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Causes of the relative success of Esperanto

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Among what are now more than 1000 efforts to create an international language, primarily the project of L. L. Zamenhof (1887) has developed into a living and flexible language. Although Zamenhof's hopes for a language accepted world-wide were not fulfilled, Esperanto proves that in principle it is possible to create a new language through language planning and bring it to practical use. This is an important fact for linguistics. Esperanto's success also lies in the fact that so far it has been able to resist competition from other systems of planned language. The factors that explain this success relate in part to linguistic structures (e.g. the system's potential for development) and in part to sociolinguistic and language policy considerations. Of particular significance was Zamenhof's language-policy role: he saw language as primarily a social phenomenon, he linked humanistic ideals to his language, and he passed Esperanto on to an emerging language community with all of its evolving and varied communicative needs. Zamenhof intuitively understood several important factors that contributed to Esperanto's stability, for example the need for a standard and its codification. Over the past decades, the scholarly literature of Esperanto studies has grown in quality and is regularly recorded in the bibliography of the Modern Language Association of America (MLA).

Keywords: Esperanto, interlinguistics, planned language, history of linguistics, Zamenhof

For a language to become a world language, it is not enough to call it so.¹

To understand the linguistically interesting phenomenon of how a project for a universal language² could become a living language, we would do best to look at the language initiated in 1887 by L.L. Zamenhof (1859–1917) under the pseudonym Dr. Esperanto. The pseudonym became the name of the language. The frequently expressed assertion that Esperanto “did not succeed” is both right and wrong, depending on how one looks at it.

Esperanto was not a success on Zamenhof's terms. Zamenhof hoped that the world would officially adopt his language as a means of intercommunication

alongside the various mother tongues, thereby facilitating contact among people of differing languages and reducing inter-ethnic conflicts.

On the other hand, Esperanto has succeeded in two ways. First, it has shown that a language project can be transformed into a living language, fully functioning and evolving with all the functions that any human language has. This fact, which is easy to verify in practice, throws a new light on various linguistic laws and suppositions (cf. Duličenko 1997). In this sense, certain indications of the reliability of the ancient human dream of a universal language can be found also in other systems, particularly Volapük (Johann Martin Schleyer, 1879), Latino sine flexione (Giuseppe Peano, 1903), Ido (Louis Couturat, 1907), Occidental-Interlingue (Edgar de Wahl, 1922) and Interlingua (IALA³/Alexander Gode, 1951)⁴.

Second, Esperanto has outlived its competitors. Before 1887 various projects had been published and after that time several hundred additional ones were added. In fact, up to the present day we can probably count more than 1000 projects for invented languages, of various types and quality, many of which have recently appeared or will appear in the Internet.⁵ Despite these developments, Esperanto is, at least up to now, the only planned language with a significant community of users, in terms both of numbers and of quality, who employ the language for their various aims and needs. A misunderstanding frequently found in the literature of linguistics and in the mass media is a failure to distinguish between a language project and a language,⁶ leading to the assertion that Esperanto “has no culture.” A language project lacks a language community, but a functioning language has such a language community. It is difficult to assert of the Esperanto language community that it has no culture. We might add that the specificities and characteristics of this language community, with its structures, traditions, activities, important people, and in fact with its entire history, are reflected and preserved in the language, particularly in the lexis, as has been shown by, among others, Aleksandr Mel’nikov (1992; 2004) and Sabine Fiedler (1999; 2002) — and these characteristics are passed on from generation to generation.

Various factors have negatively or positively affected the situation and position of Esperanto. Conscious of the fact that there have been many attempts to create an international “artificial” language or writing system,⁷ we have to ask ourselves how to explain the relative success of Esperanto and the fact that the language developed and adapted itself to the changing communication needs of its speakers.⁸

In the history of the efforts, extending over several centuries, to create a universal language or writing system, the predominant subject of discussion has been the linguistic details of individual projects, particularly in the twentieth century. Raised less often is the issue of the social dimensions of the language. It is evident, however, that the historical situation has up to now been unfavorable to the idea and dissemination of a planned language. Among the negative influences in the

twentieth century have been two world wars, revolutions, persecution under the regimes of Hitler and Stalin (Lins 1988), dismissals and misinterpretations, hegemonic ambitions of major powers with respect to their languages, and so on.

