

REPORT

PUBLIC SURVEY ON INFORMATION ACCESSIBILITY AND EASY LANGUAGE IN LITHUANIA

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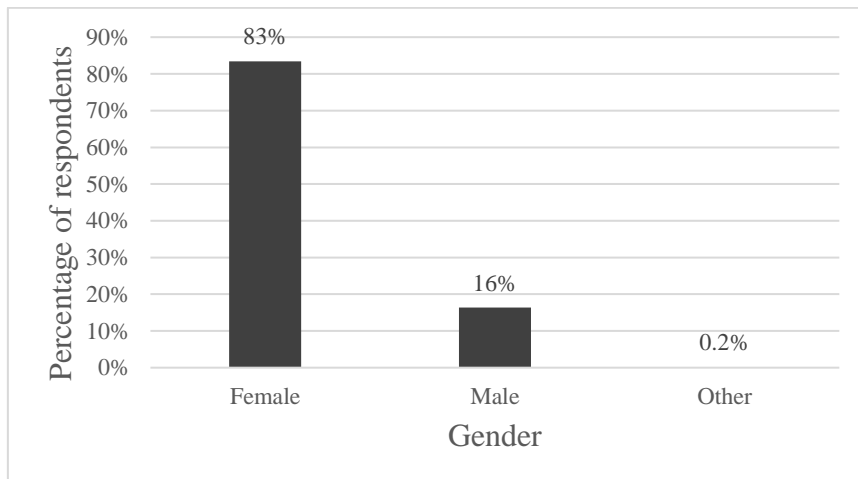
Ramunė Lebedytė Undzėnienė

The questionnaire on information accessibility and Easy language for the public in **Lithuania**

A report

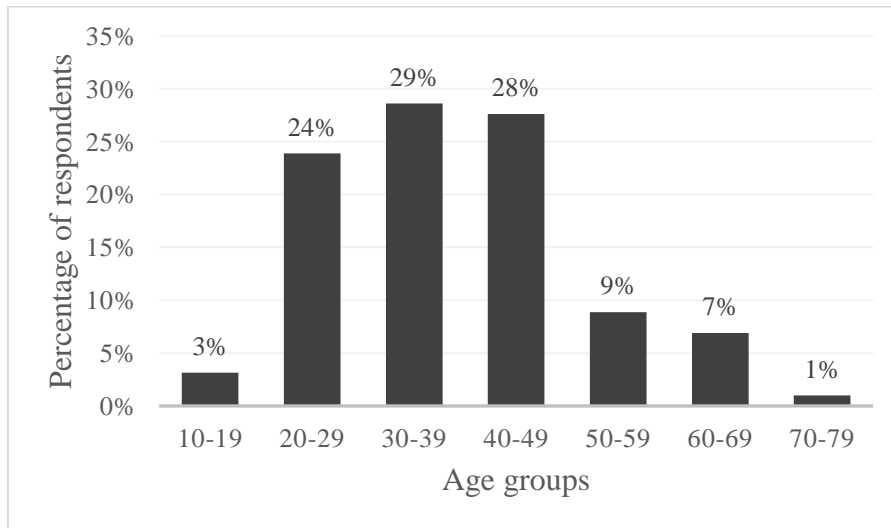
The questionnaire on Easy language for the public was conducted online through the Google sheets website. The first survey was filled out on the 28th of January 2021, and the last one was registered on the 9th of March 2021. The questionnaire on information accessibility and Easy language was completed by 507 respondents. In the present report, a general profile (age, gender, occupation, etc.) of the respondents is presented first, followed by the results of questions about Easy language. The data for each question is presented with a graphic visualization accompanied by a summary.

Gender



The figure shows that more than two-thirds (83%) of all respondents are female, while 16% of individuals are male, and 1 (0.2%) chose not to indicate any of the given genders.

Age



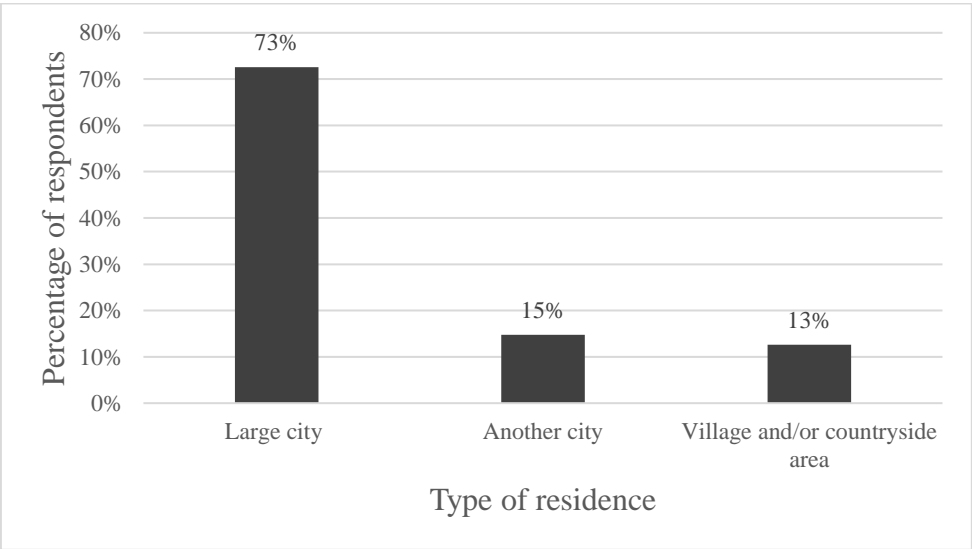
The largest proportion of respondents (29%) were aged between 30-39; similarly, 28% were aged 40-49, and 24% were aged 20-29. The youngest and oldest age groups were scarce, responding to 3% and 1% of all individuals, respectively. It is also worth mentioning that the youngest individual was 13, and the two oldest were 74. Overall, the results indicate a quite diverse age range of respondents.

