

Conferences

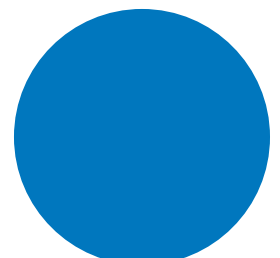
Clear Tax Communication

An interdisciplinary approach

Project: The right to understand tax communication. Analysis and clarification of the discourse used in tax collection procedures (ComT-Clar) PID2020-114308RB-I00

22 and 23 November 2023

Content summary



Conferences | Clear tax communication

An interdisciplinary approach



Presentation

The Clear Tax Communication Conferences, held in Barcelona on 22nd and 23rd November 2023, marked a milestone in the field of national and international tax communication.

It is the first time that academic and professionals from public institutions and private organisations have come together to undertake an analysis of the quality of tax communication from an interdisciplinary and interinstitutional perspective.

The objectives of this joint effort approach were to generate solutions designed to improve the efficiency of tax

processes, strengthen relationships of trust between tax authorities and taxpayers, and place citizens firmly at the heart of all communication in order to facilitate their interactions with the Administration.

This conclusion report includes the recordings of the conferences and round tables held at the event. After each title, the video of the session is embedded, followed by a presentation of the participants and the most relevant content from each session.

22nd November 2023

1. Inauguration of the Conferences

▶ [Video](#)

Pilar Díaz, the Minister of the Department of General Services and Digital Transition of the Barcelona Provincial Council, and Mayor of Esplugues de Llobregat, and Joan Guàrdia, the Rector of the Universitat de Barcelona, inaugurated the event.

In their dual capacity as institutional representatives and “perplexed” citizens, Díaz and Guàrdia built a strong

argument underlining the importance of optimising the communication of the tax authorities.

2. Conference by Estrella Montolío

Clear tax communication: Navigating complexity

▶ [Video](#)

This inaugural conference was given by Estrella Montolío, the Professor of Spanish at the Universitat de Barcelona, Lead Researcher on the project “The right to understand tax communication” (ComTClar project) and Director of the UB-DIBA Chair on Clear Communication Applied to Public Administrations.

In this conference, Montolío firstly presented the ComTClar project and the UB-DIBA Chair, through which these conferences originated. The lines of research and results of the project and the Chair would be presented and discussed over the course of the round tables and conferences at the event.

She then went on to underline the extraordinary challenge that clear tax communication poses:

«It is an extremely complicated activity because it is based on highly complex administrative and economic procedures that give rise to heterogeneous administrative and legal figures, and in which a very large number of different agents are involved».

Montolío also highlighted the importance of tackling complex societal problems, such as the lack of quality of tax communication, using the same methodology followed by teams that have successfully dealt with complex emergencies or, in other words, joint work processes between professionals and academics. She also insisted on the need to join efforts through public-private and interinstitutional collaboration.

She concluded by emphasising that the ComTClar project and the Chair that she directs strive to contribute to this line of research, embodying all the key characteristics identified by the London School



of Economics and Political Science (LSE): talent diversification, spontaneous conversation, horizontal structure, highly motivated people, public vocation of the whole team, and distributed leadership. She described the two initiatives as “bold and stimulating” examples of this highly efficient approach.

The ComTClar and UB-DIBA Chair are “bold and stimulating” initiatives for improving tax communication

3. Round table. How tax authorities communicate. Institutions that receive taxpayer complaints

▶ [Video](#)

This round table focused on the challenges that tax authorities must overcome in order to improve their communication with taxpayers.

The panellists were the Public Ombudsmen and Ombudswomen of their respective regions; Esther Giménez-Salinas, for Catalonia; Manuel Lezertua, for the Basque Country, and Ángel Luna, from the Valencian Community, as well as Jesús Rodríguez, the President of the Taxpayers Defence Council. The session was chaired by Ismael Peña-López, the Director of the Public Administration College of Catalonia, who ensured the panellists all had the chance to contribute and highlighted the fact that they all agreed that there is a real communication problem between the general public and the tax authorities.

