



ESPERANTO –  
LINGUA FRANCA AND  
LANGUAGE COMMUNITY



*Sabine Fiedler and  
Cyril Robert Brosch*

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## Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

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## **Volume 10**

Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community  
by Sabine Fiedler and Cyril Robert Brosch

# Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

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# List of abbreviations

## 1. Speakers' mother tongues (see ISO 639–3)

ben	Bengali	nor	Norwegian
cat	Catalan	pol	Polish
ces	Czech	por	Portuguese
deu	German	rus	Russian
eng	English	slk	Slovak
fra	French	slv	Slovene
heb	Hebrew (modern)	spa	Spanish
hin	Hindi	srp	Serbian
hrv	Croatian	swe	Swedish
hun	Hungarian	tel	Telugu
ish	Esan (a language of Nigeria)	ukr	Ukrainian
ita	Italian	urd	Urdu
jpn	Japanese	zho	Chinese
nld	Dutch, Flemish		

## 2. Other abbreviations

CA	Conversation Analysis
CED	Centro de Esploro kaj Dokumentado pri Mondaj Lingvaj Problemoj (Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems)
CMC	computer-mediated communication
E@I	Education @ Internet
ELF	English as a lingua franca
ESF	Esperantic Studies Foundation
Fig.	figure
IKU	Internacia Kongresa Universitato (International Congress University)
KCE	Kultura Centro Esperantista (Esperanto Cultural Centre, in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland)
L1	Language 1 (first language, mother tongue)
L2	Language 2 (second language, foreign language)
MRES	Maison Régionale de l'Environnement et des Solidarités
ProvE	Zamenhof's collection <i>Proverbaro Esperanta</i>



PU	phraseological unit
TEJO	Tutmonda Esperantista Junulara Organizo (World Esperanto Youth Organisation)
UEA	Universala Esperanto-Asocio (Universal Esperanto Association)
UK	Universala Kongreso de Esperanto (World Esperanto Congress)

# Key to transcription symbols

[...]	(Esperanto)	
(...)	(English translation)	our omission (of irrelevant passages)
(???)		transcription not possible
(text)		assumed transcription
eh	(Esperanto)	
uh	(English translation)	hesitation phenomena
TEXT		emphasised speech
te:xt		lengthened vowel
@@		laughter
te-		cut-off turn
?		rising intonation
(.)		brief pause (up to one second)
(3), (13)		long pauses (in seconds)
°text°		spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk
L		
L		utterances starting simultaneously
↑		marked rise in intonation
=		latched speech (the utterance is followed without a perceptible pause)



## A note to the reader

As its title suggests, this book is concerned with the use of Esperanto. In our experience, very few people know that this language really is used, in both writing and speech, and that it has found speakers all over the world. To a certain extent, even to us, it is sometimes hard to imagine that a language created by a single person at his desk has developed for more than a hundred and thirty years to become a fully fledged means of communication. It is our wish to provide insights into as many fields and ways in which Esperanto is applied as possible, and we do hope that the book will find an open-minded reader who is willing to embark on this description and to gain their own impression based on the facts that we present.

The research leading to the results presented in this book received funding from the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (grant agreement 613344, project MIME). This support is gratefully acknowledged. MIME stands for "Mobility and Inclusion in Multilingual Europe". It is a research project on multilingualism that over the four years of its operation (2014–2018) brought together more than 70 researchers in eleven disciplines and from 22 universities and research institutes in 16 countries. The authors of this book worked in a research group dealing with the optimal use of mutually complementary strategies for communication in multilingual settings, such as translation and interpreting, the development of receptive skills within language families (so-called intercomprehension) and machine translation. Our team at the University of Leipzig was responsible for the use of *lingua francas*. As English is presently the language mainly associated with this term, English functioning as a *lingua franca* was the focus of our research, with investigations into migration and study-abroad contexts (see, for example, Fiedler & Brosch [eds.], 2018 and Fiedler & Brosch, 2019).

Because of our background as Esperanto speakers, we felt motivated to extend our studies to another language that has been used as a *lingua franca*, the planned language Esperanto. We were encouraged to continue this work when, in a comparison among the strategies studied within the framework of MIME as regards costs, user independence, linguistic accuracy, and inclusion, we found that some of the labels seemed to fit for English as a *lingua franca*, but not for Esperanto and could therefore not be verified as characteristics of a *lingua franca* as such. This was the starting point for exploring in more detail what the practice of Esperanto communication looks like, how successful the members of the international speech

community are in the use of their language, and where we can find similarities and differences when comparing the use of English and Esperanto in comparable contexts. The results of this investigation are found in this book.

The book is written in English. This choice of language was not difficult, given that English is the dominant language used to report research findings today. But there is a certain irony in the fact that this international language is used to describe the *Lingvo Internacia* (“international language”, the official name of Zamenhof’s project published under the pseudonym “Esperanto” – ‘one who hopes’ – in 1887). It would have been easier to write this book in German, our mother tongue, for reasons that probably do not need to be further elaborated. Our second-best choice would have been Esperanto, a language in which – although it is also a second language to us as English is – we are more comfortable and confident than in any other foreign language. Speaking and writing in Esperanto we have the feeling that the language adapts to us, whereas using English we have to adapt to the language. We will return to this topic in the concluding chapter on language “ownership”, by which time we assume that the reader will know enough about Esperanto to understand what we mean. We use English to address a large readership, and we are grateful for the help that we received to make the book a good read for both native and non-native speakers of English by making improvements in both language and style. Naturally, we are solely responsible for any remaining mistakes and imperfections.

This book greatly benefited from the comments made by Goro Christoph Kimura, Timothy G. Reagan and the General Editor of the Studies in World Language Problems Series, Humphrey Tonkin. We would also like to thank Till-Dietrich Dahlenburg, Matthew Rockey and Humphrey Tonkin for their assistance in formatting, editing, and proofreading the manuscript. Furthermore, we are grateful to the members of the Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik e.V. (Society for Interlinguistics [registered association]; [www.interlinguistik-gil.de](http://www.interlinguistik-gil.de)) for helpful comments on parts of this book that were presented at their annual meetings. Above all we owe much to the Esperanto speakers whose language was observed and recorded for this study over the course of several years, and to those who willingly agreed to participate in our interview studies. Dankon.

PART I

# Introduction



## What is Esperanto?

The foundations of Esperanto, in 1887 still called simply “Lingvo Internacia” (‘international language’), were laid by one person with one aim: to make communication between people of different mother tongues easier and more equitable. In linguistics, such a language, which does not directly stem from forgotten prehistory or is not the result of the evolution of one language into another over generations, but goes back to a conscious act of language planning, is called a planned language (see Chapter 7). Outside interlinguistics, the field of their study, such systems are also referred to as “artificial languages”, “constructed languages”, “international auxiliary languages (IALs)”, “universal languages”, or “conlangs”. Their number has probably already reached almost one thousand,<sup>1</sup> but Esperanto is the only planned language project that has succeeded in becoming a fully functioning language with a vibrant international speech community. This is due to its structural properties (Janton, 1993; Nuessel, 2000; Wells, 1978), but above all to extralinguistic factors (Blanke, 2009). The main goal of this book is to show how Esperanto functions as a language in practical use.

If people hear the name of the language, a frequent reaction runs: “I didn’t know that still existed.” Many people are familiar with its name, some might know something about its creator Zamenhof (see Chapter 8) or even some structural characteristics of Esperanto, but they are not aware that it is used today in everyday conversations, as a language for special purposes, and as a medium for original and translated literature – and by some people even on a daily basis. To a large extent, this description even applies to linguists, despite growing research in this field. In addition, two peculiarities can be observed. The first is that Esperanto, or the topic of planned languages in general, arouses a considerable emotional response, or as Jane Edwards (1993, p. 23) puts it, “arguments on this subject are unusually heated”. The second oddity is that there are a relatively high number of specialists, even people of the greatest erudition, who, while choosing their words carefully in assessing other languages or subjects, not only marginalise or ignore the practice of Esperanto usage but express scathing judgements of the planned language, and

---

1. Their number varies enormously in the research literature depending on whether mere sketches and modified versions of existing projects are considered to qualify as projects. Back (1996, p. 884) speaks of about 300 more or less well elaborated planned language systems.



this on the basis of easily disproven arguments. We confine the presentations of those refusals of Esperanto to two examples.<sup>2</sup> The first is the well-known German journalist Wolf Schneider, author of numerous language guides on German, whose article *Nachruf aufs Esperanto* [‘An obituary for Esperanto’], published in the respected Swiss journal *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*,<sup>3</sup> claimed:

*Kunstsprachen bieten keine Kinderlieder und keine Verse an, keine Flüche, keine Witze, keine Redensarten. Ihre Wörter sind eindeutig und folglich einschichtig, sie haben keine Aura und keine Tiefe.*

[Artificial languages offer no songs for children, no nursery rhymes, no swearing, no jokes, no sayings. Their words are unambiguous, hence one-layered. They have no aura and no depth.]

The second example comes from a 2017 interview with the distinguished French philosopher and philologist Barbara Cassin, in which she highlighted the “failure of Esperanto” (which probably means that it is not spoken as the world’s most common second language), creating the impression that Esperanto had never left the pages of its first modest brochure:

It does not work because how could one turn it into a language? Leibniz hoped that those who didn’t get along could sit around a table and say to one another, “let’s calculate and we will know who is right.” No, language cannot be reduced to a calculation, and Esperanto does not work because it is artificial, insufficient, without any thickness of history nor of the signifier, without authors and works – “desperanto,” as the poet Michel Deguy put it. As dead as a dead language, Esperanto is no one’s maternal language.<sup>4</sup>

Psychologist Claude Piron (1994) interprets the opposition to Esperanto as a defence mechanism against an underlying anxiety, because, among other things, the concept of a planned language is subconsciously perceived by people as a threat to their mother tongues, which they consider symbols of identity and (wrongly) regard as something immutable. Blanke (2015, p. 202) points out:

---

2. Von Wunsch-Rolshoven (2018) devoted a study to this topic, mentioning a large variety of misjudgements.

3. See <http://folio.nzz.ch/1994/oktober/nachruf-aufs-esperanto>. The article was reprinted in Schneider’s (2009) book (pp. 106–109). All Internet addresses given in this book were correct at the time of going to press if not otherwise indicated.

4. e-flux conversations. <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/the-power-of-bilingualism-interview-with-barbara-cassin-french-philosopher-and-philologist/6252>. The interview is a translation of the French original: Barbara Cassin 2012. *Plus d’une langue*. Montrouge (Bayard Culture).

Inaccurate presentations of topics in interlinguistics and Esperantology are not automatically expressions of prejudice or intentional ignorance. We must concede that a planned language, functioning in practice, is an anomaly in the conceptual sphere of no small number of traditionally trained linguists.

In addition, he mentions a “*specific language barrier* that inhibits access to the scholarly literature” on planned languages, as about sixty per cent of this literature is written in a planned language, primarily Esperanto (Blanke 2018, p. 124, original emphasis).

If Esperanto is “a dead language” without wit and wordplay, what are we to make of text (1), the fragment of a conversation between five people (two English native speakers, A and D, a German native speaker, B, a Dutch native speaker, C, and a French native speaker, E, at a restaurant talking about the meals they have just ordered?<sup>5</sup>

- (1) A: *Ni verŝajne ĉiuj prenis la supon, ĉu ne?*  
 B: *Jes, mi ne estas tre malsata, do supo konvenas.*  
 A: *Sed VI mendis ion alian, <name (of C)>, ĉu ne?*  
 C: *Mi decidis preni la “penne”.*  
 A: *Lapenna, kiel vi povas?*  
 All: *@(3)@*  
 C: *Ja temas pri “penne”*  
 E: *Pene, espereble ne estos tre pene ĝin manĝi*  
 A/D/B: *@(.)@*  
 C: *Kaj via supo, kiu supo estas?*  
 A: *Mi ne scias en Esperanto: parsnip. Kio estas parsnip? <D’s name>?*  
 D: *Mi ne konas la vorton.*  
 A: *Kiu scias?*  
 B: *Mi eĉ ne scias en la germana, kvankam mi konas en la angla, sed nur pro la proverbo. Ni ne uzas ĝin por manĝaĵoj.*  
 A: *Kaj en la franca?*  
 E: *Panais.*  
 A: *Do iomete kiel “penne” @(.)@*  
 All: *@(1)@*  
 [...]
   
 C: *Sed pri kiu supo temas?*  
 A: *Estas rapo, aŭ karoto, sed blanka.*  
 C: *Mi komprenas.*  
 [...]

---

5. This conversation occurred in Liverpool on October 20th, 2016. It is the only example in this book that was not recorded, but is presented based on notes taken from memory.

- A: *Ĉu vi konas tiun junan viron, verŝajne italo, kiu jam ofte majstris ricevi monon de EU por projekto? Mi forgesis lian nomon.*
- B: *Ĉu <name>?*
- A: *Ne ne, ne gravas, ni nomu lin sinjoro Parsnip.*
- A/B/D: *@(2)@*
- A: *Tiu sinjoro Parsnip lastatempe [...]*
- [A: All of us have probably taken the soup, haven't we?
- B: Yes, I'm not very hungry. So a soup is appropriate.
- A: But YOU ordered something else, <C's name>?
- C: I've decided to take penne.
- A: Lapenna, how could you?
- All: *@(3)@*
- C: It is about "penne".
- E: *Pene*, I hope it won't be laborious to eat it.
- A/B/D: *@(.)@*
- C: And your soup. What kind of soup is it?
- A: I don't know in Esperanto – *parsnip*. What is *parsnip*, <D's name>?
- D: I don't know the word.
- A: Who knows?
- B: I don't even know it in German, although I know it in English, but only because of the proverb. We don't use it for meals.
- A: And in French?
- E: *Panais*.
- A: So a bit like "penne" *@(.)@*.
- All: *@(1)@*
- (...)
- C: But what kind of soup is it?
- A: It's turnip, or carrot, but white.
- C: I see.
- (...)
- A: Do you know this young man, probably Italian, who has managed several times to receive money from the EU for projects? I've forgotten his name.
- B: Maybe <name>?
- A: No no, doesn't matter, we'll call him Mr Parsnip.
- A/B/D: *@(2)@*
- A: The other day this Mr Parsnip (...)]

The conversation presented in Example (1) has been chosen for this introductory chapter as it represents a typical piece of Esperanto usage:

- The language has the function of a *lingua franca*, i.e. it is used habitually by the people in question, who do not have the same mother tongue, to facilitate their communication (see Chapter 2).
- It represents lively talk reminiscent of communication in a native language.
- It includes passages of verbal and non-verbal humour (@ symbolizes laughter) (see Chapter 20): in line 8 we find a play on words based on the near-homophony between the Italian *penne* and Esperanto *pene* (‘arduously, laboriously’)
- The excerpt illustrates that successful communication presupposes shared knowledge of both language and culture: the participants are all familiar with the particular role that Ivo Lapenna played in the development of Esperanto.
- Language – in this case the translation of the English word *parsnip* – is made a topic of conversation (in Chapter 23.4 we will refer to this phenomenon as *Toño’s Law*).

The use of Esperanto in this way could not have been foreseen by Zamenhof, but is the result of its more than 130-year history and an active and growing speech community.<sup>6</sup> It will become clear in the following chapters that Esperanto is not a dead language without authors and works, but a mature language that, of course, also has nursery rhymes and swear words, a language whose use is a sociolinguistic reality that may well repay further study.

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6. Following Gumperz (2009, p. 66), we use ‘speech community’ in a broad sense here, as “any human aggregate characterized by regular and frequent interaction by means of a shared body of verbal signs and set off from similar aggregates by significant differences in language usage”. See also Rampton (2010).



## What is a lingua franca?

A book bearing the expression *lingua franca*<sup>7</sup> in its title should include a definition of what exactly is meant by that term. This seems to be even more important for this specific term, which has become very popular recently but frequently has different definitions (see Brosch, 2015b, with further literature). Besides the notional variation, we have to consider the fact that *lingua franca* is based on a proper name, which leads to some uncertainty with regard to its ontological status: can a language be a lingua franca or just **function** as one?

Throughout human history, there have been several languages that served people with different mother tongues as common or vehicular languages, such as Latin, Koiné Greek, Akkadian and then Aramaic. The term *lingua franca*, as mentioned above, is based on a proper name. It was derived from the Mediterranean Lingua Franca, which was a pidgin adopted as an auxiliary language among European, African and Arab traders, sailors and pirates from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. It developed spontaneously in order to bridge language barriers, with a simple grammar and a lexicon confined to the expression of only the notions needed for the communication goals of the interlocutors and was based mainly on Italian, with a considerable adstratum of the languages spoken around the Mediterranean (Barotchi, 1994, p. 2211; Brosch, 2015b; Ostler, 2010). Much of its glottogenesis, of linguistic details, and the origin of its very name are unclear. Despite its common use for hundreds of years, it never became a mother tongue (a creole). Finally, Lingua Franca died out, leaving no certain traces – ousted by national languages, especially French. There are only a few written attestations of the language, many of them of poor quality. The 1671 play *Le bourgeois gentilhomme* by Molière (or rather the operatic version by Lully; act 4, scene 5) seems to contain authentic specimens of Lingua Franca.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Of the competing plural forms *linguae francae* (Latin), *lingue franche* (Italian), and *lingua francas* (English), we always use the last one.

8. E.g.: *Mahametta per Giourdina* “Mahomet, for Jourdain  
*Mi pregar sera é mattina* I pray (in the) evening and (in the) morning,  
*Voler far un Paladina* (I) Want to make a paladin  
*De Giourdina, de Giourdina.* Of Jourdain, of Jourdain.  
*Dar turbanta, é dar scarcina* Give a turban, and give a scimitar  
*Con galera é brigantina* With a galley and a brigantine  
*Per deffender Palestina.* To defend Palestine.”

Based on this use of the original Lingua Franca in the past, the term *lingua franca* (as a common noun to be written in lower case), in a metaphorical sense, has now gained currency to describe a common language that people of different mother tongues use for communication. When we compare the following definitions of lingua franca in this sense, two opinions can be distinguished. For a first group of authors (see, for example, Firth, 1990 and Clyne, 2000 below), it is important not to include native speakers, whereas this criterion is not mentioned as relevant for others (see UNESCO's 1953 definition and Gnutzmann, 2004 below) (Haberland, 2011).

The term 'lingua franca' is adopted to describe the language and the setting where English is used exclusively by non-native speakers. (Firth, 1990, p. 269)

A Lingua Franca is used in inter-cultural communication between two or more people who have different L1s other than the lingua franca. (Clyne, 2000, p. 83)

[A lingua franca is] a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them.

(UNESCO 1953 as quoted in Barotchi, 1994, p. 2211)

A language that is used as a medium of communication between people or groups of people each speaking a different native language is known as a lingua franca.

(Gnutzmann, 2004, p. 356)

As Clyne (2000, p. 84) illustrates by an anecdote, all languages can function as lingua francas (and it is on the basis of function that a language is considered to be one):

I was sitting in a train between Cologne and Bonn some years ago when a young Turkish man entered the compartment nervously waving a piece of paper with an address on it. A number of people tried to explain to him in ever louder German where to get off, but he did not quite understand. Several people tried in English but to no avail, and the man sitting opposite me attempted to communicate with the Turk in French, but that did not succeed either. Almost as a joke, I tried Dutch and it worked wonders, for he had been employed in the Netherlands for over a decade. At that point, a triangular conversation developed between us and the person opposite, who had spoken French, a French-Canadian who had taken his doctorate in Utrecht. So the only means of communication between an Australian, a Turk and a French-Canadian turned out to be Dutch!

Barotchi (1994, p. 2211) distinguishes three types of lingua francas: 'natural', 'pidginized', and 'planned' languages, while Vikør's (2004) classification includes four types: 'languages of religion and culture', 'imperial language', 'pidgin language', and 'artificial languages'.

Lingua franca is today generally used to describe the worldwide spread of English as a vehicular language. What makes the use of the term in connection with

English problematic is the fact that a substantial subset of its speakers (no less than 360 million people) using it are native speakers of this language. This means a clear disadvantage for its non-native speakers, who have to invest a great deal of time, energy and money in language learning and may still communicate with difficulty (Ammon & Carli, 2007; Fiedler, 2010a), a fact described as “unfair competition” by Ammon (1994). From a philosophical perspective, De Schutter (2018, p. 170) argues that with the spread of English, “global linguistic injustice comes in four types: communicative injustice, resource injustice, life-world injustice, and dignity injustice”. “Communicative injustice” refers to the fact that second-language learning generally does not lead to a command of a language that is equivalent to that possessed by native speakers: the latter usually have higher degrees of fluency, expressiveness, articulateness and eloquence in almost all communicative situations when it is used. This is closely connected to “resource injustice”, i.e. the unilateral burden of learning the shared language in terms of time, energy and money (Grin, 2005, 2011). Not to be forgotten here are related indirect advantages (e.g. financial benefits) for native speakers, who enjoy better job opportunities as the stereotypical providers of English teaching and of text-correction and translation services, but also the privileged position of English-speaking universities. De Schutter’s third type of inequality, “life-world injustice”, results from the close relationship between language and culture. Given that its spread is connected with Anglo-American cultural influence and a simultaneous marginalisation of other cultures, English is not a neutral language. “Dignity injustice”, finally, describes the inferiority and loss of self-respect that is often felt by non-native speakers in relation to their communicative partners, who can simply continue to speak their own language.

The fact that English is in active use in many different contexts today by a large number of people for whom the language is not a mother tongue, has led to the development of the concept or school (some speak of a movement – see O’Regan, 2014) of English as a lingua franca (ELF). Its advocates argue that the English used by non-native speakers should be seen as detached from native-speaker English, as a “legitimate use of English in its own right” (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 24) shaped by its users or, as more recent publications argue, due to the non-native speakers’ various linguistic backgrounds as a “multilingual mode” (Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer, 2013).<sup>9</sup> The approach has been met with little acceptance and, in our view, for reasons we described elsewhere (Brosch, 2015b; Fiedler, 2010a, 2011; see also Gazzola & Grin, 2013), cannot fundamentally redress the inequality described above. We agree with Grin (2011, p. 59), who points out that

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9. See also the latest studies describing a third phase in the development of ELF, that is “English as Multilingua Franca” (Jenkins 2015, 2017).



[t]he differences between what is labelled as “English as a lingua franca” and simply “English”, in terms of their consequences for language status, are superficial, and mostly of little importance. [...] As soon as you have a natural language which is the language of an existing community and finds itself in this internationally dominant position, you have all of these adverse effects, and ELF makes no difference at all to these problems.

Against this backdrop, if the degree of linguistic justice that a lingua franca provides is considered a relevant criterion, it appears questionable whether the term lingua franca might be suitable at all for describing communication by means of English. “[...] [C]ommunicative inequality is obscured when English is referred to as a ‘lingua franca’, a concept that appears to assume communicative equality for all,” as Phillipson (2003, p. 40) states. In fact, the positive connotation of fair communication implied in the term is abused here – we recall that the original Lingua Franca was not a native language. In reaction to these aspects, Brosch (2015b, p. 79) proposes a more precise concept in which the (non-)existence of a native speaker is taken into account (see Figure 1 below). In his model, contact languages are all second languages that can serve as means of interlingual communication, including those that are habitually not used in this function but are held in common with interlocutors by chance alone (see Clyne’s example above), and lingua francas are subdivided into lingua francas in the broader sense and lingua francas in the narrow sense. The former, which should preferably be called vehicular languages (see also Janssens et al., 2011), are languages that are habitually used to bridge language gaps, irrespective of whether their speakers are native or non-native. Examples include English or Arabic today and Aramaic or Latin in the past in certain contexts. In contrast to these, lingua francas in the narrow sense are characterised by their being

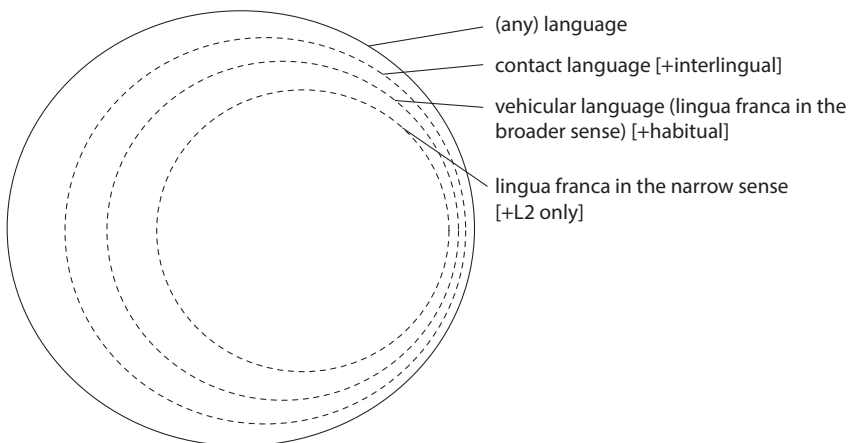


Figure 1. Notional system of language use (Brosch 2015b, p. 79)

used as non-native languages only. Ammon (2012, p. 336) expresses the difference using the terms “asymmetric” and “symmetric” lingua francas.