Region



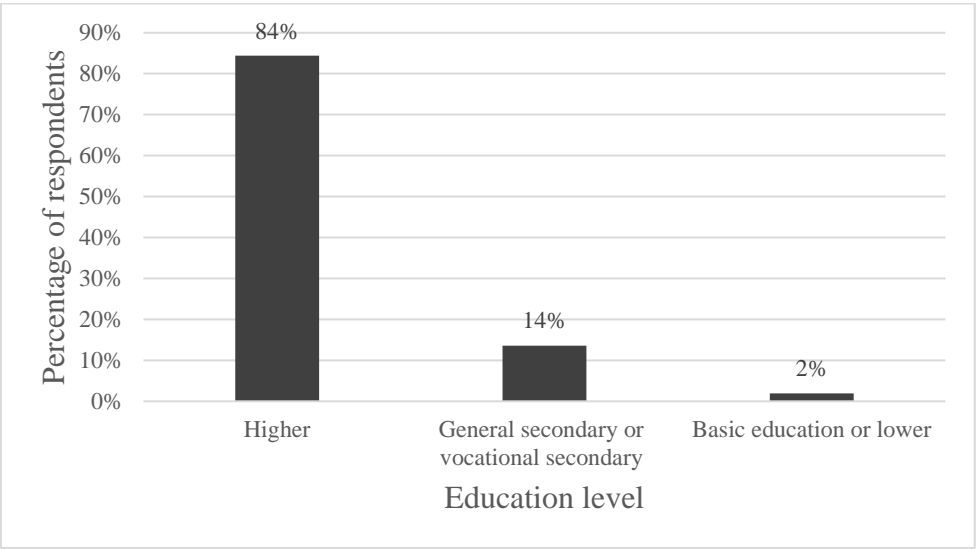
It is clear from the figure that most respondents (71%) reside in Vilnius county. 9% and 6% of all individuals live in Kaunas and Klaipėda counties, respectively, and residents of all other Lithuanian counties do not make up 10%. 5% of respondents indicated living in various foreign countries: the UK, Indonesia, Hungary, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Residence type



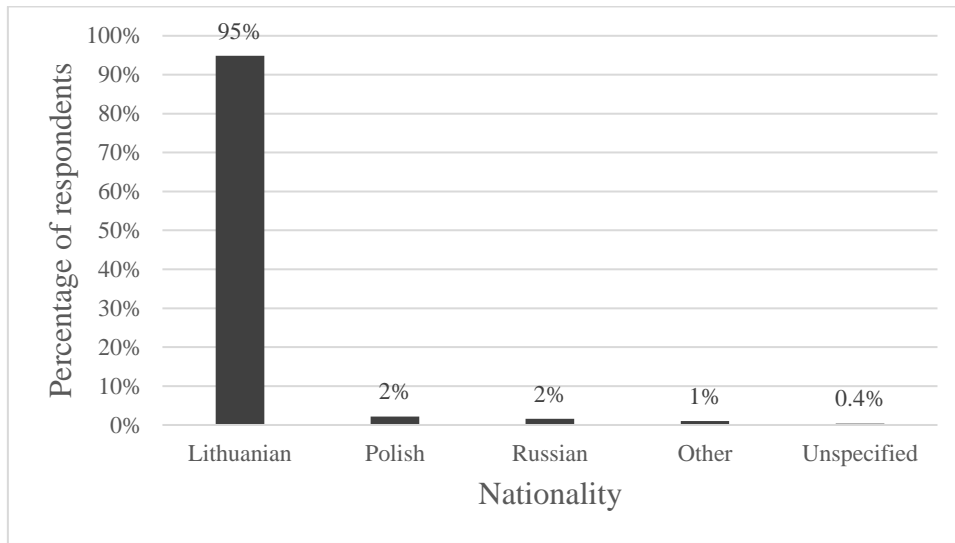
More than two-thirds (73%) of all respondents indicated living in large cities, while the distribution of people among smaller cities and villages are practically the same, with 15% and 13%, respectively.

Education level



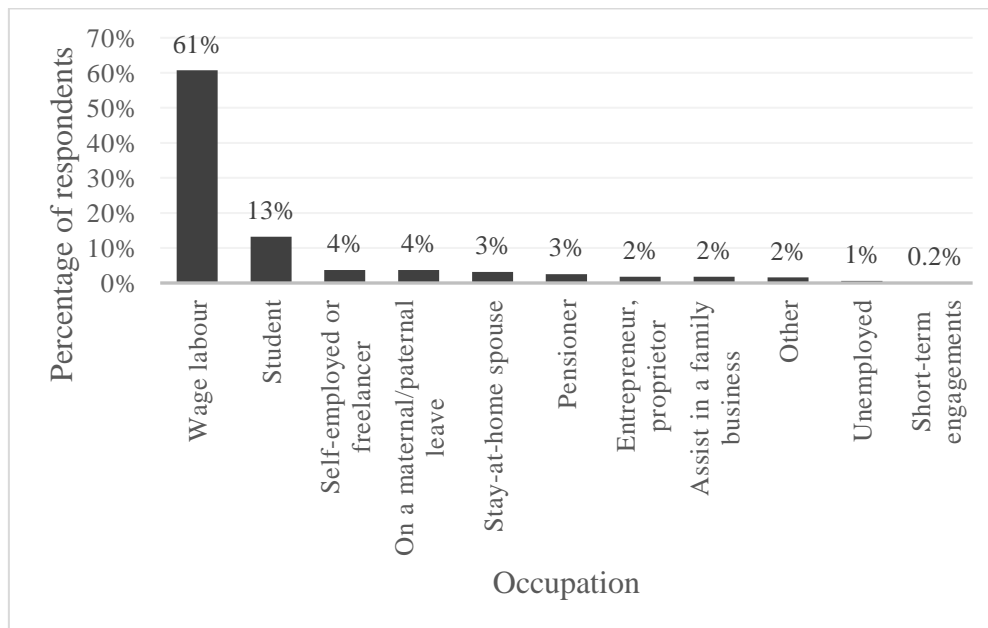
The largest portion of respondents (84%) have higher education. The percentage of individuals with second education was significantly lower (14%), and the least percentage (2%) had completed only basic education.