The Public Ombudsman of the Valencian Community asserted that the communication difficulties are symptomatic of a larger problem: the way in which

the Administrations exercise power, which is characterised by corporatism and self referentiality. In other words, firstly, civil servants at all levels defend

each other, and do things by force of habit with the excuse that “this is how we have always done it” and, secondly, the criteria for deciding whether or not a text is understandable come from their colleagues in the same department, which is usually the only opinion they receive with respect to the level of clarity of a specialised administrative document.

Therefore, this situation complicates the work of the ombudsmen and highlights the public institutions’ lack of empathy with the general public.

Tackling corporatism and self-referentiality: challenges of 21st-century Administrations

As well as mentioning other obstacles for improving the level of understanding between the Administration and citizens, the other ombudsmen emphasised a series of challenges that Administrations of the 21st century will have to tackle: continuing to work with determination to clarify tax discourse, improving the resources available to the general public to help them understand taxation procedures, improving tax education in schools, honing tax regulations so that they can be strongly linked to the complexity of the procedures and documents, reinforcing in-person citizen services, and ensuring the multichannel availability of these service to make people’s lives easier. Within this scenario, the task of the agents responsible for defending the rights of citizens is to denounce abuses of power.

4. Round table. The simplification of tax payment procedures

► [Video](#)

The main topic of this round table was the resources and measures that tax authorities are implementing to simplify tax collection procedures.

The participants in this sessions were Cristina Casablanca, the Director of the Tax Administration Unit (Barcelona Provincial Council); Virginia Muñoz, the Director of the Department of Tax Collection (AEAT, the State Tax Administration Agency), and Fernando Plaza, the founder and President of the regional tax management company Gestión Tributaria Territorial (GTT). The round table was moderated by Rafael Olañeta, the Professor of Finance and Tax Law at the Universitat de Barcelona and civil servant at the Municipal Treasury Institute at Barcelona City council. Olañeta and Plaza are members of the ComTClar project team.

Simplifying tax payment procedures is a fundamental step in increasing the efficiency, efficacy and security of these procedures.

As Casablanca emphasised, this aspect is, first and foremost, a need and a demand of citizens, On this point, Olañeta saw cause to be hopeful:

«There are reasons to be optimistic, because Administrations are already taking measures designed to achieve this simplification».

Administrations are already “getting down to work” to make taxpayers’ lives easier

For instance, at the round table, Casablanca explained how the Tax Administration Unit of the Barcelona Provincial Council has implemented a large number of payment methods from which taxpayers can choose the one that suits them best. Meanwhile, according to Muñoz, the AEAT’s Department of Tax Collection has simplified its huge documents to make them easier to

understand and invested in digital tools to encourage taxpayers to find the information they need through telephone assistance with human operators, as well as improving its app with the “Pay, defer and enquire” option (simplifying the payment and deferral of outstanding debts, increasing debt deferral periods, and speeding up the process of granting deferrals).

Likewise, the Tax Agency is taking steps to expand the range of payment methods that taxpayers can use. On this point, both Muñoz and Casablanca agreed on the need to publicise and explain the innovations and payment tools available so that taxpayers are aware of them and can make use of them.

The session was brought to a close by Fernando Plaza, who stated that the margin for simplification and improving payment systems is very limited as practically all the payment systems are already available. In fact, the challenge for local administrations is to standardise the implementation of all the payment procedures in all municipalities, as well as improving institutional websites to make it easier for taxpayers to find and understand the information they are looking for and ensure that they can conduct their tax procedures with assurances and confidence.

5. Round table. The characterisation of tax discourse

► [VÍdeo](#)



This round of presentations gave an overview of the first results of the linguistic research into the characterisation of contemporary tax discourse.

The session included contributions from Estrella Montolío, in her capacity as a linguist and Lead Researcher on the ComTClar project; Mar Forment, a linguist and Vice-Director of the UB-DIBA Chair; María Ángeles García and Fernando Polanco, linguists and researchers on the ComTClar projects, who are also all lecturers at the Universitat de Barcelona; and Giovanni Garofalo, a Professor from the Università degli Studi di Bergamo, and Gianluca Pontrandolfo, from the Università degli Studi di Trieste, who are both translators and also researchers on the project.

