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# AIRBNB'S TERMS OF SERVICE AND PLAIN LANGUAGE MOVEMENT: TOWARDS A DIAPHASIC INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION OF MULTI-WORD UNITS

## LAS TERMS OF SERVICE DE AIRBNB Y EL PLAIN LANGUAGE MOVEMENT: HACIA UNA TRADUCCIÓN INTRALINGÜÍSTICA DIAFÁSICA DE LAS EXPRESIONES MULTIPALABRA

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### Abstract

Given the great impact that collaborative housing platforms have on the tourism market, this paper aims to offer a diaphasic intralingual translation of the Terms of Service of Airbnb, according to the Plain Language movement, in order to facilitate its understanding for its travelling users. Specifically, this article focuses on the simplification of three multi-word lexical features: phrasal verbs, complex prepositions, and synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and trinomials. Automatic data extraction was carried out with the CQL query type and the "N-grams" function of Sketch Engine, which was complemented by a manual sorting. In total, 64 items were analysed and simplified, amongst which complex prepositions



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prevailed. The most recurrent Plain English strategy was the substitution of multi-word expressions for single-word standard language units.

**Keywords:** Airbnb; Terms of Service; Diaphasic intralingual translation; Plain Language movement; Multi-word lexical units.

## Resumen

Habida cuenta del gran impacto que ejercen las plataformas colaborativas en el mercado turístico, este trabajo persigue ofrecer una traducción intralingüística diafásica de las *Terms of Service* de Airbnb, según el *Plain Language movement*, para facilitar su comprensión a los usuarios viajeros. En concreto, el presente artículo se centra en la simplificación de tres rasgos léxicos multipalabra: los verbos frasales, las preposiciones complejas, y los binomios y los trinomios sinónimos o cuasisinónimos y de extrema especificidad. La extracción automática de datos se llevó a cabo a partir del tipo de consulta CQL y la función “N-gramas” de Sketch Engine, lo cual se complementó con un cribado manual. En total, se analizaron y simplificaron 64 elementos, entre los que predominaban las preposiciones complejas. La estrategia de *Plain English* más recurrente fue la sustitución de expresiones multipalabra por unidades monopalabra de la lengua estándar.

**Palabras clave:** Airbnb; *Terms of Service*; Traducción intralingüística diafásica; *Plain Language movement*; Expresiones léxicas multipalabra.

## 1. Introduction

Nowadays, continuous technological progress, growing environmental awareness and the persistent economic crises of contemporary societies are leading to the emergence of new consumption models in the tourism sector, most of which are based on the “collaborative economy” (Silva & de Azevedo Barbosa 2020: 710). This concept lacks a clearly defined framework because of the innovative and heterogeneous economic forms it encompasses, which have been given a multitude of names, such as “peer-to-peer economy”, “sharing economy”, “collaborative consumption”, “access economy” and “platform economy” (Morales Sánchez 2023: 420). However, according to the European Commission (2016: 3), the notion of “collaborative economy” mainly refers to business models that make use of cooperative platforms to offer activities, so that such websites constitute

an open market for the temporary use of products or services normally provided by individuals. This economy comprises three types of agents, namely: service providers, service users and intermediaries.

A clear example of the latter category of agents is Airbnb, a virtual platform founded in 2007 that is currently made up of more than 5 million hosts who have shared their stays with more than 1.5 billion guests in practically every country in the world (Airbnb 2023). The website is widely used by tourists, as, every day, hosts offer unique accommodations and experiences that allow them to discover other communities in a more authentic way (Airbnb 2023). This success has attracted the interest of researchers from disciplines as diverse as economics, tourism, law, and linguistics. With regard to the last one mentioned, numerous studies have been carried out, albeit limited to the discursive strategies used by 1) hosts in their descriptions and reviews (Ma, Neeraj & Naaman 2017; Lovón Cueva & Retes Rodríguez 2020; Zhang, Yan & Zhang 2020), 2) guests in their reviews (Bridges & Vásquez 2018; Quattrone *et al.* 2018; Zhang 2019; Quattrone, Kusek & Capra 2022), 3) guests in the Airbnb chat (Roje & Bazdan 2023), and 4) the platform itself (Silva & de Azevedo Barbosa 2020; Yang *et al.* 2022). Therefore, translation research on this website is still non-existent.

For this reason, the present work aims to conduct a diaphasic intra-lingual translation of Airbnb's Terms of Service according to the Plain Language movement, focusing on several lexical items: phrasal verbs, complex prepositions, and binomials and trinomials. In other words, it intends to simplify such multi-word expressions by finding, in terms of register, more accessible, and as far as possible, less extensive options in general language. Thus, this article will make English-speaking tourists (and specifically, as indicated in "Methodology" section, for those living in Europe) better understand Airbnb's Terms of Service, which is a text type characterised by its length, its small font size, and the vast amount of technical and legal jargon that it contains (Williams 2023: 140). The importance of drafting such text in a clear and simple manner lies in the fact that "[t]hese Terms of Service for European Users ('Terms') are a binding legal agreement" (Airbnb 2024). That means this document establishes a contract, on the one hand, between Airbnb (although it is not itself a contracting party)

and the hosts, as well as between Airbnb and the guests; and, on the other hand, between the hosts and the guests. These contractual relationships are explicitly defined in the Terms of Service under study by incorporating the following provisions:

When you accept a booking request, or receive a booking confirmation through the Airbnb Platform, you are entering into a contract directly with the Guest [...].