This constellation leads us to two aspects which, although of secondary importance, will be included in the research questions that our study intends to address (see Chapter 4). First, as the exploration of lingua francas has mainly focused on English so far, we will explore the differences between our data on Esperanto as a genuine lingua franca (lingua franca in the narrow sense) and those on English as a vehicular language (lingua franca in the broader sense). We will discuss this issue in Part IV, when we analyse the features of Esperanto communication. Second, as there are people who learn and speak Esperanto as a mother tongue, the *denaskuloj* (see Fiedler, 2012), it will be necessary to study whether their existence leads to a restriction of Esperanto’s character as a genuine lingua franca, a topic that we focus on in Chapter 10.



## Previous interlinguistic research

Esperanto is the only planned language (see Chapter 7 for a more thorough description and definition of this and the other terms used here) for which an independent philology has emerged. Esperanto studies (esperantology), as a subdiscipline of interlinguistics, explores both the language Esperanto, including its sources, structure, communicative potential and development, and its speech community (Blanke, 1985). The discipline developed as a result of discussions on changes in Esperanto (which finally led to the emergence of a new planned language project, Ido, as a modified Esperanto – see Chapter 7). René de Saussure, brother of the renowned Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, is regarded as the founder of Esperanto studies with his work on the theory of word-formation in Esperanto (Anderson & L. de Saussure, 2018; de Saussure, 1910).

Only a few institutions conduct ongoing research on Esperanto. A pioneering role was played by the International Auxiliary Language Association (IALA) between 1924 and 1954 (see Blanke, 1985, p. 167–73). The Association was founded to promote the study of auxiliary languages and to identify the most suitable. Therefore, much of its research addressed the question of what an optimal auxiliary language should look like.

IALA brought together a number of outstanding linguists of its day, such as André Martinet, Otto Jespersen, Edward Sapir, Charles Bally, and Albert Debrunner. In 1951, its director Alexander Gode published a naturalistic planned language, *Interlingua* (see Chapter 7). In 1968 the US-based Esperantic Studies Foundation (ESF) was founded and has since then, and especially since an increase in its capital in 1999, supported numerous practical and scientific projects aiming to study Esperanto and interlinguistics and disseminate knowledge about them. Among the most important projects sponsored by ESF are websites for learning and teaching Esperanto (<http://lernu.net> and <http://edukado.net>), the creation of a corpus of written Esperanto (<http://tekstaro.com>), symposia and summer schools on interlinguistics and Esperanto, and the postgraduate studies programme in interlinguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań (Poland).

Interlinguistics and Esperanto studies are official subjects at just a handful of universities. An important place where Esperanto has been taught since the 1950s is the University of Amsterdam. In 1997 a Special Chair in Interlinguistics and Esperanto was established there on behalf of the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA),

enabling continuous teaching and research in this field. Postgraduate Esperanto studies at Adam Mickiewicz University were established more than two decades ago, a kind of offspring and continuation of the regular programme of Esperanto studies, now discontinued, at Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE) in Budapest, which was the first and only programme of this kind after the Second World War (1966–2006).<sup>10</sup>

Numerous specialist journals regularly publish research articles on interlinguistics and Esperanto studies. Among them are *Language Problems & Language Planning* (Benjamins), which in 2021 was in its 45th year of publication and includes an interlinguistics section, the journal *Esperantologio/Esperanto Studies* formerly published at Uppsala University (1999–2018; the journal is now published by CED), the series *Interlinguistica Tartuensis* published by the University of Tartu, Estonia (with seven volumes from 1982 to 1990 and an eighth volume in 2006), and *Język. Komunikacja. Informacja* ('Language. Communication. Information', Poznań). Last but not least, the German *Gesellschaft für Interlinguistik e. V.*, founded in 1991, organises annual conferences on interlinguistics and publishes their proceedings (more than 25 volumes so far).<sup>11</sup>

Sociological research on the Esperanto speech community includes a number of monographs on the membership of national organisations, such as the British and German Esperanto Associations (Forster, 1982 [based on a survey conducted in 1968]; Stocker, 1996). Rašić (1994), in a small-scale study carried out in the mid-1980s, explores demographic characteristics and attitudes of participants of a World Esperanto Congress. His study, together with some others that he analyses in his book, finds that Esperanto speakers have a higher educational level than the average population and extensive language proficiencies.<sup>12</sup> There are more male than female Esperanto speakers, and those who are politically interested and organised are often found to belong to the political left (Alòs I Font, 2012, p. 31; Stocker, 1996).

Richard E. Wood (1979) mentioned three characteristics of the Esperanto speech community in the title of his essay, "A Voluntary, Non-Ethnic and Non-Territorial Speech Community", terms which have lost nothing of their significance. The fact that there are people who speak Esperanto as one of their mother tongues does not

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10. For a list of theses on interlinguistic topics produced at ELTE, see *Interlinguistische Informationen* 99 (2016, pp. 10–17).

11. See [www.interlinguistik-gil.de](http://www.interlinguistik-gil.de). The working language of the society is German.

12. A survey conducted by Fiedler (1998), including 500 readers of the magazine *Esperanto*, showed that Esperanto speakers learn on average 3.5 foreign languages beyond Esperanto (*Kiujn aliajn lingvojn vi lernis?* 'What other languages have you learned?') and speak on average 1.6 foreign languages beyond Esperanto (*Kiujn aliajn lingvojn vi parolas?* 'What other languages do you speak?') (see also Alòs I Font, 2012, p. 27).

contradict the quality “voluntary”, as we will see in Chapter 10. As membership of the Esperanto speech community is not based on genealogical characteristics, factors such as race and tribe, it is undoubtedly a non-ethnic community. It is noteworthy, however, that its ever-increasing common cultural tradition has induced researchers to use the term “quasi-ethnic community” (see, for example, Fettes, 1996; Meľnikov, 1992). The third feature, “non-territorial”, refers to the fact that Esperanto speakers are geographically dispersed. A number of authors compare the Esperanto speech community to a diaspora. Although its speakers, of course, cannot look back on life in a common territory as is normally the case with diasporas, there are some properties they have in common with communities living as a diaspora (e.g. Becker, 2006; Blanke, 2003; Flegner, 2003; Piron, 1989b; Tonkin, 1997), as we shall see in subsequent chapters.

Recent work dealing with the Esperanto speech community has focused on the identity of Esperanto speakers (Caligaris, 2016; Fians, 2018, 2021; Koutny, 2010; Stria, 2017) and on the changes that can be observed concerning linguo-political and -ideological orientations after the 1960s (Fiedler, 2018b; Galor & Pietiläinen, 2015; Gobbo, 2016; Pietiläinen, 2010; Tonkin, 2006).

A state-of-the-art article (Pereltsvaig, 2017) provides an overview of the development of Esperanto studies with a focus on work that has been done in core disciplines in linguistics, such as the morphology, phonetics, and the syntax of Esperanto, but also fields like gender, linguistic typology, second-language acquisition and humour. The overview provides an impressive picture of Esperanto research, above all against the backdrop of the conditions described above, but it also reveals a large number of research desiderata calling for exploration.



## The aim of this book

The goal of this study is to address the research gaps identified in the previous chapter. We intend to find answers to the following questions:

- In which speech situations and domains is Esperanto presently used (scientific discourse, private talk, family life, business conversations etc.), serving as an efficient means of communication, and which domains are blind spots when it comes to the use of Esperanto?
- How do Esperanto speakers proceed when encountering problems of communication? Are there, for example, any language-specific strategies for coping with lexical or terminological gaps?
- Are there systematic differences between the Esperanto found in textbooks or in literature and the Esperanto actually used in lingua franca communication? Are there linguo-structural differences between written and spoken Esperanto?
- Can the frequent claims that Esperanto is “easier than other languages” and “fully expressive” be verified in any way?

Independently of the question of whether the use of a planned language is worthwhile, research on this under-researched subject can provide us with insights relevant to linguistic phenomena in general, among them:

- As planned languages are “lingua francas by design”, the comparison between their practical use and the use of other lingua francas, especially English, can improve our knowledge of lingua francas as such. Are the characteristics that are ascribed to lingua franca communication general lingua franca features? Or are they rather properties of the lingua franca that is presently most frequently used in this function – English? What are the main characteristics of communication by means of a lingua franca? This not only concerns purely linguistic aspects, but also sociological circumstances of its production, e.g. the diaspora-like character of Esperanto.
- The Esperanto speech community delivers a particularly straightforward example of intercultural communication, the peculiarities of which can be studied here in a nutshell, without the many interferences resulting from a particular ethnic culture. How does its study improve our knowledge of intercultural communication? To what extent is intercultural communication by means of



Esperanto influenced by culture-specific traits that its use has produced within the Esperanto speech community?

- How do extralinguistic factors like speaker attitude influence linguistic behaviour? Intriguing parallels can be found when we compare the Esperanto speech community with communities of ethnic minority languages, as Kimura (2010, 2012) has shown.
- Another point of general interest in linguistics is the standardisation of languages that lack (a significantly large group of) native speakers as the central force that usually guarantees their stability. This includes ethnic languages that maintain certain degrees of usage despite no longer having native speakers, like Latin or Sanskrit, and revived languages, like Cornish (Kimura, 2010, 2012).
- Given the unusually small number of Esperanto native speakers, what are Esperanto speakers' attitudes towards "ownership" of the language? Do they regard Esperanto as a foreign language like any other, or do its speakers regard it as somehow different?

By addressing these questions, we hope, first and foremost, to learn more about the generally under-studied topic of Esperanto communication and, secondly, to contribute to research that goes beyond Esperanto and can have an impact on the work of researchers in other (linguistic) disciplines. We are, however, not concerned at all with the questions of whether Esperanto should be adopted as one or even **the** language of the European Union or the world, or whether it should be a compulsory subject in schools, nor with prognoses about whether the planned language will grow or decline, be ousted by competing planned languages, or any other questions related to phenomena which are not strictly (socio)linguistic in nature. We rather leave such issues to political scientists and philosophers, not without hope, however, that these will make use of our findings in their own argumentation.

## Methods and data

Research on Esperanto is accompanied by a dilemma that has the character of a catch-22 situation. On the one hand, it is not possible to describe the language adequately without speaking it and being familiar with the community of its speakers. The two blatant misjudgements presented in Chapter 1 are a clear illustration of what might otherwise result. On the other hand, researchers who fulfil this pre-condition and who are active Esperanto speakers are often not seen as unbiased and serious researchers (Fiedler, 2015a, p. 99). Tonkin (1993, p. 12) describes the phenomenon as follows:

A major problem (...) is that knowledge of Esperanto tends to disqualify the researcher from studying it: to know Esperanto is to be regarded as an enthusiast, and hence biased; not to know it obviously disqualifies the researcher from writing about it (or ought to: there are some notorious exceptions). Hence the opportunity for outsiders to get to know the language and its community well are severely restricted.

The authors of this book have been speaking Esperanto for many years and participating in the Esperanto speech community mainly out of linguistic interests. Therefore, there may be readers and reviewers of this book who deny the scientific value of our findings and call us biased. We are convinced, however, that we are only as biased as a specialist in Basque studies speaking Basque and visiting the Basque region, or a researcher on English as a lingua franca speaking English and taking part in international events that use English. As Hutchby and Woolfitt (2008, p. 106) point out, “it is absolutely necessary that [...] analysts are either members of, or have a sound understanding of, the culture from which their data have been drawn”. We have made clear in Chapter 2 that there is a distinction between the language and its community (which both fall within the scope of our explorations) on the one hand, and the political and philosophical ideas and ideals connected with the movement to make Esperanto the world’s first foreign language (a topic which does not concern us here at all) on the other. As much as one can argue against the latter, there is no denying the easily verifiable fact that a certain amount of people really do use the language for a number of purposes. By ignoring any speculation about the future and refraining from political comments and instead presenting

the objective facts in a scientific and comprehensible way, we are confident that an unprejudiced reader will recognise the value of our study and be capable of judging whether something is a matter of fact or of interpretation.

This book concerns Esperanto not as an abstract system, but as a language spoken by a speech community. We focus on its dynamics, behaviour, and linguistic peculiarities. For this reason, the present study can be categorised as a work in the realm of sociolinguistics. While surely some of the phenomena we deal with here can be interpreted by means of “pure” linguistics (and to our minds do not call for a methodological substantiation or introduction here), the more fundamental questions require the use of methods of qualitative social research. Within this framework, our research draws on various methods, all of which have to fit the collective and diaspora-like character of the Esperanto speech community. These are mainly conversation analysis, ethnographic research, and the documentary method. We made extensive use of tools like participant observation (with note-taking and audio-recording, see below) in events where Esperanto was spoken, and conducted semi-structured interviews in order to compensate for the lack of basic research into the planned language thus far. In particular cases (for example, speakers’ attitudes on accents in Chapter 24), additional methods of data interpretation served to supplement the findings. For some of our research questions, besides consulting the literature we analysed discussions and other data found on the Internet. As methods of investigation depend on individual research tasks, more detailed descriptions of the particular methods applied will be given in the relevant chapters of Part III.

The empirical parts of our study were carried out in compliance with the ethical guidelines of the MIME project (see Preface) and the University of Leipzig. It is noteworthy in this context that – being aware that their language lacks both scholarly attention and a high reputation within the general population – Esperanto speakers are generally open and supportive with regard to research into their communication, readily granting permission to be recorded. The audio or video documentation of Esperanto speech events is thus not uncommon in the community. These conditions have served to diminish what is known as the observer’s paradox (Labov, 1972, p. 209), so that the data this exploration draws on can be regarded as naturally occurring communication, i.e. as data “that would have occurred regardless of the investigator’s interventions or research aspirations” (Wagner & Firth, 1997, p. 343).

The backbone of our research is an extensive corpus of contemporary spoken Esperanto. It was recorded during our fieldwork between 2014 and 2018 (see nos. 1–198 in the annexed *List of recordings*) and is supplemented by recordings from recent years that were available publicly or made available to us (nos. 199–205). All together, the dataset amounts to 188 hours of audio (and in a few cases also video)

material. Due to time constraints,<sup>13</sup> only a small portion of the speech events has been fully transcribed. In most cases, transcriptions were limited to the passages containing the occurrences under investigation (e.g. metaphors, word searches or plays on words). The transcription conventions, tailored to the needs of the individual research topics, are based mainly on the systems of Levinson (1983), Firth (1996) and Wagner & Firth (1997) (see Key to transcription symbols at the beginning of the book).

The investigation is mainly based on data collected during the following national and international Esperanto meetings:

- Tria Interlingvistika Simpozio “Problemoj de internacia lingva komunikado kaj iliaj solvoj” (Third Interlinguistics Symposium “Problems of international linguistic communication and their solutions”) Poznań, Poland, 25–26 Sept. 2014
- Dua Sesio de Interlingvistikaj Studoj (Second Interlinguistic Studies Session) Poznań, Poland, 2–6 Feb. 2015
- Internacia Kolokvo “Vivanta lingvo de vivanta komonumo” de la Kultura Centro Esperantista (International Colloquium “Living language of a living community” of the Esperantist Cultural Centre) La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, 27 Feb.–2 Mar. 2015
- Kvina partnera renkontiĝo de Grundtvig-projekto “Kultura diverseco kaj multlingveco en Eŭropo” (The fifth partner meeting of the Grundtvig project “Cultural diversity and multilingualism of Europe”) Herzberg, Germany, 24–26 May 2015
- 100-a Universala Kongreso de Esperanto (The 100th World Esperanto Congress) Lille, France, 25–31 July 2015
- Sesa Kongreso de Kuba Esperanto-Asocio (Sixth Congress of the Cuban Esperanto Association) Havana, Cuba, 19–20 Nov. 2015
- La 103-a Universala Kongreso de Esperanto (The 103rd World Esperanto Congress) Lisbon, Portugal, 28 Jul.–4 Aug. 2018
- Nitobe-Simpozio “Esperanto kaj universitato” (Nitobe Symposium “Esperanto and University”) Lisbon, Portugal, 4–5 Aug. 2018

The meetings listed here represent typical speech events in the life of the Esperanto community, with Esperanto being the default language.<sup>14</sup> As for content, some activities are related to the use of Esperanto, whereas others (such as lectures on academic topics or courses on the culture and language of the host country) are

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13. Based on our experience, it would take about ten years and a full-time position to transcribe the whole material.

14. See Chapter 9 about the main domains of Esperanto communication.

not connected with the language. We should mention that not all our investigations on the features of Esperanto communication presented in the individual chapters of this book are based on the complete dataset contained in Appendix 1. This is because our work took several years and we carried out some studies on specific topics with regard to particular conferences using the dataset available to us at that time, while the collection of data continued after this. The details of a given investigation will be provided in the relevant subchapters.

As can be seen in the *List of recordings* (see Appendix 1), Esperanto communication manifests itself in a wide range of particular speech events or genres of both formal and informal character. Table 1 provides an overview of the genres that we distinguish, taking our dataset as a point of departure.<sup>15</sup>

Table 1. Overview of genres that were distinguished in the database

Indication used in references	Genre	Explanation	Example
Pres	(Conference) presentation	Includes speeches or lectures on a particular subject	International Congress University lecture “Sukcesoj kaj perspektivoj en planedosciencoj” (Success and perspectives in planetary science)
Disc	Discussion	Includes conversations and debates about a particular topic; questions and answers following a lecture	A working-group meeting of the editors of an Esperanto journal
Int	Interview	Includes meetings between us as researchers and a specialist who answers questions	A semi-structured interview with a representative of the Esperanto Academy
Tour	Touristic or cultural event	Includes guided tours of a town or museum; information given during a coach trip	Guided tour of Lille city centre
Edu	Conversation and talk in an educational context	Includes teacher talk (information on a particular topic and instructions) and conversations between students in seminars	Teacher informs the students about the aim of the seminar; in group work, students discuss the use of gestures in intercultural communication
cerem	Ceremony	Includes opening and closing ceremonies of congresses, speeches at receptions	Welcoming speech of the mayor of the town hosting the congress

15. We understand ‘genres’ as conventional rhetorical forms that are used by speakers who share some set of communicative purposes to respond to recurring situations (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 2004). See also Chapter 23 on written and oral communication.

Table 1. (*continued*)

Indication used in references	Genre	Explanation	Example
Infl	Informal or small talk	Includes conversations during meals and excursions	Conversation between conference participants during a coffee break
Oth	Other	Includes speech events that are not mentioned above and are hard to classify	An auctioneer's offers

At the end of this chapter, we provide a number of technical and terminological hints that will be useful when reading the other parts of this book:

- Unless explicitly noted otherwise, all translations in this book are our own.
- Unless otherwise indicated, all Internet links given in this book were correct at the time of going to press.
- The references of our linguistic examples, e.g. [112 (hun; disc; Lille) 11:42], include: the number of the recording (see Appendix 1), the speaker's native language (see list of abbreviations),<sup>16</sup> the genre (see above), the place of communication, and the time in the recording).

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16. In those cases where we did not know a speaker's mother tongue we decided to indicate this by a question mark.



## On the structure of this book

**Part I (Chapters 1 to 5)** have offered a first impression of what Esperanto looks like and made a case for exploring communication carried out in Esperanto. We have given an overview of the research that has already been conducted in this generally under-studied area and explained how we will try to close research gaps, both on the basis of an extensive dataset of spoken Esperanto and by applying methods of qualitative social research. We have also explained what a lingua franca is and why this concept can be perfectly applied to Esperanto.

The following paragraphs may serve to orient the reader as to how the rest of this book is structured. We have tried to conceptualise the chapters in a manner that allows them to be read selectively without too much interdependency. It is, however, highly advisable to become familiar with the topics discussed in our short introduction to Esperanto (Chapters 7 to 11) in order to have sufficient background knowledge for the main part of our study, which is Part IV (Chapters 17 to 26).

**Part II (Chapters 7 to 11)** contains an overview of Esperanto, something we find necessary given that so little is known about this planned language, as Chapter 1 has shown. Here we not only give a review of Esperanto as a linguistic system, but also outline how it came to life, presenting the motivation of its founder Zamenhof and the history of what is often referred to as the Esperanto movement. This part of the book will also give a short introduction to interlinguistics, the discipline exploring interlingual communication, with special attention paid to the use of planned languages. It includes information that goes beyond Esperanto's use as a lingua franca: Chapter 10 looks at Esperanto as a family language, i.e. its use by so-called *denaskuloj* ('Esperanto speakers from birth'). We will describe the nature and extent of this phenomenon and discuss the differences between these speakers and native speakers of other languages.

**Part III (Chapters 12 to 16)** includes an excursus which leads us to the use of Esperanto outside the community of its speakers. We will shed light on how the language is used for artistic purposes, how the word "Esperanto" serves as a metaphor, and how and why Esperanto words and phrases are used in brand naming – a considerably widespread phenomenon.

**Part IV (Chapters 17 to 26)** presents the **main characteristics of Esperanto communication** and is by far the largest and most significant part of this volume. In ten chapters, we describe the most important traits of using Esperanto, as they



appear in our dataset. We show how Esperanto is used and explain its similarities and differences from other languages, especially English as a lingua franca. After a short introduction (Chapter 17), the chapters comprise a description of the use of metacommunicative signals, enhancing and guaranteeing understanding in spoken and written language (Chapter 18), an exploration of repair strategies in Esperanto communication (Chapter 19), an overview of wordplay and other types of language-based humour (Chapter 20), a description of phraseology and metaphors (Chapter 21), a comparative study of code-switching, showing interesting differences between Esperanto and English as a lingua franca (Chapter 22), a comparison of spoken and written Esperanto (Chapter 23), a study of the attitudes of Esperanto speakers to foreign accents in the language, with special attention paid to the comparison with English, for which this phenomenon has been thoroughly explored (Chapter 24) and, finally, considerations and examples of Esperanto norms and the question of how language change manifests itself in the more than 130-year history of the planned language (Chapter 25). Part IV concludes with a case study that offers a summary of the features of Esperanto communication described. In Chapter 26, we investigate the use of Esperanto as a working language in an international NGO. While by no means claiming that the selected phenomena presented in these ten chapters suffice to give an exhaustive description of the language, we are nonetheless convinced that we have chosen the most important features of communication in modern Esperanto to allow an informed assessment of its character and communicative potential.

**Part V (Chapters 27 to 30)** contains the book's **conclusion**. Here, as can be expected, we summarise the results presented in Part IV and identify some fields where further research is needed.

The four main parts, comprising a total of 30 chapters, are followed by a bibliography of works consulted, several appendices (including a list of our recordings and other texts cited throughout this book) as well as indices of topics and authors.

PART II

## Esperanto – an overview



## Planned languages and interlinguistics

The term “planned language” first appeared in its German original *Plansprache*. It was introduced by Eugen Wüster as a translation of Jespersen’s (1928) *constructed language* in his 1931 dissertation on terminology standardisation.<sup>17</sup> Following Wüster, Blanke (1985, p. 53, 2018, p. 9) defines a planned language as “a language consciously created by an individual or group of people, in accordance with defined criteria, with the goal of facilitating international linguistic communication”.

Planned languages can be considered a result of language planning. As a number of researchers have stressed, there is no dichotomy between natural and artificial languages. Ethnic languages undergo language planning and there is much natural development in planned languages, so that this aspect of linguistic reality is reflected more adequately by the model of a continuum than by a binary distinction, a continuum (or scale) running from “consciously developed” to “unconsciously developed” (Schubert, 1989, p. 10). Esperanto does not stand out as an isolated extreme, but it certainly represents a very good example of language planning processes, as these extend to its complete corpus, i.e. all levels of its linguistic system. As early as 1908, Baudouin de Courtenay pointed out that between the transformation of only individual linguistic details and the transformation of the whole language there is only a quantitative, but not a qualitative difference.<sup>18</sup> This was confirmed by more recent representatives of language planning, e.g. Tauli (1968, p. 27) who explicitly includes the creation of planned languages in his definition of language planning.<sup>19</sup>

In the understanding of the definition above, a typical planned language is, first, consciously created, second, serves communication, and, third, has a worldwide scope. The first criterion sets it apart from so-called “ethnic” or “national languages” (often incorrectly referred to as “natural languages”), which came into being with

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17. Wüster wanted to find a German expression for Jespersen’s term that was more suitable than *konstruierte Sprache*, which was used in the German translation of Jespersen’s book (“Eine internationale Sprache” 1928) (Wüster, 1976/1955, pp. 272f.).

18. “Między przekształceniem pewnych tylko szczegółów językowych a między przekształceniem całego języka zachodzi różnica jedynie ilościowa, nie zaś jakościowa.” (Baudouin de Courtenay, 1908, p. 10).

19. Cf. his definition: “LP [Language Planning] is the methodical activity of regulating and improving existing languages or creating new common regional, national or international languages.”

the emergence of an ethnic group or were, in the case of pidgins, created spontaneously without deliberate planning. The second criterion distinguishes planned languages from languages constructed for the expression of artistic needs, such as languages of fiction like Quenya (*The Lord of the Rings*), Klingon (*Star Trek*), or Dothraki (*Game of Thrones*) (Peterson, 2015).<sup>20</sup> The third criterion makes them distinct from (partly) planned ethnic languages like Modern Hebrew, which fulfil the first two criteria, but are bound to a certain ethnic group and have a smaller set of sources.