Nationality



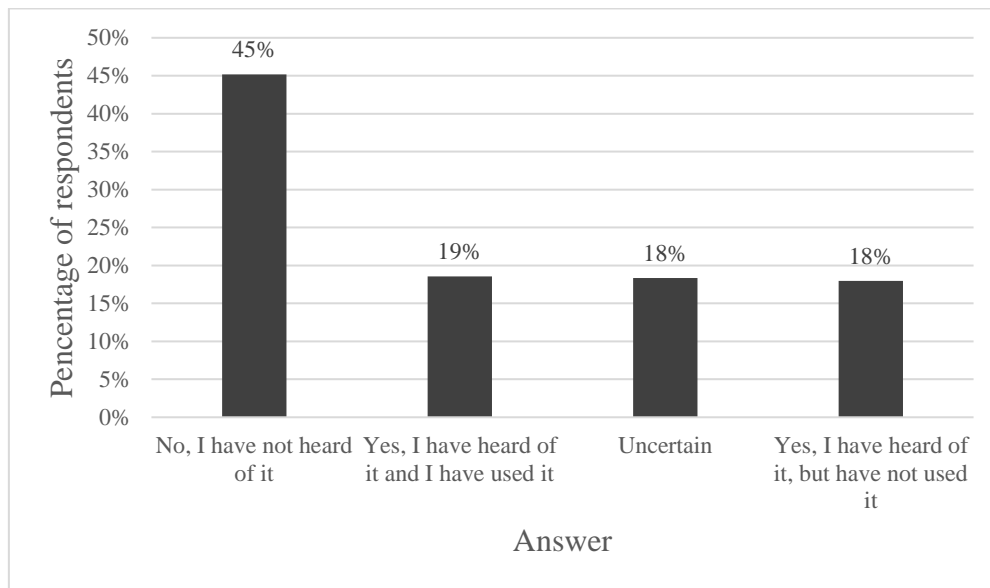
The vast majority of respondents (95%) described their nationality as Lithuanian. Polish and Russian nationalities, although both minor and equal to a percentage of 2%, were second largest. 1% of individuals (5) were of various nationalities, among which were Belarussian, Swedish, Latvian, German, and Hungarian nationalities. 0,4% (2) people wrote an incomprehensible symbol or letter; therefore, these responses were grouped under the label 'unspecified'.

Occupation



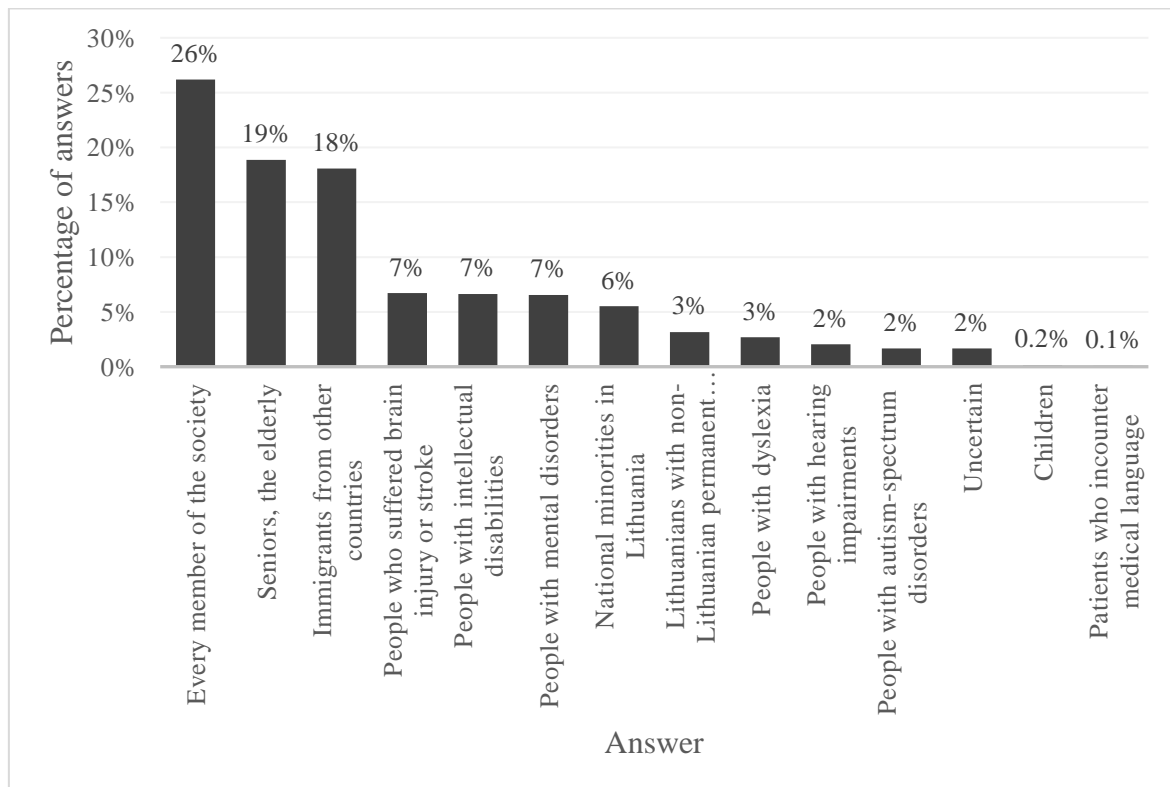
A majority of respondents (61%) reported working in wage labour. The second-largest percentage of people (13%) said they are students, although the proportion is considerably smaller than that of wage labour. The remaining options did not accrue significant proportions, each one not reaching 5%. 2% (8) of individuals gave examples of occupations other than those provided in the question. Among them were such examples as a researcher, officer, member of a non-governmental organization, 2 individuals indicated being students and having a job, and 1 said they are a wage worker and have their own business. Finally, another 2 people provided unintelligible answers.

1. Have you previously heard of/encountered Easy language?



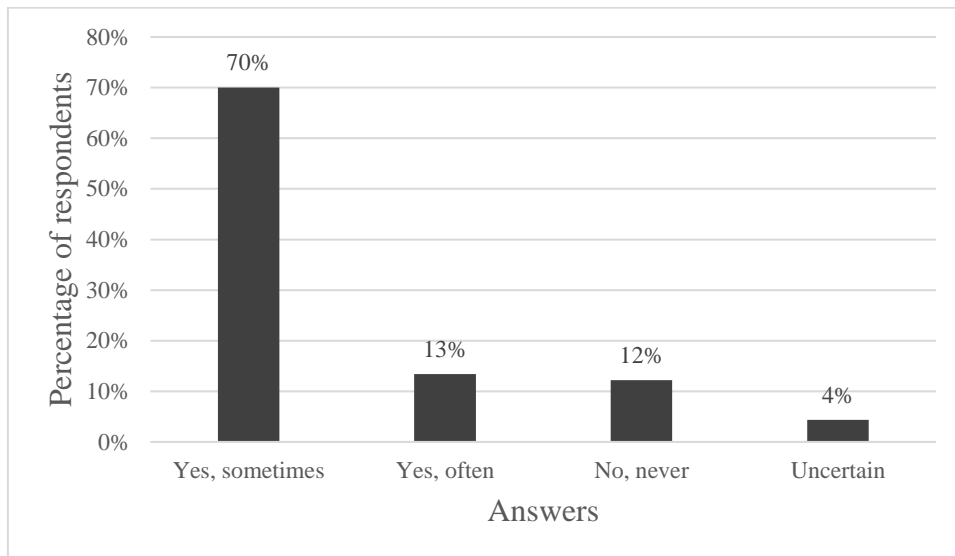
From looking at the figure, it is clear that almost half of all respondents (45%) have not heard of Easy language before. Percentages are distributed almost equally among other options – 19% of people indicated that they have heard and used Easy language and 18% indicated that they have heard of the language but have never used it.

