

Constructed Languages: ESPERANTO

Sevda Huseynova Sohrab
(Qafqaz University, Azerbaijan)

Abstract: “What is language!?” The question has been answered differently at different times. V. Humbolt, A. Shleykher, H. Shteyntal, G. Paul, and other linguists put forward various considerations about the language.

Language is creative and productive by nature, a person using it can set up an infinite number of sentences and express thoughts. Throughout history, numerous languages seriously impeded the development of relations between people. People have searched ways for getting out of this problem. As a result, the idea of creating a universal world language has occurred.

Universal world language refers to a language which can be easily understood by all individuals of different nations. As a way of solving this problem, linguists have proposed to create a substituting constructed language.

The most common constructed language is Esperanto. This language possesses simple phonetic, grammatical, lexical structure. The language created by Zamenhof can be studied and remembered easily.

According to historical facts, Esperantists (Esperanto-language speakers) established a country called Amikejo. They even celebrate The World Esperanto Day as a holiday once a year.

Key words: linguists, universal world language, constructed language, Esperanto, Zamenhof, Esperantist, Amikejo

1. Introduction

“What is language!?” The question has been answered differently at different times. V. Humbolt, A. Shleykher, H. Shteyntal, A. A. Potebnya, G. Paul, F. F. Fortunatov, I. A. Boduen de Kurtene, H. Shuhardt, K. Fossler, F. de Sossur and other linguists put forward different considerations about the language. For example,

- (1) Language is a public event.
- (2) Language is the most important means of communication between people.
- (3) Language is a means of expression of thoughts (No. 1, p. 75).

V. Humbolt considered the language a harmony of all levels of sounds and speech (No. 1, p. 28). For A. Shleykher, language is the most improved “organism” formed by human voice in the nature (No. 1, p. 30). According to H. Shteyntal and K. Fossler, the language is a psychophysical system (No. 1, p. 35) and an individual moral creative act (No. 1, p. 48) based on a single principle.

The language is understood as the compilation of sounds by people with precision. Language is the underlying basis of the thought process (No. 2). Being classified as a system consisting of a special sound signals, language is genetically encoded program (No. 3, p. 11). Language is a reflection of thinking and consciousness

with sounds and words (No. 4, p. 9). Language is available in the mind of each individual, so it is abstract (No. 5, p. 29). Language is creative and productive by nature, a person using it can set up an infinite number of sentences and express thoughts (No. 6, p. 57). Being the wealth of broad mass of people on the earth, language doesn't exist having a general sense among people. Language differs from other phenomena with the feature that it is not universal, and was always characterized nationally. Language is available as a language of different people and nations. From this aspect, we consider the English, Turkish, Russian and Azerbaijani languages (No. 1, p. 77). From 2500 to 7000 languages are currently available in the world. Eight of them are considered the languages of the world: Chinese, English, Spanish, Arabic, Russian, French, German, Portuguese.

Table 1 Main World Languages and Number of Users

Languages	Number of users
Chinese (Mandarin)	1,075,000,000
English	514,000,000
Spanish	425,000,000
Arabic	256,000,000
Russian	275,000,000
French	129,000,000
German	110,000,000
Portuguese	194,000,000

Although the languages differ from one another with their characteristics, they share following common features:

- (1) Languages, all of which are known to us, consist of sounds, words, grammatical parts, and sentences;
- (2) All languages play a role of exchange of oral or written ideas among people ;
- (3) All languages are closely involved in the formation and expression of opinion and thought;
- (4) All languages acquire literary language norms, stylistic qualities in the process of development (No. 7, p. 8).

According to scientists, during the last 100 years, from 3000 to 6000 languages may experience the danger of disappearance. At least, 100 thousand people must speak a language for maintaining it. 80% of world population speaks only 80 languages from 7000, and only 20% of the population speaks other languages. It has to be taken into consideration that 3,5 thousand languages belong to 0.2% of population.

2. A Single World Language

Do we need so many languages? In general, how did they appear and increase? The question can be replied by remembering the legend about "Babylon Tower":

"The God doesn't annihilate the nations who try to reach him erecting a lofty tower, he punishes them with numerous different languages making it impossible for them to understand one-another."

Abundancy of languages throughout the history seriously impeded the establishment of relations between people. People looked for solutions for getting out of this trouble . As a result of public demand, an idea occurred to create a single world language. The world language — the universal language is a language which can be understood by all nations with no difficulties.

The ancient Persians viewed the multilingualism as a means of impeding the development of human relationships and supposed it would continue until the rule of God, Ahura.

In the fourth century BC, the famous Greek thinker Plato said that if the gods had given just a single language instead of so many ones to the people, then it would have been great kindness (No. 8, pp. 352–360).