There are various ways to classify planned languages. A subdivision based on historical criteria, as presented by Duličenko (1989, 1990), lists a total of 917 planned language projects constructed in no fewer than forty countries from the second century to our era until the 1970s. New projects continue to appear. Duličenko's statistics show a small peak in the middle of the seventeenth century, when Latin started to lose its status as a universal language. The largest number of language projects appeared between 1850 and 1950, however, when, against the background of technological advances in international trade and travel, the variety of languages represented a growing obstacle. From a sociolinguistic perspective, planned languages can mostly be categorised according to the following four criteria:

- A. **According to the relationship of the planned language systems to ethnic languages, especially with regard to their lexical material.** This is the traditional classification of Couturat and Leau (1903+1907), who distinguish between (a) a priori systems, (b) a posteriori systems, and (c) mixed systems.<sup>21</sup> Whereas the majority of a priori languages (often created by philosophers, e.g. George Dalgarno in 1661 or John Wilkins in 1668) form their phonological and lexical systems on the basis of philosophically motivated classifications of human knowledge, an a posteriori system borrows lexical material from specific ethnic languages (usually Latin, Greek, and Romance) and adapts it to its structure. Within the a posteriori systems, an autonomous (or schematic) subgroup can be found with a high degree of regularity in inflection and word formation (e.g. Ido, see below), while the so-called naturalistic subgroup (e.g. Interlingua, see below) deliberately forfeits some regularity for the sake of the easy recognisability of the source material. A third group within the a posteriori languages are modified or simplified ethnic languages like Basic English. An example of a mixed system, having both a priori and a posteriori traits, is Volapük (Schleyer, 1982 [1879]), which comprises heavily modified material from ethnic languages (see below).

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20. The latter are very popular nowadays on the Internet. However, their community mainly uses English as its language of communication.

21. See Schubert (2018) for a detailed discussion of the history of these notions.

- B. **According to the form of realisation.** Besides systems that can be both written and spoken (pasilalies), or planned languages, there are also written-only projects (pasigraphies), which again can be divided into a priori and a posteriori systems. An example of an a posteriori pasigraphy is the ideographic writing system Blissymbolics (originally called Semantography) which has been used as a method to teach disabled children to communicate (see Okrent, 2009, pp. 153–199; Maradan, 2012).
- C. **According to their authors' intentions.** One group of motives includes the humanistic aims of pacifism and international understanding. The authors hoped that a common language could eliminate conflicts and wars between peoples and races. Another group of motives is based on language philosophy. For example, in the seventeenth century, Gottfried W. Leibniz (1690 [1666]) and René Descartes (1629) outlined ideas of an ideal, logically constructed language that would promote rational thinking. Otto Jespersen's project Novial (1928) is closely related to his linguistic ideas. In the same way, Interlingua by Alexander Gode (1951) has to be seen in connection with the ideas of Benjamin Lee Whorf on language relativism, and thus as an attempt to model Whorf's notion of the Standard Average European (see below). Other language projects, such as Adalbert Baumann's *Wede* (Weltdialekt/Weltdeutsch; Baumann, 1915), are based on purely nationalistic and chauvinistic ideas. Finally, the interest and pleasure in manipulating linguistic elements in creative and innovative ways should not be underestimated. Very often, different motives overlap.
- D. **According to their actual use** (see Blanke, 1985, pp. 105–108, further refined in Blanke, 2006, pp. 49–98). Ninety-nine percent of all systems remain confined to their authors or their inner circles. As these languages never really fulfilled the communicative function of a human language, Blanke calls them “planned language projects”. Fewer than ten projects (see below) achieved, at least for some time, a moderate degree of dispersion, which makes them appear in some but not all domains that are found in living languages. Such examples are called “planned semi-languages” (*Semiplansprachen*) by Blanke. Real “planned languages” in a narrow sense, according to Blanke, appear in virtually all domains in which ethnic languages are used, so that functionally such languages are not discernible from ethnic languages. The only example he considers a member of this group today is Esperanto, which has left its competitors far behind. Using a scale of 28 levels, Blanke (2000, pp. 52–57) describes the transition from a language project to a language, from the “manuscript” (step 1) to a “developed language with language change” (step 28).

We consider the differences expressed in these classifications to be an important basis for research on planned languages. This is especially true for Blanke's typology,

which is not only of theoretical value as it takes the social character of language into account, but also of great practical relevance. While one might have a different opinion about whether systems such as Ido and Interlingua (see below) should be placed in the second or third group, projects that have never been applied in communication cannot be compared to Esperanto with its rich communicative history. This difference is ignored when authors employ formulations like ‘artificial languages such as Volapük and Esperanto’ or ‘planned languages such as Esperanto or Basic English’, as is often done today.<sup>22</sup> From the point of view of realised communication the differences, for example, between Esperanto and Basic English are bigger than between Esperanto and English.

The planned language systems that grew beyond publication and have found real-life applications are small in number and typologically very similar:

- They are morphologically reduced; agglutinating or inflecting,
- they are mostly head-initial (prepositions, preposed determiners, postposed relative phrases), having accusative alignment, and SVO word order,
- they have a definite, sometimes also indefinite article,
- their lexicon is based mainly on Greek, Latin, and Romance internationalisms,
- they are written with the Latin alphabet.

The main differences concern orthography (phonemic vs etymological), the grade of regularity, the amount of bound morphology (synthetic vs analytic), and redundancy. In the following paragraphs we characterise, in chronological order, the most important planned language systems, or planned semi-languages in Blanke’s terminology, before we concentrate on Esperanto and its speech community in Chapters 8 and 9.

**Volapük**, published in 1879 by the German Roman Catholic priest Johann Martin Schleyer, was the first project of a planned language to gain a wider audience. The language differs considerably from other projects due to its alphabet: besides the cardinal vowels *i e (/e/) a o u*, it includes the German umlauts *ü (/y/)* *ö (/ø/)* *ä (/ɛ/)*. Volapük words are accented on the last syllable. The morphology is very rich, and nevertheless regular, with adjectives following the noun, and there is no article. The lexicon consists, on the one hand, of many a priori elements (pronouns and many other function words) and, on the other, of a posteriori elements changed beyond recognition for reasons of phonotactics and simplification (e.g. *Vol-a-pük* < *world, speak*; *limep* < *emperor/imperator*; *bevü* < *between*).

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22. The quote by Cassin presented in Chapter 1 is an example. The French philologist equates Leibniz’s ideas about a universal language or script with a fully fledged language like Esperanto.

For some ten years the language, or at least the idea, spread rapidly among the European middle class. After two meetings in Germany, at which participants mainly spoke German, the third Volapük congress in Paris in 1889 was the first international event in the history of mankind to see a planned language in use. But it also marked the beginning of the decline of the movement, as Volapük did not stand the test as a means of communication. The language disappeared as rapidly as it had attracted attention: as Schmidt (1963) indicates, at the end of 1888 there were a thousand people who had diplomas as teachers of Volapük, 257 Volapük clubs (among these, 107 in Germany, twenty-three in Italy, twenty-one in Austria-Hungary, seventeen in Switzerland, fifteen in Sweden and Norway, thirteen in the USA, nine in Spain and Portugal, five in France) and twenty-three Volapük journals, of which only twenty-seven clubs and four periodicals remained in 1900. In addition to the linguistic properties which made the language difficult to learn, Schleyer's autocratic personality led to Volapük's decline. Schleyer saw the language as his property and rejected changes proposed by the Volapük Academy, disregarding the sociological dimension of a community of speakers. There was an attempt to revive the language through a reformed Volapük by Arie de Jong (1931), which is the basis of its use today by a very small group of people.

*Latino sine flexione* ('Latin without inflections') is the only version, among many, of a simplified Latin to have been used in practice. It was proposed in 1903 by the Italian mathematician Giuseppe Peano. As is deducible from its name, the language uses the Latin lexicon (with the addition of words for modern concepts from Romance languages), but omits almost all of its morphology, using word order and function words instead. For example, nouns and adjectives are not declined in *Latino sine flexione* itself, and the plural ending *-s* is only used where plurality is not marked otherwise (e.g. by means of cardinal numbers). The past and future tenses are generally indicated by adverbs; if necessary, past time can be expressed by placing *e* before the verb (*me e bibe* – 'I drank') and future time by *i* (*me i bibe* – 'I will drink').

*Latino sine flexione* was supported between 1909 and 1939 by an organisation dedicated to the promotion of planned languages, the Academia pro Interlingua, which was a continuation of the Volapük Academy. The language was mainly applied in scientific texts, which were published primarily in the periodical *Schola et Vita* (1926–1939). Barandovská-Frank (2002, pp. 17–20) mentions the following fields: astronomy, biology, ethnology, interlinguistics, culture, linguistics, literature, mathematics, medicine, pedagogy, psychology, sociology, and technology. It fell out of use completely after the Second World War, but served as inspiration for Interlingua, a planned language system created by the International Auxiliary Language Association (IALA) in 1951 (see below).



**Ido** was created in 1907 by the Frenchmen Louis Couturat and Louis de Beaufront and touted as an improved version of Esperanto.<sup>23</sup> The linguistic differences between Ido and Esperanto are not vast, with the result that speakers of the two languages can understand each other.<sup>24</sup> Ido dropped the diacritics and obligatory accusative of Esperanto, abandoned Zamenhof's a priori table of correlatives (see Chapter 11), and suppressed the concordance of nouns and adjectives. Many German and Slavic roots were replaced by Romance elements. While the lexicon was "naturalised" (i.e. root forms were less modified so as to be more easily recognisable), word formation became considerably more schematic and redundant than in Esperanto. Some elements from Ido, mostly lexemes, were later adopted by Esperanto.

The publication of this offspring of Esperanto (the suffix *-id* means 'descendant/offspring') fractured the Esperanto community, leading to the so-called Ido schism (see Chapter 8). Among the speakers who left Esperanto for Ido were influential intellectuals, such as Louis de Beaufront, Wilhelm Ostwald and Otto Jespersen. For some twenty years a flourishing language movement similar to the Esperanto movement existed. The language was used for scientific communication (see Gordin, 2015, pp. 148–156), and the dictionaries compiled for Ido were "the most complete works of their kind for any system of planned language" (Jacob 1947, p. 46; see also Blanke 1985, pp. 188/189). The spread of the language, however, was hampered by ongoing linguistic reforms. Only after the Second World War, when Ido had lost most of its speakers to Occidental and later Interlingua (see below), was a stable norm reached; the production of fiction also began. Today Ido continues to play a role, with a small community of a few hundred speakers, regular international meetings (of 30 to 40 participants) and several journals.

**Occidental**, which after the Second World War was renamed **Interlingue**, was published in 1922 by the Baltic German Edgar von Wahl (also known as Edgar de Wahl). In opposition to the autonomous Esperanto and Ido, Occidental-Interlingue is a naturalistic project designed to resemble Western European languages as much as possible. The system is mostly analytical, with an accusative only in the realm of the personal pronouns. The orthography is etymological, while the accent is sometimes

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23. For details on the authorship of Ido see Blanke (1985, p. 187) and Garvía (2015, pp. 134–137). See also Chapter 8.

24. In fact, multiple occasions show that Esperanto and Ido speakers can understand one another. For example, in a report about a language exhibition in Berlin in 2017, an Ido journal states: "Dum la konversi di Esperantisti kun ni, li uzis Esperanto e ni Ido sen havar mis-kompreni" [During the conversations of Esperanto speakers with us, they used Esperanto and we Ido, without mis-comprehension] (*Ido-saluto* 2017/4, p. 4).

irregular to preserve the pronunciation of borrowed words. Word formation does not so much serve to coin new words as it helps to promote the use of many international words (e.g. the adjective *defensiv* ‘defensive’ in Occidental-Interlingue is a regular derivation from *defender* ‘to defend’). This principle of converting verb infinitives into derived nouns and adjectives has become known as de Wahl’s rule.

In its first two decades many speakers of Ido went over to Occidental, but with the appearance of Interlingua (see below) in 1951 most of its adherents switched to this even more consistently naturalistic project. Nowadays Occidental-Interlingue, which interestingly resulted in hardly any international meetings or literature with a non-linguistic scope, is scarcely used.

**Basic English** (= British American Scientific International Commercial English) was created by Charles Kay Ogden in 1930. It is a reduction of English (i.e. Standard English) with its irregularities in spelling and grammar to a minimal vocabulary of 850 words. These include 600 “things” (with 400 “general” and 200 “picturable”), 150 “qualities” (i.e. adjectives), of which 50 are “opposites”, and 100 “operations” (including function words and only 18 verbs). Words that are not part of this core vocabulary have to be paraphrased. For example, *remove* is replaced with *take away*, and *dwarf* becomes *a man much smaller than normal size*. The number of 850 does not stand up to critical examination, however, as Ogden did not count “localised names”, “measuring terms” or “special vocabularies”. The claim suffers further when we consider that words can be used as different parts of speech (e.g. *back* as a noun and an adverb) (for a more detailed description see McElvenny, 2018, pp. 82–87).

There were extensive efforts to promote Basic English in the 1930s and 1940s, including by Winston Churchill. A number of texts were published, including belles lettres and scientific literature, for example on electrical engineering, geology and economics. Basic English represented a model for some other projects of modified ethnic languages, such as Basic Slovak, and it was used occasionally as a propaedeutic for learning English.

**Interlingua** was published in 1951 by the International Auxiliary Language Association (IALA) and designed mainly by its director, the German American Alexander Gode. Since the 1920s, IALA had been a pioneering organisation exploring the use of planned languages in many studies and experiments. This knowledge, however, was not exploited for Interlingua by Gode, who on the contrary wanted to create “Standard Average European” postulated in the framework of the famous Sapir-Whorf hypothesis on linguistic relativism (Whorf, 1956). The language is based on so-called “control languages”, which means that a word enters Interlingua if it can be verified in corresponding forms and with corresponding meanings in at least three of the following languages: (1) Italian, (2) French, (3) Spanish and Portuguese (combined), and (4) English. German and Russian act as possible

substitutes. Interlingua's lexicon is combined by an analytical grammar similar to English (no agreement of adjectives, no personal endings with the verb). There is no autonomous word formation. The orthography is etymological (*th, ph, ch, y, rh*).

In the 1950s and 1960s the language spread in science: a number of medical journals published abstracts in Interlingua, and there were two scientific journals, *Spectroscopia Molecular* and *Scientia International*, from 1952 to 1955 (Gordin, 2015, pp. 219). The language is still alive today, being the biggest of Esperanto's marginal competitors, with new books (including fiction) published regularly and international meetings organised by the International Interlingua Association *Union Mundial pro Interlingua (U.M.I.)* every second year. As the latter are attended by about 30 to 50 people (for comparison: the traditional Esperanto world congress, known as the UK ("Universala Kongreso"), has in the last 20 years attracted on average 1,800 participants), it can be assumed that there may be a few hundred or perhaps a thousand speakers of Interlingua today.

## The history and ideological background of the Esperanto movement

Esperanto was published with the original name, *Lingvo Internacia* ('international language'), in Warsaw in 1887. Its author, Lazar' Markovič Zamenhof (*Лазарь Маркович Заменгоф*, with the non-Jewish additional name *Людвик/Ludwik*; in Yiddish *אליעזר לודוויג זאמענהאָף*), later usually named L. L. Zamenhof, adopted the pseudonym *Doktoro Esperanto* ('one who hopes'), which eventually became the name of the language.<sup>25</sup>

Zamenhof was born in 1859 in the town of Białystok, in a part of the Russian Empire that is now eastern Poland, to a family of assimilated Lithuanian Jews ("Litvaks"). His father was a teacher of modern languages who had worked his way up to the position of a tsarist censor, but later lost his job. The family was often in financial trouble, causing them to relocate several times before finally settling in Warsaw at the end of the century. Zamenhof grew up with his mother tongues Russian and Yiddish in a multi-ethnic setting where Polish, German, and Lithuanian were also spoken. He also learned French, Latin, Classical Greek, and Hebrew. From a very young age, he considered the language barrier between the ethnic groups to be the main reason for inter-ethnic hostility and ignorance, and he began working on the idea of overcoming these problems and the resulting mutual hatred through a neutral tongue – one that could serve as a means of communication between diverse nations and place people on an equal footing. The first signs of his international language go back to the year 1878. In around 1880 Zamenhof was also intensely studying Yiddish, for which he wrote the first modern grammar (although this was not published in his lifetime). After antisemitic pogroms in 1881 Zamenhof had to leave Moscow, where he was studying ophthalmology, and became an adherent of Zionism. However, he rejected the plans to revive Classical Hebrew (which later nevertheless turned out to be successful)

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25. In recent years, many new biographies of Zamenhof have appeared, of which those by Korzhenkov (2010) and Künzli (2010) are particularly noteworthy. Especially interesting for the relationship between Esperanto and Zamenhof's Jewish identity is the collection of and commentary on sources in Jagodzińska (2012). For aspects of the history of the Esperanto movement see also Schor (2016) and Pereltsvaig (2017, part 2).

and to valorise Yiddish (then called “the Jargon”) and continued working on the project of an international language, which in his eyes would serve not only as an additional language for inter-ethnic communication, but also as the common language of a soon-to-be-established Jewish state and nation. Later Zamenhof distanced himself from Zionist projects, and after 1900 he started propagating a universal set of principles based on the commonalities of religions which he first called Hillelism (after the ancient rabbi Hillel) and later Homaranism (which can be rendered ‘Humanitism’, from Esperanto *hom-* ‘man/human being’, *-ar-* ‘collection of/group’, *-an-* ‘member/adherent’, *-ism-* ‘theory/system’, *-o* ‘noun’). His goal was to unite the world’s religions on a neutral base without conflating them into one. In 1917 he died from heart failure in Warsaw. In 1960, UNESCO recognised him as one of the “great personalities of humankind”, and in 2015 it declared its intention to officially remember him on the occasion of the centenary of his death in 2017.

In the summer of 1887, while Volapük was at its apogee, Zamenhof, with the help of his bride, Klara Zilbernik, succeeded in publishing the modest forty-page brochure (now known as *Unua Libro* ‘first book’) of his *Lingvo Internacia* in Russian, German and French (it was later also published in Polish, English, and other languages). Unlike J. M. Schleyer, the inventor of Volapük (see Chapter 7), as early as 1888 he relinquished all personal rights to the language and proclaimed it the property of its users.

*Mi scias tre bone, ke la verko de unu homo ne povas esti senerara, se tiu homo eĉ estus la plej genia kaj multe pli instruita ol mi. Tial mi ne donis ankoraŭ al mia lingvo la finan formon; mi ne parolas: “jen la lingvo estas kreita kaj preta, tiel mi volas, tia ĝi estu kaj tia ĝi restu!” Ĉio bonigebla estos bonigata per la konsiloj de l’ mondo. Mi ne volas esti kreinto de l’ lingvo, mi volas nur esti iniciatoro.* (Zamenhof *La Dua Libro de l’ lingvo internacia I*; Dietterle 1929, p. 26, original emphasis)

[I know very well that the work of a *single person* cannot be without mistakes, even if that person were the greatest genius and more educated than I am. Therefore, I have not given the language its final form; I am not saying: “here is the language created and complete, this is how I want it to be and to remain!” Everything worth improving will be improved by means of the advice of the world. I don’t want to be the *creator* of the language, I merely want to be an *initiator*.]

Zamenhof started corresponding with people interested in the language (among them Edgar von Wahl, the future inventor of Occidental), and in 1888 the *Dua Libro* (‘second book’) and an appendix to it were published to solidify the final form of the language. In the same year the Volapük club of Nuremberg, Germany, switched over to Esperanto and began publishing the first Esperanto journal, *La Esperantisto*, in 1889. In the years that followed, during which Zamenhof lived in relative poverty, the language slowly spread throughout Russia and Germany, but the movement was embroiled in quarrels over linguistic reforms. When these were

finally rejected by a majority in a poll in 1894, many reformists (among them the Nuremberg club) left the language, and the ban of *La Esperantisto* by the tsarist police in 1895 – prompted by an article by Leo Tolstoy, who had taken an interest in Esperanto – led to the end of the journal (see Lins, 2016, pp. 15/16).

With the language in real danger of disappearing, Esperanto was saved from this crisis by Louis de Beaufront, who successfully propagated it in France and Western Europe – not as an idealistic remedy to save mankind from war, but as a practical means of communication for commercial and scientific needs (Garvía, 2015, pp. 77–81). Between 1900 and 1914 Esperanto flourished, with the foundation of hundreds of local groups, journals, and specialised organisations.<sup>26</sup> Many texts were translated into Esperanto and original literary works began to appear (Minnaja & Silber, 2015; Sutton, 2008). In the summer of 1905, nearly 700 Esperanto speakers came together in Boulogne-sur-Mer for the first Esperanto world congress. At the congress, the so-called Bulonja Deklaracio (‘Declaration of Boulogne’) declared the grammatical and lexical basis published as the *Fundamento de Esperanto* (‘Esperanto foundation’) to be the immutable linguistic norm (see Chapter 9). A *Lingva Komitato* (‘Language Committee’) was established, which later installed (1908) and eventually became (1948) the Esperanto Academy (*Akademio de Esperanto*). The *Fundamento* comprises a basic grammar (i.e. the grammatical part of the first textbook *Unua Libro*, originally published in 1887), a list of official vocabulary items (*Universala Vortaro* ‘universal dictionary’, Zamenhof, 1894) and stylistic exercises (*Ekzercaro*, 1893). Such a World Esperanto Congress (*Universala Kongreso de Esperanto, UK*) has taken place every year since 1905, interrupted only by the World Wars and the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>27</sup> The first international Esperanto association, *Universala Esperanto-Asocio (UEA)*, was founded in 1908, the year of the Ido schism. The outbreak of the First World War put an end to the rapid growth of Esperanto – not only physically, but also ideologically, as the dream of universal, peaceful progress was drowned in blood.

What is often referred to as the Ido schism has an exciting history that started in 1901, when the *Délégation pour l’adoption d’une langue auxiliaire internationale*, led by the logician and Leibniz researcher Louis Couturat and the mathematician Léopold Leau, was founded with the task of raising public awareness of the need for an international auxiliary language and deciding on the most suitable project among those existing at the time. Zamenhof had selected Louis de Beaufront to

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26. These included organisations for followers of various religions, for pacifists, vegetarians, philatelists, as well as professional organisations for railroaders, scientists, physicians, etc. (Blanke & Blanke, 2015).

27. The anniversary 100th World Esperanto Congress in Lille, France, in 2015 was attended by approximately 2,700 participants.

present Esperanto, which of course had a reasonable chance of success. When, after years of studying the variety of projects and listening to their representatives and with two monographs on the topic, the *Délégation* still failed to make a decision, a working committee of eighteen scholars (including prominent figures such as Otto Jespersen, Wilhelm Ostwald, Jan Baudouin de Courtenay, and Hugo Schuchardt, in addition to Couturat and Leau) was established in 1907. In one of its final sessions, Couturat presented an anonymous project to the members of the committee whose creator called himself “Ido” and which included modifications to Esperanto that had already been discussed as flaws of the language. The committee decided to adopt Esperanto as the universal auxiliary language, but on condition that Esperanto be modified in line with the proposals expressed in the “Ido” project. As Esperanto, as we have shown, had by this time already been in active use in both written and spoken communication, the speech community was unable to agree on the proposed modifications. From that time onwards the reform proposals adopted by Ido were seen as a separate language, and in future years Ido was considered a rival to Esperanto. When in 1908 it transpired that Beaufront was the author of Ido (see Garvía, 2015, pp. 134–137) and when he became one of its leading figures, this was seen as a kind of high treason by Esperanto speakers, which caused vociferous debate. Others believe that Beaufront’s confession as the author of Ido was a lie to cover Couturat, who as a member of the *Délégation* was not permitted to present his own project (Gordin, 2015, p. 147).

The 1920s saw, in addition to the struggle between Esperanto and its competitors Ido and Occidental (see Chapter 7), the flourishing of the Esperanto working class movement, which brought together manifold socialist streams in *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda* (SAT, ‘World Association for Non-Nationhood’). At the same time, the bourgeois movement lobbied the League of Nations to vote for the introduction of Esperanto, but the positive report by vice-secretary Nitobe Inazō in 1921, backed only by smaller countries, was finally rejected through the adversarial activities of France, which opposed the possibility of another rival for the position of French (which was already under pressure because of English). In the 1930s, the fascist and communist regimes in Europe (and also in Japan) grew suspicious of the so-called cosmopolitan activities of Esperanto speakers, which culminated in the dissolution of all planned language associations in Nazi Germany in 1936 and the arrest and execution of leading Soviet Esperanto activists as spies in 1937 (O’Keeffe 2021). While using the language was never banned per se, promoting it could be extremely dangerous. The socialist movement in particular was largely wiped out (for an overview, see Lins, 1988 and 2016).

Esperanto was also gaining ground outside Europe. In the first half of the twentieth century, large speech communities existed in Asia, particularly in Japan and

China, and in Brazil.<sup>28</sup> The language played an important role in the history of Japanese popular internationalism (Rapley, 2016). It was learned and discussed by intellectuals and ordinary people alike, and, according to Konishi (2013, p. 25), “[b]y 1928, Japan had the highest number of registered Esperanto speakers by far of any non-European country, including the United States”. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the history of Esperanto in China was closely connected with anarchism (Müller & Benton, 2006). In addition, it is noteworthy that Esperanto speakers played an active part in the Chinese Latinization movement in several periods between 1911 and 1958 (Wang & Liu, 2017).