Undoubtedly the relative success of Esperanto is due also to its structural characteristics, but probably only to a secondary degree. One could certainly hypothesize that the structural qualities of other projects were not inferior to those of Esperanto, although it is difficult to arrive at objective criteria for such a measurement. The relative success of Esperanto is therefore due to the interaction of various factors, primarily having to do with linguistic structures and with non-linguistic conditions.

Linguistic factors⁹

Several specific structural factors have undoubtedly helped Esperanto to succeed. We have identified seven of them.

First, lexical sources are easily recognizable for many. The lexical roots used in planned languages, particularly in the twentieth century, tend to be drawn from Romance languages, although in varying quantities from project to project. This overwhelming Romance element can be explained historically by reference to the wide international distribution of Latin-derived languages and language elements. This is so of Esperanto as well, whose lexical roots are for the most part of Romance derivation. According to Janton (1993:51), 75% of Esperanto morphemes are derived from Romance languages, 20% from Germanic languages, and 5% from other languages. Other studies indicate a higher level of Romance elements, as high as 90% (Corsetti, La Torre & Vessella 1980). The numbers of course depend on the nature of the text (everyday language, literary language, technical language) and on the quantity of texts examined.

Second, Esperanto has an easily grasped phonology. We have already noted that the lexical structure, being Latinate, is relatively easily grasped by many. The same is true of the phonology — and particularly so for speakers of European languages (although less so for Asians). The simple vowel system (5 vowels), compared to French or English, permits relatively easy acquisition of pronunciation for non-Europeans as well. The consonant system presents greater difficulties. However, the sound system is in general relatively acceptable — and this holds true also for Africans of various linguistic backgrounds, as the phonetician Max Mangold (1979) has established.

Third, Esperanto has a phonological alphabet and simple orthography. The Latin alphabet, with a few diacritics, allows for a phonological (phonemic) orthography, which is accordingly particularly simple. Each separate letter (grapheme)

represents only one separate sound (phoneme). The phonemes allow some allophonic variety and therefore do not limit the pronunciation norm too strictly. The spoken use of the language internationally has, over the years, led to relatively unified pronunciation — a characteristic strengthened by more frequent personal contacts, meetings and other forms of programming, and modern acoustical communication such as radio, recordings, telephony, the acoustic possibilities of the Internet, compact discs and other forms of electronic storage and dissemination.

Fourth, Esperanto lacks morphemic variants. In Esperanto all morphemes, both free and bound, are invariant. Thus there are no allomorphs as in ethnic languages, where such phenomena appear for reasons often explainable only in historical terms and arising from the effects of morpheme combination, or because of semantic distinctions, or changes of accent, or various other causes (the only exception occurs in nicknames).

Fifth, Esperanto allows for easy combinability of morphemes through productive word formation. According to Maria Stepanova (1971) the ability to combine morphemes to create morpheme structures (words) is guided by internal valency factors occurring between morphemes. One can distinguish between morphophonological internal valency and semantic internal valency. Because of Esperanto's relatively simple morpheme-structure, its lack of allomorphs, its lack of historically determined infixing at the junction of morphemes, and other factors, word formation can more readily follow semantic principles than undergo limitation through morphophonological factors. However, other factors influenced by ethnic languages do on occasion intervene, for example analogy, factors resulting from language economy, and so on. Word formation, which constitutes an open system, is autonomous and does not depend on outside linguistic models, as is the case for example with Interlingua. For these reasons, word formation in Esperanto is very elastic and productive.¹⁰

Sixth, Esperanto is open to the assimilation of new international lexical elements. An important factor in the enrichment of the language is the relatively easy assimilation of current international lexical elements in the form of basic morphemes (i.e. lexical roots).