Montolío opened the session by explaining that the Government is the most prolific issuer of texts there is, sending millions of communications each year through documents with great perlocutionary power as they have a real impact on society. This is the case of tax discourse documents themselves, the most common kind of administrative discourse for the average citizen, which is why studying this area is so useful.

To begin this study, we need a representative corpus of the main documents that the tax authorities send out to the public. However, there are few corpora of administrative discourse, and even fewer focusing specifically on tax discourse, as García explained. Therefore, it has been necessary to compile a corpus of the full real taxation texts to give empirical credibility to the research. This corpus was compiled using a methodology that ensures the representativeness and consistency of the corpus. The result of this compilation is the ComTClar corpus.

Knowledge of administrative discourse: the first step for its transformation

All material testimony of administrative acts, these documents are, as Polanco explained, subject to conceptualisation as discursive genres. To approach characterising and classifying them as genres, within the framework of the ComTClar project, the team opted for a multilevel cognitive model that recognises the complex linguistic, cognitive and social relationship reflected by the documents and the genres within which they are framed. The first application of the multidimensional model to the corpus enabled the 352 documents it comprises to be classified into 20 standard document types with relevant differential characteristics that, in turn, could be classified in 11 distinctive genres that constitute the colony of genres of the tax collection procedure.

In their presentations, Forment, Garofalo and Pontrandolfo focused on a microanalysis of the tax documents and genres.

Forment explained that the linguistic analysis of the documents in the corpus using lexicometric tools generates important information with respect to the type of text. The information it contains and the degree of difficulty of interpretation.

For instance, identifying that the most commonly used lexical category in the corpus is nouns (at a slightly higher percentage than in a general language corpus) indicates that tax documents have a higher degree of information density than texts from other fields. Likewise, lexicometric analysis enables us to measure the frequency of use of potentially complex expressions, thereby detecting possible focuses of indecipherability that make it hard to interpret the texts. This is the case of commonly recurring words in these texts such as “day”, “month”, “above”, “below”, “following” and “previously”, all of which have a meaning that is not very precise when the reader needs a clear context to adequately interpret the text.

Garofalo and Pontrandolfo went on to present the results of a case study based on a comparative analysis between the ComTClar corpus and the General Taxation Act, the most commonly cited reference in tax documents. Based on the analysis of the lexical density and the use of the gerund and participle, grammatical forms identified in specialist literature as clear indicators of obscurity in a text, we can conclude that, in fact, the General Taxation Act is easier to read and understand than the communications sent by tax authorities to citizens without specialist knowledge of tax matters.

The round of presentations ended with a tribute to two dear friends and members of the ComTClar research project who are sadly no longer with us: Natividad Braceras Peña, the linguist and magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice of Catalonia; and Mario Tascón, the journalist, founder and director of the consultancy Prodigioso Volcán, and pioneer and indisputable champion of clear communication in the Spanish-speaking world.

► [Vídeo](#)

6. Round table. The process of clarifying an enforcement order demanding payment

► [Vídeo](#)

This round table discussed the process of clarification of two standardised forms that notify the taxpayer of an enforcement order requiring payment.

The participants in this round table were Iván Mesón, a Tax Inspector and Subdirector General of the Executive Tax Collection Department (State Tax Agency); Patricia Francés, a lawyer and specialist consultant working for the company Gestión Tributaria Territorial (GTT); Antonio Pasagali, the Executive Creative Director of the consultancy Prodigioso Volcán; and Marc Bayés, a linguist from the Universitat de Barcelona, who are all researchers on the ComTClar projects. The session was moderated by María Ángeles García, a linguist and researcher on the project, who also led the process of clarifying the two forms notifying an enforcement order demanding payment. All the speakers in this round table took part in this clarification process, as well as the whole team of linguists on the ComTClar project.