After the Second World War, the Esperanto movement attempted to reorganise and gain support in the United Nations. In 1954, UEA successfully campaigned for a UNESCO resolution which called on all member states to explore the possibilities of the use of Esperanto, but, like a similar resolution in 1985, this did not have many practical consequences. In the Eastern Bloc, it was not until post-Stalinist times that organised Esperanto activities were able to start. But once the movement had been re-established in Eastern Europe, Esperanto often received generous support from governments for reasons of prestige – while at the same time secret police always kept an eye on the relations of Esperanto speakers to other, especially Western, countries. While leading figures of the movement were still trying to garner political support for the long-dreamed-of *Fina Venko* (lit. ‘final victory’), i.e. the worldwide adoption of Esperanto, the majority of speakers preferred to just use the language. This led to a considerable growth in literary output, especially prose, while before that Esperanto had been used mostly for poetry (Sutton, 2008). It also led to the beginning of an ever-growing music scene<sup>29</sup> and more and more international meetings, mostly of a specialised nature (e.g. for young people).

In 1980, in a manifesto drawn up at an international Esperanto youth congress in the Finnish town of Rauma, some younger Esperanto speakers even called for a turn away from political goals, as the speech community was already sufficient for all kinds of activities. This orientation towards Esperanto as a self-elected alternative culture has been referred to as *raŭmismo* since the mid-eighties and used in opposition to *finvenkismo*. However, as far as the individual Esperanto speaker is concerned, the two orientations do not seem mutually exclusive – a point of view argued by a number of Esperanto researchers (Fiedler, 2002a; Tišljár, 1997; Tonkin,

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28. For more detailed surveys see Pereltsvaig “State-of-the-Art: The History of Esperanto” (<https://www.esperanto.org/en/research/state-of-the-art/state-of-the-art-esperanto-history/>) and Kókény & Bleier, 1986/1933, pp. 62–66, 97–99, 392–405).

29. See, for example, <https://www.vinilkosmo-mp3.com/en/>.



2006). Kimura (2012: 169), referring to Zamenhof’s formulations of *Esperantujo* (‘Esperantoland’) and *popolo esperantista* (‘Esperantist people’), even contends that “from the beginning, Esperanto has developed along dual tracks as a movement and as a community”.

The end of the Cold War and the rise of the Internet after 1989 mark the newest phase of the Esperanto movement/speech community. The discontinuation of monetary support from Eastern European states and the “disappearance” of thousands of members in these countries, who had joined the movement chiefly because it was their only chance to have international contacts, was a huge blow to the traditional organisations and the movement as a whole. But Western associations, too, faced a steady loss of members,<sup>30</sup> as the possibilities of the Internet saw them lose their former monopoly on procuring information and contacts. Today there is no longer any need to join a club in order to consume the cultural products of Esperanto or to speak the language: e-books, YouTube, voiceover IP software, etc. allow for immediate contact with the world by means of the planned language. Against this backdrop one could argue that while the classical Esperanto *movement* is shrinking, the speech *community* is growing.

The following timeline may serve as a summary of the information on the history of Esperanto given in this chapter:

- 1859: L. L. Zamenhof is born to a family of assimilated Lithuanian Jews (“Litvaks”) in Białystok, in the Russian Empire (today Eastern Poland);
- 1878–1881: First texts in a so-called Pra-Esperanto (protoforms of Esperanto from Zamenhof’s time at school and university);
- 1887: Publication of the first brochures of *Lingvo Internacia* in Warsaw (in Russian, German, and French, with the pseudonym “Dr. Esperanto”);
- 1888: First Esperanto club (in Nuremberg, Germany);
- 1889–1895: First Esperanto journal *La Esperantisto* (ending following a ban imposed by tsarist censorship);
- 1895–1900: Stagnation in Germany and Russia, overcome by its spread in France, where practical usage was emphasised instead of idealistic notions of peace and fraternity;
- after 1900: Beginning of the social and ideological differentiation of the Esperanto movement, foundation of special organisations, national associations, journals; first original literature and rapid growth of the movement in Europe;

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30. An example is the Universal Esperanto Association UEA, which had nearly 44,000 members in 1987 and less than 15,000 in 2014, see [https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Membronombroj\\_de\\_UEA#Diagramo\\_kaj\\_tabelo\\_de\\_la\\_suma\\_membraro\\_ekde\\_1908](https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Membronombroj_de_UEA#Diagramo_kaj_tabelo_de_la_suma_membraro_ekde_1908).

- 1905:** First World Esperanto Congress (*Universala Kongreso*, UK) in Boulogne-sur-Mer (France), which also saw the enactment of the *Fundamento de Esperanto* as the immutable linguistic norm, and the foundation of the *Lingva Komitato*, later to become the *Akademio de Esperanto* (Esperanto language academy);
- 1908:** Foundation of the Universal Esperanto Association *Universala Esperanto-Asocio* (UEA) and of the *Akademio de Esperanto*; Ido schism;
- 1914–1918:** First World War halts many activities, ending Esperanto’s rapid dissemination;
- 1917:** Zamenhof dies in Warsaw;
- 1920s:** Very active working class movement; official support for Esperanto in the League of Nations, but finally failure of all attempts because of French opposition;
- 1927:** Foundation of the International Esperanto Museum in Vienna (today the “Planned Languages” Collection of the Austrian National Library ÖNB);
- 1930s:** Systematic suppression of Esperanto organisations and activities in totalitarian countries (Germany 1936, Soviet Union 1937);
- after WWII:** Reorganisation, but in the Eastern Bloc not until post-Stalinist times (e.g. in the GDR in 1965); tension between official promotion and mistrustful monitoring in the East;
- 1954, 1985:** UNESCO resolutions calling for the official acknowledgement of Esperanto; beginning of official relations between UEA and UN;
- 1970s:** Formation of, and emphasis on, an independent culture (literature, music, meetings); at the same time, the appearance of ever more scientific studies (1906–1971: twenty-eight dissertations, 1975–1987: ninety-five dissertations: see Symoens 1989);
- 1980:** Manifesto of Rauma: some Esperantists abandon the political goals of the movement;
- 1987:** Anniversary World Congress in Warsaw with record attendance of 5,900 participants;
- after 1990:** Political changes and technological advances (end of Communism, Internet) defy the traditional Esperanto organisations, which lose many members, while the use of the language increases, especially through an increasing number of meetings and on the Internet.



## Main current domains

For practical and methodological reasons there are no reliable data on the number of Esperanto speakers worldwide. According to the Ethnologue, the standard reference for living languages, Esperanto is the second language of two million people, while, according to membership-based statistics, Esperanto speakers number only approximately 150,000 (Fettes, 2003, p. 43). A modern approach to assessing the number of Esperanto speakers should not ignore the major impact that the Internet has had on how the language is used. Wandel (2015, p. 318) suggests an updated estimate of the number of Esperanto speakers worldwide based on the number of people on Facebook who claim to speak the language: “A simple calculation accompanied by reasonable refinements leads to a number of approximately two million Esperanto users within the Internet community alone, probably significantly more worldwide.” A seminal collection of papers on planned languages, *Interlinguistics. Aspects of the science of planned languages* (Schubert, 1989 [ed.]), gives an impression of the broad range of estimates. Here, one of the authors posits a number of “between 2 and 3.5 million” speakers (Piron, 1989b, p. 157), while another suggests 500,000 (Pool & Grofman, 1989, p. 146). Of these two, the lower estimate seems to be reasonable to us, with the number of truly fluent speakers being much lower.

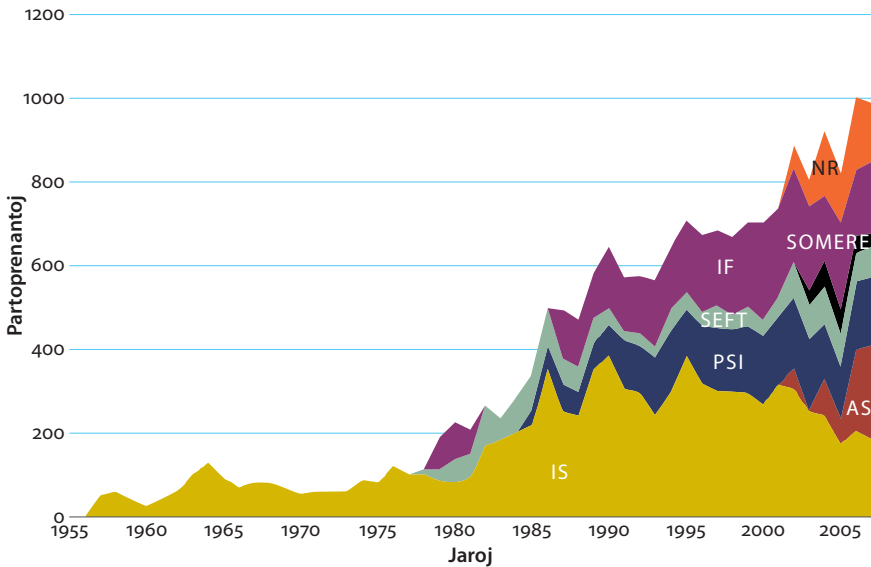
The ever-increasing numbers of participants in Esperanto events clearly attest to the fact that the language is not falling out of use, but rather gaining new speakers. Figure 2<sup>31</sup> shows the number of participants in Esperanto events in Germany lasting at least one week (from which IS, AS, IF, and NR occur at the same time around the turn of the year).

Another indicator of growing interest in Esperanto is an increase in learners. More and more people are learning Esperanto in online courses that are offered free of charge (e.g. *lernu!*; *Duolingo*; *Livemocha*; *Lingolía*; *EsperantoLand*). The Esperanto course for English speakers by *Duolingo* was launched in late May 2015 and attracted about 400,000 learners in its first year. Courses for Spanish and Portuguese speakers have since been added, with a total of about 2.8 million people who had begun one of the three versions by the start of 2020.<sup>32</sup>

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31. Taken from [https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dosiero:Renkontigoj\\_en\\_Germanio\\_partoprenantoj.png](https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dosiero:Renkontigoj_en_Germanio_partoprenantoj.png).

32. See <https://www.liberafolio.org/2020/03/31/kie-estas-la-duolinganoj/>



**Figure 2.** Participants in lengthy Esperanto events in Germany (jaroj = years, partoprenantoj = participants; Abbreviations: IS = Internacia Seminario ‘international seminar’, SEFT = Somera Esperanto-Familia/Feria Tendaro ‘Esperanto summer family/holiday camp’, IF = Internacia Festivalo ‘international festival’, PSI = Printempa Semajno Internacia ‘international springtime week’, AS = Ago-Semajno ‘action week’, NR = Novjara Renkontiĝo ‘New Year’s meeting’ and SOMERE = Somera Mezeŭropa Renkontiĝo ‘Central European summer meeting’)

The intense travel and meeting activities of Esperanto speakers – a specific trait of the community<sup>33</sup> – have led to a high number of international couples. For them, Esperanto often becomes, at least in the beginning, a family language and for their children an additional mother tongue. We will return to this topic in Chapter 10.

In Chapter 8, we mentioned the production of poetry and prose in the history of Esperanto. Strictly speaking, Esperanto was a literary language from its earliest beginnings. The 1887 *Unua Libro* included as examples of texts in the new language (in addition to a number of biblical translations and a letter) three poems, two of which were original. Soon afterwards, Zamenhof and other Esperanto pioneers started to translate important works of world literature, such as Dickens’ *The Battle of Life* (1891), Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* (1894), Pushkin’s *Борис Годунов* (Boris Godunov) (Vasilij Devjatnin, 1894–95), Beaumarchais’ *Le Mariage*

33. For instance, the Esperanto calendar for May to September 2015 published in the magazine *Esperanto* 3, 2015 pp. 66–67 lists fifty-three multiple-day events in twenty-four countries.

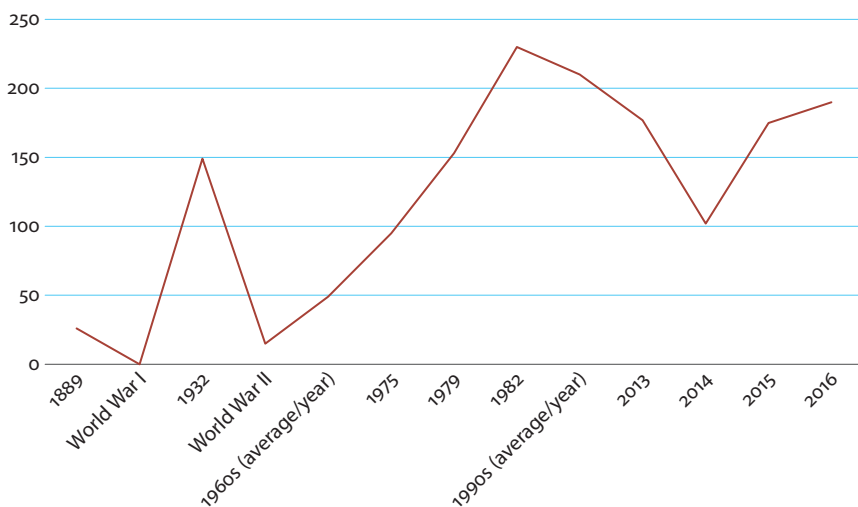
*de Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro) (Abraham A. Kofman, 1898), Schiller's *Wilhelm Tell* (Ludwig E. Meier, 1906), Gogol's *Peвuzop* (The Government Inspector) (1907), Prus' *Faraon* (Pharaoh) (Kazimierz Bein, 1907), Goethe's *Iphigenie auf Tauris* (Iphigenia in Tauris) (1908), Schiller's *Die Räuber* (The Robbers) (1908), Molière's *Georges Dandin* (1908), *Don Juan* (Émile Boirac, 1909), Orzeszkowa's *Marta* (1910), and Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* (Antoni Grabowski, 1918). Translating literature helped to develop Esperanto's expressive qualities and to stabilise it, and it has also been regarded as proof that the language is capable of presenting work from other cultures (Cool, 1993, p. 73; Minnaja, 2018, p. 177). Translated literature from outside Europe includes Lu Xun's short stories (*Elektitaj noveloj*, 1939), Ihara Saikaku's *Five Women who Loved Love* (*Kvin Virinoj de Amoro*, 1966), Cao Xueqin's *Dream of the Red Chamber* (*Ruĝdoma Sonĝo*, 1985), Luo Guanzhong's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (*Romano pri la tri regnoj*, 2008) (Laulum, 2010). It is noteworthy that Esperanto has served also as a bridge language. For example, a number of works originally written in the languages of Central and Eastern Europe have been translated into Esperanto and then translated into Chinese and Japanese from the Esperanto versions (Janton, 1993, p. 94).

This short list of translations already illustrates a specific feature of translated literature in Esperanto: it is highly international and fundamentally democratic. In contrast to the situation in ethnic languages, Esperanto translations cover a large variety of source languages, including both “big” ones like English and French and “small” ones like Macedonian and Czech (see Fiedler 1999, p. 283f.).<sup>34</sup> Market strategies seem to be less important here than some Esperanto speakers' wishes to make the members of the speech community familiar with the culture of their home country. Of course, we have to consider that the total literary output in Esperanto (including translations) is a drop in the ocean compared to that in, say, English or German.

Esperanto literature has kept its important role in developing the language and its community, with specialist literary journals, literary competitions and prizes contributing to its advancement. The 2001 catalogue published by the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) contains more than 4,000 entries, among them both translated literary world classics and original works. Referring to the survey of original Esperanto literature by Sten Johansson, Minnaja (2018) points out that between the year 2000 and January 2014, more than 2,600 titles were published,

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34. Statistics on the source languages of translated literature in Germany, for example, show that the most important languages in 2017 were English (66.5%), French (11.9%), Japanese (6.4%), Italian (2.7%) and Swedish (2.5%) (<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/194342/umfrage/buchmarkt-hoerbuch-umsatz-nach-warengruppen/>).



**Figure 3.** Development of the Esperanto book market (1889–2018) (Becker, 2017)

equivalent to more than 170 titles per year. Figure 3 provides an overview of the development of the Esperanto book market from 1889 to 2016.<sup>35</sup>

There are two comprehensive presentations of Esperanto literature in general, each more than 700 pages long. Sutton's (2008) book in English provides an overview of Esperanto's most important original works, their authors and, by including reviews, readers' opinions on these for the general public, whereas Minnaja and Silber (2015) offer a compendium on Esperanto literature for the speech community. Both illustrate the rich history of Esperanto literature including various literary genres and schools, without ignoring special trends such as the Prague group, which made Esperanto a linguistic battlefield in the 1970s and 1980s with its lexical innovations (see Chapter 25). We agree with Tonkin (2000) that despite these literary innovators the language has remained relatively stable and accessible. In general, or more specifically in the terms of classic functional stylistics (Riesel, 1975), in Esperanto the language used in literary works is less far removed from everyday usage than we know to be the case in ethnic languages.

Esperanto has also been used as a language for special purposes (or scholarly language). Blanke and Blanke (2015) list twenty-four specialised Esperanto

35. Figure 3 is based on data published in the Esperanto journal *La Ondo de Esperanto* 5/2017 (Kaliningrad, Russia). It was created by Ulrich Becker and presented during his talk in the Soros lecture series in New York on November 10, 2017 (Becker, 2017). We thank Ulrich Becker for his permission to include the figures in this book.

organisations and thirty-seven disciplines with specialist publications and describe forestry, railway and medicine as the fields in which terminology development and unification have been particularly systematic and useful in Esperanto. Stabilised scientific vocabulary is recorded in over 200 dictionaries covering some ninety fields. The Universal Esperanto Association seeks to coordinate work on terminology and collaborates with the principal international terminological institutions. The annual World Esperanto Congress includes a Congress University (*Internacia Kongresa Universitato, IKU*) with lectures by university professors representing fields as diverse as astronomy, philosophy and zoology. The use of Esperanto as a language for special purposes is mainly restricted to its application within Esperanto circles. Only a few speakers use the language for professional goals outside the community, and there are only a few examples of specialist organisations or journals using the language (cf. Interlingua in the 1950s and 1960s: see Chapter 7). We will return to the topic of the professional use of Esperanto in Chapter 26.

Overall, it is impossible to equate the use of Esperanto with widely used or even world languages, either quantitatively or regarding the range of communicative functions. Literary writing and the use of Esperanto as a language for special purposes are the functional styles that are most developed in addition to everyday use. The domain of trade and business, one of the central areas in which English has flourished as a lingua franca, hardly exists in Esperanto communication. Domains like advertising, legal and institutional language use are likewise largely undeveloped, owing to the lack of a significant market or adoption at state administration level. The use of Esperanto in a professional context is restricted to several international Esperanto organisations, for example the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA). The international staff at its headquarters in Rotterdam naturally use Esperanto as their corporate language. In addition, there are several independent Esperanto publishers, travel agencies and other small companies that offer their services in various languages including Esperanto. For the most part, however, Esperanto is associated with the private sphere of its users, their leisure activities and related domains.

Nowadays, the Esperanto speech community is mainly active in Europe, but has local centres in the United States, Brazil, China, and Japan. The Universal Esperanto Association (UEA) has individual members in more than 120 countries and about seventy affiliated national Esperanto organisations. The speech community is very heterogeneous in terms of sociological categories and ideology. The majority of speakers, however, identify with Esperanto as an equitable means of communication, peacefully uniting people irrespective of their origin, race, sex, age, religion, or language, goals which are related to Zamenhof's original motivation (generally called Esperanto's 'inherent idea', *Interna Ideo*). In addition, proficient speakers



share the culture of the community formed by its artistic products (especially literary works), achievements (such as the support for Esperanto by UNESCO resolutions), and its crises (such as the Ido schism and the persecution of speakers in totalitarian regimes). Consciousness of the language's 130-year communicative history is an important constituent of their identity.

## Esperanto as a family language and the phenomenon of Esperanto “native speakers”

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Esperanto is in active use in various domains of communication despite the fact that its speakers do not live together in a specific territory. There is no “Esperantoland”, but Esperanto speakers regard their community as *Esperantujo*/*Esperantio* (using one of the two suffixes for the formation of the names of countries: *-uj* or *-i*), especially when its life manifests itself at meetings and other common activities, where the following farewell can often be heard: *Ni renkontiĝos ie iam en Esperantujo* (‘We’ll meet [again] somewhere sometime in Esperantoland’).

Whilst the various meetings mostly bring together speakers only for a short time, since the early days of the language some people have found their life-partners during such encounters. When these couples decide to live together and one partner moves to the other’s home country, Esperanto can find itself in a new role: it is adopted as a family language. This phenomenon has even given rise to a set phrase, *Esperanto – edzperanto* (‘Esperanto – husband/wife provider / matchmaker’) (see Fiedler 2015d, p. 255). Out of the thirty participants in our interview study, which is a part of the dataset for this venture (see “interview” in Appendix 1), no fewer than fourteen met their present or a previous partner through Esperanto, and thirteen mentioned that they used Esperanto as (one of) their language(s) in the home.<sup>36</sup>

This use of Esperanto has not triggered scholarly interest so far (for an exception see Brosch, 2018) – especially when compared with the popularity that the use of English as a lingua franca between couples has enjoyed (see, for example, Gundacker, 2010; Klötzl, 2013, and Pietikäinen, 2014). There are, however, a few studies on the use of the language by children who are born to these couples and

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36. The following passage from an interview with a Hungarian woman living in a Dutch environment with her French-speaking husband provides insight into the special role that Esperanto played in their marriage: “Mi devas diri, kiam mia edzo, pro tio, ke li estas enprofundiĝanta en iu laboro en la franca aŭ en la nederlanda, alparolas al mi en la nederlanda aŭ franca, mi komprenas ĉion, sed mi estas ofendita. Do, mi ne sentas, ke li estas tute kun mi” [I have to say that, when my husband is sunk in thought during some work in French or Dutch and starts talking to me in French or Dutch, I understand everything, but I am upset. Because, I don’t feel he is entirely with me.] [64 (hun; int; -) 25: 21–41].

subsequently raised with Esperanto as a first language.<sup>37</sup> These include research by Versteegh (1993), Corsetti (1996), Bergen (2001), Corsetti et al. (2004), Lindstedt (2006, 2010, 2016), Sakaguchi (2006), Fischer (2011), and Fiedler (2012). In addition, a number of studies conducted by Esperanto speakers (Butler, 1921; Csiszár, 1995; Csiszár-Salomon, 2009; Golden, 1991; Košecký, 1996; Miner, 2010) are no less important contributions to the research in this field, though they are only rarely taken into account outside the speech community because of the language barrier.

Most of these studies approach nativisation in Esperanto from a sociolinguistic perspective, which is also our focus here. Linguistically oriented research, i.e. studies exploring the process of L1<sup>38</sup> acquisition with Esperanto, is rarely found. The few studies that do exist are often based on analysis of the diaries kept by Esperanto-speaking parents (e.g. Brosch, 2019; Corsetti, 1996; Sakaguchi, 2006; Vaha, 1996). An exception is Bergen (2001), whose study has received considerable attention from language acquisition scholars (see, for example, Wray & Grace, 2007). He uses a rather small sample, however, and has been criticised by Lindstedt (2006, 2016) for a number of mistakes related to his insufficient familiarity with Esperanto suffixes and his lack of experience with different influences on Esperanto speakers.

As several book-length publications testify (see, for example, Bonfiglio, 2010; Coulmas, 1981; Davies, 2003), it is surprisingly difficult to define the notion of a “native or mother tongue speaker”. In his effort to provide a detailed description, Davies (2003, pp. 210f.), at the end of his book, lists six features that he proposes as characteristics of a typical native (L1) speaker:

1. The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker in childhood.
2. The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar 1.
3. The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2 which are distinct from his/her Grammar 1.
4. The native speaker has a unique capacity to produce fluent spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries [...] and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items [...]. In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.
5. The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphor to novels).
6. The native speaker has a unique capacity to interpret and translate into the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker. Disagreements about an individual’s capacity are likely to stem from a dispute about the Standard or (standard) Language.

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37. For general literature on multilingual first language acquisition see Genesee & Nicoladis (2009), Meisel (2019), and Wright et al. (2017).

38. In accordance with the majority of authors in language acquisition, we use L1 to refer to “first language/native language” and L2 to “second/foreign language”.

Interestingly enough, Davies adds that all these qualities, with the exception of the first criterion (exposure during early childhood), can in principle be accomplished by L2 speakers, too, if the conditions are sufficiently good – which is “possible but difficult and rare” (p. 215). For this reason, Davies (2003, pp. 212–214) comes to the conclusion that the main differences between L1 and L2 speakers are psycholinguistic rather than objective in nature. They are based on power relations and social ascriptions of identity: “[...] [T]he fundamental opposition is one of power and [...] in the event membership is determined by the non-native speaker’s assumption of confidence and of identity.” (p. 215)

While this intriguing topic deserves a much more detailed account, for the needs of the present chapter it should suffice to define “mother tongue / L1” as any language that a child acquires from birth by means of exposure to the language and personal interaction with one or more speakers of the language (typically his/her parent), as opposed to learning it later in life by means of formal education, and that as a result of this early acquisition the child becomes a native speaker of the given language. Taking this definition as a point of departure, it can rightly be said that Esperanto has also become a mother tongue.<sup>39</sup> For none of its speakers is it the only L1, of course, as Esperanto speakers are at least bilingual. In Esperanto, a mother tongue speaker of this language is usually referred to as a *denaskulo* (*de-nask-ul-* ‘from-birth-person-’), which is a short form of *denaska Esperantisto* (‘Esperanto speaker from birth’). We will consistently use *denaskulo* (plural: *denaskuloj*) here and throughout this book to refer to native Esperanto speakers, in accordance with previous studies (Fiedler, 2012; Versteegh, 1993). This formal distinction has the function of highlighting the principal differences between native speakers of an ethnic language and children who are raised with Esperanto. One of those – the fact that in the case of Esperanto children grow up with a non-dominant native language among others, such as the language(s) of their parent(s) and the language of their environment – has just been mentioned, and further differences will be addressed over the course of this chapter. It may be useful, first, to describe the history, scope and organisational structure of the phenomenon in more detail.