Seventh, Esperanto is characterized by unambiguous marking of the principal classes of words and grammatical categories. The principal classes of words, at least in European parlance, namely verb, noun, adjective and derived adverb, have unambiguous markers (word-category suffixes). This is also so for grammatical categories as well (tenses, moods, cases, participles). This makes the grammatical structure of sentences relatively transparent.

Non-linguistic factors

The various structural characteristics mentioned above account for the relative ease of learning¹¹ and application — important advantages for a language proposed as a means of international communication, especially one that lacks a strong economic or political lobby. However, the non-linguistic factors are more important than those related to linguistic structure. Let us begin with a brief history.

The final third of the nineteenth century was marked by increasing rapidity of capitalist development, greater internationalization of commerce, politics and culture, and a deepening of spiritual and scientific exchanges. During this period of history, at least in Europe, there was a certain openness to the idea of an international language, which helped the spread of Volapük (1879). Also important was the recruitment potential of Catholic circles by the author of Volapük, the priest Johann Martin Schleyer. Volapük was the first planned language to achieve a degree of dissemination, though it quickly disappeared with the onset of the twentieth century (Schmidt 1986, Haupenthal 1982). Its early success is surprising, because Volapük had serious linguistic defects, such as a complicated word-formation system, and a morpheme system derived chiefly from Latin, English and German, but much transformed and accordingly having low recognizability and insufficient redundancy.

Despite its linguistic failings, Volapük soon had its clubs in many countries, where one could not only learn the language but also put it to practical use, particularly in printed texts and in correspondence. Volapük is proof of the fact that non-linguistic rather than structural characteristics are decisive in producing a certain level of success. According to the Volapükist Johann Schmidt, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries there existed some 400 clubs and 18 national associations totaling 30,000–40,000 members (Schmidt 2005). Although these numbers are probably exaggerated, it is clear that for a certain period Volapük was linked with the idea of a neutral international means of communication. The evident linguistic failings of Volapük and the collapse of its movement led many Volapükists to move over to the new language of Doctor Esperanto.

Of special significance for the success of Esperanto was the politically wise attitude of its initiator Zamenhof. He intuitively understood the essential problems of the structure and functioning of a language, among them the relation between the linguistic system (*langue*) and its concrete application (*parole*), the importance of the language community, the relationship between stability and evolution, and the problem of norms and their codification. Although we should really mention other people besides Zamenhof whose role was very important, for reasons of space we will limit ourselves to the role of Zamenhof, which was particularly

decisive. We have singled out ten non-linguistic factors decisive to the development of the Esperanto language community.

First, Esperanto constitutes a language scheme open to further development. Zamenhof did not present a language project elaborated in any great detail, with many texts and an extensive dictionary, as did, for example, Alfandari (1961), author of Neo. In his first brochure, he simply presented sixteen basic grammatical rules, 929 morphemes and a few model texts. In short, he published a sketch of a language. This sketch, however, contained enough information to allow those interested to learn the project and apply it, initially for correspondence, but, as of 1889, in a journal (*La Esperantisto*, 1889–1895).¹² By creating texts and engaging in correspondence, the early users applied the language and created the *parole*, which in turn reflected back on the language system, the *langue*. The subscribers to the journal formed the first Esperanto language community, which actively participated in the further construction of the language. Although Zamenhof himself created many texts, they would have been without value were it not for the other users of the language.

Second, the Esperanto language is linked to a humanistic ideal. In his language Zamenhof saw not only a technical device to facilitate international communication, but above all an instrument for reducing inter-ethnic conflicts and wars between nations. He saw the language as helping the brotherhood of humanity. It was precisely this idea, the “internal idea” of Esperanto (Blanke 1978), rather than its relative ease of learning, that for many people constituted a stronger reason to learn the language. This ideology of brotherhood also influenced Zamenhof in his attempts to found a cosmopolitan religion, the “Hillelism” (*hilelismo*) or “Humanitism” (*homaranismo*) that received less attention than the language itself (see Zamenhof 1972). We find a similar ideology of brotherhood in Schleyer’s Volapük, but for the most part not in the other projects mentioned above.