When Members make or accept a booking, they are entering into a contract directly with each other. Airbnb is not and does not become a party to or other participant in any contractual relationship between Members. [...] these Terms constitute the entire agreement between Airbnb and you pertaining to your access to or use of the Airbnb Platform and supersede any and all prior oral or written understandings or agreements between Airbnb and you (Airbnb 2024: 6, 18-19 and 22).

## 2. The Plain Language movement

The first references to the “Plain Style” date back to the 14th century (Willerton 2015: 2). Already in *The Canterbury Tales* of Geoffrey Chaucer, the host asked the learned clergyman of Oxenford (now Oxford) to speak plainly to the pilgrims so that they could understand him (McArthur 1991: 14). However, the first protests in favour of clear language did not begin until 1971 with Chrissie Maher, who denounced, in times of economic crisis, the significant difficulties that many English families were experiencing when applying for social benefits due to the unintelligibility of the forms involved (Montolío Durán & Tascón Ruiz 2020). As Liverpool City Council did not respond to requests for simplification of content, Chrissie Maher began to create initiatives, such as founding the *Tuebrook Bugle* newspaper and organising training courses in writing, which called into question the incomprehensible jargon of such forms and, in general, of public documents. Nevertheless, in 1979, dissatisfied with the results of these initiatives, she formed the “Plain English Campaign” (Montolío Durán & Tascón Ruiz 2020), “con la que luchó por mejorar el lenguaje utilizado por los poderes públicos argumentando que estos organismos

deberían tener en cuenta la capacidad del lector a la hora de redactar sus documentos”<sup>1</sup> (Relinque Barranca 2017: 86).

Certainly, this campaign led to the emergence of the well-known “Plain Language movement”, which is based on Gowers works’ *Plain Words: A Guide to the Use of English* (1948) and *The Complete Plain Words* (1954). Such movement has formulated and continues to develop principles on the writing, structure and design of various specialised texts in a multitude of languages to improve the accessibility of information for the lay audience. Focusing on the field of writing (in English), which is the subject of this article, two types of guidelines can be distinguished. On the one hand, there are those in which the following forms and structures are recommended (Etxebarria Arostegui 1997: 366; Petelin 2010: 213):

- Active over passive voice;
- “Strong” verbs, i.e. verbs that have a precise meaning and generate a sense of direct and specific action;
- First and second person forms of address;
- Short sentences with simple syntax;
- Common terms;
- The same terminology throughout a text;
- A standard lexicon;
- Everyday and conversational language;
- A concise, simple and persuasive style;
- A positive tone whenever possible;
- Neutral inclusive language; and
- An unambiguous, consistent and clear language.

On the other hand, there are those guidelines that discourage the use of the elements and constructions indicated below (Etxebarria Arostegui 1997: 366; Petelin 2010: 213):

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1. Authors’ translation into English of the literal quotation: “with which she fought to improve the language used by public authorities, arguing that these bodies should take into account the reader’s ability when writing their documents” (Relinque Barranca 2017: 86).

- Nominalisations with polysyllabic nouns ending in *-ity*, *-tion*, *-age* and *-ance*;
- Noun strings;
- Unnecessary and redundant words;
- Imprecise quantifiers;
- Vague expressions;
- Technical terms;
- Archaisms;
- Foreign words;
- Synonyms, to avoid the “thesaurus syndrome”;
- Initialisms and acronyms;
- Grammatical contractions;
- Euphemisms;
- Neologisms;
- Idioms;
- Negation and double negation; and
- Expressions related to ageism, sexism, racism, and classism.

Given space limitations, this work aims to implement two of the above-mentioned guidelines in the diaphasic intralingual translation of Airbnb’s Terms of Service, namely: the use of a standard lexicon and the avoidance of unnecessary and redundant words. For this purpose, these three linguistic elements defined below were analysed.

### 3. Lexical features under study

#### 3.1. *Phrasal verbs*

Phrasal verbs constitute multi-word verbal constructions (Busuttil 1995: 57) that are very common in the English language (Ishii 2009: 121). Their accurate definition has given rise to numerous debates, which essentially focus on the second element incorporated in them (Busuttil 1995: 57). In any case, according to Ishii (2009: 121), they consist of “units of verbs and prepositions/adverbs that have more or less different meanings from those of the verbs alone”. Thus, it is possible to distinguish between:

- Prepositional phrasal verbs, and
- Adverbial phrasal verbs.

### 3.2. *Complex prepositions*

Complex prepositions “range from two to four words” (Biel 2015: 141) which function syntactically and semantically as simple prepositions (Biber *et al.* 1999: 75), forms for which they can be substituted very often (Beckner & Bybee 2009: 29). Depending on the number of elements they are composed of, these structures usually show the following patterns:

- Two-word complex prepositions: adjective + simple preposition, adverb + simple preposition, simple preposition + simple preposition, conjunction + simple preposition, and verb in gerund + simple preposition (Allerton 2008: 55-56);
- Three-word complex prepositions: simple preposition + noun + simple preposition (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 670); and
- Four-word complex prepositions: simple preposition + definite article + noun + simple preposition, and simple preposition + indefinite article + noun + simple preposition (Biber *et al.* 1999: 75).