The idea of creating a means of universal communication influenced both verbal and written communications and as a result, a problem of interlinguistics (common language) and pazigraphy (common writing) has occurred. These issues are intertwined with each other and both of them are mentioned in the projects that are put forward. That is, when a project on a new language is worked out, the structure of its alphabet is also shown there. For example, the language Esperanto.

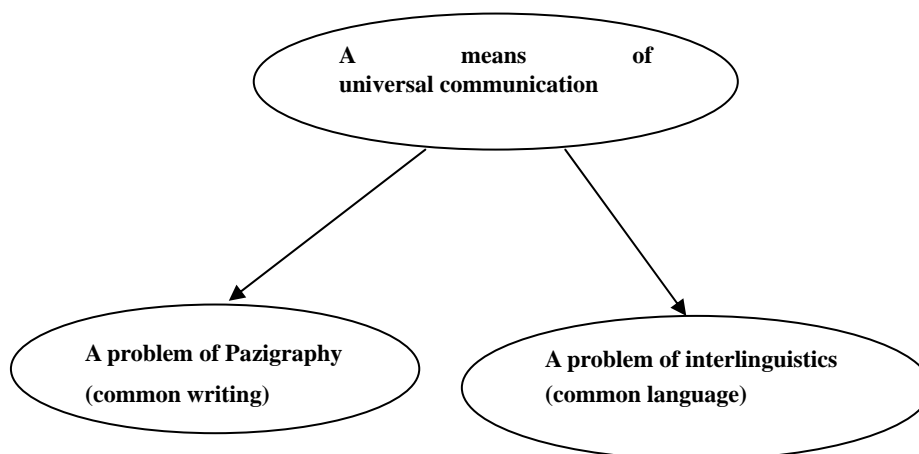


Figure 1 Problems of Universal Communication

A common language emerges gradually. There are two stages of this process:

- (1) A stage of assisting common language;
- (2) A stage of substituting common language;

The aim of assisting common language is to spread new discoveries, scientific achievements to the world, substituting common language serves to establish economic, political, cultural relations between nations.

There are two possible ways of solving common communication problem:

- (1) By choosing one of the natural languages;
- (2) By creating a constructed language;

For understanding the term “natural language” we have to determine the word “natural” first. “Natural” means — real, true, caused by nature, not made by humankind. Each natural language is a product of a long historical process.

What is a constructed language? The word “constructed” is defined in different ways in the dictionaries: false, insincere, invented, artificial, fabricated. Each constructed language emerges on existing natural languages. There is no unanimity among linguists about the artificial language, linguists of different times have understood the concept of an artificial language in different ways. Some scientist have called it “homeless”, they didn’t consider constructed languages improved. Academician Marr wrote: “In the world there is no natural language, all languages are artificial, created by humanity.” According to Hugo Shukhard constructed languages are more or less natural, natural languages are more or less artificial.

But how to create an artificial language? There are two views on the creation of an artificial language:

- (1) Build an artificial language only on the European languages;
- (2) Base an artificial language on the all world languages;

So far, only main Western European languages such as Latin, English, French, German, and Asia's three languages — Chinese, Japanese, Hindu languages have been used for the creation of constructed languages. Besides, the Arabic language was used in the project of Loqlen artificial language.

Artificial languages are divided into two types in terms of the means of mass communication:

(a) Languages that can be used as a spoken language, a way of verbal communication. For example, I do.

(b) Languages that can't be converted to a way of verbal communication. These languages are the languages of mathematics, physics, chemistry, cybernetics, computer science and information technology.

Ideas of creating an artificial language and using it as a means of communicating were available in ancient times, in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance period. However, this trend has become more powerful in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Development of science and technology, literature and art demanded the further strengthening of relationship between the people. In such a socio-political situations there was a need for a universal means of communication. Therefore, the scientists and linguists worked out constructed language projects and submitted them to the community.

Table 2 Constructed Languages, Their Authors, and Year of Creation

Constructed languages	Author	Year of creation
Solresol	Jan Fransua Syudr	1817
Universalglot	M. Pirro	1868
Neutral	V. Rozenberg	1902
Ro	Eduard Foster	1906
Īdo	Lui De Kutrat	1907
Oxidental	Edqar De Val	1922
Mediol	Ī. Veysbart	1922
Novial	Otto Yespersen	1928
Loqlan	C. Braun	1960
Linkos	Qans Froydental	1961
Lanqdok	R. Tabori	1961
Boabomo	F. Okamoto	1962

Historically, only two of all constructed language projects were accepted with approval and spread across a number of countries around the world. These are Volyapuk (1880) and Esperanto (1887) languages that are not included in the list given above.

Volyapuk language project was published in 1880. The author of this project is Johann Martin Schleyer (1831–1912). Schleyer was familiar with the peculiarities of many world languages. He knew 70 languages.