Over the course of this round table, the participants insisted on the need to undertake measures to clarify documents through co-creation processes with public participation, public-private cooperation, and collaboration between professionals and academics from different fields of knowledge. Based on these principles, the project team has worked on the clarification of two standard forms notifying the taxpayer of an enforcement order demanding payment (at a state and municipal level), with the original and clarified versions being presented and analysed in this session.

Aware of the fact that state and municipal enforcement orders currently received by taxpayers are not very clear, Francés and Mesón, gave an overview of the work that had gone into the process of clarifying the documents with a team of linguists who, in order to make decisions on the reformulation of the verbal

component of the documents, constantly asked them questions about both the legal implications of the enforcement order procedure and the regulations related to it.

García presented the results of the text clarification process, which, over the course of a year's work, had resulted in a profound transformation of the structure and linguistic formulation of the documents. Specifically, this transformation took place on three levels: firstly, the formal and informative architecture of the two documents was modified; secondly, they adapted the model of dialogue relationship constructed in each document between the tax authority (often represented in the text using impersonal structures) and the citizens (whom the Administration referred to with fairly unpleasant terms such as “debtor” and “the party obliged to pay”); and, lastly, they examined and

modified syntactic and terminological issues, which involved, for instance, redrafting paragraphs and statements to give prominence to relevant informative contents over subordinate information, as well as clarifying the terminology used.

Working towards “text appeal” and clarity in enforcement orders

As well as these transformations, the graphic design team at Prodigioso Volcán also worked on the documents, led by Antonio Pasagali, who explained that they worked on both the state and municipal enforcement orders with two main goals in mind: 1) that the documents make the user want to read them; and 2) that they are easy to understand. To achieve these objectives, they used a variety of strategies, including changing the typeface (font size, line spacing, kerning

and line width), the distribution of information (columns), delineation (colours and lines) and timelines (to indicate the steps of the procedure).

The presentation of the textual, linguistic and design transformations gave the speakers the opportunity to present the four user tests and comprehension test created by the EDAP research, led by Bayés for this part of the project.

These five tests were applied to the municipal enforcement order demanding payment. The results revealed the following: firstly, they confirmed the pertinence of the vast majority of the questions asked in the test; secondly, they underlined the importance of evaluating or monitoring the document at an intermediate stage of development so that the users can identify areas of potential obscurity that require further clarifications; and, lastly, they validated the strength of the decisions made to clarify the municipal enforcement order.

23rd November 2023

7. Conference by Joaquín Sanmartín. By the rivers of Babylon. The historical origins of tax discourse

► [Video](#)

Joaquín Sanmartín, the Professor Emeritus of Semitic Philology at the Universitat de Barcelona, gave the inaugural conference of the second day of the event.

Sanmartín began his presentation by highlighting the need to adapt the discourse to its audience, an idea that fits well with the highly fashionable concept of “clarification of institutional discourse”. While this may sound like a new idea, it actually dates back to the Mesopotamian culture (third millennium BCE), explained Sanmartín.

The first texts outlining taxes emerged on the shores of the Euphrates and Tigris

Mesopotamia was the cradle of the first organised states, which not only monopolised in a symbolic sense, but also took control of the conditions of production and redistribution of wealth. As such, the Mesopotamian states had a centralised system of governance, which included, among other functions, the administration and collection of taxes. Over the course of three millennia, all this administrative management was recorded in countless texts, in the form of tablets, often inscribed in bilingual versions in the Sumerian and Acadian languages. In fact, among the very earliest written documents conserved today (dating back to around 3300 BCE) include the first ever examples of tax discourse.



Moreover, part of fiscal policy fell within the remit of the “ilkum”, a basic concept of Babylonian taxation terminology, which consisted of the provision of forced labour for state and religious organisations, military service and the compulsory contribution of agricultural produce. This taxation policy also included the payment of rent and work to the landlords of state-owned plots of land. These activities were known by the term “biltum”, which also referred to the load carried by animals, a metaphorical transliteration (from “beast of burden” to “tax burden”) that we still continue to use 5,000 years later.

8. Round of presentations. The professionals' and citizens' beliefs and opinions on the quality of tax communication

► [Video](#)

In this round of presentations, the speakers presented the results of four questionnaires designed to gauge the perception of citizens and tax professionals with respect to the quality of tax authority communications.