Although, because of varying information from different sources,<sup>40</sup> we are not totally sure about the earliest case of a child growing up with Esperanto, it seems safe to say that the phenomenon is not recent, but began as early as about fifteen

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39. As the title of Corsetti’s (1996) paper reveals, it is primarily fathers who speak Esperanto with their children.

40. Wikipedia mentions 1904 as a starting point, citing the moment when Emilio Gaston, from Spain, began teaching his children in Esperanto. There are, however, no linguistic data available from this time. From an article by Esperantina Grażyna Mirska, we learn about an Esperanto-speaking family in the fourth generation in Poland (Mirska, 2016, p. 156).

years after the language itself came into being. The first case study is of a family in Czechoslovakia in 1919, to which Golden (1991) refers. The linguistic development of three children of Montague C. Butler, a renowned British Esperantist, is well documented (Butler, 1921). The use of Esperanto as a native language is increasing. In 1957, 154 children in nineteen countries were reported as growing up with Esperanto (Corsetti, 1996, p. 265). Corsetti refers to 285 registered families in January 1995, but estimates the actual number to be considerably higher. In their 2004 article, Corsetti, Pinto and Tolomeo raise the number to 2,000 children and cite the fact that *denaskuloj* can be found above all in Europe. It is known that about half of them give up the language when they are able to decide for themselves, usually in their adolescence (Papaloïzos, 1992). This phenomenon is not unusual, also occurring with regard to minority languages under the pressure of a surrounding majority language (see, for example, Caldas & Caron-Caldas (2002), on the peer pressure on English-French bilingual teenagers). Esperanto is particularly affected by the problems that small, low-prestige languages have in acquiring appropriate material for children (books, games, films) or the negative reactions voiced to a “useless additional language” (see Corsetti, 1996, p. 267).

For families with *denaskuloj*, *Rondo Familia* (‘family circle’) was established in 1995 as a special interest group within the Universal Esperanto Association (UEA), together with an email list, which serves especially practical purposes. In November 2018, there were 236 registered email addresses on this list.<sup>41</sup> Also, most Internet resources (e.g. a wiki) are of a practical nature, enabling parents to share educational advice and material (often home-made PDF books, songs, nursery rhymes, etc.).

As for children’s language acquisition, contact with peers is of the utmost importance, and regular meetings of Esperanto families are organised in various places in Europe. REF (*Renkontiĝo de Esperantaj Familioj* ‘meeting of Esperanto families’) is a well-established event that takes place during the summer holidays; in July 2018 it was attended by twenty families with seventy-five participants in total.<sup>42</sup> Other meetings, such as an Easter holiday meeting, PSI (*Printempa Semajno Internacia* ‘international springtime week’) in Germany, and a meeting at the end of the year, NR (*Novjara Renkontiĝo* ‘New Year’s meeting’), attract up to 200 attendants, a third of whom are children and teenagers (but not necessarily *denaskuloj*). Beside these events, the creation of opportunities for encounters among *denaskuloj* depends heavily on their parents’ initiative, but in recent years video messaging software such as Skype has created new possibilities for direct contact.

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41. Confirmed by a personal message from the administrator [18 Nov 2018].

42. Personal message of one of the organisers [17 Nov 2018].

It is noteworthy that the use of Esperanto as a mother tongue is found not only in international families. According to Guráň and Filadelfiová (1996, p. 39) 61%, and to Corsetti (1996, p. 266) even about two thirds of the *denaskuloj* have parents belonging to the same nationality (see also Csiszár-Salomon 2009, p. 318). This fact sheds light on the character of the speech community, and especially on questions of language loyalty and speaker identity. It shows that the planned language “holds a high position in a scale of values”, a position that is worth defending and needs to be defended, as Weinreich (1977, p. 131) expressed in his definition of language loyalty (*Sprachloyalität*). To its speakers, Esperanto is not only a means of communication, but an instrument to pass on cultural values that those speakers want to maintain and disseminate. Here again, there are parallels between Esperanto speakers and members of linguistic minorities (Fiedler, 1999, p. 163; Kimura, 2010, 2012).

*Denaskuloj* are “invisible” in the second-language community of Esperanto. This is not only due to their numerical disadvantage. They can hardly be identified on the basis of linguistic criteria. True, *denaskuloj* often naturally speak faster and react more spontaneously than other speakers. But there are no sounds in this language whose production needs to be acquired in early childhood, and accents resulting from speakers’ mother tongues are considered to be normal and are generally tolerated in the speech community (see Chapter 24). Therefore, Esperanto can be learned successfully by adults, and experience shows that good L2 speakers of Esperanto can surpass the linguistic level of a *denaskulo*.

Csiszár-Salomon (2009, pp. 318–319), a native Esperanto speaker, points out the following:

*Laŭ mia opinio la fakton, ke Esperanto estas “bona internacia lingvo” pruvas ĝuste tio, ke dum internaciaj aranĝoj oni ne povas rimarki la denaskajn parolantojn de la lingvo, ĉar ankaŭ nedenskaj lingvolernantoj povas akiri saman, aŭ eĉ pli bonan nivelon ol denaskuloj.*

[In my opinion, the quality of Esperanto as a ‘good international language’ can be proven in particular by the fact that at international meetings native speakers of the language are not noticed, because non-native speakers can acquire the same or even greater proficiency than native speakers.]

The fact that *denaskuloj* do not provide the criterion of linguistic adequacy can be illustrated by language practices adopted in the speech community. While it is common in ethnic languages to have language in publications checked by native speakers, it would not occur to Esperanto authors to look for a native speaker of the planned language to proofread their texts. Of course, texts must be checked for correctness. For this task, however, experienced speakers or representatives of a different mother tongue might be relevant consultants to avoid mother tongue interference (Germanisms, Russianisms etc.). As *denaskuloj* do not hold a prestigious

status in the community (Lindstedt, 2010, p. 73), feelings of insecurity or inferiority in relation to native speakers, which are reported in the use of other languages (Beyene et al., 2009; Flowerdew, 2007; Švelch, 2015), are hardly known in Esperanto.

We have dealt with this topic in such detail here because of our experience that these differences in status between a native speaker of an ethnic language and a native speaker of Esperanto are often ignored in discussions of the role of a planned language (Fiedler, 2015a). People who are not familiar with Esperanto start from their knowledge of the position of native speakers in ethnic languages, arguing that a language can be neither efficient nor expressive if it has no native speakers, or only a small number of them. In Esperanto, communicative ability, expressiveness and naturalness cannot be equated with nativeness. Innovation and creativity as well as language change emanate from L2 speakers in the Esperanto speech community (Lindstedt, 2016), as the following chapters of this book will illustrate.

## Esperanto as a linguistic system

Like any other language, Esperanto can be described in many different ways depending on linguistic trends and authors' points of view.<sup>43</sup> What makes Esperanto special are the extremes that can occur in its representations, ranging from its minimal sixteen-rule grammar printed on the back of a business card or, more typically, one sheet of paper (see Appendix 3) to the 598-page *Plena Analiza Gramatiko* (Kalocsay & Waringhien, 1985). Both types of representation seem to have their justification, although the truth of Esperanto's complexity is probably somewhere in the middle.

In short, Esperanto can be characterised as a combination of (European) internationalisms with a regular morphology of a mixed type and a syntax with a notably Slavic influence. This chapter provides an overview of Esperanto grammar, which should enable the reader to analyse the examples we give in Part IV without the need for morphological glossing. Some specific features of the language system will be explained in later chapters in the context of their use.

### Phonology and alphabet

Esperanto has twenty-eight phonemes, written by twenty-eight letters of the Latin alphabet without *q*, *w*, *x*, and *y* and with  $\hat{c}$  [ $t\hat{f}$ ],  $\hat{g}$  [ $d\hat{z}$ ],  $\hat{h}$  [*x*],  $\hat{j}$  [*z*],  $\hat{s}$  [*ʃ*], and  $\hat{u}$  [non-syllabifying *u*].<sup>44</sup> The graphemic inventory thus is as follows:

*Aa Bb Cc Ĉĉ Dd Ee Ff Gg Ĝĝ Hh Ĥĥ Ii Jj Ĵĵ Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Rr Ss Ŝŝ Tt Uu Ŭŭ Vv Zz*

Whenever the diacritics cannot be used, they should be replaced by *ch*, *gh*, *hh*, *jh*, *sh*, and *u*.<sup>45</sup> There is no uniform regulation of punctuation and word division.

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43. See Gledhill (1998), Janton (1993), Nuessel (2000), and Wells (1978) for linguistic sketches of the language. A comprehensive pedagogical description of Esperanto is found in Wennergren (2020).

44. The letter <ŭ> is used only after *a* and *e* (and in highly debatable words, *o*) to form the diphthongs *aŭ* [*aŭ*] and *eŭ* [*eŭ*] (e.g. in *ambaŭ* 'both' and *Eŭropo* 'Europe'). Its status as a proper phoneme is debatable, however (see Pokrovskij, 2014).

45. On the Internet, especially in the time before the divulgation of Unicode, many more surrogate systems were in use, e.g. *c^*, *c'*, *ú*, *w*. A common and popular alternative system, however, is



The phonemics and especially phonotactics were not designed to achieve the greatest simplicity (as in, for example, Volapük), but to embrace as much international vocabulary from the source languages (see below) as possible.<sup>46</sup> The following tables give an overview of the phoneme system (graphemes diverging from their IPA equivalents are given as miniature letters):

**Table 2.** Esperanto consonants in the notation of the International Phonetic Alphabet

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Dental/alveolar	Post-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Nasal	m		n				
Plosive	p b		t d			k g	
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ <sub>s</sub> ʒ <sub>j</sub>		x <sub>h</sub>	h
Affricate			ts <sub>c</sub>	tʃ <sub>c</sub> dʒ <sub>g</sub>			
Approximant					j		
Trill			r				
Lateral approximant			l				

**Table 3.** Esperanto vowels in the notation of the International Phonetic Alphabet

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		u <sub>u</sub> /ü
Open mid	ε <sub>e</sub>		ɔ <sub>o</sub>
Open		a	

Esperanto has a fixed word stress. In polysyllabic words, stress is on the penultimate syllable: *Esperanto, familio*. It can, however, appear on the last syllable, when the noun marker, word-final *o*, is elided, cf. *komitat'* = *komitato* 'committee'. This optional elision is virtually only found in poems and songs. An apostrophe is also traditionally used in *dank' al* ('thanks to'). Double consonants are rare, but phonemic (*fino* 'end' – *finno* 'Finn').

to replace the accented letter by the plain letter + *x* (e.g.  $\hat{c}=cx$ ,  $\hat{g}=gx$ ) (which means a one-to-one correspondence and allows for automatic conversion into the real letters) (see Chapter 25.5.2). For the sake of intelligibility, in all our quotes we convert unofficial surrogate systems into the official orthography.

46. See van Oostendorp (1999) on the many clusters that Esperanto has taken over from its source languages.

Although rule 9 of the *Fundamento* postulates high precision in pronunciation (“Every word is to be read exactly as written, there are no silent letters”), in practice Esperanto allows for a certain degree of variation, e.g. the pronunciation of <e> and <o> as [e] and [o] or for positional allophones ([aŋkâŭ] besides [ankâŭ]) for *ankaŭ* (‘also, too’). In addition, words with articulatorily difficult structures often, but certainly not always, show assimilations or other simplifications, e.g. *ekzisti* [eksisti/egzisti] ‘to exist’, *absoluta* [apsoluta] ‘absolute’, *biero* [bjerɔ] ‘beer’. Despite the enormous influence of speakers’ native languages, Esperanto has attained a consistent normative pronunciation (see Chapter 28).

## Lexicon

The lexicon of Esperanto is based mainly on internationalisms of Latin and Greek origin as they appear in French, Italian, English, German, Yiddish, Russian, and Polish (e.g. *demokratio* ‘democracy’, *spontanea* ‘spontaneous’, *korekti* ‘to correct’). It is therefore essentially of European character. The Romance languages provide approximately 75% of the Esperanto vocabulary (e.g., *filo* ‘son’, *manĝi* ‘to eat’), about 20% is of Germanic origin (e.g. *haŭto* ‘skin’, *trinki* ‘to drink’), and the rest are derived from various other sources, especially Slavic languages (e.g. *bulko* ‘bun’, *kolbaso* ‘sausage’) (Janton 1993, p. 51; see also Jansen, 2011 and Parkvall, 2010).

Esperanto is a language that is practically without homonyms.<sup>47</sup> In order to avoid homonymy, to facilitate pronunciations and prevent erroneous analysis, roots are sometimes slightly modified or lesser used forms are elected, e.g. *verŝi* (‘to pour’) from French *verser* (as *vers-o* means ‘verse’), *logi* ‘lure’ from German *locken* (as *lok-o* means ‘place’), *abomeni* (‘to abominate’) (as *-in-* marks female sex).<sup>48</sup> Where there were no internationalisms for a given concept, Zamenhof took words from the languages mentioned above, especially from French and German. Sometimes etymological or accidental phonetic correspondences could be used (e.g. *domo* ‘house’ after Latin and Slavic, *sama* ‘same’ after English and Slavic), sometimes similar forms were combined in a kind of compromise solution, e.g. *ŝtono* (‘stone’) as a mixture of the English and German (*Stein* [ʃtâin]) words. A few words, stemming from an early, but later thoroughly modified stage of the language prior to its publication in 1887 (so-called Pra-Esperanto: see Waringhien 1989, pp. 19–48), are without a definitively certain etymology, notably *tuj* ‘immediately’ and *edzo* ‘husband’.

Another feature to keep in mind is the semantic autonomy of the roots. Although they were formally taken from one or more languages, their meanings in

47. For a more detailed discussion on homonymy and the creation of deliberate ambiguity for humorous purposes (so-called pseudo-homonymy), see Chapter 20.

48. See Szerdahelyi (1976) for different types of adaptation. See also Blanke (1985, pp. 249f.) and Janton (1993, pp. 52–53).

Esperanto need not correspond with those in the source language(s). For example, the preposition *ĉe* ('at') is formally taken over from French *chez*, but semantically it is an exact correspondence of Russian *у* (*u*, see Brosch, 2011, p. 139). The meaning of a word can also depend on the lexical class of a root, i.e. the part of speech that it prototypically forms, as we shall see below. A consistent part of a verbal root is also the thematic role of its subject, whether it is an agent (*mi sufokas* 'I suffocate [somebody]') or a patient (*mi dronas* 'I drown').<sup>49</sup>

A comparison of Esperanto dictionaries documents the lexical expansion of the language. Whereas Zamenhof's *Unua Libro* (1887) included fewer than one thousand roots, today's quasi-authoritative monolingual dictionary *La Nova Plena Ilustrita Vortaro (NPIV)* (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002) comprises approximately 17,000 roots (with approximately 47,000 entries in total). Diverging opinions on how many, and which, new roots should be added to the language have accompanied Esperanto almost since its beginnings. In practice, this struggle between "neologists" and conservatives has led to a balanced growth of the lexicon.

## Morphology

From a typological point of view, Esperanto is an agglutinative language with isolating and inflectional features (Piron, 1981; Wells, 1978). Its morphology is based on the combination of invariable elements. Besides the purely phonetic elisions described above, the only exceptions to this principle are the hypocoristic suffixes *-ĉj-* and *-nj-* for pet forms of male and female names, which in turn are shortened to the first two to six letters.<sup>50</sup>

Open parts of speech are marked by characteristic suffixes:

- *-o* for nouns (e.g. *telefono* 'telephone')
- *-a* for adjectives (*telefona* 'telephonic, telephone-')
- *-e* for derived adverbs (*telefone* 'by telephone')
- *-i* for verbs in the infinitive (*telefoni* 'to telephone').<sup>51</sup>

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49. Other than in English, a change of this role has to be marked overtly by a suffix, e.g. *mi sufokiĝas* 'I am suffocated' and *mi droniĝas* 'I drown (somebody)'.  
 50. E.g. *Peĉjo* 'Pete' (*Petro*) 'Peter', *Elinjo* 'Betty' (*Elizabeto*) 'Elizabeth', but also *Paĉjo* 'dad(dy)' and *Panjo* 'mum(my)' (*patro* 'father', *patrino* 'mother'). In addition to the translation of pet names from other languages, the hypocoristics are nowadays used mostly to address young children.

51. It is not by chance that Lucien Tesnière (1966, p. 64) labelled nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs O, A, I, E in his dependency grammar.

Closed parts of speech like pronouns, primitive adverbs, prepositions, and particles have no categorical suffix and belong to the small class of unbound morphemes.

Most morphemes are bound, but nearly all of them, even those traditionally called “affixes” (see below), can still be used as word bases: for example, *-ebl-*, a suffix indicating possibility (as used in *farebla* ‘feasible’ from *fari* ‘make, do’) with the help of an ending expressing the part of speech, can be the core of an independent word: *eble* (‘perhaps, maybe’), *eblei* (‘to be possible’).

Nouns and adjectives are inflected for number and case: *-j* marks the plural (*telefonoj* ‘telephones’), *-n* marks the object case or accusative (*telefonon*). Adjectives agree in number and case with the noun that they modify (e.g. *nova telefono* ‘a new telephone’ – *nia instituto ricevis novajn telefonojn* ‘our institute received new telephones’). The accusative ending *-n* is also used to express the adverbial functions of measurement (*du metrojn longa* ‘two metres long’), time (*unu tagon okazis* ‘one day it happened’), and goal (*Parizon* ‘to Paris’).<sup>52</sup>

Other syntactic relations are expressed by prepositions. There is no grammatical gender. Esperanto has only one article, the definite article *la*, which is not inflected. In a similar way as with the noun ending *-o*, its final vowel can be replaced with an apostrophe (*l'*) (for details see 25.5.1). Comparison is expressed with the help of the particles *pli* ‘more’ and *plej* ‘most’ (e.g. *bona – pli bona – plej bona* ‘good’ – ‘better’ – ‘best’).

The personal pronouns are as follows:<sup>53</sup>

**Table 4.** The personal pronouns of Esperanto

	1st person	2nd person	3rd person				
<b>Singular</b>	<i>mi</i> ‘I’	<i>vi</i> ‘you’	<i>li</i> ‘he’	<i>ŝi</i> ‘she’	<i>ĝi</i> ‘it’ <sup>‡</sup>	<i>si</i> ‘-self’	<i>oni</i> ‘one, they’ (impersonal)
<b>Plural</b>	<i>ni</i> ‘we’		<i>ili</i> ‘they’				

<sup>‡</sup> Traditionally, with animals *ĝi* is used as a general pronoun, while *li* and *ŝi* designate male and female animals, when needed. Due to the influence of European languages, *ĝi* with humans has only been used for young children.

The possessive pronouns are formed by adding the adjective ending *-a* to the personal pronouns: *mia* ‘my’, *ĝia* ‘its’, etc.

The cardinal numbers below one million do not inflect and are combined from the highest to the lowest unit:

52. This last function is rare today (see Wennergren, 2020, Chapter 12.2.5).

53. The use of Esperanto pronouns has recently undergone changes by many speakers who want to avoid sexist language use (see Chapter 25).

**Table 5.** The cardinal numbers in Esperanto

0 <i>nul</i>	6 <i>ses</i>	1.000 <i>mil</i>
1 <i>unu</i>	7 <i>sep</i>	1.000.000 <i>unu miliono</i>
2 <i>du</i>	8 <i>ok</i>	11 <i>dek unu</i>
3 <i>tri</i>	9 <i>naŭ</i>	28,5 <i>dudek ok komo kvin</i>
4 <i>kvar</i>	10 <i>dek</i>	60.341 <i>sesdek mil tricent kvardek unu</i>
5 <i>kvin</i>	100 <i>cent</i>	

The ordinal numbers are derived from the cardinal numbers by adding the adjectival suffix *-a*: 1<sup>st</sup> *unua*, 62<sup>nd</sup> *sesdek-dua*, 7005<sup>th</sup> *sep-mil-kvina*.<sup>54</sup>

The verbal system of Esperanto can be presented as follows:

**Table 6.** The verbal system of Esperanto

Function			Suffix	Label
Naming			<i>-i</i>	Infinitive
Mood	Real	Past	<i>-is</i>	Future
		Present	<i>-as</i>	Present
		Future	<i>-os</i>	Past
	Desire		<i>-u</i>	Volitive
	Irreality		<i>-us</i>	Conditional

Verbs do not change for person or number. Infinitive verbs are marked by *-i*, the imperative (or volitive, used for wishes and commands) by *-u* and the conditional (or irrealis) by *-us*. The tenses have characteristic vowels (*-i*, *-a*, *-o*): the past tense is formed by the suffix *-is*, the present by *-as*, and the future by *-os* (e.g. *mi telefonis* ‘I telephoned’, *mi telefonas* ‘I telephone’, *mi telefonos* ‘I will telephone’).

Analogously, participles, comprising anteriority, contemporality, or posteriority, are formed by adding the elements *-int-*, *-ant-*, *-ont-* (active) and *-it-*, *-at-*, *-ot-* (passive). Compound tenses are formed by *esti* (‘be’) and a participle. They are used to express the passive (e.g. *ĝi estas finita* ‘it has been/is finished’) and slight modal or aspectual nuances (e.g. *la letero estis forsendota* ‘the letter was about to be sent’), but are usually avoided for stylistic reasons: in most contexts a simple *ŝi iris* is sufficient to express both ‘she went’, ‘she was going’, ‘she has gone’, and ‘she had gone’. The polyfunctional endings of the verb (comprising word class, tense, and voice) can be seen as an inflectional trait.

54. See Eichner (2012, pp. 135–137) about this kind of derivation.

At the intersection of grammar and lexicon, there is a closed subsystem of pronominal-adjectival correlatives. Such relations can be found in other languages, too (see Barandovská-Frank, 2009), but in Esperanto they have become more regularised and are therefore often simply called *tabelvortoj* ('tabular words'):

Table 7. The Esperanto system of correlatives (often called *tabelvortoj*)

	Interrogative or relative	Demonstrative/ deictic <sup>a</sup>	Indefinite	Generalising	Negative
<b>Thing</b>	<i>kio</i> 'what'	<i>tio</i> 'that (thing)'	<i>io</i> 'something'	<i>ĉio</i> 'everything'	<i>nenio</i> 'nothing'
<b>Individuality</b> (person, particular thing)	<i>kiu</i> 'who, which (one)'	<i>tiu</i> 'that (one)'	<i>iu</i> 'someone, some (person or thing)'	<i>ĉiu</i> 'every(one), each'	<i>neniu</i> 'no (one)'
<b>Quality</b>	<i>kia</i> 'what a, what kind of'	<i>tia</i> 'such a, of that kind'	<i>ia</i> 'some kind of'	<i>ĉia</i> 'every kind of'	<i>nenia</i> 'no kind of, of no kind'
<b>Possession</b>	<i>kies</i> 'whose'	<i>ties</i> 'that one's'	<i>ies</i> 'someone's'	<i>ĉies</i> 'everyone's'	<i>nenies</i> 'no one's'
<b>Manner</b>	<i>kiel</i> 'how, like, in what way'	<i>tiel</i> 'so, thus, in that way, like that'	<i>iel</i> 'somehow'	<i>ĉiel</i> 'in every way'	<i>neniel</i> 'in no way'
<b>Place</b>	<i>kie</i> 'where'	<i>tie</i> 'there'	<i>ie</i> 'somewhere'	<i>ĉie</i> 'everywhere'	<i>nenie</i> 'nowhere'
<b>Time</b>	<i>kiam</i> 'when'	<i>tiam</i> 'then, at that time'	<i>iam</i> 'at some time'	<i>ĉiam</i> 'always'	<i>neniam</i> 'never'
<b>Reason</b>	<i>kial</i> 'why'	<i>tial</i> 'for that reason, therefore'	<i>ial</i> 'for some reason'	<i>ĉial</i> 'for all reasons, for every reason'	<i>nenial</i> 'for no reason'
<b>Quantity</b>	<i>kiom</i> 'how much/ many, what amount'	<i>tiom</i> 'that much, so many'	<i>iom</i> 'somewhat, some quantity'	<i>ĉiom</i> 'all of it'	<i>neniom</i> 'none, not a bit'

a. The stem *ti-* is deictically neutral, but together with the particle *ĉi* (originally an adverb 'here') it indicates near objects: *tiu libro* 'this/that book' – *tiu ĉi* / *ĉi tiu libro* 'this book (here)'.

The correlatives in rows 1, 2, 3, and 6, ending in *-o*, *-u*, *-a*, and *-e*, can take the accusative ending *-n*. Those in rows 2 and 3, ending in *-u* and *-a*, can take the plural ending *-j*. The correlatives ending in *-u* and *-a* agree in number and case with the noun they qualify.