2. Who could, in your opinion, benefit from information in Easy language?



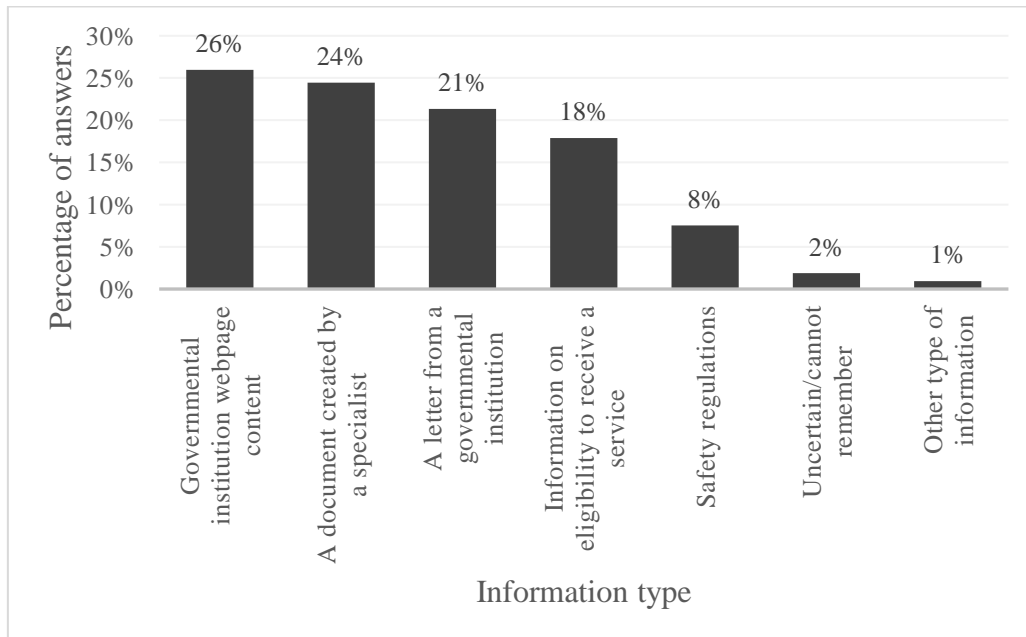
Respondents could choose multiple responses when answering who could benefit from Easy language; therefore, each chosen point was counted as a separate answer. In total, 1267 answers were reported. The answer stating the usefulness of Easy language for all members of society accrued 26% of the total responses. Among more specific groups, the elderly and immigrants were viewed as the most likely users of Easy language, responding to 19% and 18% of all answers, respectively. All other options accrued between 2% and 7% of the total responses. Additional 3 answers that were not specified in the question were indicated: 2 answers, making up 0.2%, said that Easy language could be beneficial for children, and 1 (0.1%) said that patients, who encounter medical language, could be potential users of Easy language.

3. Have you personally experienced difficulties to comprehend relevant information due to the text being composed in a complex manner?



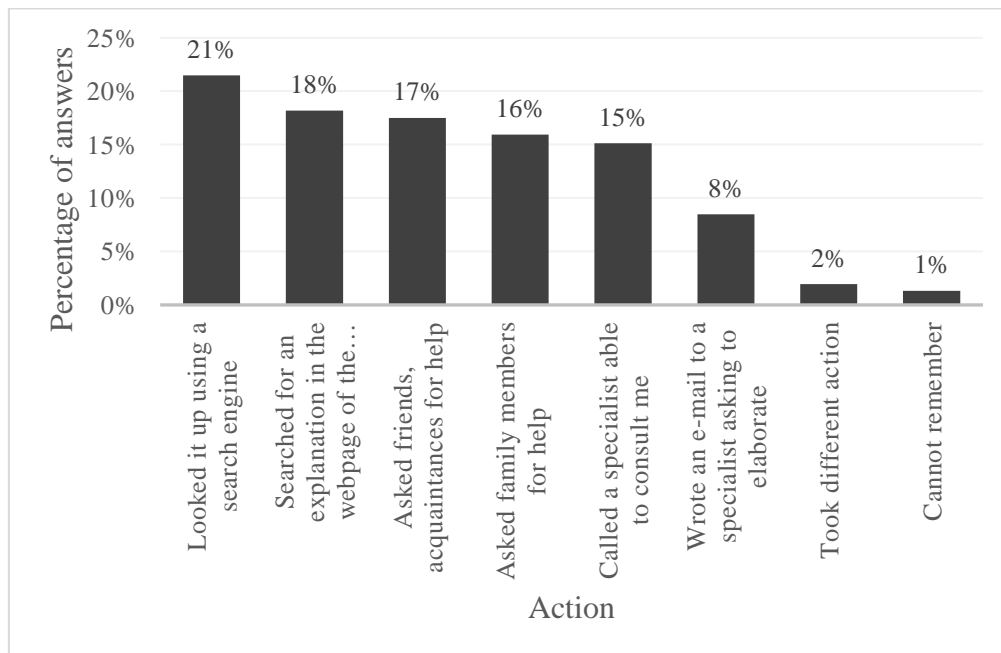
A significant percentage of respondents recalled having difficulties understanding complex texts – 70% of individuals said that they sometimes experience such difficulties, and for 13% such experience is frequent. Meanwhile, 12% of respondents stated that they have never had any difficulties comprehending relevant information.