### 3.3. *Binomials and trinomials*

English binomials and trinomials are sequences made up of two or three expressions with, frequently, the same grammatical category, an analogous level of syntactic hierarchy, semantic relation, and nexuses such as “and” and “or” (Hernández García 2023: 107 and 225). According to their semantic linkage, such sequences are classified as follows (Hernández García 2023: 106):

- Binomials: synonymous or quasi synonymous, antonymous, of subdivisions, complementary, and extremely specific; and
- Trinomials: synonymous or quasi synonymous, of subdivisions, complementary, extremely specific, and of binomials with no semantic relation to the new added expression.

On this matter, it should be pointed out that this study focuses exclusively on two- and three-membered structures that are synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific, as these are the only binomial and trinomial forms that can be simplified.

4. Methods

The present work was essentially organised in five phases. Firstly, we downloaded the document under study, whose details are described below:

Website for the download and selection of the document	<a href="https://www.airbnb.es/e/termsofserviceupdate">https://www.airbnb.es/e/termsofserviceupdate</a> In this link, there are three different sections of Airbnb's Terms of Service, established according to the target audience, i.e. European users, Australian users, and users outside of the European Economic Area, United Kingdom and Australia. This paper focuses on the Terms of Service for European Users with a view to promoting tourism within the European Union, the geopolitical entity to which Spain belongs, through an accessible language. Note that this document in English does not contain any type of specification regarding the diatopic language variation.
Format	.pdf
No. of pages	32
No. of words	12 209
Last updated date	25th January 2024

Table 1. Download and features of the *Terms of Service* from Airbnb (elaborated by the authors)

Secondly, we created a monolingual English corpus in Sketch Engine by importing the Airbnb's Terms of Service referred to in the table above. Then, we used the CQL (Corpus Query Language) query type by grammatical tags, contained in the advanced search option of the software's "Concordance" function, which provides results in context. In this way, we were able to retrieve simplifiable phrasal verbs, complex prepositions, and synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and



trinomials. Specifically, we conducted an automatic screening through the combinations of tags shown in the following table:

Type of multi-word expressions			Combination of used tags <sup>2</sup>	Results in Sketch Engine
Phrasal Verbs	Prepositional	Verb + simple preposition	[tag="V.*"] [tag="IN"]	364
	Adverbial	Verb + adverb	[tag="V.*"] [tag="RB.?" ]	125
Complex prepositions	Of two words (Allerton 2008: 55-56)	Adjective + simple preposition	[tag="J.*"] [tag="IN"]	109
		Adverb + simple preposition	[tag="RB.?" ] [tag="IN"]	39
		Simple preposition + simple preposition	[tag="IN"] [tag="IN"]	15
		Conjunction + simple preposition	[tag="CC"] [tag="IN"]	33
		Verb in gerund + simple preposition	[tag="VVG"] [tag="IN"]	51
	Of three words (Quirk <i>et al.</i> 1985: 670)	Simple preposition + noun + simple preposition	[tag="IN"] [tag="N.*"] [tag="IN"]	125

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2. For clarity purposes and as a summary, the meanings of the tags included in Table 2 are set out in this footnote as follows: V.\* stands for ‘verb’, IN for ‘preposition’, RB.? for ‘adverb’, J.\* for ‘adjective’, CC for ‘conjunction’, VVG for ‘verb in gerund’, N.\* for ‘noun’, and DT for ‘definite article’.

Complex prepositions	Of four words (Biber <i>et al.</i> 1999: 75)	Simple preposition + definite article + noun + simple preposition	[tag="IN"] [tag="DT"] [tag="N.*"] [tag="IN"]	97
		Simple preposition + indefinite article + noun + simple preposition	[tag="IN"] [lemma="a"] [tag="N.*"] [tag="IN"]	23
Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and trinomials	Preposition + conjunction + preposition		[tag="IN"] [tag="CC"] [tag="IN"]	6
	Adverb + conjunction + adverb		[tag="RB.?" ] [tag="CC"] [tag="RB.?" ]	0
	Adjective + conjunction + adjective		[tag="J.*"] [tag="CC"] [tag="J.*"]	39
	Noun + conjunction + noun		[tag="N.*"] [tag="CC"] [tag="N.*"]	222
	Verb + conjunction + verb		[tag="V.*"] [tag="CC"] [tag="V.*"]	63
	Conjunction + conjunction + conjunction		[tag="CC"] [tag="CC"] [tag="CC"]	1

Table 2. Used tags and results obtained from the automatic screening of the Terms of Service from Airbnb with CQL of Sketch Engine (elaborated by the authors)

Thirdly, we performed a manual review of the collected expressions for two purposes. The first one was to verify their grammatical category. Thus, the data gathered from the combinations of tags relating to phrasal verbs and

complex prepositions were checked against resources such as the online *Cambridge Dictionary* and the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, and the *English Complex Prepositions of the Type ‘in Spite of’ and Analogous Sequences. A Study & Dictionary* (Klégr 2002), respectively. In the case of the results obtained from the combinations of tags regarding synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and trinomials, these were verified by consulting the doctoral thesis of Hernández García (2023), which offers an extensive list of two- and three-membered constructions classified according to their semantic relationship. The second goal consisted in selecting bounded multi-word expressions that could be adapted in terms of register of the natural language and, where feasible, in their length, by means of plain alternatives of analogous grammatical category. In this way, the expressions under study were reduced in number as follows:

Type of multi-word expressions		No. of simplifiable expressions
Phrasal verbs	Verb + simple preposition	3
	Verb + adverb	1
Complex prepositions	Adjective + simple preposition	2
	Adverb + simple preposition	1
	Simple preposition + simple preposition	2
	Conjunction + simple preposition	2
	Verb in gerund + simple preposition	3
	Simple preposition + noun + simple preposition	16
	Simple preposition + definite article + noun + simple preposition	4
	Simple preposition + indefinite article + noun + simple preposition	3

Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and trinomials <sup>3</sup>	Preposition + conjunction + preposition	1
	Adjective + conjunction + adjective	3
	Noun + conjunction + noun	8
	Verb + conjunction + verb	14
	Conjunction + conjunction + conjunction	1

Table 3. Simplifiable multi-word expressions identified through manual screening (elaborated by the authors)

It should be noted that the figures in Table 3 are significantly lower than those in Table 2 due to the functioning of Sketch Engine, as this software does not take into account the repetition criterion when generating results in CQL. In other words, if the same phrasal verb appears 4 times in Airbnb's Terms of Service, the programme counts 4 results, which are probably equivalent to a single simple alternative (unless the verb is framed in very different contexts and with special characteristics; such cases, when appropriate, have been included in our proposal for intralingual translation). Moreover, although Sketch Engine's automatic grammatical annotation via TreeTagger is almost perfect, with an accuracy of 96.4% (Schmid 1994: 44), we were able to verify during data extraction that there are some tagging errors, a problem which also affected the lower figures in Table 3. In addition, there is the presence of expressions which lack clear and direct accessible synonyms, and which therefore imply the reformulation of the original text in order to neutralise their difficulty.

Fourthly, once the list of multi-word expressions that pose a barrier to comprehension had been established and their contexts had been retrieved from the CQL query type, we used the “N-grams” function to compute the number of occurrences of each of them (taking into account their different meanings, when necessary) and thus determine their representativeness. In particular, we resorted to the advanced search of this function, where we implemented the filter “Size of N-grams” to delimit the number of elements

3. Adverbial binomials and trinomials have not been included in Table 3 because no results were obtained for this type of constructions in the Terms of Service of Airbnb.

containing the bounded multi-word expressions, and the one called “of this list:”, located in the “Additional criteria” section, to enter such expressions and obtain their frequency indexes.

Fifthly and finally, in order to conduct the diaphasic intralingual translation, we consulted different types of resources. We used mainly the *Words and Phrases Guide. A Guide to Plain Legal Language* (Australian Government 2023), the *Plain Language* website belonging to the United States Government and the *Plain English Campaign*, as well as English monolingual dictionaries of synonyms, such as the *WordReference Dictionary*.

## 5. Intralingual translation proposal

The data in this section, divided into 3 subsections according to the type of multi-word expressions under analysis, are arranged in tables with 4 columns with the following fields: 1) “simplifiable elements”, which lists, in alphabetical order, the complex multi-word expressions in Airbnb's Terms of Service with an accessible alternative of the same grammatical category; 2) “no. of occurs.” (that is, of occurrences), which includes the total number of repetitions of these structures in the above-mentioned document and, when they have several meanings, also the figures of occurrences according to the different acceptations, separately; 3) “examples of context”, where as many illustrative fragments as meanings of the selected multi-word expressions are provided and only those structures are underlined in order to avoid diverting attention to any other linguistic unit susceptible to adjustments; and 4) “accessible proposals”, where simplified options for such multi-word expressions are suggested according to their monosemous or polysemous character and, in specific cases, certain elements required by the extracted contexts are indicated in brackets (but note that in other contexts not included in Airbnb's Terms of Service, such elements may not be necessary).

### 5.1. Phrasal verbs

With respect to these multi-word expressions, it is worth mentioning that, although Sketch Engine shows numerous results for verbs followed by

prepositions and adverbs, curiously, as we will see in the following subsections, only a few of them are phrasal verbs in conformity with the sources consulted. Furthermore, we detected phrasal verbs whose register does not need to be modified as it is suitable for a lay audience (i.e. *to bring in* and *to lead to*).

5.1.1. Prepositional phrasal verbs

Only 3 forms of this type of verbs in the original text have been found modifiable as follows:

Simplifiable elements	No. of occurs.		Examples of context	Accessible proposals
<i>to allow for</i>	1		You agree that Airbnb’s Rebooking and Refund Policy, Extenuating Circumstances Policy, and these Terms preempt the cancellation policy you set in situations where they <u>allow for</u> the cancellation of a Reservation [...] (Airbnb 2024: 9).	<i>to allow</i>
<i>to enter into</i>	5		When you accept a booking request, or receive a booking confirmation through the Airbnb Platform, you are <u>entering into</u> a contract directly with the Guest [...] (Airbnb 2024: 6).	<i>to make</i>
<i>to provide for</i>	3	1	To that end, these Terms <u>provide for</u> a two-part process for individuals to whom this Section 25 applies: (Airbnb 2024: 24).	<i>to set, to fix</i>
		2	You will receive administrative communications from us using the email address or other contact information you <u>provide for</u> your Airbnb account (Airbnb 2024: 24).	<i>to give for</i>