## Word formation

Word formation in Esperanto is highly productive and autonomous, allowing users to build up a large vocabulary after learning only a limited number of linguistic elements. The main types of word formation besides simple conversion with the part-of-speech endings<sup>55</sup> are compounding (creating head-final determinative compounds, e.g. *bird(-o)-kaĝ-o* ‘bird cage’) and derivation with one or several of about forty very productive affixes<sup>56</sup> (e.g. *malsanulejo* ‘hospital’, consisting of *mal-* ‘opposite’, *san-* ‘sound, healthy’, *-ul-* ‘person’, *-ej-* ‘place’, so literally a place for ill persons, similar to German *Krankenhaus*). From this it follows that many common expressions are motivated, i.e. understood on the basis of the morphemes that they contain. Nevertheless, many Esperanto word formations are lexicalised, such as *lernejo* (‘place of learning’), which normally refers specifically to a school, not to all places where learning might take place, or *homaro* (*homo* ‘human being’, *-ar-* ‘set, collection’) is not any ‘group of people’, but ‘mankind’.

As regards Esperanto word formation, it is important to know that each root word has an inherent part of speech (noun, adjective/adverb, or verb). To apply Esperanto affixes correctly, one must know the character of the root. For example, *komb-* ‘to comb’ is a verbal root, so the simple derived noun *komb-o* means the act of combing, while the instrument ‘comb’ is *kombilo* (*-il-* ‘instrument’), whereas *bros-* ‘brush’ builds the primary noun *bros-o* ‘brush’, and the act of brushing is *brosado* (*-ad-* ‘action’).<sup>57</sup>

The productivity of Esperanto word formation can be illustrated by an example. Someone who knows the meaning of *amik-o* (‘friend’) and is familiar with the system of affixes should be able to understand and produce the following words:<sup>58</sup>

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55. As in many European languages, change of the part of speech can signify more than the syntactical features: it can also add a new meaning, cf. *krono* ‘crown’ → *kroni* ‘to crown’ → *kronado* (*-ad-* ‘action’) ‘coronation’. Because of this the meaning of a verb derived from a noun is not always predictable. Adjectival derivations as well allow for much polysemy, e.g. *silka robo* ‘silk gown’ (material) – *silka ĉapelo* ‘silk hat’ (ornament) – *silka industrio* ‘silk industry’ (relation) – *silka raŭpo* ‘silk worm’ (product), see Blanke (1985, p. 193). In most cases, however, they are disambiguated by the context.

56. Although we use the traditional term here, from a linguistic point of view these elements are not affixes, but affixoids, i.e. they can be used as bases of independent words, e.g. *malo* ‘opposite’, *ulo* ‘person’, *ejo* ‘place’, *ilo* ‘instrument’.

57. See Wennergren (2020, p. 558) and AKTOJ de la AKADEMIO 1963–1967. Oficiala Bulteno de la Akademio de Esperanto – N° 9. II. ENKETO kaj DECIDOJ de la Akademio pri la demando de la Vortfarado en Esperanto: <https://www.akademio-de-esperanto.org/aktoj/aktoj1/vortfarado.html>.

58. For the use of these words in situational contexts see the Esperanto corpus <http://www.tek-staro.com>.

*amikeco* ‘friendship’

*amikino* ‘female friend’

*amikineto* ‘little female friend’

*amika* ‘friendly’, adjective, e.g. *amikaj rilatoj* ‘friendly relations’

*amike* ‘as friends’, adverb, often used as a set phrase when closing emails

*malamiko* ‘enemy’

*malamikino* ‘female enemy’

*geamikoj* ‘group of friends of all genders’, often used to address people:

[Dear] friends!

*malamikeco* ‘hostility’

*malamika* ‘hostile’

*eksamiko* ‘former friend’

*malamike* ‘in a hostile / an unfriendly way’

*amikiĝi* ‘to become friends’

*amikigi* ‘pacify’, ‘to cause people to become friends’

*reamikigi* ‘to cause people to become friends again’

*malamikigi* ‘to turn into enemies’

*amikema* ‘making friends easily’

*amikeme* ‘inclined to make friends’

*amikemo* ‘inclination to make friends’

*malamikiĝi* ‘to become enemies’

*amikaĵo* ‘a favour to a friend’

*amikaro* ‘circle of friends’

Compounds include *koramiko* ‘boyfriend/girlfriend’ (*koro* = heart), *homamiko* ‘philanthropist’ (*homo* = human being).

In addition to these endonymic word formations, which are described in rule 11 of the *Fundamento* (see Appendix 3), new lexis can be created by adopting international words to which a suffix marking the part of speech is attached, as prescribed by rule 15 of the *Fundamento*. Sometimes motivated endonyms and international exonyms are used in parallel, forming synonyms, as in the case of *malsanulejo* versus *hospitalo*.

Finally, we should note that the language includes phraseological units: translated expressions (e.g. *nigra ŝafo* ‘black sheep’) and original items motivated intrinsically by the history and culture of the Esperanto speech community (e.g. *rondo familia* ‘family circle’, used as a designation for the Esperanto speech community). See Fiedler (1999, 2015d) and Chapter 21 of this book.



## Syntax

Linguistically speaking, Esperanto is a mainly head-initial language with nominative-accusative alignment: it uses prepositions only, and determiners are usually found in front of their heads. Adjectives generally precede their heads but can also follow them for special emphasis, as in Zamenhof’s coinages *lingvo internacia* and *rondo familia* (‘family circle’, see above). In Esperanto all the main parts of speech known from European languages appear: nouns, adjectives, derived adverbs, and verbs as open word classes, while pronouns, primitive adverbs, numbers, and particles are closed classes. Agreement is mainly syntactically driven: adjectives agree with nouns, pronouns, and relative clauses, while adverbs agree with all other kinds of words, especially verbs and phrases: *legado estas amuza* ‘reading is amusing’ – *legi estas amuze* ‘to read is amusing’.

The overt marking of most parts of speech and cases allows for a flexible (although not “free”) word order (see Jansen, 2007). Nine out of ten sentences in Esperanto display SVO word order; other orders are mostly used to express distinctions of topic, comment, and focus.

The stylistic effects that a change of word order (or inversion) can produce can be illustrated by some of the items that Zamenhof created for his collection of proverbs, *Proverbaro Esperanta* (see Chapter 21).

## Textual examples

To help the reader gain further insights into the linguistic system of Esperanto, we present below two specimen texts with interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses. The first is an online book review. The second example represents the first two paragraphs of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

*Ambaŭ libroj estas verkitaj en la stilo de ĵurnalisma raportaĵo, stilo, kiun la profesia ĵurnalista Kniivilä senteble bone regas: Legante la librojn, oni havas la impreson, ke oni vojaĝas kune kun Kniivilä tra Rusujo kaj Krimeo kaj persone ĉeestas la intervjuojn, kiujn li faras kun diversaj homoj, de simplaj civitanoj ĝis politikaj aktivuloj.*<sup>59</sup>

Both books are authored in the style of a journalistic report, a style the professional journalist Kniivilä masters noticeably well: reading the books one has the impression that one travels along with Kniivilä across Russia and Crimea and that one is personally present at the interviews he does with various people, from ordinary citizens to political activists.

59. <http://www.liberafolio.org/2015/de-putin-al-krimeo-2013-du-legindaj-jurnalismaj-libroj>

*Ambaŭ libr-o-j est-as verk-it-a-j en la stil-o de*  
 Both book-NO<sup>60</sup>-PL to\_be-IND.PRS to\_author-PST.PTCP.PASS-ADJ-PL In the style-NO of  
*jurnal-ism-a raport-aj-o, stil-o, kiu-n la profesi-a*  
 journal-(manner)-ADJ to\_report-(thing)-NO style-NO which-ACC the profession-ADJ  
*jurnal-ist-o Kniivilä sent-eb-l-e bon-e reg-as:*  
 journal-(professional)-NO Kniivilä to\_sense-(possible)-ADV good-ADV to\_rule-IND.PRS  
*Leg-ant-e la libr-o-n oni hav-as la*  
 to\_read-PRS.PTCP.ACT-ADV The book-NO-ACC one/they to\_have-IND.PRS The  
*impres-o-n, ke oni vojaĝ-as kun-e kun Kniivilä tra*  
 impression-NO-ACC That one/they to\_travel-IND.PRS with-ADV With Kniivilä through  
*Rus-uj-o kaj Krime-o kaj person-e ĉe-est-as la*  
 Russian-(land)-NO And Crimea And person-ADV at-to\_be-IND.PRS the  
*intervju-o-j-n, kiu-j-n li far-as kun divers-a-j hom-o-j,*  
 interview-NO-PL-ACC which-PL-ACC he to\_make-IND.PRS with diverse-ADJ-PL human-NO-PL  
*de simpl-a-j civit-an-o-j ĝis politik-a-j aktiv-ul-o-j.*  
 of simple-ADJ-PL citizenry-(member)-NO-PL until politics-ADJ-PL active-(person)-NO-PL

Ĉiuj homoj estas denaskte liberaj kaj egalaj laŭ digno kaj rajtoj. Ili posedas racion kaj konsciencon, kaj devus konduti unu al alia en spirito de frateco.

Ĉiuj rajtoj kaj liberecoj difinitaj en tiu ĉi Deklaracio validas same por ĉiuj homoj, sen kia ajn diferencigo, ĉu laŭ raso, haŭtkoloro, sekso, lingvo, religio, politika aŭ alia opinio, nacia aŭ socia deveno, posedaĵoj, naskiĝo aŭ alia stato. Plie, nenia diferencigo estu farata surbaze de la politika, jurisdikcia aŭ internacia pozicio de la lando aŭ teritorio, al kiu apartenas la koncerna persono, senkonsidere ĉu ĝi estas sendependa, sub kuratoreco, ne-sinreganta aŭ sub kia ajn alia limigo de la suvereneco.<sup>61</sup>

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

60. NO = noun; affixes are given in brackets.

61. See <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=1115> for the Esperanto version and <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html> for the English version.

*Ĉiu-j hom-o-j est-as de-nask-e liber-a-j kaj egal-a-j laŭ*  
 all-PL human-NO-PL to\_be-IND.PRS from-bear-ADV free-ADJ-PL and equal-ADJ-PL according  
*dign-o kaj rajtoj. Ili posed-as raci-o-n kaj*  
 dignity-NO and right-NO-PL they to\_possess-IND.PRS reason-NO-ACC and  
*konscienc-o-n kaj dev-us kondu-t-i unu al la ali-a en spirit-o de*  
 conscience-NO-ACC and must-IRR to\_behave-INF one to the other-ADJ in spirit-NO of  
*frateco. Ĉiu-j rajt-o-j kaj liber-ec-o-j*  
 brother-(quality)-NO all-PL right-NO-PL and free-(quality)-NO-PL  
*difin-it-a-j en tiu ĉi Deklaraci-o valid-as sam-e*  
 to\_difine-PST.PTCP.PASS-ADJ-PL in this here declaration-NO be\_valid-IND.PRS same-ADV  
*por ĉiu-j hom-o-j sen kia ajn diferenc-ig-o, ĉu laŭ*  
 for all-PL human-NO-PL without what\_a \_ever difference-(make)-NO whether according  
*ras-o, haŭt-kolor-o, seks-o, lingvo, religio, politik-a aŭ ali-a*  
 race-NO skin-colour-NO sex-NO language-NO religion-NO politics-ADJ or other-ADJ  
*opini-o, naci-a aŭ soci-a de-ven-o, posed-aj-oj,*  
 opinion-NO nation-ADJ or society-ADL from-to\_come-NO to\_ppossess-(thing)-NO-PL  
*nask-ig-o aŭ ali-a stat-o. Pli-e nenia*  
 to\_bear\_(become)-NO or other-ADJ state-NO more-ADV no\_kind\_of  
*diferenc-ig-o est-u far-at-a sur-baz-e de la*  
 to\_distinguish-(make)-NO to\_be-IMP to\_make-PRS.PTCP.PASS-ADJ on-base-ADV of the  
*politik-a, jurisdikci-a aŭ inter-naci-a pozici-o de la land-o aŭ*  
 politics-ADJ jurisdiction-ADJ or between-nation-ADJ position-NO of the land-NO or  
*teritori-o al kiu aparten-as la koncern-a person-o*  
 territory-NO to which to\_belong-IND.PRS the concerning-ADJ person-NO  
*sen-konsider-e ĉu ĝi est-as sen-depend-a, sub*  
 without-to\_consider-ADV whether it to\_be-IND.PRS without-to\_depend-ADJ under  
*kurator-ec-o, ne-sin-reg-ant-a aŭ sub kia ajn ali-a*  
 trustee-(quality)\_NI not-itself-to\_reign-PRS.PTCP.ACT-ADJ or under what\_a \_ever other-ADJ  
*lim-ig-o de la suveren-ec-o.*  
 limit-(make)-NO of the sovereign-(quality)-NO

PART III

## **Excursus**

The use of Esperanto outside the speech community



## Introduction

### Esperanto as a metaphor

A language is normally used for practical reasons, i.e. because of its *communicative* function. It serves both its L1 and L2 speakers to make themselves understood and to interact with one another. Occasionally, however, a language, or elements of it, is used by people who might not even speak it. They exploit the positive values attributed to the language and use it for its *symbolic* function. Latin, for example, is associated with erudition, and English has recently become a symbol of modernity and is used for reasons of prestige. People like to interpolate English words or phrases into their native language talk (Fiedler, 2014, 2017), and they create words – so-called pseudo-Anglicisms – that look English despite not actually having the same meaning in English (Furiassi & Gottlieb, 2015). This chapter addresses uses like these with regard to Esperanto. It starts out with a brief survey of Esperanto as a language in science fiction literature, and in films and theatre, then reviews two studies that explore the use of the glottonym in journalistic texts (Chapter 14) and finally investigates the use of Esperanto words in brand naming processes (Chapter 15).



## The use of Esperanto for artistic purposes

The authors of literary works, in particular fantasy and science fiction literature, have come up with various ways of solving the communication problems in their imaginary worlds. Some rely on technology, introducing devices such as the “Babelfish” in Douglas Adams’ *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*. Others invent languages or have them created by linguists, such as in the cases of Klingon in the TV series *Star Trek* or Dothraki in *Game of Thrones*. In addition, there are authors who decide to have their protagonists speak a pre-existing constructed language. Examples include H. G. Wells’s novel *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), in which the world in 2050 communicates in Basic English, and the novels of Eberhardt del’ Antonio (see Mannewitz, 1997) and Harry Harrison’s *The Stainless Steel Rat* series, in which Esperanto is spoken. Harrison even includes a description of Esperanto in the appendices to his books.<sup>62</sup>

In a similar vein, Esperanto can be found in films and plays. One example of a whole film in Esperanto (though it was not shot for an Esperanto-speaking audience) is the 1966 horror movie *Incubus*, starring William Shatner. The film makes use of the language in order to achieve an effect of alienation. Originally, the actors were requested to speak nonsensical gibberish or Volapük, but they refused these two options. However, since they did not know how to pronounce the language properly (or did not care), the Esperanto they speak is hard to understand even for Esperanto speakers.

A very creative use of the language, although probably not very amusing for the overwhelmingly pacifist Esperanto speech community, is found in *Esperanto, the Aggressor Language*. Seeking to create a realistic enemy (with its own uniforms, structures, and language) for military manoeuvres, but without risking the indignation of a given country, in the late 1950s the US Army published this Esperanto handbook to provide the fictional opponents, named simply “Aggressor”, with a neutral language. As a newsreel video (available on YouTube) shows,<sup>63</sup> this practice

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62. It is reported that quite a number of readers became interested in Esperanto through Harrison’s novels or contacted the Esperanto Association in the US for further information about the language (see the journal *Esperanto* 2/95, p.38). Harrison was the honorary president of the Esperanto Association of Ireland and an Honorary Patron of UEA.

63. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZ2ei7e6aAs>.



was in active use for some time. However, the film shows that the soldiers acting as “Aggressor” had no proper phonetic training in Esperanto.

A similar inspiration characterised the 1939 film *Idiot’s Delight*, starring Norma Shearer and Clark Gable. Here Esperanto serves as the language of a fictitious country in Central Europe, with signs, storylines and even songs appearing in the language. Esperanto also serves as a neutral background language in other films, e.g. *The Great Dictator* (1939), *State Secret* (1950), *Street Fighter* (1994), *Gattaca* (1997), and *Blade: Trinity* (2004).

An example of a film in which the use of Esperanto is more closely related to the ideals connected with the language is *Doreamon: Nobita and the Island of Miracles* (2012), which is based on the popular Japanese manga and anime series *Doreamon*. Here Esperanto is spoken on a miraculous island where prehistoric animals have survived alongside the human inhabitants, who have lived in peace for a long time and do not have armed forces.<sup>64</sup>

The stage play *Felici Tutti* (2011) by the Italian theatre collective Controcanto uses Esperanto as the language of refugees, giving this group of people a universal character as migrants without being specific about their home country or origin. In addition, because of the Romance-based lexis of Esperanto, many words are instantly recognisable to an Italian audience.

As the examples show, the use of Esperanto (or another planned language) in artistic contexts is mainly motivated by the desire to characterise a country or ethnic group as different, or, in the case of fantasy and science fiction, exotic. It renders neutrality without losing authenticity and credibility (see Chapter 7, and also Fiedler, 2019b).

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64. We owe the information about this film to Goro C. Kimura. For a survey of Esperanto and cinema, see also <http://delbarrio.eu/cinema.htm>.

## The use of the glottonym *Esperanto*

Gubbins (1997) and Blanke (2002) studied the use of the word *Esperanto* in journalistic texts, with the first author selecting English, French and German newspapers and the second focusing on German contexts. The authors found that the glottonym is dominantly used in metaphorical senses. One of these is “universality”, i.e. something is provided for or accessible to the whole world or all members of a particular group, as in the following examples about the arts:

*Les textes des chansons des spectacles sont écrits dans un **espéranto** créé pour l’occasion, et parfois teintés de français, de chinois ou même de Swahili.* [The song lyrics of the shows are written in an Esperanto that was created for the occasion and that is sometimes tinted by French, by Chinese or even by Swahili.]

(*Le Monde* 18 April 1995, from Gubbins, 1997, p. 265)

Fortunately ... they still speak a brand of musical **Esperanto** that engages with an international audience.

(*The Guardian* 22 March 1995, from Gubbins, 1997, p. 266)

*Die Volksmusik ist das **Esperanto** aller Schweizer.* [Folk music is the Esperanto of all Swiss people.]

(*Tagblatt* 5 July 1999, from Blanke, 2002, p. 126)

Sometimes the word is used to express the “mixed character” of the language, based on the fact that Esperanto’s vocabulary represents a mixture of several sources (Blanke, 2002, pp. 133–136). The examples found in the press can be both positively connotated (as ‘varied’ or ‘rich’) and negatively connotated (as ‘an elusive hotchpotch’):

(On the songs of the Italian singer Milva) *Ein **Esperanto**, das sich aus vielen Sprachen nährt und doch sehr vertraut klingt.* [An Esperanto that is nourished by many languages, but sounds familiar nevertheless.]

(*Offenbach-Post* 23 January 2002)

*Die Spontangerichte aus Joops Kochbuch sind in seinen Domizilen Potsdam, New York, Hamburg und Monte Carlo entstanden und so liest man sich durch ein wahres **Esperanto** von kulinarischen Happen.* [The spontaneous dishes in Joop’s cookbook were created in his domiciles in Potsdam, New York, Hamburg and Monte Carlo, and this is why it reads like a true Esperanto of culinary snacks]

(*Der Spiegel* 14 October 1999)

(On a TV schedule) *Man kann jetzt auch zum Fernsehen zu doof sein. Ein TV-Programm liest sich wie Esperanto: Vieles kommt einem bekannt vor, aber verstehen tut man's doch nicht.* [You can now be too stupid even to watch TV. A TV schedule reads like Esperanto: much of it sounds familiar, but nevertheless you can't understand it.] (Saarbrücker Zeitung 14 November 2001)

*Die Unterhaltung läuft in 'Donau-Esperanto' – einer radebrechenden Mischung aus Deutsch, Englisch, Französisch, Russisch und Handzeichen.* [The conversation runs in “Danube Esperanto” – a broken mixture of German, English, French, Russian and gestures.] (Passauer Neue Presse 4 July 1999)

Gubbins (1997, p. 266) points out some metaphorical uses in the world of computing. He finds this association with modern technology and progress surprising, given that the language is “often portrayed as moribund and outmoded”.

With translation software we are seeing the first stages of a type of electronic Esperanto for the written word (The Observer 19 June 1994)

Solar-powered computers ... an international language, some sort of Microsoft Esperanto (The Guardian 14 July 1994)

See also the following examples from Blanke's (2002) collection:

*Die Datenübertragung zwischen Computern, das sogenannte TCP/IP-Protokoll ..., war als plattformunabhängige Sprache zwischen unterschiedlichen Wissenssystemen geplant, eine Art Computer-Esperanto über die Telefonleitung.* [The data transfer between computers, the so-called TCP/IP protocol ... was planned as a platform-independent language between different knowledge systems, a kind of computer-Esperanto via telephone line.] (Tagesspiegel 25 February 2000)

*Zum Esperanto der Computerwelt könnte die neue Jini-Technologie von Sun Microsystems avancieren.* [The new Jini technology from Sun Microsystems could advance to an Esperanto of the computer world.] (Subway 3/1999)

Clearly negative is the metaphorical use of *Esperanto* in the sense of “levelling down”, “monotony” or “drab uniformity”:

(about architecture:) *Im allgemeinen Sog der Globalisierung wird die Entscheidung getroffen werden, ob wir unter Druck des Marktes und der virtuellen Realität zu einer Esperanto-Architektur kommen oder ob es nicht doch gelingt, eine eigene erkennbare, eigenständige Architektur zu schaffen.* [In the general maelstrom of globalisation, the decision will be taken whether, as a result of the market and of virtual reality, we end up with an Esperanto architecture or whether we will nevertheless manage to create our own perceptible individual architecture.]

(Der Standard 21 December 2001, from Blanke, 2002, p. 139).

*Eine Chance der Bühnen, sich gegen das „globale Kultur-Esperanto der Pop-Kultur“ und die „internationale Shopping-Mile-Identität narkotisierter Konsumenten“ zu behaupten, sieht Löffler im Konzept Thomas Ostermeiers. [Löffler sees in Thomas Ostermeier’s concept a chance for the theatre to survive against the “global cultural Esperanto of pop culture” and the “international shopping-mall identity of drugged consumers”.]* (Die Welt 10 June 1999)

Gubbins (1997) finds a large number of uses in political contexts, as the press in his corpus frequently refers to the late German chancellor Helmut Kohl’s infamous misrepresentation of Esperanto in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (24 May 1995): “Wir wollen kein Esperanto-Europa, sondern ein Europa, in dem alle ihre Identität behalten” [We do not want an Esperanto Europe, but a Europe in which everyone retains their identity.]

Quantifying their data, the two authors find accordingly that about half of all metaphorical uses of Esperanto carry negative connotations. They conclude that Esperanto speakers and organizations face a considerable challenge in altering the language’s image. As Gubbins (1997, p. 267) puts it, “[Esperanto’s] success will be measured, among other ways, by changes in journalistic discourse which link the language’s name more firmly to the enduring quest for human dignity and equality.”



## The use of Esperanto words in branding

This chapter addresses a symbolic use of Esperanto that has recently gained currency and was first described by Brosch (2016). It is the use of Esperanto words outside the speech community in designations for products, institutions and projects. Against the background of the general lack of knowledge about the language and its use, and its low prestige among those who claim to know it, and as has just become evident in the use of the glottonym *Esperanto*, this phenomenon is surprising, because any marketing department's decision to use an Esperanto word as their brand name is, of course, motivated by a desire to boost their brand's image. In the following we will present some of the most interesting examples of this type of brand naming together with the reasons that the name givers had in mind.

Nuessel (1992, p. 89) suggests that brand names should be characterised by the following features in order to be successful:

1. visual comprehension
2. pronounceability in most languages
3. avoidance of objectionable or absurd meanings
4. positive references
5. ease of recall
6. conformity to legal prerequisites for official registration.

We will return to some of these properties in the discussion of our examples.

Although the quantifiable use of Esperanto words as names for products and institutions is a recent phenomenon, some early examples exist. One of these is described by Heller (2017, pp. 17–18): the watch company L.A.I. Ditesheim et Frères, founded in 1881 in La Chaux-de-Fonds, a centre of the Swiss watchmaking industry. Esperanto was well known in Switzerland at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, when it was used by the Red Cross and promoted by Edmond Privat, a peace activist, university professor and writer who is known in the Esperanto speech community, among other things, as Zamenhof's biographer. In 1905, at the height of enthusiasm for Esperanto, with the first international Esperanto congress taking place in Boulogne-sur-Mer and the *Fundamento de Esperanto* accepted as the immutable basis of the language, Ditesheim decided to change the company name to *Movado* ('movement'). "Esperanto's internationalism

and rationality were harnessed to clean, modern design”, as Heller (2017, p. 18) describes Ditesheim’s motivation. Modernity is still the focus of the brand, as a look at its website ([www.movado.com](http://www.movado.com)) and its slogan “Movado – Modern ahead of its time” reveals, and the history of its naming is also part of advertising strategies today.

(...) The year 1905 was momentous for the company. That was the year the name “Movado” was adopted. A word meaning “always in motion” in the international language of Esperanto. This new name proved to be a visionary choice.

Over the past 134 years, Movado has been a brand in motion, always changing, always innovating, always moving forward. (...) This is what makes Movado ahead of its time. (<https://jhyoung.com/brand-feature-movado/>)

A more recent example is a slogan in Esperanto that the International Police Association, founded by Arthur Troop in the United Kingdom in 1950, has chosen: *Servo per Amikeco* (‘service through friendship’) (see Figure 4).