4. What type of information have you had difficulties to comprehend?



Only respondents, who have answered positively in question 3 had to answer this question; they also could tick multiple answers. In total, 1063 answers were provided. Respondents viewed webpage content of governmental institutions and documents written by specialists as hardest to understand, these options accrued 26% and 24% of all answers, respectively. Letters from governmental institutions follow close (21%). Moreover, respondents specify 10 additional information types, which make up 1% of all answers. 4 people have experienced difficulties understanding laws, others have had problems with books, letters from a bank, contracts, letters of colleagues, children 's homework, and changes in legalisation documents.

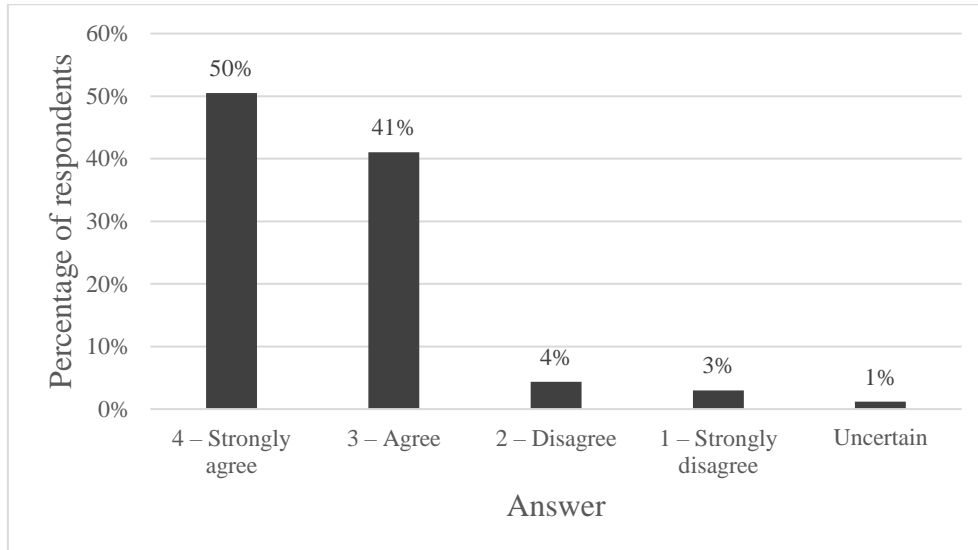
5. How did you act when having difficulties to comprehend a written text?



Only respondents who have chosen answers 1, 2, 3, and 5 in question 4 had to answer the present question and could choose multiple answers as well. In total, 978 answers were recorded. The graph is balanced and indicates respondents using a wide range of actions when faced with difficulties understanding information. The largest percentage tended to look information up using a search engine – this choice amounts to 21% of all answers. All other options have similar numbers of responses, ranging between 18% and 15%. Writing an e-mail to a specialist was the least popular choice, not reaching 10%. Additionally, 2% of all answers were different actions, not provided in the question. 14 respondents said they tried reading the complex text several times, others tried to focus better, skipped the parts of the text they could not understand, read a specialized instruction; finally, 2 individuals said they ignored the text altogether.

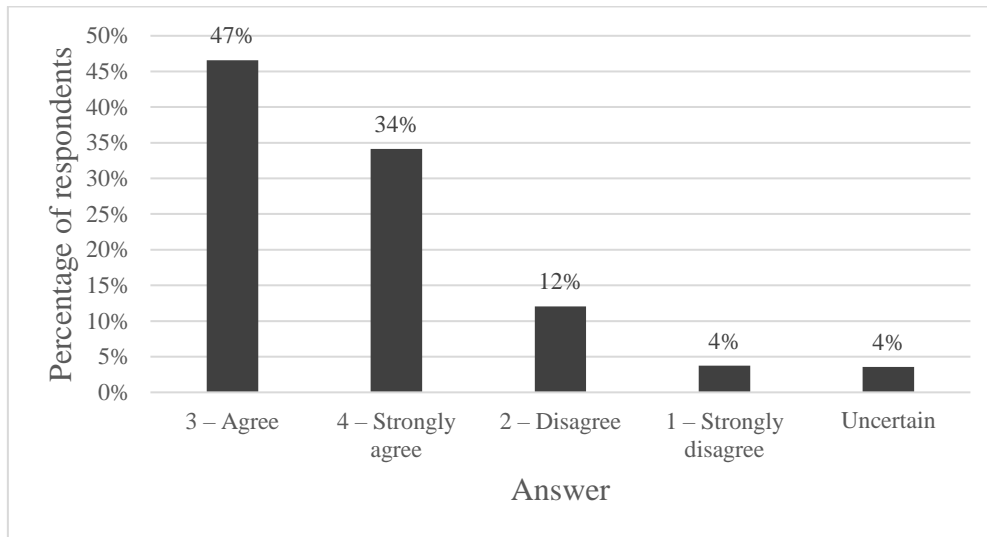
6. For questions 6.1. – 6.4. respondents had to rate a given statement in a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being ‘Strongly disagree’, and 4 being ‘Strongly agree’.

6.1. Governmental institutions should always communicate with the public in Easy language.



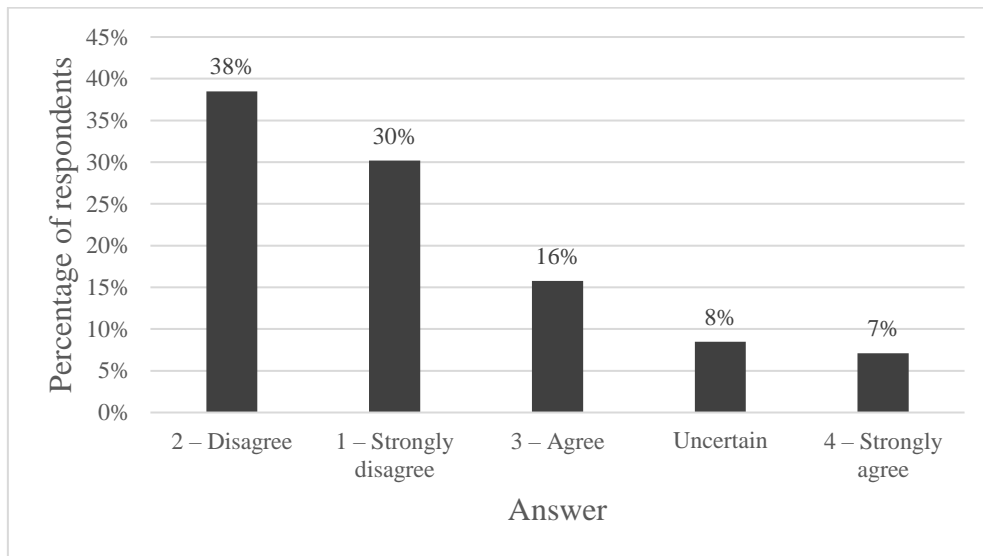
Overall, a vast majority of respondents agree with the present statement, with half of all individuals strongly agreeing with it, and 41% agreeing. Only a few people had a different opinion – combined, individuals who disagree or strongly disagree with the statement make up 7%. Therefore, this data suggests that respondents agree that governmental institutions should communicate with the public in Easy language.