Third, Zamenhof saw language as a social phenomenon. At the First World Congress of Esperanto in 1905 in Boulogne-sur-Mer (France), where the language was widely spoken for the first time, Zamenhof formally relinquished all rights to “his” language. He understood that a language cannot depend on the desires of a single person, but is rather a social phenomenon. This realization distinguished him from Schleyer, who saw Volapük as his personal invention, over whose development he wished to retain a deciding influence.

Fourth, Esperanto was intended for universal application. As with Schleyer and Volapük, but in contrast to the founders of Latino sine flexione, Ido, Occidental-Interlingue and Interlingua, Zamenhof proposed for his language universal application that would include its use for artistic purposes. He understood that literary translations, many of which he himself produced¹³ and original literary production (Sutton 2008) can have great significance for the development and expansion of the language.

Fifth, Zamenhof saw his language as a language for all levels of society. In contrast to the authors of Ido, Occidental-Interlingue, Interlingua and other projects, Zamenhof's relation to his language community was not elitist but democratic. His language was intended to serve all classes and levels of humanity. Writing in 1910 to the editor of the German periodical *Der Arbeiter-Esperantist*, Zamenhof observed, "Perhaps for no one in the world does our democratic language have such significance as for workers" (Zamenhof 1948:263). And in fact in the years following World War I there emerged a relatively strong workers' Esperanto movement — which, among other things, proved the social usefulness of the language as a politically practical instrument (Noltenius 1993).

Sixth, Esperanto was intended to protect ethnic languages. The uninformed sometimes suppose that Esperanto stands in opposition to ethnic languages and that it is designed to push them aside or even take their place. Although the idea of a single worldwide language does appear on occasion in social utopias (Mannewitz 1997), in the Esperanto movement it has never gained much traction. To the contrary, Zamenhof stated quite clearly as follows:

An international language not only aims to give to people from different ethnicities ... the capability of understanding one another, but it also in no way intends to interfere with the internal life of these ethnicities ... An "international language" and a "global language" are two quite different things, and in no way should one confuse the two. (Zamenhof 1929:281)

Today's Esperanto language community shows interest in, and awareness of, the dominant influence of English and the situation of other languages. The disequilibrium in national and international means of communication has political, economic, and cultural-policy effects, not all of them positive. Phillipson, among others (2003, and see the review in LPLP 27/3 [2003]), has analyzed these issues, particularly in the European context. The users of Esperanto propose their language as a neutral international language whose effect would be to reduce and finally neutralize the position of English as a device for interlingual understanding and thus free the various ethnic languages from the often suffocating pressure that English exerts on them.

Seventh, Esperanto was envisioned by Zamenhof as a practical instrument. Zamenhof hoped that the linguistic characteristics (see above) that he had given to his language would rapidly allow it to function in practice. He succeeded in this regard. The widespread practical application of the language, removed from disputes over linguistic details, constituted a major stabilizing factor and was one of the decisive elements in Esperanto's success.

Eighth, from an early stage, Esperanto possessed stabilizing textual models. For those newly learning and applying Esperanto, it was important to have textual

models that would help orient them to the lexis, grammar and style. For this reason Zamenhof's enormous production of translated and original text had a major effect in providing models.¹⁴ This was particularly significant also because, very soon after the publication of the first brochure, proposals began to surface for various reforms.

Ninth, Zamenhof was careful to allow democratic decisions on reforms. Zamenhof collected the various proposals for reforms and recast them in the form of a new language project, in fact a variant of his original project. He submitted them to a decision by the first small language community, the subscribers to *La Esperantisto*. By a democratic written ballot the subscribers in 1894 refused the reform proposals. This was an important step in the further stabilization of the language.