The participants in this session were Estrella Montolío, the Lead Researcher on the ComTClar project and Director of the UB-DIBA Chair; Mar Forment, the Vice-Director of the UB-DIBA Chair and researcher on ComTClar project; Esaú Alarcón, a tax consultant and Professor of Financial and Tax Law at the Universidad Abat Oliba-CEU; Cristina Casablanca, the Director of the Tax Administration Unit (Barcelona Provincial Council); and Cristina García-Herrera, the Director of Studies at the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Alarcón and García-Herrera are also members of the ComTClar project.

One of the objectives of both the research project and the Chair is to ascertain whether the general impression of the bad quality of tax authority communication is a true reflection of reality or, in other words, whether it is a scientifically verifiable fact. How much do we actually know empirically about the taxpayers' perception of tax communication? Not much at all, in fact, amounting to little more than we can glean from sources such as the annual survey of the CIS sociological research centre and a few questions on the barometer of the Institute of Fiscal Studies (IEF). However, these sources do not give us any information about the quality of tax communication.

With the aim of rectifying this situation, in this round of presentations, the speakers gave an overview of four questionnaires designed by the ComTClar team: two aimed at professionals (staff providing service to the public at the Tax Administration Unit of the Barcelona Provincial Council (ORGT), and tax consultants who are members of the Spanish Association of Tax Consultants (AEDAF), and two to collect the opinion of taxpayers.

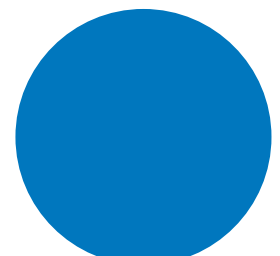
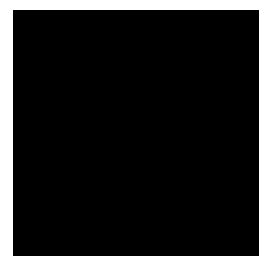
Listening to taxpayers and professionals is essential for being able to propose effective changes to communication

Gauging the opinion of professionals who work in the tax system fundamental in order for governments to gain awareness from the inside with respect to a problem as ingrained as the (bad) quality of communication with the public. As Casablanca and Alarcón explained, both the staff dealing with the public at the ORGT and tax consultants have first-hand experience of the taxpayers' complaints and the communication aspects related to the tax procedure that complicate and hinder fiscal compliance.

Meanwhile, having access the taxpayers' opinion of a problem that affects them directly is crucial for enabling governments to propose solutions based on verifiable data. On this point, García-Herrera went on to explain the main activities of the Institute, how the barometer works, how they pick the topics to ask about in the variable block, and why they considered it necessary to dedicate this block to clear tax communication in 2022 (with a total of 6 questions on matters related to tax communication and the psychosocial costs of compliance).

Montolío and Forment then presented the results of the questionnaire conducted on citizens in the province of Barcelona. The data shows that the problems with a lack of intelligibility and the obstacles that taxpayers commonly face to fulfil their tax obligations are not merely an impression, but rather an empirically proven fact. Two out of three of the Barcelona residents surveyed (67%) consider taxation language to be fairly or very hard to understand.

This is possibly one of the reasons that only 33% of the people surveyed conduct their tax procedures independently, with the rest relying on the help of their accountant (40%), or family members and friends (23%). The fact that practically two-thirds of people resort to third-party help to do their bureaucratic procedures is a stark demonstration of the low level of general empowerment among citizens in their dealings with the tax authorities, underlining the need to take action to remedy this situation.



9. Round table. Clear communication: public policy, good governance and good administration

► [Vídeo](#)

In this round table, the participants discussed the need to develop public policies designed to promote clear communication between tax authorities and taxpayers.