6.2. Situations when I find it difficult to understand a text make me feel self-conscious.



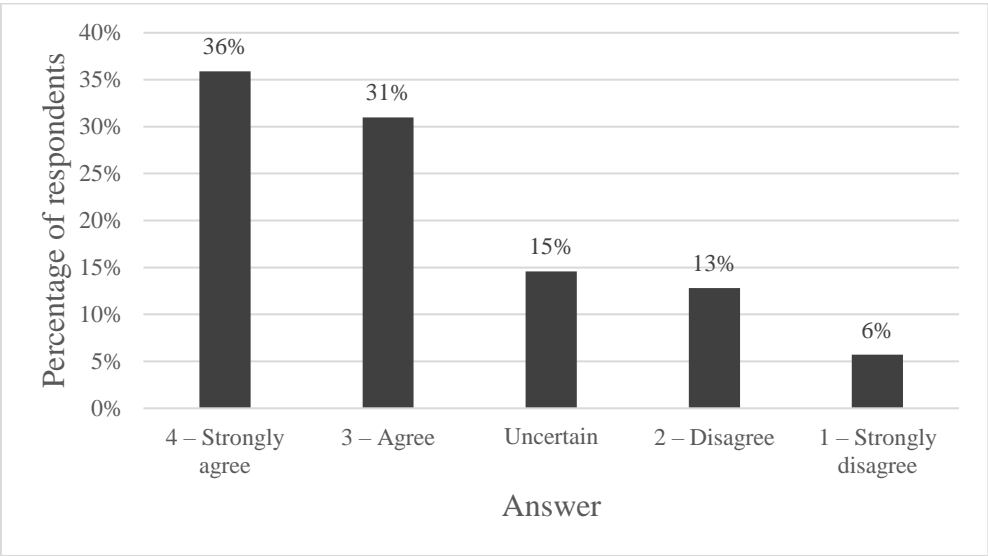
As seen in the figure, a majority of respondents have felt self-conscious when having difficulties understanding a text. This is illustrated by almost half of the people agreeing with the given statement and 34% choosing to strongly agree. A minority reported not experiencing a feeling of embarrassment when having problems comprehending a text, with 12% disagreeing and 4% strongly disagreeing with the given statement.

6.3. I would feel uncomfortable knowing that information is specifically tailored for me in easy language.



Although in total 23% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would feel uncomfortable knowing a text is specially tailored for them, the percentage is overshadowed by those having a different opinion. A significant 38% of respondents disagreed and 30% strongly disagreed with the given statement. Therefore, the data indicates that most people would not feel ashamed knowing a text is specially written for them in easy language.

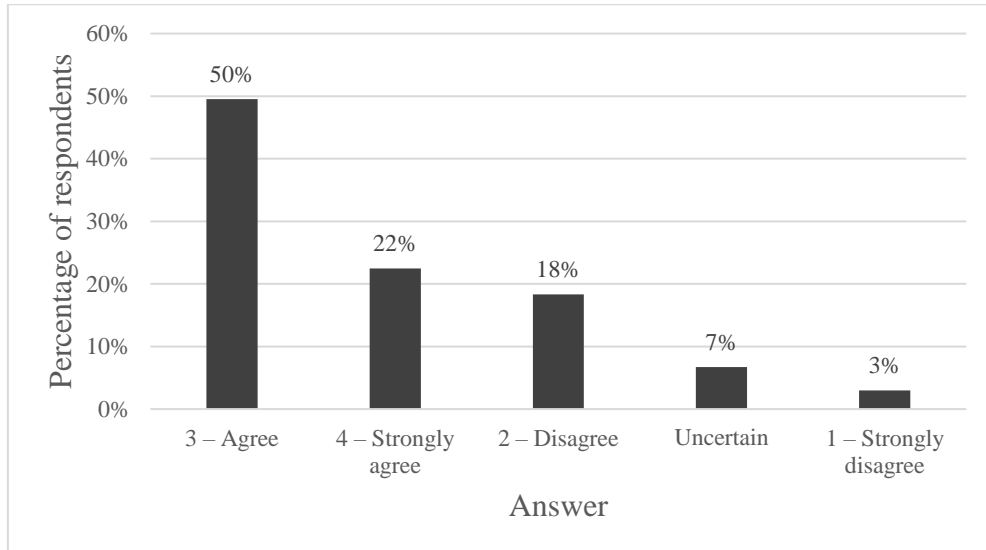
6.4. I would be glad if information would be specifically tailored for me in Easy language.



Most respondents were in favour of having information tailored for them in Easy language, with 36% strongly agreeing and 31% agreeing. Significantly, 15% had no preference, and a combined percentage of 19% decided to disagree or strongly disagree.

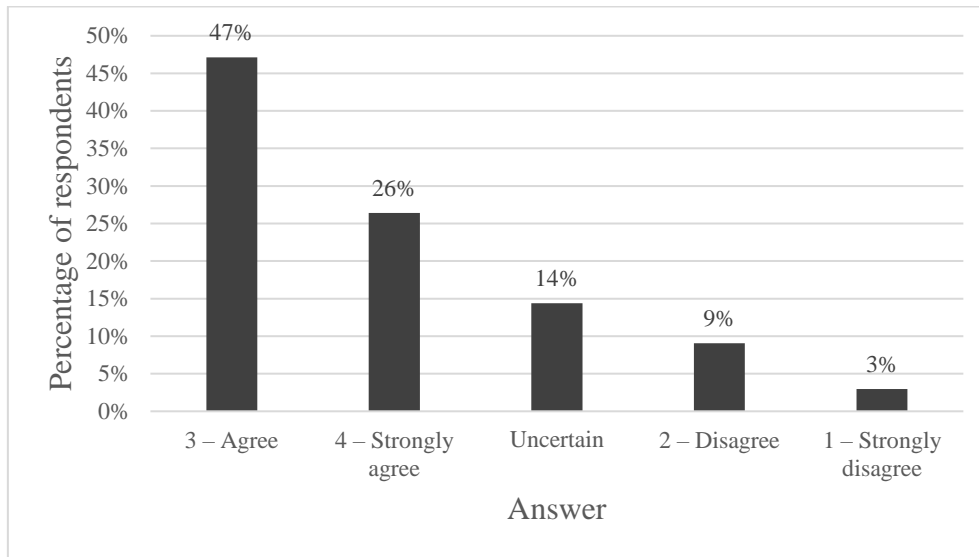
7. For questions 7.1. - 7.6. respondents had to rate a statement in a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 being 'Strongly disagree', and 4 being 'Strongly agree'.