Schleyer built the phonetic system of the language on the existing vowels and consonants. All the words are written as they are pronounced and are read as they are written. A place of stress on the word is invariable, as a rule, the final syllable is stressed. Volyapuk has rich lexical content. It's lexival structure is mainly based on the roots of the words from Latin, English, French and German languages.

Lof -love

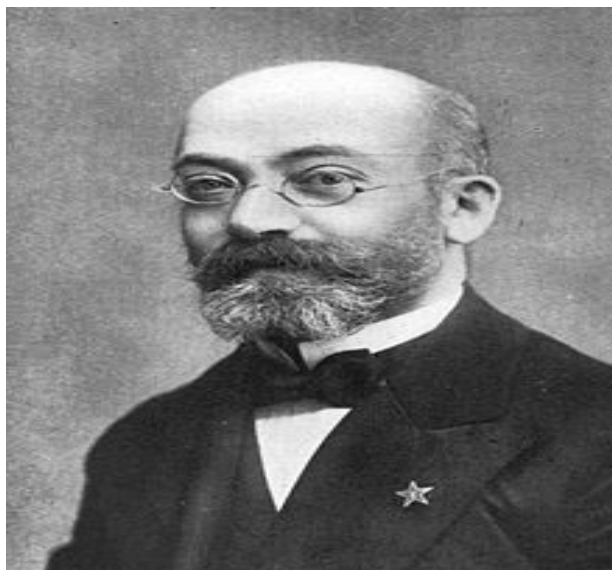
Filop- Africa

Melop - America

cif-chairman

This language was welcomed by the society and linguists with approval. In the Third World Congress on

Volyapuk language held in Paris in 1889 all the conferences and the editorial works were done in Volyapuk (No. 8, pp. 362–385).



Ludwik Lazarus Zamenhof (1859-1917)



The Cover of the First Book Published in Esperanto

The world's most popular artificial language is Esperanto. Esperanto (it means a person who hopes) was established to facilitate communication between people with different mother tongues. The creator of this language is Ludwik Lazarus Zamenhof.

Ludwig Zamenhof was born in Belostok, Poland. He still thought about creating a constructed language while studying in the gymnasium because people living in the area where he lived, spoke different languages, and it seriously made a problem for the internal communication and relationships. Soon after that, he prepared a project on universal language problem. But his father found the project and burnt that.

While he was a student at the Medical, Zamenhof returned to the issue of a constructed language and began to develop a new project. After graduating from the Institute, he began to work as an ophtolmologist in Warsaw.

After making several improvements and additions on his project, Doctor Ludwig Zamenhof published the project as a booklet and manual (No. 8, p. 411). In fact, the original name of the language Esperanto is *Linguo Internacia*, but as L. L. Zamenhof introduced himself with the nickname “Doktoro Esperanto” in “*Unua Libro*” — his first book about Esperanto, so the language was remembered with this name over time. The internal rules of the language were reflected in the book “*Fundamento de Esperanto*” published in 1905 by Zamenhof. Dr. Zamenhof wanted to avoid contradictions and conflicts, to unite the world within one language, so he created Esperanto and used English, French, German and Russian languages for it.

Esperanto may be included in Indo-European (Aryan languages) language group. Currently, 1.6 million people claimed to be able to speak this language .

As we know, existence of gender, changeable articles, word endings in some languages make it difficult to learn them. So Dr. Zamenhof takes these problems into account, and therefore characterizes the language of Esperanto with the following features:

(1) Phonetics

The alphabet consists of 28 letters: 6 vowels, 22 consonants. There are no long and short options of phonemes. Writing system is based on the Latin alphabet which is very common all over the world.

(2) Esperanto Alphabet

a b c ĉ d e f g ĝ h ĥ i j k l m n o p r s ŝ t u ŭ v z

(3) Orthography and Orthoepy

Stress is constant , it falls on the syllable coming before the last one. For example:

Some`ro (somero) – summer

Vesro`ro (vespero) – evening

Words are written in a way as they are pronounced.

(4) Lexical content

Lexical basis of Esperanto is mainly formed by international words. This group of words is used in Azerbaijani language as in other languages. For example:

Filologio-	filology	yanuaro-	january
Universitato-	university	favruaro-	february
Gitaro-	guitar	iunio-	june
Obyekto-	object	himno-	anthem
Diagnozo-	diagnose		

3. Morphology

Morphological system of Esperanto is closer to the Turkic languages. The parts of speech are same as in natural languages.