A document about the history of the association gives background information on why a slogan in Esperanto was chosen:

The IPA motto, “Service Through Friendship” was coined by Troop but he thought it might be best in another language. After trying French, German, Italian, Spanish and Latin, Troop contacted Bob Hamilton of Glasgow. Hamilton was an expert in the International Language Esperanto. Hamilton translated the motto into “SERVO PER AMIKECO”. It is appropriate that Esperanto was chosen as it was developed in 1887 by L.L. Zamenhof as a politically neutral language. (“The History of the International Police Association” 2015: 13–14) ([https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ipa-usa.org/resource/resmgr/history/IPA\\_INT\\_History.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ipa-usa.org/resource/resmgr/history/IPA_INT_History.pdf))

In this context it is also interesting to mention that the predecessor of the association, the World Police League, had as one of its aims to “[s]pread [the] auxiliary language, Esperanto, among police worldwide to allow more direct and faster communication between the police forces of various countries”. ([https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ipa-usa.org/resource/resmgr/history/IPA\\_INT\\_History.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.ipa-usa.org/resource/resmgr/history/IPA_INT_History.pdf), p. 8)

As the last quotation in particular illustrates, these examples, although still in use today, are closely linked with the history of the Esperanto movement. They date from a period when the world was still looking for a means of international communication, a language that would facilitate mutual understanding beyond national borders – a time when Esperanto had a good chance of becoming that language, when there was “a window of opportunity for the cause of an artificial language”, as Garvía (2015, p. 3) puts it. The modern trend to choose an Esperanto word as a brand name must be based on different motivations. In the following we will present some of those reasons and illustrate them by means of examples. They are ordered according to frequency, taking a collection of eighty-eight examples (Brosch, 2016) as a basis.



Figure 4. Screenshot of the International Police Association website

- a. “Esperanto is an international (universal) and neutral language; the use of Esperanto words is to express the idea that everybody should be addressed and feel involved”

The so-called refugee crisis of the past few years has given rise to a large number of charity organisations, several of which chose Esperanto names. One of them is *Alveni* (‘arrive’), run by Caritas (see Figure 5). Its founders explain their choice of name as follows:

Esperanto haben wir gewählt um allen gerecht zu werden. Viele unserer Klienten haben Begriffe aus ihrer Heimatsprache vorgeschlagen. Da wir aber nicht den Eindruck erwecken wollten besonderer Ansprechpartner für einen bestimmten Kulturkreis zu sein, haben wir uns für die Weltsprache Esperanto entschieden.

[We chose Esperanto in order to please everyone. Many of our clients proposed expressions from their native languages. Since we didn’t want to give the impression that we were a point of contact for people of one specific culture only, we chose the universal language Esperanto.] (personal correspondence)



ALVENI - Dienste für Flüchtlinge

**ALVENI - Dienste für Flüchtlinge**

Menschen aus den Kriegs- und Krisengebieten suchen bei uns Zuflucht und Hilfe.

**ALVENI**, die **Sozialdienste für Flüchtlinge**, das **Haus der Nationen**, das **Jugendhaus** und das **Clearinghaus** helfen dabei, das Leben in Deutschland zu bewältigen und Perspektiven zu entwickeln.

**Suche nach Angeboten und Dienstleistungen**

Angebotssuche

**!** Diese Seite zu meiner Merkliste hinzufügen

Figure 5. Screenshot of the *Alveni* homepage

Another example is the music group *Kaŝita kanto* ('hidden song'):

Da unsere Texte in verschiedenen Sprachen verfasst sind, fiel es uns schwer uns auf einen Namen in nur einer Sprache zu beschränken, weshalb wir uns letzt[t]lich für Esperanto entschieden haben. Zudem gefiel uns die Idee, die hinter diesem Sprachkonzept steht: nämlich eine möglichst neutrale und jedem zugängliche Weltsprache zu formulieren.

[As our texts are written in various languages, it was hard for us to confine ourselves to a name in just one language, which is why we eventually chose Esperanto. Additionally, we liked the idea behind this linguistic concept: to formulate a universal language that is as neutral and as accessible as possible.]

(personal correspondence)

b. “Esperanto as a language aims at equality and understanding between peoples. An Esperanto word is chosen to show commitment to and support for these ideas”

A product known around the world is the probiotic beverage *Yakult*. However, it is hardly known nor evident from its form that this name stems from Esperanto. It goes back to *jahurto*, a variant of the more usual *jogurto* ‘yoghurt’. The form was evidently adapted to be more easily pronounceable for the Japanese market at which it was originally directed. The firm’s website explains the origin of the name:

Dr. Shirota decided to put the lactic acid bacteria he discovered in a milk drink easy to metabolize and to drink. He named it Yakult. This name comes from “jahurto” which in Esperanto means yogurt. At the time of Dr. Shirota, it was believed that this new language could have been an international one common among all peoples. The choice of this name, written in Western characters since the beginning, shows the forefront cosmopolitan approach of the Yakult’s “father” who, in his vision, wished the product distributed in all the world.

(<https://yakult.com.mt/1935-2/>)

A manufacturer of electric scooters gives two reasons for choosing its name, *Unu* (‘one’): first, this is an expression of support for Esperanto’s idea of uniting the world; second, it reflects the company’s understanding of *Unu* as ‘unique’, as every *Unu* scooter is assembled individually according to the client’s wishes.

Dass wir ein Esperanto-Wort gewählt haben ist natürlich kein Zufall, wir sind vielmehr Fan von der Idee eine Sprache zu kreieren, die alle Menschen vereinen soll, indem sie für alle verständlich sein soll – was wir auch auf unsere Produkte projizieren können, da wir von Beginn an das Ziel einer Internationalisierung verfolgen. „unu“ deshalb, weil jeder unserer Scooter einzigartig ist, sprich, der Roller wird einzig für den Kunden produziert, erst sobald dieser sein individuelles Produkt zusammengestellt und bei uns bestellt hat – wir produzieren weder auf Lager noch „Standardmodelle“.

[That we have chosen an Esperanto word is, of course, no coincidence, rather we are fans of the idea of creating a language aimed at uniting all people by being comprehensible for everyone – which is something that we also project onto our products, as we have pursued the target of internationalisation from the beginning. “unu” for the reason that each of our scooters is unique, that is to say, the scooter is produced uniquely for the customer, once they have composed their individual product and sent the order to us – we do not produce stock, nor are there any “standard models”.]

(personal correspondence)

c. “Esperanto words are chosen as names because they sound nice”

In the non-Esperanto-speaking world, the fact that a word sounds pleasant and is easy to pronounce can be just as important as semantic considerations. One example is a school circus project that was looking for a suitable name for their performance:

Wir sind ein Schülerzirkusprojekt einer Gesamtschule mit Schülern multikultureller Herkunft. Wir hatten als Thema den Absturz unserer Artisten im Regenwald / Traumwelt zwischen Tier und Mensch und Phantasie. Auf der Suche nach verschiedenen (wohlklingenden) Wörtern für Dschungel sind wir (nach einer Abstimmung) bei **Gangalo** hängengeblieben. Die Wahl des Wortes hat sich voll rentiert (Neugierde, Interesse und antizipatives Denken an Dschungel hatten sich eingestellt!) (personal correspondence, *ĝangalo* = ‘jungle’)

[We are a circus project at a comprehensive school with pupils from a variety of cultural backgrounds. The theme of our project was our circus performers’ crash-landing in the rain forest / the dreamworld between animal and human being and imagination. In search of several (pleasant-sounding) words for ‘jungle’, (after a vote) we decided on *Gangalo*. This choice of word was a complete success (it aroused curiosity, interest and conjured up images of the jungle!)]

(personal correspondence, note: the Esperanto word for ‘jungle’ is *ĝangalo*)

The online Esperanto periodical *Libera Folio* (2015–03–34) included a report on a Russian-language webpage on Crimea whose founder had decided to give it an Esperanto name (*krimeo.ru*). The article quotes the founder’s motives as follows:

Mi penis, ke la nomo estu ne “io ajn”, sed ke ĝi plaĉu, bele sonu, asociiĝu kun Krimeo kaj estu facile memorebla. (...) Kredu, kiam mi ekvidis la vorton “Krimeo” mi tuj vere enamiĝis al ĝi. Ĝi aspektis kaj sonis ĝuste tiel, kiel mi volis.

[I tried to find a name that was not just “any name”, but one that would be pleasing, sound nice, be associated with the Crimea and be easy to remember. (...) Believe me, when I saw the word “Krimeo”, I immediately fell in love with it. It looked and sounded exactly the way I wanted it to.]

Similarly, for a Swedish online telephone information portal, a main criterion for a name was that it sound nice. They contacted the local Esperanto society asking for suggestions and decided on *Eniro* (‘going in, entrance’).

#### d. “The meaning of Esperanto words is recognisable”

As we have seen in the example of the circus project above, it is useful to have a name that is semantically transparent for speakers of other languages (*Gangalo* gave rise to associations with ‘jungle’, which the pupils called “anticipatory thinking”). This aspect was also one of the motivations for calling a Hamburg shop for electric vehicles *Trankvile* (‘calm, quiet’). As a newspaper reports, its founder wished that the paperboy who kept waking him up every morning with his noisy scooter had a silent e-vehicle. He chose the Esperanto word because of its international intelligibility and the analogy between the simple structures both of e-scooters and of Esperanto:

Ich wollte gern als Unternehmen einen ‘sprechenden Namen’ nutzen, der international verständlich ist. Hierzu bietet sich gerade Esperanto an. (...) *Trankvile* wird sofort verstanden.

[I wanted the business to have a “telling name” that could be understood internationally. Esperanto is ideal for this (...) People understand *Trankvile* immediately.]  
(personal correspondence)

Analog zur Weltsprache Esperanto, das durch Vereinfachung der Grammatik einer leichteren Verständigung dient, sind Elektrofahrzeuge sehr viel einfacher konstruiert als Verbrenner und bieten bedeutende Vorteile.

[By analogy with the world language Esperanto, which serves easier communication by means of a simplified grammar, electric vehicles are constructed much more easily than combustion engines and have enormous advantages.]

(<https://www.openpr.de/news/872181/TRANKVILE-electric-vehicles-eroeffnet-neuen-Laden-in-Hamburg.html>)

#### e. “Words are not yet trademarked”

What Nuessel (1992) called “[c]onformity to legal prerequisites for official registration” seems to be increasingly important in the Internet era, with its enormous potential for e-commerce. Finding a catchy name for a new online venture can be a challenge, and taking a detour via another language can be helpful.

In order to avoid trademark problems with the former name “Bilbo Blogger”, in 2009 the developers of this free/libre KDE blogging application started a forum brainstorming for a new name. Finally they chose *Blogilo* (‘blog tool’), an Esperanto name, because

“It has a good meaning[...],  
It’s short,  
It’s global and worldwide,  
And It’s like Blog+Bilbo.” (https://momeny.wordpress.com/category/blogilo/)

The problem of finding suitable domains was also mentioned by the owner of a webtool for project management who decided to call it *Kunagi* ('to collaborate, act together'). A Swedish Esperanto journal reports:

(la posedanto) diris ke apenaŭ plu ekzistas bonaj anglaj vortoj por uzi en domajno. [...] Pro tio li konscie komencis uzi Esperanton kiel fonto de bonaj vortoj por programoj kaj domajnoj. <https://web.archive.org/web/20140104005132/http://esperantosverige.se/enhavo/artikoloj-legeblaj/58-kat-esperanto-uzata-esperanto-enla-mondo/283-ankau-neesperantistoj-uzas-esperanton> [(the owner) said that there were hardly any good English words left to use in domains (...) Therefore, he intentionally began using Esperanto as a source of good words for programmes and domains.]

These examples show that in the majority of cases there is a combination of reasons for choosing a name in Esperanto. Such is the case with our final example: a quotation from the owner of a Polish company selling used 3D printers named *UZATA* ('used'). In his answer to our request for information about the company's name he mentions no less than six reasons, including some of those mentioned in (a) to (e) above and two more:

Z Esperatno (sic) zetknąłem się w szkole średniej, XXXI l.o. w Łodzi im. Ludwika Zamenhofa (<http://lo31.pl/>). Jako, że patronem naszej szkoły był twórca Esperanto, nauczycieleprzekazywali nam o nim informacje, oraz było również koło naukowe Esperanto (już go niema), na którym można było uczyć się języka. Powodów dla którego używam Esperanto do nazywania moich projektów jest kilka:1: Słowa są zrozumiałe (dosłownie lub intuicyjnie) przez miliardy ludzi2: Brzmia dobrze – Zamenhof spędził sporo czasu by wyrazy były optymalnym połączeniem spółgłosek i samogłosek ponadto:3: Są łatwe w wymowie4: Są łatwe do zapamiętania5: Jest bardzo dużo wolnych domen z rozszerzeniem .com6: Nazwa w Esperanto jest ekskluzywna, nadaje projektowi powagi i prestiżu. (personal correspondence)

[I got to know Esperanto at high school, in the 31st high school "Ludwik Zamenhof" in Łódź (<http://lo31.pl/>). As our school was named after the creator of Esperanto, our teachers told us about him, and there was also an Esperanto society (which no longer exists) in which we could learn the language. There are several reasons why I use Esperanto for naming my projects: (1) the words are understandable for billions of people (directly or intuitively); (2) they sound good – Zamenhof spent a lot of time creating words that are an optimal combination of consonants and vowels; (3) they are easy to pronounce; (4) They are easy to remember; (5) there are many free domains with the ending .com; (6) a name in Esperanto is exclusive, it lends repute and prestige to a project.]

Esperanto speakers are of course delighted when a word from their language is chosen as a name of a product, project or institution. In 2012, an Internet poll was set up to find a name for the new public bicycle service in Warsaw. Of the six pre-selected proposals, the Esperanto name *Veturilo* ('vehicle') came in first place,

probably because of support from Esperanto speakers from around the world, who had heard about the poll and the possibility of helping an Esperanto name win.

However, we also notice that words are sometimes misunderstood or misspelt. In many cases it is the diacritics (i.e. the letters *ĉ ĝ ĥ ĵ ŝ ŭ*) that cause problems. People who do not speak the language are not aware that a missing accent can cause a difference of meaning and they are not familiar with the surrogates *ch gh hh jh sh u* (see Chapter 11), so that they often simply omit the diacritic (as in our example Gangalo – *ĝangalo* ‘jungle’). Let us finish this chapter by giving two examples that are related to those spelling peculiarities, where, interestingly enough, the users of Esperanto words were able to solve their problem in clever and creative ways. The first is *AGO* (‘action, deed’), an organisation operating social institutions, particularly homes for the elderly. When the founders chose this name, they initially believed it meant ‘age’ (*aĝo* in Esperanto), a suitable reference to the old age of the people they cared for. When members of an Esperanto society pointed out that the word means ‘action’, not ‘age’, they found this an appropriate interpretation of their philosophy and decided just to change the explanation of the word on their webpage.<sup>65</sup> With the second and final example we return to the music group *Kaŝita kanto*. The diacritic is ignored in the text of their homepage ([www.kasitakanto.com](http://www.kasitakanto.com)). As Figure 6 shows, the group makes playful use of the sign, however, which seems to be floating away like petals or dandelion seeds, or maybe thoughts, on a summer’s day with an ease that reflects the style of their music.

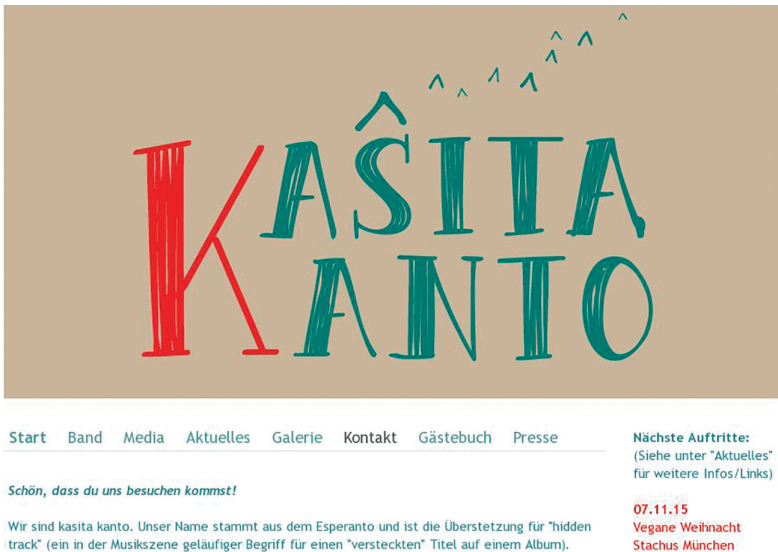


Figure 6. A screenshot of the homepage [www.kasitakanto.com](http://www.kasitakanto.com)

65. See Brosch (2016, pp. 46–47) for the original e-mail reporting the circumstances in more detail.



## Some concluding remarks on Esperanto outside its speech community

Part III of this book has been intended as an excursus. It started with a short survey of books and films that make use of Esperanto as a language spoken by people in an imaginary world, by a group of foreigners or the enemy to make them more authentic and credible without having to be specific about their ethnicity. It is one of several links that unite two fundamentally different types of constructed languages: planned languages like Esperanto created for the practical purpose of easing communication between people of different mother tongues, and invented languages like Klingon or Dothraki, created for artistic reasons (see Fiedler, 2019b, for a more detailed discussion).

In the final chapters in this section we shed some light on the symbolic use of Esperanto, first, through the studies by Gubbins and Blanke, on metaphorical uses of the name of the language and, second, on the use of Esperanto words as names for products, projects and institutions. A comparison of these two reveals a significant difference. Whereas in the newspaper articles they analysed, Gubbins and Blanke found approximately equal numbers of positive and negative connotations, in all of the cases in which we were able to identify a motivation for choosing an Esperanto name, that motivation was positive – hardly surprisingly, since people who take a dim view of the language will probably not make use of its lexical material. Furthermore, the reasons for using Esperanto words, as we have seen, are manifold and different from those for using the metaphor, although a commitment to the ideals of Esperanto often turned out to play an astonishingly central role for people using Esperanto names. Finally, we have to consider that Esperanto elements cannot be identified as such by the majority of people, so that misconceptions or prejudice are of minor importance. Nevertheless, it does not seem incorrect to see in this trend a certain appreciation of the language which should not be ignored, especially as it concerns the use of Esperanto by younger people in new media.





PART IV

## **The main characteristics of Esperanto communication**



## Introduction

### Communication in Esperanto

Having described Esperanto as a linguistic system, having reviewed its history and the main characteristics of its speech community (including its native speakers), and having examined the symbolic values attributed to Esperanto outside its community, we now invite the reader to get acquainted with its practical use. How do people interact by means of a consciously created language in an international L2 community? How do they make sure they are understood, and how do they cope with the fact that Esperanto is spoken with various degrees of proficiency? Can they be expressive, for example, by making use of metaphors and set phrases, as they like to do in their mother tongues? And what about humour, an important factor in creating cooperative communication? Is spoken Esperanto different from written Esperanto, and what about computer-mediated communication, the language we find in blogs and forums? We will try to answer all these questions in separate chapters in the following fourth part of this book.

Our approach here is to present naturally occurring data. We aim to familiarise the reader with authentic Esperanto, as it is spoken at ordinary Esperanto speech events. We will do so by presenting excerpts from presentations, debates and conversations, together with English translations. In doing so we enter uncharted territory – after all, to the best of our knowledge, spoken data have never before served as the basis for a comprehensive description of the planned language.

Our findings in Chapter 18 to 25 on the features of Esperanto communication (i.e. the use of metacommunication, repair strategies, humour in conversation, the use of phraseology and metaphors, code-switching, written vs spoken Esperanto and language change) will be merged and at the same time tested and expanded in a case study (Chapter 26), where we explore the use of Esperanto as a corporate language in a non-governmental organisation (NGO).

Our subject of study does not require any specific order of presentation. We decided to start with metacommunication as a rather general feature that will be familiar to most readers from both mother tongue and foreign language communication, and to continue with characteristics that show the particularities of Esperanto communication more distinctly.



## Metacommunication

### 18.1 Introduction

Communication, irrespective of whether it is carried out in a planned language or an ethnic language, is much more than just the exchange of necessary information. When we speak or write, we represent ourselves, for example, by organising the text in such a way that others can easily understand, or by signalling our own attitude to its content or towards the listener or reader. A multitude of devices are applied with the purpose of enhancing communication, including paralinguistic elements such as intonation and stress in oral communication, and punctuation in written communication.<sup>66</sup> These all have a metacommunicative function, i.e. as “communication about communication”: they indicate how a message is meant to be interpreted. Metacommunicative utterances are interspersed in the actual process of communication, serving to control and support the listener’s comprehension. This chapter deals only with explicit textual forms of metacommunication. We will examine metacommunicative utterances, which can be defined collectively as the linguistic means employed by speakers and/or writers to comment on ongoing communication and its conditions, including the interacting partners and their respective relationships, with the purpose of optimising the process of communication (Techtmeier, 1984: 133; Fiedler, 1991: 25–26). Examples include:

text-structuring elements:

- (2) *Mi havas kvar komentojn, kiuj rekte tuŝas la problemon. Sed mi mencias nur du el ili. Unue, pri la problemo, ke oni ne scias kie estas la prelego [...] Due, mi pensas, ke la filmado gravas [...]*

[I have **four** comments that touch on the problem directly, but I mention only **two** of them. **First**, about the problem of not knowing where the lecture is ... **Second**, I think that filming is important ...] [144 (eng; disc; Lille) 56:05]

justifications of communicative decisions:

- (3) *mi donas kelkajn klarigojn nun en la buso por gajni tempon*

[I am giving some explanations now, on the bus, to save time]

[131 (fra; tour; Lille) 5:48]

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66. For an overview of potential non-verbal expressions, see Hyland (2005, p. 28).

anaphoric and cataphoric references:

- (4) *kiel mi diris* [as I said] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 20:49]  
 (5) *mi parolos pri tio en la lasta bildo* [I will discuss this in the last picture]  
 [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 47:55]

and signals regarding the way a particular expression should be understood:

- (6) *Ja Esperanto estas planlingvo, ne tiel inter citiloj natura lingvo* [Esperanto is indeed a planned language, not a quote/unquote natural language]  
 [113 (hun; pres; Lille) 11:42–52]<sup>67</sup>

Metalanguage (in Jakobson’s 1960 reading), as a specific type of metacommunication, focuses on one part of the communication process, namely the use of linguistic forms and structures. This self-referencing property of language is unique to human language.

Metacommunication is a fundamental and ubiquitous feature of the way we communicate (Hyland, 2005, p. 5). Mauranen (2010, p. 36) calls it “a strong candidate for being a discourse universal”. Its occurrence in Esperanto texts is therefore unsurprising. Indeed, the use of a non-native language as a common means of communication among speakers with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds would seem to make the use of elements that facilitate adequate understanding a necessity. With this in mind, and in light of the high degree of language awareness of Esperanto speakers (see Fiedler, 2006; Kimura, 2012), we expect that Esperanto communication should contain a high concentration of metacommunicative utterances. Except for markers of idiomatic expressions in studies on phraseology (Fiedler, 1999), metacommunication in Esperanto has not yet been the subject of much, if any, investigation.

Outside Esperanto, metacommunication<sup>68</sup> has been the focus of research since the 1980s. An early study is Schiffrin’s (1980) analysis of “meta-talk” in tape-recorded conversations. Oral communication was also the basis of Techtmeier’s (1984) exploration of metacommunication in discussions among German scientists. Analytical frameworks for the categorisation of different types of metacommunication were

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67. By considering the utterance the unit of investigation, our approach is distinguished from broad conceptions of metacommunication which include sentence connectors and pronouns (e.g. Hyland, 2005; Vande Kopple, 1985).

68. The specific terminology varies from author to author. “Metadiscourse” and “metatalk” also appear. Mauranen prefers the terms “metadiscourse” (2012) and discourse reflexivity (Mauranen, 2010). Busse and Hübler (2012, p. 2) state that they use “[t]he two terms ‘metapragmatic’ and ‘metacommunicative’ [...] complementarily, the term ‘metapragmatic’ carrying theoretical, and the term ‘metacommunicative’ practical overtones”.

introduced by Vande Kopple (1985) and Markkanen et al. (1993). The majority of authors dealing with metacommunication in the 1980s and 1990s concentrated on language for special purposes, with a focus on written texts.<sup>69</sup> They showed that metacommunication is an integral part of academic writing and that there are correlations between the use of metacommunication and text genre. Later investigations emphasised spoken academic communication (Mauranen, 2003) and the comparison between spoken and written academic genres (Ädel, 2010; Mauranen, 2010). A huge body of research is devoted to culture-dependent differences in the employment of metacommunication.<sup>70</sup> Researchers have studied metacommunication in various languages and analysed how speakers employ it when using English as a lingua franca, and have concluded that metacommunicative prevalence is not uniform across languages.<sup>71</sup>

Our data were analysed using the methodology of conversation analysis. This approach investigates the ways in which “talk in interaction” (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1974, p. 720; see also Stivers & Sidnell, 2013) is structured and managed by speakers. Conversation analysts focus on naturally occurring communication. They view it as their task to analyse communication with an emphasis on what can actually be found, without preconceptions or hypotheses. In doing so, they remain open to discovering systematic properties of the structure and management of talk (Firth, 1996, pp. 237f.; Levinson 1983, pp. 286f.). The working assumptions that have been developed by conversation analysts about the organisation of conversation in various languages form the point of departure of our investigation. The consideration of interactions in a planned language can be seen as both a test and an enrichment of the conversation analysis approach and an opportunity to deepen our understanding of the general nature of interactional talk. The transcription conventions can be found at the beginning of the book (see also Chapter 5).