Tenth, and finally, the problem of dealing with reforms was partly responsible for the early establishment and codification of standard Esperanto. Since discussion of reforms did not end with the vote, and several variants of Esperanto appeared, it became important to set limits to distinguish the normal development of the language from the creation of an essentially new project. For this reason, at the first World Congress in Boulogne-sur-Mer on August 9, 1905, Zamenhof and those close to him proposed the acceptance of an "untouchable" basic standard, the so-called *Fundamentals of Esperanto* (Zamenhof 1991). This basic norm continues to serve as a compulsory unifying platform for the language, though it defines only the essence of the language (alphabet, basic grammar, basic morphemes, model texts) and does not hinder the lexical and stylistic development of the language.

Ensuring stability and building community

The publication of the competing reform project Ido in 1907, whose author was the French scholar Louis Couturat,¹⁵ seemed a direct threat to Esperanto and presented a challenge for the adepts of Zamenhof's language. Zamenhof, for his part, redoubled his translation work. The practitioners of the language continued as usual, without expressing much interest in language disputes. But significant numbers of intellectuals from the Esperanto language community went over to Ido, while others worked to defend Esperanto. The pressure to attack or defend Esperanto motivated them to subject it to closer analysis and to describe its principal characteristics in theoretical terms. This was particularly true of word-formation in Esperanto, in which Ido followed a different path and criticized the Esperanto approach (Couturat 1910, 1911). The mathematician René de Saussure, brother of Ferdinand de Saussure, was among those who came to Esperanto's defense. Because of his studies of the theory of word formation in Esperanto (de Saussure 1910a; 1910b), he is regarded as one of the founders of Esperantology (Esperanto studies).

To monitor observance of the Fundamentals, and the evolution of the language, a Language Committee was established at the first congress in Boulogne in 1905. In due course the Language Committee became the Esperanto Academy, the principal language-cultivation body for Esperanto. The conservative role played by the Language Committee and its successor helped stabilize the language and played a role in defending it against reforms deemed unnecessary.

From the start, Zamenhof worked at building the structure of the language community. He collected addresses of learners of Esperanto and published them in *La Esperantisto*, whose first volume recorded 1000 such individuals. They formed the kernel of the future language community. Little by little, local clubs came into being, along with a few national associations and various periodicals with their subscribers. To allow for more effective and diversified international use of the language, the need developed for tighter coordination and development of the language community, not least to defend the language against competing proposals. Hence the founding of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) in 1908, and of other more specifically focused organizations, such as the International Esperantist Science Association in 1907, and organizations for Catholics (1910) and Protestants (1911). These organizations, along with national associations and their journals, permitted the further construction of the base of the language community, in which were reflected a wide diversity of political and religious tendencies. Little by little this community became a social factor with practical outcomes. Common ideals (the internal idea, mentioned above), strengthening of the organizational base of the community, defense of the language against its critics — all these factors strengthened the sense of common identity.

Over the years the distinction between the organizational base on the one hand and the language community on the other has grown clearer. A wide range of organizations has emerged at the international, regional, national and local levels, along with institutions of various kinds — facilitating agencies, learning centers, publishers of books and journals, cultural centers, libraries and archives, radio stations, various forms of electronic contact, networks of globally active representatives, and a wide range of conferences, meetings, festivals, and the like. This language community, with its ideals and traumas (the Ido crisis, international disputes, political persecutions), indeed its whole history, its leaders, and its remarkable activities, has created what Alexander Melnikov (1992; 2004) calls a “quasi-ethnicity,” a living quasi-diaspora.¹⁶

Esperanto studies today: Descriptive and research-based scholarship

The present and future position of Esperanto depends on relatively broad scholarly analysis and description of the language. The field of Esperanto studies (or Esperantology) explores the sources, structure, development, function, communicative domains and the language community as a whole. Esperanto is the only planned language that is researched on an ongoing and systematic basis.