7.1. Easy language is the same text with complex words omitted.



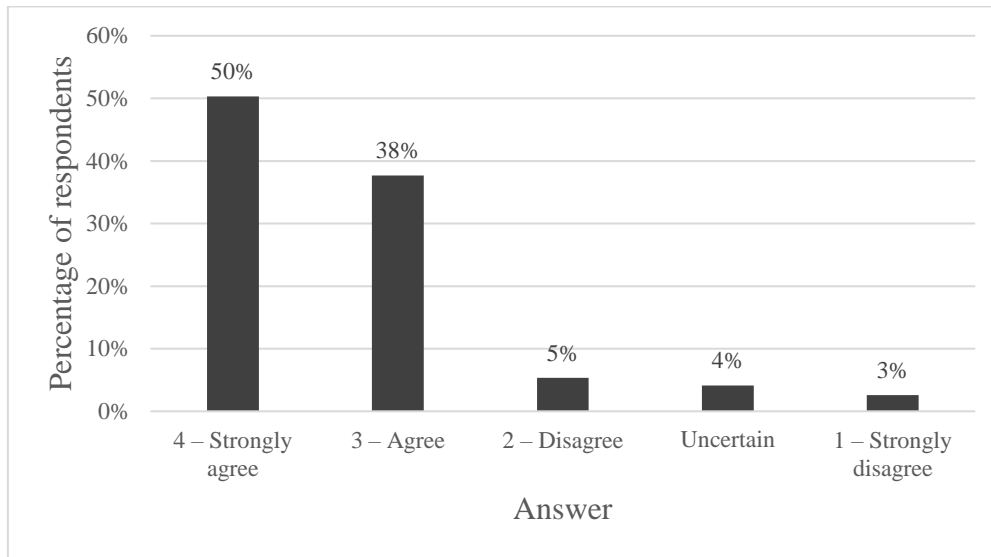
Most individuals were positive about this statement, with half of the respondents agreeing and 22% strongly agreeing that a text written in Easy language is the same only with complex words omitted. A combined percentage of 21% disagreed or were in strong disagreement, and 7% had no opinion on the subject.

7.2. Easy language is a specific form of communication that follows specific guidelines.



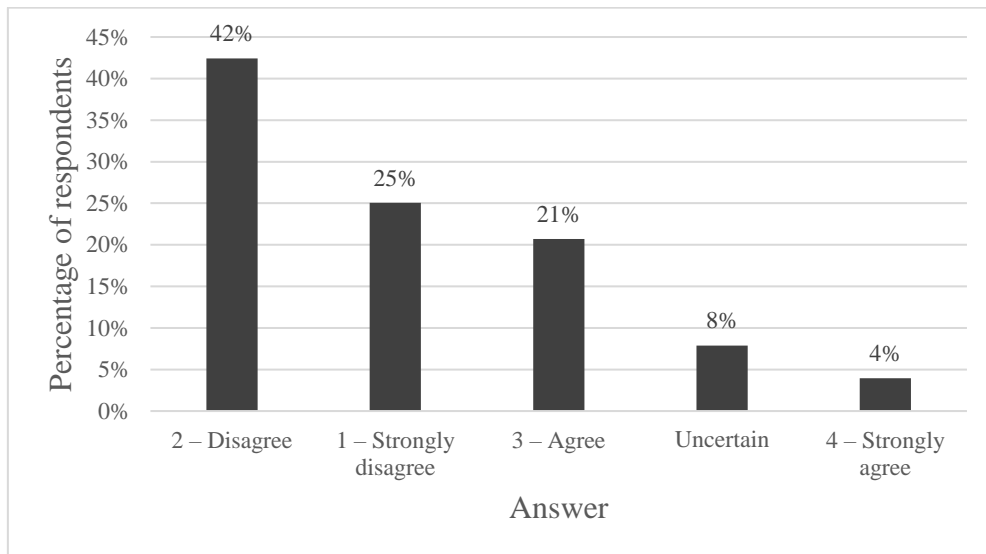
More than two-thirds (73% combined) of all respondents agree or strongly agree that Easy language is a communication form that follows specific guidelines. Only 12% of individuals either disagreed or strongly disagreed, although 9% expressed no specific opinion.

7.3. Writing a text in Easy language does not change the message of the text.



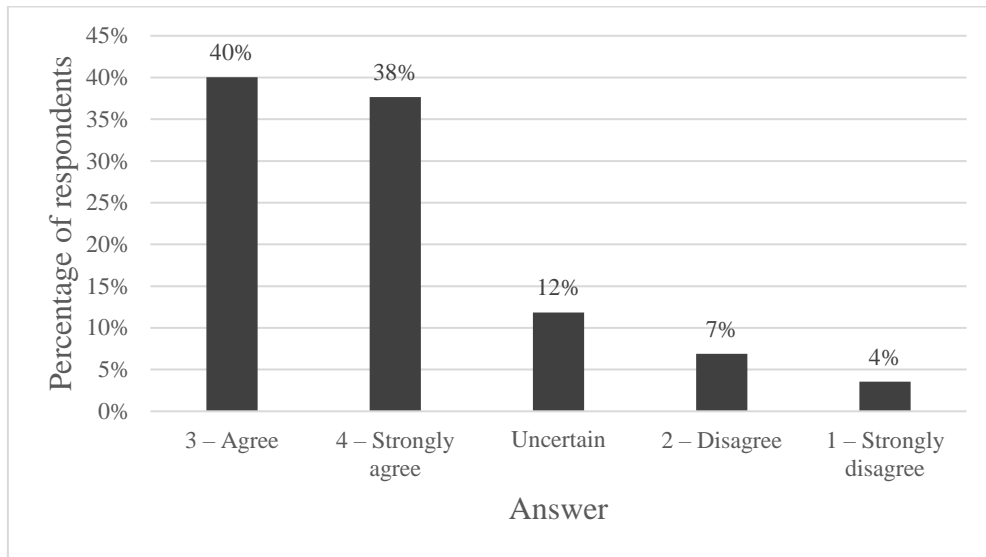
Half of all respondents strongly agreed that a text written in Easy language does not change its meaning, supported by more than a third (38%), who agreed with the statement. Meanwhile, only a combined percentage of 8% expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. Therefore, it safe to state that respondents strongly believe that text does not change its message when written in easy language.