Table 4. Prepositional phrasal verbs of Airbnb’s Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

5.1.2. Adverbial phrasal verbs

The only simplifiable multi-word verb construction constituted by a second element with the category of adverb is presented in the following table:

Simplifiable elements	No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
<i>to set forth</i>	2	Do not use the name, logo, branding, or trademarks of Airbnb or others without permission, and only as <u>set forth</u> in our Trademark Guidelines (Airbnb 2024: 13).	<i>to describe</i>

Table 5. Adverbial phrasal verbs of Airbnb's Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

5.2. Complex prepositions

5.2.1. Two-word complex prepositions

The Airbnb's Terms of Service contain a total of 10 two-membered complex prepositions with potential simpler alternatives. These are as follows:

Simplifiable elements	No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
<i>according to</i>	7	If you are a Business Host <u>according to</u> Section 26 additional terms apply (Airbnb 2024: 19).	<i>under</i> <sup>4</sup>
<i>as to</i>	3	You and Airbnb acknowledge and agree that we are each waiving the right to a trial by jury <u>as to</u> all arbitrable Disputes (Airbnb 2024: 28).	<i>in, with</i>

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4. In spite of the simple preposition *under* becomes a polysemous *término délfico* (word of common language that takes a different acceptance when used in specialised texts) in Airbnb's Terms of Service, it functions appropriately in our contexts with the meaning it has in the natural language.

<i>except as</i>	11	<u>Except as</u> required by law, we are not obligated to take action in response to any report (Airbnb 2024: 13).	<i>unless</i>
<i>insofar as</i>	2	[...] (iii) the intentions pursued by the Member or Notifier, <u>insofar as</u> can be determined by Airbnb (Airbnb 2024: 16).	<i>as</i>
<i>outside of</i>	3	If your country of residence or establishment is <u>outside of</u> Australia, the EEA, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, the Terms of Service for Non-European Users apply to you (Airbnb 2024: 1).	<i>outside</i>
<i>pertaining to</i>	1	[...] these Terms constitute the entire agreement between Airbnb and you <u>pertaining to</u> your access to [...] (Airbnb 2024: 22).	<i>about, of, on</i>
<i>prior to</i>	5	Where appropriate, Airbnb will issue a warning <u>prior to</u> such a suspension (Airbnb 2024: 14).	<i>before</i>
<i>pursuant to</i>	5	Your right to terminate this agreement at any time <u>pursuant to</u> Section 13.2 remains unaffected (Airbnb 2024: 22).	<i>under</i>
<i>relating to</i>	4	If you declare that you use the Airbnb Platform to offer Host Services to consumers for purposes <u>relating to</u> your trade, business, craft or profession (“Business Host”), these [...] (Airbnb 2024: 30).	<i>of</i> <sup>5</sup>

5. Since the present study focuses on enhancing linguistic accessibility through word reduction apart from register attenuation, we suggest, whenever possible, single-word proposals or, at least, proposals with fewer words than the element



<i>subject to</i>	11	Except as provided in Section 25.16, and <u>subject to</u> Section 12.6 of the Terms of Service for Non-European Users this Section 25 will survive any termination of these Terms and will continue to apply even if you stop using the Airbnb Platform or terminate your Airbnb Account (Airbnb 2024: 30).	<i>under</i>
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Table 6. Two-word complex prepositions of Airbnb's Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

5.2.2. Three-word complex prepositions

There are 16 three-membered complex prepositions subject to diaphasic intralingual translation:

Simplifiable elements	No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
<i>by means of</i>	1	[...] including complaints that have not been resolved <u>by means of</u> our complaint handling system (Airbnb 2024: 16).	<i>by, with</i>
<i>in accordance with</i>	13	The agreement between you and Airbnb reflected by these Terms remains in effect until either you or we terminate the agreement <u>in accordance with</u> these Terms (Airbnb 2024: 14).	<i>under</i>
<i>in addition to</i>	1	<u>In addition to</u> these Terms, you will be subject to, and responsible for complying with, all terms of the Reservation [...] (Airbnb 2024: 4).	<i>additional to</i>

susceptible to simplification. Hence *in relation to* is not considered as a simpler alternative to *relating to*.

<i>in case of</i>	3	<u>In case of</u> a dispute, the appointed arbitrator for the first matter instituted within a set of claims identified by either party shall decide whether those claims [...] (Airbnb 2024: 28).	<i>in, if</i>
<i>in compliance with</i>	2	You are responsible for handling and using personal data of Guests and others <u>in compliance with</u> applicable privacy laws [...] (Airbnb 2024: 7).	<i>under</i>
<i>in connection with</i>	2	You are responsible for your own acts and omissions and are also responsible for the acts and omissions of anyone you invite to join or provide access to any Accommodation, all areas and facilities where the Accommodation is located that the Host and Guest are legally entitled to use <u>in connection with</u> the Accommodation [...] (Airbnb 2024: 5).	<i>about</i>
<i>in excess of</i>	1	[...] otherwise caused the complaining Member to incur cleaning costs <u>in excess of</u> the Member's cleaning fee [...] (Airbnb 2024: 17).	<i>over</i>
<i>in lieu of</i>	1	[...] you agree and acknowledge that such notifications via electronic means <u>in lieu of</u> a written statement [...] (Airbnb 2024: 22-23).	<i>instead of</i>