The results enter — though still in insufficient quantity — the multilingual research literature. But the larger part, perhaps sixty percent of the work in Esperanto studies, is published in Esperanto itself — which presents something of a barrier to linguists who do not know Esperanto. These materials are collected in special libraries and archives and the publications are recorded in bibliographies.¹⁷

To understand the phenomenon of Esperanto fully, it is not enough to study the scholarly literature: it is essential to observe and experience the language in practice. It is, after all, practice that reveals the truth.

Notes

1. Slogan on the cover of the first brochure (*Unua libro*), published in Russian (Dr. Esperanto 1887). (The author wishes to thank Humphrey Tonkin for supplying an English translation of this article.)
2. Languages deliberately created for international communication are given a variety of designations: *universal language*, *world auxiliary language*, *(international) artificial language*. The preferred scholarly term is “(international) planned language.” On terminology see Blanke 1997.
3. IALA: International Auxiliary Language Association (1924–1953), an international linguistics society that addressed the problem of an international auxiliary language and in 1951 launched *Interlingua*, primarily on the basis of the work of Alexander Gode (Blanke 1985: 167–183).
4. On the various efforts to create and disseminate an international planned language, see, among others, Bausani 1970; Blanke 1985; Couturat & Leau 1903+1907/2001; Drezen 1931/1991, 2004; Duličenko 1990; Isaev 1976, 1991; Kuznecov 1982a, 1982b, 1984, 1987; Pei 1958/1978.
5. Until 1970, the date at which he completed editorial work on the book that he published years later, Aleksandr Duličenko collected information on 917 projects (Duličenko 1990). New projects continue to appear, particularly on the Internet: see Becker 2001, Fettes 1997, Okrent 2009.
6. On the difference between a *project* for a planned language and an actual planned language, see Blanke 1991 & 2006: 49–98, also Schubert 2001.
7. “World writing system” or “pasigraphy”: Blanke 1976.
8. Several studies have attempted to raise the question “Why did Esperanto win?” among them Ĵirkov 1931, Blanke 1975.

9. I will omit linguistic examples to avoid getting lost in details. On the structure of Esperanto see the numerous grammars (particularly Wennergen 2005) and textbooks, and also the linguistic studies of Gledhill 2000, Isaev 1981, Janton 1993, and Wells 1978.
10. Blanke 1981, in a comparative study of German and Esperanto word-formation, establishes the superiority of Esperanto to the, in this respect, relatively creative German language. For this reason the language is particularly suitable for machine translation projects, as Schubert (1992, 1993) has demonstrated.
11. It is difficult to decide which aspects of a language learned as a foreign language are easy or difficult, since everything depends on the learner's original language. For this reason "ease of learning" is always relative. Otto Back, however, has formulated some criteria for judging whether a language is "easy" or "difficult" (Back 1972, 1979, and see also Mangold 1979).
12. A reprint of the journal with an afterword by Reinhard Haupenthal appeared in 1988 (Hildesheim, Zürich, New York: Olms).
13. Zamenhof translated, among other titles, the plays *Hamlet* (Shakespeare, 1894), *The Government Inspector* (Gogol, 1906), *Iphigenia in Tauris* (Goethe, 1908), *The Robbers* (Schiller, 1908), and *Georges Dandin* (Molière, 1908), and most of Andersen's Fables. He also translated the complete Hebrew Old Testament (1907–1917): see Blanke 2006: 315–330.
14. Between 1973 and 2004, the Japanese publisher and Zamenhof scholar Itô Kanzi, under the pseudonym Ludovikito, edited and published all of Zamenhof's works in 34 volumes (and, in a further 22 volumes) the materials, journals, textbooks, and dictionaries that appeared in Zamenhof's time and under his editorship, or with his advice or approval.
15. Philosopher and logician, publisher of the manuscripts of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, co-author of the fundamental study *La Langue universelle* (Couturat & Leau 1903+1907/2001)
16. On the social make-up of the Esperanto movement see Forster 1982 & Rašić 1994; on current issues in the Esperanto movement see Tonkin 2006 (in Esperanto), 2009 (in Italian).
17. On paths to the scholarly literature in interlinguistics and Esperanto studies, see Blanke 2003. Scholarship in Esperanto is particularly well represented in the *MLA International Bibliography*.