The members of the panel in this session were Germán J. Arenas, a researcher in the field of International Relations and Political Studies (Universidad de Alcalá) and member of the ComTClar project; Marina Espinosa, the Coordinator of Corporate Strategy and Local Consultation (Barcelona Provincial Council); and Joaquín Meseguer, the Coordinator of the Access to Information Working Group of the Network of Institutions for Transparency and Public Participation (FEMP). The session was moderated by Aránzazu Moretón, Professor of Constitutional Law and Director of the Transparency and Open Governance Chair of the Universidad de Valladolid (TransGobA).

The session began with insights from Espinosa, who explained that the general public does not know what the Barcelona Provincial Council does, before giving a thorough overview of the institution's activities (who it comprises, what they oversee, how and why).

Clear communication must become a clear policy of the State

Arenas proposed a political scientific approach to clear communication. He underlined that 30% of the almost 100 documents that he analysed (policy texts, public plans or programs, reports, official records and laws) recognise the importance of clear communication and the right to understand, and contain explicit commitments to incorporate these commitments in the development of public policies. He added that the political

aspirations of a country should focus on incorporating a legal culture that ensures that citizens understand the rules and the consequences of violating them. He concluded by advocating the idea that governments should strive to foster engagement between the State and the people it serves.

Meseguer brought the session to a close by highlighting the need for clear communication to be embraced as a public or state policy because he warns of a growing gap between increasingly specialised administrative language and the gradual worsening of laypeople's language, describing the former as the elitist language of those in power, far removed from the average citizen. He went on to underline three key ideas: firstly, that people do not understand the Administration; secondly, we have to make procedures easier and forms clearer; and, lastly, that there is an urgent need to improve the underlying regulations on which these documents are based.

10. Round table. Problems and solutions in tax collection procedures

► [Vídeo](#)

The legal professionals who took part in this round table discussed different strategies for simplifying tax collection procedures that could be implemented in Administrations.

The participants on the panel were Cristina García-Herrera, the Director of Studies at the Institute of Fiscal Studies; Pablo Grande, a State tax inspector (AEAT), and Borja Garín, a tax consultant and Professor of Financial and Tax Law at the Universitat de Barcelona. José Andrés Rozas, the Professor of Financial and Tax Law at the Universitat de Barcelona, acted as the moderator. All the participants are members of the research or working team of the ComTClar project.

Rozas presented the work of the legal professionals on the ComTClar project, which consisted of, on the one hand, acting as the “translators and connectors” required between the lawyers and experts in tax law and tax collection and the rest of the members of the projects who are not specialists in taxation; and, on the other, examining the simplification strategies that can be applied by tax authorities from the perspective of legislation and case law. The first presentation was given by García-Herrera, who discussed the concept

of “tax simplification”. Creating a simpler taxation system is a commonly accepted goal among all the sectors involved. However, determining what constitutes a simple taxation system is not, in itself, a simple task, as it depends on the perspective applied for the definition.

Moreover, simplification affects different areas (the taxation system, tax regulations and the application of these taxation systems) that require different measures

and a scope that also differs. Of these three areas, fiscal compliance is the aspect with the greatest margin for improving and applying actions that achieve better results. This is where the concept of “simplicity” comes into play, striking the balance between simplicity and complexity, which entails making the taxation system clearer and easier to understand, without modifying the regulations, through clearer communications, guides and taxpayer assistance, etc.

In his presentation, Grande discussed applying simplification to the payment of tax debts. The Tax Agency can only influence the costs associated with paying debts: the opportunity costs (administrative burdens) and psychological costs —as shown by behavioural psychology—, with the aversion to loss and “pain” caused by paying taxes (i.e., “losing money”). In fact, as recent neurological studies show, paying for something, including taxes, really causes actual pain: it activates the same neural areas of the brain as physical pain and sadness.

Improving communication and facilitating compliance are key to achieving good tax administration

Specifically, there are two factors involved in the “pain” of payment: timing and effort. In the former case, we tend to suffer less when we pay less in advance for something. However, in the case of taxes, it is very hard to associate payment with the receipt of public goods and services. In contrast, the effort required to pay taxes is a factor that we can influence in a more specific way: facilitating and simplifying the payment of taxes helps reduce the associated “pain”. In this regard, the Tax Agency has applied strategies such as improving the information and assistance provided



in relation to tax collection matters; enhancing the payment methods, channels and technologies; and simplifying the documents received by taxpayers, all with the aim of reducing the “pain” associated with paying taxes.