7.4. When changing a text to Easy language, relevant details and themes of the text might be lost.



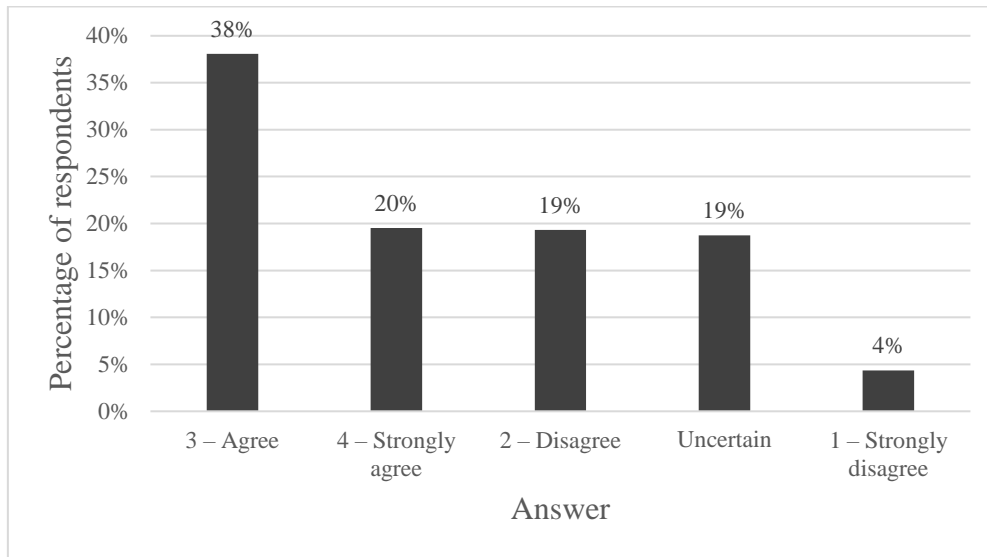
By looking at the figure, a considerable combined percentage (25%) of individuals, who either agree or strongly agree with the provided statement, emerges. However, although the significance of the opposing view must be acknowledged, overall, people are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (42% and 25% of all respondents, respectively) with the idea that relevant details and themes might be lost in a text written in Easy language.

7.5. Information in Easy language must be checked/validated by the end-users.



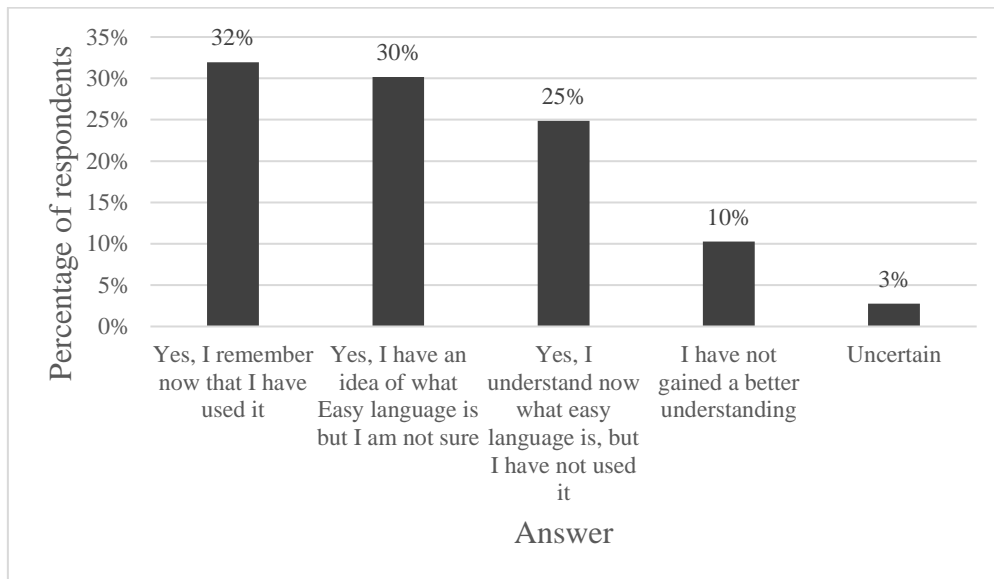
A majority of respondents supported the statement greatly, with 40% agreeing and 38% strongly agreeing with the idea that information written in Easy language must be checked by the end-users. The summed-up percentage of individuals who disagree or strongly disagree with the statement reaches only 11%, while 12% of respondents did not have a certain opinion.

7.6. Text in Easy language often has pictures added to it.



By looking at the chart, it is visible that the results are more evenly distributed, and several trends can be distinguished. First, the largest proportion of respondents (58%, combined) were in favour of the idea that pictures should accompany Easy language texts. However, a considerable combined percentage (23%) of individuals who either disagree or strongly disagree is present; people who have expressed no opinion also accrued an unusually large percentage of 19%. In general, it can be stated that most people tend to agree that pictures should be added to Easy language texts; however, the opinion is not unambiguous.

8. Have you, after having filled out the questionnaire, gained a better understanding of what Easy language is?

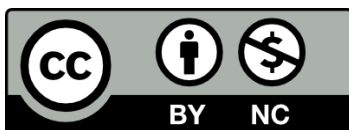


According to the figure, more than two-thirds of respondents feel positive about the given question. The largest percentage of 32% believe they have gained a better understanding of what Easy language is and even remembered using it before, followed close by those, who have an idea of what Easy language is but are not completely sure (30%) and those, who are certain what Easy language is but have not used it. Compared to this, only a small percentage of 10% felt that they have not gained a better understanding of Easy language. Having considered the results, it can be stated that most people have gained a better knowledge of what Easy language is after completing this survey.

PERLSI



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