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Zusammenfassung

Über die Gründe des relativen Erfolgs des Esperanto

Von den bisher weit über 1000 Versuchen, eine internationale Sprache zu schaffen, hat sich in erster Linie das 1887 von L.L. Zamenhof veröffentlichte Projekt zu einer lebendigen und elastischen Sprache entwickelt. Obgleich sich Zamenhofs Hoffnungen über eine in der Welt akzeptierte internationale Sprache bisher nicht erfüllten, beweist das Esperanto, dass es prinzipiell möglich ist, durch Sprachplanung eine neue Sprache zu schaffen und in die Praxis einzuführen, ein für die Linguistik bedeutsamer Fakt. Der Erfolg dieser Sprache besteht auch darin, dass es ihr bisher gelang, in der Konkurrenz zu anderen Plansprachensystemen zu bestehen. Die Faktoren, die diesen Erfolg erklären, sind sowohl von sprachstruktureller (u.a. die Entwicklungspotenzen als Systemeigenschaft) als auch soziolinguistisch-sprachpolitischer Art, wobei der sprachpolitischen Rolle Zamenhofs eine

besondere Bedeutung zukommt. Er sah in der Sprache in erster Line eine gesellschaftliche Erscheinung, verband seine Plansprache mit humanistischen Idealen und übergab sie der sich herausbildenden Sprachgemeinschaft mit ihren sich entwickelnden vielfältigen kommunikativen Bedürfnissen. Zamenhof erfasste intuitiv die Bedeutung einer Reihe die Sprache stabilisierender Faktoren, u.a. die der Norm und ihrer Kodifizierung. Die esperantologische Fachliteratur gewinnt in den letzten Jahrzehnten ständig an Qualität und wird in der Bibliographie der us-amerikanischen Modern Language Association (MLA) regelmäßig erfasst.

Resumo

Pri la kaŭzoj de la relativa sukceso de Esperanto

De la ĝis nun pli ol 1000 provoj krei internacian lingvon unuavice la projekto de L.L. Zamenhof el ja jaro 1887 evoluis al viva kaj elasta lingvo. Kvankam ne plenumiĝis la esperoj de Zamenhof pri tutmonde akceptata lingvo, Esperanto pravas, ke principe eblas krei novan lingvon per lingvoplanado kaj enkonduki ĝin en la praktikon. Jen grava fakto por la lingvistiko. La sukceso de ĉi tiu lingvo krome konsistas en tio, ke ĝi ĝis nun kapablis rezisti la konkurencon de aliaj planlingvaj sistemoj. La faktoroj klarigantaj ĉi-tiun sukceson havas kaj lingvostrukturan (i.a. la evolupotencoj kiel eco de la sistemo) kaj socilingvistikan-lingvopolitikan karakterojn. Apartan signifon havas la lingvopolitika rolo de Zamenhof, kiu en lingvo vidis unuavice socian fenomenon, ligis al sia lingvo humanismajn idealojn kaj transdonis ĝin al la establiĝanta lingva komunumo kun siaj evoluantaj multspecaj komunikaj bezonoj. Zamenhof intuicie komprenis kelkajn gravajn faktorojn, stabiligajn por la lingvo, i.a. la signifon de la normo kaj ĝia kodigo. Dum la lastaj jardekoj la esperantologia fakliteraturo daŭre gajnas kvaliton kaj regule estas registrita en la bibliografio de la usona Modern Language Association (MLA).

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