<i>in order to</i>	4	<u>In order to</u> make the arbitration most cost-effective, efficient, and convenient, any required arbitration hearing in an arbitration wherein the amount in controversy does not exceed \$1,000,000 shall be conducted remotely [...] (Airbnb 2024: 26).	<i>to</i>
<i>in relation to</i>	2	Any decisions made by Airbnb <u>in relation to</u> a Damage Claim do not affect your contractual and statutory rights (Airbnb 2024: 18).	<i>about</i>
<i>in view of</i>	1	[...] if this is necessary <u>in view of</u> capacity limits [...] (Airbnb 2024: 20).	<i>because of</i>
<i>in violation of</i>	6	Either party may seek dismissal of any arbitration filed <u>in violation of</u> any provision of this Arbitration Agreement (Airbnb 2024: 27).	<i>against</i>
<i>on behalf of</i>	3	If you are booking for an additional guest who is a minor or if you bring a minor to a Host Service, you must be legally authorized to act <u>on behalf of</u> the minor and you are solely responsible for the supervision of that minor (Airbnb 2024: 5).	<i>for</i>
<i>under consideration of</i>	2	Airbnb may, temporarily and <u>under consideration of</u> the Members' legitimate interests (e.g. by providing prior notice), restrict the availability of the Airbnb Platform [...] (Airbnb 2024: 20).	<i>under</i>

<i>with regard to</i>	1	To the extent that Airbnb's liability is excluded or limited, this also applies <u>with regard to</u> the personal liability of its legal representatives, employees, and other agents (Airbnb 2024: 20-21).	<i>to, in</i>
<i>with respect to</i>	4	[...] the Airbnb entity so identified is your contracting entity <u>with respect to</u> that product, feature or transaction (Airbnb 2024: 21).	<i>for</i>

Table 7. Three-word complex prepositions of Airbnb's Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

As for *in connection with*, it should be noted that, as we will show in subsection 5.3.1, it has a further occurrence in the form of synonymous or quasi synonymous binomial together with *as a result of*.

5.2.3. Four-word complex prepositions

The number of four-word complex prepositions detected in the document under study is 7, namely:

Simplifiable elements	No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
<i>as a result of</i>	1	[...] the amount you are paid will be reduced by the amount we refund or otherwise provide to the Guest, and by any other reasonable costs we incur <u>as a result of</u> the cancellation (Airbnb 2024: 8-9).	<i>because of</i>

<i>as an alternative to</i>	1	You and Airbnb each retain the right to seek resolution of the dispute in small claims court <u>as an alternative to</u> arbitration (Airbnb 2024: 25).	<i>instead of (through)</i> <sup>6</sup>
<i>for a period of</i>	1	14.3 A complaint may be submitted via our complaint handling system <u>for a period of</u> six (6) months, beginning in [...] (Airbnb 2024: 16).	<i>in, within</i>
<i>for the purpose of</i>	3	2 [...] the other party or its attorney(s) has asserted a claim or defense that is groundless in fact or law, brought in bad faith or <u>for the purpose of</u> harassment, or is otherwise frivolous (Airbnb 2024: 27).	<i>for</i>
		1 We may require you to provide additional documentation as determined by us <u>for the purposes of</u> enabling us to assess the reliability and [...] (Airbnb 2024: 30).	<i>to</i>
<i>from the time of</i>	1	[...] the other party shall not recover their post-offer costs and shall pay the offering party's costs (including all fees paid to the arbitration provider) <u>from the time of</u> the offer (Airbnb 2024: 29).	<i>from</i>

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6. In the present paper, we provide only accessible alternatives with the same grammatical category as the multi-word expressions under simplification. For this reason, we do not suggest, for example, *rather than* as a simpler variant of *as an alternative to*.

<i>in the case of</i>	1	(iii) such action is necessary to protect the personal safety or property of Airbnb, its Members, or third parties (for example <u>in the case of</u> fraudulent behavior of a Member), or (iv) your account has been inactive for more than two years (Airbnb 2024: 14-15).	<i>from, against</i>
<i>through the use of</i>	1	Business Hosts have access to personal and other data in their Airbnb account and host dashboard which is provided by the Business Host, their Guests or generated <u>through the use of</u> the Airbnb Platform and which is necessary for [...] (Airbnb 2024: 31).	<i>through, by</i>

Table 8. Four-word complex prepositions of Airbnb’s Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

With regard to *as a result of*, several aspects need to be specified. On the one hand, as shown in the following section, it has a second occurrence forming the synonymous or quasi synonymous binomial *in connection with* or *as a result of*. On the other hand, this complex preposition does not have a single-word accessible equivalent and *due to* is not recommended as a simplified option (Australian Government 2023), probably because of its high register.