Noun	Conjunction	Preposition
Adjective	Verb	Pronoun
Numeral	Adverb	Particle
Exclamation		

Nouns (Substantivo) ends in “o”: Ringo- ring

Maro- sea

“J” denotes the plural form of the nouns: *Infano+j = kid+ s*

Jaro+ j = year+ s

Adjectives (Adjektivo) end in “a”: *Bona- good*

Bela- beautiful

Numerals are the main parts of speech in (Numeralo) Esperanto .

1- *unu*

4- *kvar*

7- *sep*

2- *du*

5- *kvin*

8- *ok*

3- *tri*

6- *ses*

9- *naj*

Ordinal numearls are formed by adding “a” to the end of the cardinal numerals:

Dek+a = ten+th

Du + a = second

Pronoun (Pronoma): *mi- I*

ni- We

ci - You

vi- You

li – He

ili- They

Verbs (Verbo) consist of 6 suffixes:

-i- is added to make the infinitive form: *halti - stand*

-as- denotes the present simple form: we take the infinitive suffix **-i-** from the word

ami- to love and add suffix **-as-** *amas*. The best thing is that verbs don't change their endings on persons:

mi amas - I love

ni amas - we love

li amas- he loves

-os –makes the future form of the verb:

Mi amos – i will love

li amos – he will love

-is- makes the past form of the verb:

Skribi – to write

mi skribis - I wrote

-us- makes the conditional form, **-u-** the imperativ form of the verb:

Porali – to speak

mi poralus – if I speak

Silenti – to keep silence

ci silentu – you keep silence (No. 11, pp. 391–403)

Obviously, Esperanto is a language with easy structure. You do not need to study hundreds of rules for acquiring this language.

Saluton! = Hello !

Dankon = Thanks

Kio estas via nomo ? = What is your name?

Mia nomo estas Sevda = My name is Sevda.

According to experts, the constructed language — Esperanto is learned 10–15 times more easily than any other natural language. Even the number of native Esperanto speakers increased to 10.000. For example, American billionaire George Soros who is hungarian by origin. He learned Esperanto from his father when he was just a little child.

A large number of books in Esperanto, 137-explanatory, 112 terminological dictionaries have been published. Universala Esperanto Associo (World Esperanto Association) is engaged in teaching and propogating this language around the world. There is also a special computer program to write in Esperanto <http://www.lexilogos.com/clavier/esperanto.htm>.

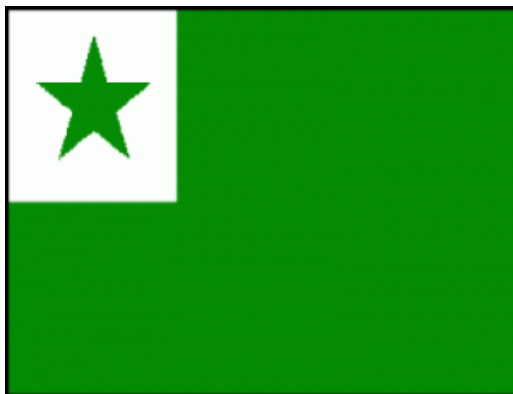
The adoption of Ido language prepared by French philosopher Louis De Kutrart based on Esperanto in 1907 caused disagreement among the Esperantists (No. 9, pp. 550–551). But it didn't decrease the sympathy of the

people to this language. This language was recognized as one of the official languages of the UN in 1954.

According to the statistics of 2003, 24 countries are involved in teaching Esperanto, it is taught in 69 universities, 18 of them are in China. The official education language of Akademio Internacia de la Sciencoj San Marino University in Italy is Esperanto. It is also being taught Üsküdar American High School in Turkey.

Despite all these positive facts, Esperanto couldn't become the unique world language. The reasons for this are many, but the main reason is the following:

Dr. Matt Pearson, the professor of Portland college writes: "Esperanto couldn't turn into a global means of communication, because it never was a language of a nation or a state with super political and economic power."



The Flag of Amikejo

According to historical facts, there was a country named Amikejo established by Esperantists. This small country covered an area of 3,5 square kilometers at the crossroads of Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands in Western Europe. Unfortunately, there is no exact information about this first and unique Esperantists' country after signing the peace treaty of Versailles in 1919, following the incorporation of some territories to Belgium after the World War I.

December 15, Zamenhof's birthday is celebrated as the World Esperanto Day.

"Mi esperas ke vi lernos Esperanto, baldaw."

- I hope you also will learn Esperanto soon.

4. Conclusion

D. Fitzgerald in Washington writes: "Humanity may confront big losses if all the world's languages are replaced a dominant global language. Because the language reflects the personal identification of each nation — if the people are deprived of a language which survived through the history , its culture will be destroyed."

"The world needs only one languag." — in my opinion, it is an utopian idea. However, reading the online discussions of people from all over the world from various internet sites around this topic, I realized that the world is satisfied with the implementation of this utopia.

I say: "Let's protect our own language, because our language and our culture make us who we are."

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