Garín ended the session with some comments on the role of jurisprudence and the law in defining what we understand by good administration. From the perspective of tax law, good administration is only related to the procedure. On this point, the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights clearly establishes the guarantees that governments must fulfil in administrative procedures. In the case of Spain, the Supreme Court considers that the right to good administration is enshrined by the legal system and, as such, this right is applicable. In general, this right is applied ex post (after the fact) as compensation for an action taken by the Administration that has violated one of the taxpayer’s rights. However, Garín argued that it would be more useful to see the right to good administration as an ex ante mandate (before the fact), as a way of ensuring that the Administration guarantees the assurances to taxpayers are safeguarded to prevent the need for subsequent compensation for the misapplication of procedures.

11. Conference by Ingemar Strandvik. The ISO standard on plain language: Distilled wisdom from the profession

► [Video](#)

Strandvik explained the four principles that underpin the standard: relevance, accessibility, ease to understand and usability. Moreover, he emphasised the importance and scope of the ISO standard on plain language because it constitutes “the distilled wisdom of the profession” or, in other words, it is an agreed code of good practices which, as such, establishes definitions, principles and checklists that help evaluate clear writing.

The ISO standard on plain language: Distilled wisdom from the profession

One of the aspects highlighted by Strandvik is the fact that this standard creates a point of reference, reinforcing the credibility for people who draft documents in plain language. Moreover, it introduces the logic required for quality management. In this respect, it specifies the parameters to be taken into consideration by anybody who wants to ensure that the documents they draft are written in clear language.

Strandvik brought his presentation to a close by reiterating that the project “The Right to Understand Tax Communication”, headed by Montolío, the implementation of which was presented of these two days of conferences, is a clear example of applying all the recommendations of the ISO standard.

12. The Closing Session of the Event

▶ [Vídeo](#)

The closing session of the event was led by the President of the Barcelona Provincial Council and Mayor of Sant Boi, Lluïsa Moret, the Vice-Rector of Research at the Universitat de Barcelona, Jordi Garcia, and Estrella Montolío, the Lead Researcher on the ComTClar project and Director of the UB-DIBA Chair.

Jordi Garcia underlined the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration and the science that generates societal impact. He highlighted the relevance of solid research in the field of Social and Human Sciences in terms of improving social problems. Like the rest of the experts participating, he predicted a long and fruitful future for the UB-DIBA Chair and the objectives applied in the ComTClar project.

Montolío went on to present a critical concept for understanding what had been discussed in the speakers' presentations over the course of the two days of the event: the concept of "counter-narrative", or the alternative to the dominant narrative. The counter-narrative emphasises that, in fact, we can work on clarifying tax discourse, that there are governments, academics and professionals who are doing precisely that, including the speakers themselves. "We have managed to turn things around together, collaboratively, in terms of many of the narratives that have prevailed until now with respect to the people and organisations that have come together to take part in these two days of conferences".

In a short and enthusiastic contributions, the Professor from the Universitat de Barcelona encouraged and inspired the audience, emphasising that "we can take a step forward and break with convention, striving for excellence and finding good partners because, when we bring the right people together, joined by a strong shared desire to improve our environment, the positive energy that is generated —as we have seen for ourselves— is powerful, disruptive and useful. It is magical". Montolío ended by thanking the academic



and political authorities taking part in the round table, as well as a number of other people who have played a key role in organising and running the event.

"Public Administrations have a responsibility to make themselves understood, to accompany and guide citizens and, by doing so, combat public disaffection"

Lastly, Lluïsa Moret stated that Public Administrations have a responsibility to make themselves understood, to accompany and guide citizens and, by doing so, combat public disaffection. She thanked everybody who had helped make the event possible for their collaboration and finished by predicting a long and bright future for the UB-DIBA Chair on Clear Communication applied to Public Administrations, echoing Humphry Bogart's famous closing line in Casablanca, "This is the beginning of a beautiful friendship"

Organisers



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