5.3. Binomials and trinomials

5.3.1. Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials

The Airbnb’s Terms of Service include a total of 24 different two-membered structures, divided into 20 synonymous or quasi synonymous and 4 extremely specific (variations in spelling by alternating conjunction or by changing the order of the elements lead to the addition of 5 more binomial constructions):

	Simplifiable binomials	No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
Synonymous or quasi synonymous	<i>any and all</i>	2	You must describe <u>any and all</u> fees and charges in your Listing description and may not collect any additional fees or charges outside the Airbnb Platform except those expressly authorized by our Offline Fee Policy (Airbnb 2024: 8).	<i>any, all, each</i>
	<i>complete and accurate</i>	1	Your Listing must include <u>complete and accurate</u> information about your Host Service, your price, other charges like cleaning fees, resort fees, offline fees, and any rules or requirements that apply to your Guests or Listing (Airbnb 2024: 6).	<i>complete</i>
	<i>content and grounds</i>	1	Airbnb reserves the right to refuse to engage with the dispute settlement body if a dispute regarding the same <u>Content and grounds</u> for alleged illegality of the Content or its alleged inconsistency with these Terms has already been resolved [...] (Airbnb 2024: 16-17).	<i>content</i>
	<i>fees and charges (fees or charges)</i>	1 (1)	You must describe any and all <u>fees and charges</u> in your Listing description and may not collect any additional <u>fees or charges</u> outside the Airbnb Platform [...] (Airbnb 2024: 8).	<i>charges</i>

Synonymous or quasi synonymous	<i>in connection with or as a result of</i>	1	[...] (iii) your interaction with any Member, stay at an Accommodation, participation in an Experience or other Host Service, including without limitation any injuries, losses or damages (whether compensatory, direct, incidental, consequential or otherwise) of any kind arising <u>in connection with or as a result of</u> such interaction, stay, participation or use [...] (Airbnb 2024: 21).	<i>from, of</i>
	<i>outages or disruptions</i>	1	We are not responsible for <u>outages or disruptions</u> of the Internet and telecommunications infrastructure which are beyond our control and can lead to [...] (Airbnb 2024: 20).	<i>outages</i>
	<i>performance or conduct (conduct or performance)</i>	1 (1)	[...] (iv) you have repeatedly received poor reviews or Airbnb otherwise becomes aware of or has received complaints about your <u>performance or conduct</u> (Airbnb 2024: 15).	<i>conduct, behavior</i>
	<i>residence or establishment</i>	12	If your country of <u>residence or establishment</u> is within the European Economic Area (“EEA”), Switzerland or the United Kingdom, the Terms of Service for European Users apply to you (Airbnb 2024: 1).	<i>home, citizenship</i>
	<i>supplemental or additional</i>	1	[...] (i) your breach of these Terms (including any <u>supplemental or additional</u> terms that apply to a product or feature) [...] (Airbnb 2024: 21).	<i>other</i>



Synonymous or quasi synonymous	<i>terms or conditions (terms and conditions)</i>	1 (1)	Any <u>terms or conditions</u> that you include in any supplement contract with Guests must: (i) be consistent with these Terms [...] (Airbnb 2024: 6).	<i>terms</i>
	<i>to acknowledge and agree (to agree and acknowledge)</i>	4 (1)	You <u>acknowledge and agree</u> that we retain the right, with prior notice to affected Members, to cease the collection and remittance of Taxes in any jurisdiction for any reason (Airbnb 2024: 9).	<i>to agree</i>
	<i>to communicate or interact</i>	1	Be polite and respectful when you <u>communicate or interact</u> with others (Airbnb 2024: 11).	<i>to communicate, to connect</i>
	<i>to direct or control</i>	1	Airbnb does not <u>direct or control</u> your Host Service and you understand that you have complete discretion whether and when to provide Host Services and at what price and on what terms to offer them (Airbnb 2024: 6).	<i>to control</i>
	<i>to enforce or apply</i>	1	If there is a dispute about whether this Arbitration Agreement can be <u>enforced or applies</u> to a Dispute, you and Airbnb agree that an arbitrator will decide that issue (Airbnb 2024: 25).	<i>to apply</i>
	<i>to handle and use</i>	1	You are responsible for <u>handling and using</u> personal data of Guests and others in compliance with applicable privacy laws [...] (Airbnb 2024: 7).	<i>to use</i>

Synonymous or quasi synonymous	<i>to prevent or impede</i>	2	[...] you will be given notice of any intended measure by Airbnb and an opportunity to resolve the issue, unless such notification would (i) <u>prevent or impede</u> the detection or prevention of fraud or other illegal activities, [...] (Airbnb 2024: 15).	<i>to prevent</i>
	<i>to suspend or revoke</i>	1	[...] <u>suspend or revoke</u> any special status associated with your account (Airbnb 2024: 15).	<i>to cancel</i>
	<i>to violate or infringe</i>	1	You are responsible and liable if any of your Content <u>violates or infringes</u> the intellectual property or privacy rights of any third party (Airbnb 2024: 10).	<i>to violate</i>
	<i>type or category</i>	1	Listing characteristics (e.g. location, price, calendar availability, number and quality of images, reviews, ratings and other quality signals, <u>type or category</u> of Host Service, host status, [...]) (Airbnb 2024: 7).	<i>kind</i>
	<i>understandings or agreements</i>	1	[...] these Terms constitute the entire agreement between Airbnb and you pertaining to your access to or use of the Airbnb Platform and supersede any and all prior oral or written <u>understandings or agreements</u> between Airbnb and you (Airbnb 2024: 22).	<i>understandings, agreements</i>

