete	4
designate	15
disburse	14
disconnect	5
establish	20
exclude	10
expire	19
implement	3
insert	16
participate	9
reimburse	13
represent	22

### (2) Plain English Test (Type 1 and 2)

Number	Answer
1	B
2	C
3	D
4	A
5	B
6	D

## **G. Debrief Interview**

### **1. Phrasal Verb Test**

***(1) What problems and challenges did you have in matching the verbs?***

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***(2) Which verb type did you find easier to understand?***

*LATINATED VERB / PHRASAL VERB*

***(3) Comments, if any?***











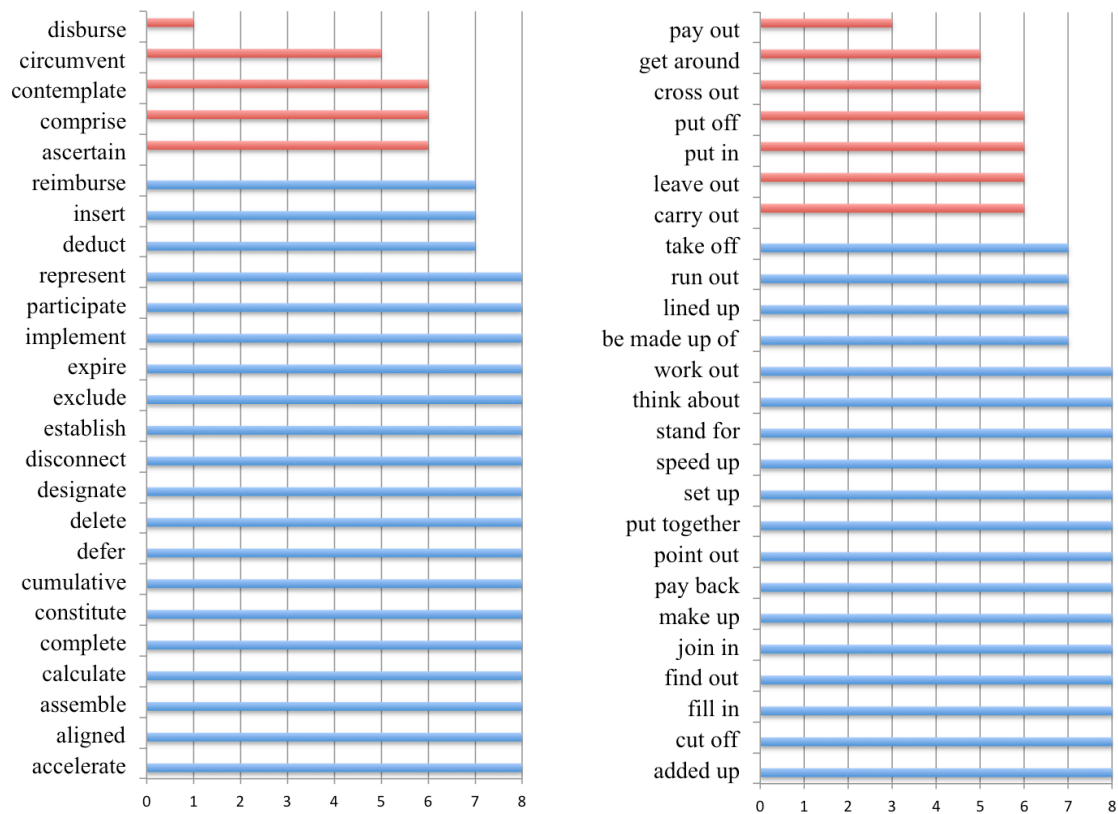




## H. Test #1 Results

Table 11 shows the number of Latinate and phrasal verbs that the participants claim that they know. Table 12 demonstrates pairs of the Latinate and phrasal verbs that the participants fail to match correctly. These results are explained in the Discussion and Recommendation section.

**Table 11 Frequency of the Latinate and phrasal verbs that participants knew.**



**Table 12 Frequency of correct matching between Latinate and phrasal verbs**