Extremely specific	<i>if and as</i>	1	If <u>and as</u> permitted by applicable law, we may, but have no obligation to (i) ask you to provide identification or other information [...] (Airbnb 2024: 19).	<i>if</i>
	<i>to access and use</i>	1	You must register an account to <u>access and use</u> many features of the Airbnb Platform (Airbnb 2024: 19).	<i>to use, to access</i>
	<i>to instruct and authorize</i>	1	[...] you <u>instruct and authorize</u> Airbnb to collect Taxes on your behalf, and/or to remit such Taxes to the relevant Tax authority (Airbnb 2024: 9).	<i>to allow</i>
	<i>to organize or facilitate</i>	1	Do not <u>organize or facilitate</u> unauthorized parties or events (Airbnb 2024: 13).	<i>to organize</i>

Table 9. Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials of Airbnb's Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

Concerning *in connection with or as a result of*, it is worth mentioning that the accessible proposal *from* is based on the verb that precedes such binomial, i.e. on *to arise*. In relation to *residence or establishment* and, in particular, its simplified suggestion *home*, it would be appropriate to modify the syntagm and use *home country* instead of *country of home*.

5.3.2. Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific trinomials

In the case of three-membered expressions, as can be seen in the table below, only 3 were counted, namely 1 synonymous or quasi synonymous and 2 extremely specific:

Simplifiable trinomials		No. of occurs.	Examples of context	Accessible proposals
Synonymous or quasi synonymous	<i>to assign, transfer or delegate</i>	2	You may not <u>assign, transfer or delegate</u> this agreement or your rights and obligations hereunder without Airbnb's prior written consent (Airbnb 2024: 22).	<i>to transfer</i>
	<i>to enter, occupy and use</i>	1	An Accommodation Reservation is a limited license to <u>enter, occupy and use</u> the Accommodation (Airbnb 2024: 4).	<i>to use</i>
Extremely specific	<i>to participate, attend or use</i>	1	You are responsible for informing the Host of any medical or physical conditions, or other circumstances that may impact your ability to <u>participate, attend or use</u> the Experience or Host Service (Airbnb 2024: 4).	<i>to enjoy</i>

Table 10. Synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific trinomials of Airbnb's Terms of Service: frequency, examples of context and simplification proposals (elaborated by the authors)

6. Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to carry out a diaphasic intralingual translation of Airbnb's Terms of Service according to the Plain Language movement in order to facilitate its comprehension by tourists, since this document constitutes the binding agreement that they accept when contracting services in this platform (whether accommodations or experiences). Taking into account space limitations, three multi-word lexical features were simplified (in terms of register and, where feasible, length), namely: phrasal

verbs, complex prepositions, and synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials and trinomials.

In particular, through the Sketch Engine tool, the following simplifiable elements were identified and computed in the analysed document: 1 and 3 adverbial and prepositional phrasal verbs, respectively; 10, 16 and 7 two-, three- and four-word complex prepositions, respectively; 20 and 4 synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific binomials, respectively; and 1 and 2 synonymous or quasi synonymous and extremely specific trinomials, respectively. Thus, at the micro level of lexical category, we observe the predominant use of synonymous or quasi synonymous two-membered constructions (with 20 expressions, 74%), three-word complex prepositions (with 16 structures, 49%) and prepositional phrasal verbs (with 3 sequences, 75%). Likewise, at the macro or global level, complex prepositions (with 33 expressions, 52%) prevail over the types of binomials and trinomials above-mentioned (with 27 structures, 42%) and phrasal verbs (with 4 sequences, 6%).

In total, 64 simplifiable multi-word expressions were counted, whose diaphasic intralingual translation according to and in favour of Plain English entailed both register adaptation and, in most cases, lexical reduction. Specifically, 59 expressions (92%) were replaced by single-word units, namely: 4 phrasal verbs (6.5%), 28 complex prepositions (43.2%), 24 binomials (37.7%) and 3 trinomials (4.6%). In this respect, it should be noted that the prepositional phrasal verb *to provide for*, computed within these 59 expressions, has, in its second meaning, a more accessible proposal which does not imply a quantitative reduction of words (*to give for*), but this is the only translation with such characteristics. Moreover, only 3 and 2 complex prepositions (8%) of 3 and 4 words, respectively, became binomial accessible alternatives. Such is the case of *in addition to* (translated as *additional to*), *in lieu of* (rendered as *instead of*), *in view of* (conveyed as *because of*), *as a result of* (translated as *because of*) and *as an alternative to* (rendered as *instead of*).

In summary, this paper highlights the need to review certain elements of the wording of Airbnb's Terms of Service in order to improve its

intelligibility. For future research, it would be interesting to conduct a complete intralingual translation of this document, considering all the complex or difficult to understand lexical and syntactic features that it contains. Furthermore, by replicating the methodology of this study, it would be possible to identify uses and writing habits in terms of multi-word expressions, similar to those addressed in these pages, on Airbnb's own collaborative platform; it would even be possible to compare their use and frequency on hotel booking or accommodation portals in mixed format (hotel or vacation rental) such as Booking. Another research line would be to analyse and evaluate, empirically, the impact that the implementation of Plain English would have on tourists' understanding of the contractual clauses, rights and obligations contained in Airbnb's Terms of Service.

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