Metacommunicative utterances can be classified in different ways. The majority of researchers distinguish between textual items, which aim at guiding the reader through the text by managing the flow of information, and interpersonal items, which are intended to actively engage the reader (Bamford & Bondi, 2005;

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69. See the overview in Ädel (2006).

70. See the survey in Hyland (2005, Chapter 6).

71. For example, as Hyland (2005, p. 118) summarises, Milne (2003), studying metacommunication in editorials of the Spanish *El País* and the British *The Times* found significant differences with regard to types of metacommunication used in the Spanish and English texts. Mauranen (1993) found that Finnish authors used only about fifty percent as many interactive metacommunicative forms as native English speakers did when writing in English. Fandrych and Graefen (2002), although stressing unifying tendencies in the writing of academic texts, also describe differences in the use of text-commenting devices in German and English academic texts.



Hübler, 2011).<sup>72</sup> This subdivision broadly corresponds to Halliday's (1973) textual and interpersonal metafunctions. In a similar way, reworking the previous studies on metacommunication by Vande Kopple (1985) and Markkanen et al. (1993), Stainton (1996) presents a classification as informational or attitudinal metacommunication. Ädel (2010), who uses "metadiscourse" as an umbrella term, proposes a taxonomy of twenty-three functions in total and applies it to spoken and written academic English. Her taxonomy has proved especially useful for the present study. She starts with a primary distinction between "metatext" and "audience interaction", which is comparable to the subdivision into textual and interpersonal mentioned above. "Metatext" comprises the functional subtypes of metalinguistic comments, discourse organisation and speech act labels, whereas "audience interaction" includes various forms of references to the audience. Mauranen (2010, 2012), in her research on English as a lingua franca in spoken academic discourse, divides metacommunicative utterances according to the circumstances of their use, classifying them as monologic, dialogic or interactive speech.

The latter classification does not seem to be a suitable basis for our discussion, as a number of the lectures and conference presentations that we study – both classically monologic genres – are in reality rather interactive in nature. Presenters pose questions to the audience, are interrupted by audience members and are even corrected by them and respond to their comments. In general terms, we adopt the basic subdivision of metacommunication into primarily message-oriented and audience-oriented utterances. Empirical evidence shows, however, that the two types are closely related. Interpersonal (or interactional) utterances involving the reader also frequently serve as signals of text progression, which is why Thompson (2001, p. 61) speaks of "two sides of the same coin".

Our analysis draws on a dataset comprising lectures and conference presentations (including discussions following these), debates, excursions, and casual talk. The dataset is part of the larger corpus described in Chapter 5.<sup>73</sup> We identified 321 occurrences of metacommunication in the dataset. For reasons of comparison, written texts (e.g. from journals) were also included in this section.

Identifying metacommunication is not simple. Its linguistic forms are very diverse, and we must examine each possible occurrence to determine whether it qualifies as an 'utterance'. In addition, difficulties sometimes arise in distinguishing between ordinary signals of orientation inherent in a piece of communication and explicit markers employed by the author in light of an audience's presuppositions.

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72. Hyland (2005) uses the terms "interactive" and "interactional" to mark the distinction.

73. The dataset that forms the basis of this investigation encompasses the recordings between September 2014 and November 2015 (a total of 51.6 hours).

What complicates matters further is the fact that metacommunicative utterances are often combined into clusters of utterances with different functions. In these cases we tried to determine the dominant function of the passage and counted the occurrence as one metacommunicative utterance. This fact should be kept in mind with regard to the total number of metacommunicative utterances quoted above.

We study the metacommunicative utterances found in the various aforementioned forms of communication from two different perspectives. First, we group utterances by their respective functions. We take the basic distinction between content- and audience-oriented items as a starting point, further subdividing the metacommunicative utterances within each of the two groups according to their intended purpose, and arranging them in order of frequency. Second, we focus on certain properties of the metacommunicative utterances. We describe each utterance with respect to its position within the message and its linguistic form. This includes the use of personal pronouns, aspects of conventionalisation, different uses in speech and writing, and culture-driven preferences in the use of metacommunication.

## 18.2 Metacommunicative utterances and their functions

### 18.2.1 Text organisation

In the majority of cases, metacommunicative utterances serve organisational purposes, i.e. they are used to direct the listener's or reader's attention to the structure of the text. In order of frequency, the organisational functions include introducing a communicative action that immediately follows (A), structuring communicative events (B), referring to visual elements and to following or preceding passages (C), labelling illocutions (D), managing time and situation (E), and managing linguistic form (F).

#### A. *Introducing communicative actions*

This function can be observed, above all, in lectures, conference presentations, discussions and work group meetings. "Signposts" to guide listeners and participants permeate these genres, as the time stamps in the examples illustrate:<sup>74</sup>

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74. Most examples include additional content, in which case the metacommunicative element is presented in bold type. All quotes are given in the original.

- (7) *Nun mi iom parolu pli precize pri la rapideco de forkuro, ĉar tio estas unu el la difinoj de nigra truo.* [Now I should talk a bit more precisely about escape velocity, because this is one of the definitions of a black hole.]  
[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 22:28–22:36]
- (8) *Li verkis do unu romanon [...] ĉiun duan jaron. Do nun pri la vortaro de San Antonio. Komence li skribas [...]* [So he wrote a novel (...) every second year. So now about the dictionary of San Antonio. In the beginning he writes (...)]  
[75 (fra; pres; Lille) 5:54–6:10]
- (9) *Kaj (???) mi nun venos al tiu poliglota renkontiĝo* [And (???) now I come to this polyglot gathering]  
[106 (eng; pres; Lille) 9:32]

In discussions and seminars, participants often start by introducing their topic when taking the floor:

- (10) *mi volas nur aldoni iun personan sperton, ĉar mi ja laboras en hospitalo* [I just want to add some personal experience, as I work in a hospital]  
[12 (deu; disc; Poznań) 42:45]
- (11) *pri papago ankaŭ mi havas interesan historion* [I too have an interesting story about a parrot]  
[17 (por; edu; Poznań) 17:38]

The introduction of a new subtopic is often combined with metacommunicative utterances that function in other ways, above all as disclaimers, i.e. statements in which speakers explicitly state what they do *not* intend to address (see Examples (12) and (13)).

- (12) *Mi nun ne parolos al vi pri la KER-ekzamenoj, ne pri edukado.net, ne pri metodoj. Sed mi portas al vi iun tute novan temon, iun laboron, kiun mi en junio, eh en majo kaj en junio sukcesis fari [...]* [Now I won't speak to you about CEFR exams, nor about edukado.net, nor about methods. But I bring you a completely new topic: work I succeeded in doing in June, uh in May and June (...)]  
[110 (hun; pres; Lille) 1:02–1:22]
- (13) *Temas pri [...] surbaze de tiuj ĉi kvar agadkampoj [...]. Mi ne tuŝos la aliajn agadkampojn, ĉar pri tio okupiĝos [...]* [The topic is (...) based on these four fields of activity (...) I won't touch on the other fields of activity, as (...) will be dealing with this]  
[176 (spa; pres; Havana) 0:38–1:03]

## B. Structuring communicative events

Speakers often use metacommunication to refer to an agenda that is already known to the participants. Enumerations help to keep track of the macrostructure of the entire speech event; in (16), a discussion on gender and sexual orientation, the individual letters of the acronym *GLAT* (which stand for *Gejoj, Lesbaninoj,*

*Ambaŭseksemuloj, Transseksuloj* [Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transsexual people]) are used as structuring elements.

- (14) *Se ne estas demandoj pri tiu ĉi punkto, ni tuj transiru al la venonta [...] se ne estas intervenoj, punkto ok – terminologio.* [If there are no questions on this point, we should move on at once to the next one (...) if there are no objections, point eight – terminology.] [151 (eng; disc; Lille) 9:26–12:06]
- (15) *Mi preparis por vi unupaĝan superrigardon.* [I've prepared for you a one-page survey] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 0:02]  
*Tio estas do la unua punkto, do la kondiĉoj. Specoj de komunikado – dua punkto – do povas esti lingva, [...] nelingva, do estas parola kaj skriba komunikado, implica kaj eksplika [...]* [This is the first point, the conditions. Types of communication – the second point – can be linguistic (...) non-linguistic, hence there is spoken and written communication, implicit and explicit (...)] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 6:16–6:35]  
*Do tio estas do la unua punkto: kondiĉoj kaj specoj de komunikado* [So, this is the first point: conditions and types of communication] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 8:36]  
*Nun ni iras al la kvina punkto, tio estas la senkulpigo en moderna socio* [Now we are going to the fifth point, i.e. apologising in modern society] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 22:37]
- (16) *Ĉu ni difinu la L?* [Shall we define L?] [12 (eng; disc; Poznań) 7:04]

Occasionally, speakers use metacommunication to justify communicative decisions, i.e. they give reasons for organising their speech in a specific way.

In Examples (17) and (18), the structuring refers to serial speech events, the lecture courses in the International Congress University, which usually consist of three parts. Topic announcements referring to other parts of the series are therefore included here.

- (17) *Do, la enhavo de tiu prelegserio, kiel dirite, estas tri prelegoj, en tiu unua prelego ni parolos pri la scienca revolucio [...]. En la morgaŭa prelego [...] ni parolos pri [...]. Marde matene [...]* [Well, the content of this lecture series, as was said before, there are three lectures. In this first lecture we will speak about the scientific revolution (...) In tomorrow's lecture (...) we will talk about (...) On Tuesday morning (...)] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 6:00–7:15]
- (18) *Ni havos kurson kune, kun tri lecionoj. Du hodiaŭ [...] kaj la tria estos morgaŭ [...]* [We will have a course together, with three lessons. Two today (...) and the third one tomorrow] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 01:05–1:25]

C. *Referring to visual elements and to following or preceding passages*

Within this subgroup of metacommunicative devices,<sup>75</sup> references to visual elements (e.g. handouts or PowerPoint slides providing illustrations, graphs or tables) are the most frequent. They are typical of lectures and conference presentations, as in (19) and (20), and occasionally occur in explanations on outings (see Chapter (21)).

- (19) *Ĉi tie estas kelkaj bildoj pri nia universitato* [here are some pictures of our university] / *kaj jen estas foto* [and here is a photograph]  
[105 (ukr; pres; Lille) 11:02 / 12:27]
- (20) *Do, la ĝenerala modelo de la komputebla informado povas esti reduktita al tiu- al tiu grafikaĵo. Ni havas je la maldekstra flanko sendanton de informoj [...]* [So, the general model of computable information can be reduced to this- to this diagram. On the left we have a sender of information (...)]  
[98 (ita; pres; Lille) 9:41–9:54]
- (21) *Nur per tiu ilo – pioĉo* [Only using this instrument – a pickaxe]  
[140 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 13:20]

In Example (21), a tour guide relates how in the First World War (before the battle of Arras) soldiers dug a tunnel using nothing but a pickaxe. She lacks the word in Esperanto and refers to a picture of a pickaxe in the exhibition, before a participant supplies the term (*pioĉo*).

Speakers use cataphoric references to refer to the future, indicating that content related to the current discussion and therefore perhaps also anticipated by the audience, will be discussed later (see Examples (22) and (23)). Anaphoric references refer to the past, to content that has already been covered and that might be useful in understanding the current discussion (see Examples (24) and (25)).

- (22) *Poste mi- mi diros la ekzemplon* [Later I- I'll give an example]  
[149 (jpn; pres; Lille) 1:27:07]
- (23) *Do surloke ni klarigos kelkajn detalojn* [so we'll clear up some details on site]  
[133 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 6:54]
- (24) *Do fakte, kiel jam dirite, ni festas ĉi tie la centjaran eh la centjariĝon de ĝenerala teorio de la relativeco* [Thus in fact, as was already said, we celebrate here the centenary- uh, the centennial of the general theory of relativity]  
[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 3:52]
- (25) *kiel mi diris en la buso [...]* [as I said on the bus (...)]  
[132 (fra; tour; Lille) 6:15]

75. Hyland (2005, p. 154) uses the term “endophorics” as an umbrella term for the three types.

In addition, speakers occasionally refer to other participants of the speech event in order to show respect or to reinforce their own argument (see Examples (26) and (27)).

- (26) *Kiel vi ja ĉiuj diris* [as you all said] [176 (spa; pres; Havana) 4:21]  
 (27) [...] *ĝuste kiel <name> diris, <name surname> ĉi tie* [...] [(...) as <name> just said, <name surname> here (...)] [161 (?; disc; Lille) 56:02]

Cataphoric and anaphoric references illustrate the close relationship between text organisation and audience orientation. They help to make a text well organised, coherent and easy to comprehend, but their form and frequency depend on the speaker-listener relationship and on how good the speaker perceives the listener's understanding of the content to be. The large number of references in the corpus bears witness to the fact that Esperanto speakers are aware of their particular situation, namely that listeners speak the language as an L2 and are, as a community, very heterogeneous.

#### D. Labelling illocutions

This type of metacommunicative utterance is not always easy to differentiate from the type described in section A (introducing communicative actions), as the introduction of a topic often includes illocution markers. It is not the organisational aspect that takes centre stage here, however. The items presented below serve as explicit interpretations of the speaker's activities and intentions. Speakers use them to topicalise, i.e. to indicate the illocutionary function of a preceding or following utterance (Examples (28) and (29)). In Example (30) the speaker wants to ensure that a passage is understood not as his own wording but as a quote; in Example (31), the illocutionary label mitigates a preceding criticism (*Vi ne menciis ...* 'you did not mention ...'); and Example (32) seems to be meant as an apology.

- (28) *Nun mi esprimas mian dankon* [And now I express my thanks] [110 (eng; pres; Lille) 32:50]  
 (29) *ĉi tio ja estas pli- pli ja komento ol demando* [this is indeed more- more a comment than a question] [74 (jpn; pres; Lille) 55:35]  
 (30) *Mi volas legi citaĵon [...]* [I want to read out a citation (...)] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 12:00]  
 (31) *mi ne volas vin akuzi, simple mi volas diri* [I don't want to accuse you, I just want to say] [40 (hun; pres; La Chauv-de-Fonds) 87:35]  
 (32) *se mi rajtas legi mian propran PowerPoint* [if I may read my own PowerPoint] [86 (eng; pres; Lille) 20:00]

### E. *Managing time and situation*

All oral speech events can involve unforeseeable changes to which interactants must respond. In our corpus, this essentially concerns two types of situations: first, technical problems (e.g. the use of equipment for the presentation of visual or acoustic aids) (Examples (33) and (34)) and, second, the restriction of time (Examples (35) and (36)). Speakers' commentaries on these situations represent a form of metacommunication.<sup>76</sup>

- (33) *Pardonu, [...] unu el miaj lumbildoj malaperis* [I'm sorry, (...) one of my pictures has disappeared] [149 (ben; pres; Lille) 53:00]
- (34) *Mi ne bone testis la aparaton, mi esperas, ke ĉio funkcias bone* [I didn't test the equipment properly, I hope that everything will work fine] [177 (por; tour; Havana) 42:40]
- (35) *Estas ĝis unua kaj kvarono, ĉu? Ni havas tempon* [It goes until quarter past one, doesn't it? We have some time] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 33:11]
- (36) *do tio estas la lasta (ekzemplo)* [so this is the last (example)] / *mi rapide montras al vi* [I'll show you quickly] [107 (zho; pres; Lille) 2:51 / 3:14]

In addition, metacommunicative comments help to bridge the gap in situations where a necessary piece of information is not available (Examples (37) and (38)), or where a speaker has to take the floor without being prepared to speak (Example (39)) or has to continue after an interruption (Example (40)).

- (37) *inter vi estas, [...] atendu, mi notis tion ie; estas belgoj, germanoj [...]* [among you there are (...) wait, I've noted this somewhere: there are Belgians, Germans (...)] [130 (fra; tour; Lille) 3:39]
- (38) *Momenton, mi havas ĝin notite* [give me a second, I have it noted here] [99 (ita; disc; Lille) 86:36]
- (39) *Vi devintis* [sic; Presumably it should be "devintus"] *diri tion [= ke mi devas veni al la podio] antaŭe. [...]* *Kion mi povas diri* [You should have said this (= that I have to enter the stage) before [...]] What can I say] [174 (por; cerem; Havana) 19:41]
- (40) *Mi klarigas, ke tiu stacidomo [...]* [I'm explaining that this train station (...)] [102 (fra; tour; Lille) 2:37]

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76. Ädel (2010, p. 87) speaks of the "discourse function Contextualising".

### F. *Managing linguistic form*

This type includes comments on the choice or creation of words and phrases. Speakers signal the ad hoc character of a linguistic form and use metacommunication to signal that they, to a certain extent, dissociate themselves from their own language use.

- (41) *X. ne estas la ĝusta loko por tiaj esence partianaj aŭ partizanaj aŭ kiel oni povus diri dokumentoj* [X. is not the right place for such essentially partisan or guerilla or how could you say documents] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 24:17]
- (42) *mi absolute kunpensas, kaj mi pensas, ke mi ĵus inventis tiun vorton, almenaŭ por mi* [I totally follow (lit. think with you), and I think I've just invented this word, at least for me] [143 (spa; pres/disc; Lille) 81:35]

In lectures and conference presentations, metacommunication is employed for terminology management (Examples (43) and 44)).

- (43) *[...] kaj tio en la scienca lingvo nomiĝas geodezo [...]* [(...) and in scientific language this is called *geodesy* (...)] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 4:45]
- (44) *tio estas fakte radioondo ni diru* [this is in fact a radio wave, so to speak] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 26:35]

Comments can also refer to the foreign origin of an expression (Examples (45) and 46)).

- (45) *[...] mi prononcas angle, Wall Street Journal* [(...) I pronounce it in English: Wall Street Journal] [99 (eng; disc; Lille) 101:15]
- (46) *Ankaŭ estas la tiel nomitaj kromuniversitatoj. Ili havas diversajn nomojn [...] kaj en tiu konkurencokampo, en tiu, la angla nomo estas kutime extension school, kaj ĝi havas diversajn nomojn* [There are also so-called additional universities. They have various names (...) and in this field of competition, in this, the English name is usually *extension school*, and it has several names] [198 (eng; disc; Lisbon) 27:00]

Metacommunication can often be found with proverbs and idiomatic expressions to prevent these from being understood in a literal sense (Examples (47) and 48)). This topic will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 21 on phraseology.

- (47) *ĉe ni oni diras: kiu ne kuras, ne manĝas* [in our country they say 'he who doesn't run, doesn't eat'] [5 (ces; infl; Poznań) 5:43]
- (48) *Oni diras kutime: La fiŝo estas la lasta besto, kiu konscias pri la ekzisto de la akvo.* [We usually say: the fish is the last animal to be aware of the existence of the water] [198 (por; disc; Lisbon) 23:00]



In addition, metacommunicative markers accompany word searches, as will be discussed in Chapter 22 on code-switching. Finally, it should be mentioned that meta-communication occurs with repairs (*darwinisma evoluŝtupo, [...] pardonu, ŝtuparo* ‘Darwinian evolutionary step, [...] sorry, ladder’ [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 27:10–22]), as will be shown in Chapter 19.

### 18.2.2 Audience orientation

The metacommunicative utterances which will be discussed in this section focus on the addressee. Speakers want to ensure that the participants of the speech event, be it a seminar, lecture or excursion, understand them in the intended way. More precisely, they employ metacommunication with the aim of managing the conditions of communication, such as channel (G), checking other participants’ understanding (H), highlighting the relevance of information (I), evaluating others’ talk (J), and anticipating criticism (K).

#### G. Managing channel

At the beginning of their presentations, speakers often check whether the acoustic and visual preconditions for successful communication are met:

- (49) *Ĉu la homoj en la lastaj vicoj bone aŭdas min?* [Can the people in the back rows hear me well?] [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 5:38]
- (50) *Ĉu vi pli-malpli komprenas ĉion?* [Do you understand everything more or less?] [140 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 21:22]
- (51) *Ĉu necesas, ke mi staru?* [Is it necessary for me to stand?] [149 (ben; pres; Lille) 38:05]

In the case of unsatisfactory acoustic conditions, the initiative is often taken by the audience (Examples (52) and (53)) or the moderator (Example (54)):

- (52) *Laŭte. Mi ne aŭdas* [Louder! I can’t hear!] [85 (?; pres; Lille) 68:20]
- (53) *Laŭte. Iru al mikrofono* [Louder! Closer to the microphone!] [94 (?; pres; Lille) 59:08]
- (54) *Proksimigu vian buŝon al la mikrofono* [Move your mouth nearer to the microphone!] [161 (hun; disc; Lille) 44:25]

## H. *Checking understanding*

Debates and seminars are characterised by a pronounced orientation to others. For example, participants ask whether their questions have been adequately understood (Example (55)) and heads of discussion groups ask participants to check whether their contribution is correctly represented in a document (Example (56)). More often than not, speakers grant the audience permission to ask questions at any time (Example (57)), and sometimes repeat a question before answering, so as to enable all participants to follow the discussion (Example (58)).

- (55) *Ĉu mia demando estas klara?* [Is my question clear?]  
[38 (fra; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 58:20]
- (56) *Bone, do mi aldonis [...] Ĉu tio ĝuste trafas la ideon? Jes? Jes.* [OK, so I have added (...)] Does this match the idea well? Yes? Yes.]  
[99 (eng; pres; Lille) 104:05–15]
- (57) *Se vi havas demandon, vi povas en la mezo fari ankaŭ* [If you have a question, you can ask in the middle, too] [80 (heb; pres; Lille) 18:09]
- (58) *La demando estis, ĉu [...]* [The question was whether (...)]  
[73 (heb; pres; Lille) 54:47]

## I. *Highlighting the relevance of information*

By emphasising the important parts of speech (or – albeit less frequently – unimportant parts – see Example (61)) a speaker can guide the audience to the core message, which is especially helpful in educational contexts. In Example (62), the speaker comments on the design of his visual aids.

- (59) *aparte mi ŝatas mencii* [I want to mention especially] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 4:35]
- (60) *Bonvolu tre bone fiksi la bildon* [Please keep this picture in mind]  
[110 (hun; pres; Lille) 1:28]
- (61) *Ne gravas, se vi nenion komprenis de la lasta frazo* [It doesn't matter if you didn't understand anything in that last sentence] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 16:17]
- (62) *Mi metis en ruĝo "la informado-mikso"* [I've put in red letters "mix of information"]  
[85 (eng; pres; Lille) 23:02]

The catchphrase *Kredu min, (sinjorino)*<sup>77</sup> ['Believe me, (madam)'] can often be heard as an intensifier in Esperanto. See, for instance, the conversation during lunch in Example (63). Example (64), from a conference presentation, shows that its use is not restricted to casual conversation.

77. *Kredu min, sinjorino ...* ('Believe me, madam') refers to Cezaro Rossetti's novel of the same title (1950) about a travelling salesman's adventures.

- (63) A: *Belege!* (comment on a soup that has been served)  
 B: *Jes, mi diris al vi ke- kio estas bona.*  
 C: *Beleco kaj la boneco estas du aliaj (aferoj)*  
 B: *(Jes, sed) ĝi estas ankaŭ bona. KREDU min, sinjorino!*  
 Several: @(..)@  
 [A: Beautiful! (comment on a soup that has been served)  
 B: Yes, I told you that- what is good.  
 C: Beauty and quality are two different (things).  
 B: (Yes, but) it (a soup) is good, too. Believe me, madam!]  
 [1 (deu-hun-hun; infl; Poznań) 13:55]
- (64) *Ne ĉiuj eblaj kombinoj fakte aperas [...] pro tio la sumo ne estas la produkto de tio [...]. Bonvolu, kREDU min, gesinjoroj* [In fact, not all possible combinations appear (...). Because of that the sum is not the product of this (...). Please believe me, ladies and gentleman] [156 (deu; pres; Lille) 6:47]

### J. Evaluating others' talk

Metacommunication is also used to assess other participants' contributions in debates and seminars, with positive feedback clearly predominating in the dataset, as the following examples show:

- (65) *Tio estas tre brava komento* [This is a very commendable comment]  
 [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 48:20]
- (66) *Vi tute trafas kernan punkton* [You're hitting the core point]  
 [148 (ita; pres/disc; Lille) 14:25]
- (67) *tio estas efektive tre bona demando* [that is indeed a very good question]  
 [156 (deu; pres; Lille) 37:14]

Howarth (2006, p. 125) describes the conventional response “it is a good question”, which occurs with high frequency in his corpus of public press conferences, as “a form of evasion or buying of time”. Although it cannot be ruled out that this motivation played a role for some of the speakers, the variability of linguistic forms in the examples is an indicator that the function of earnest evaluation is of primary importance.

It can be considered negative feedback, however, when the right to speak is withdrawn from a participant in a discussion or debate as in Example (68), or when his or her contribution is regarded as inappropriate for further discussion. Even in this case, refusals are often hedged or introduced by positive assessment (Example (69)).

- (68) – *Jes?*  
 – *Mi (dirus), mi nur volis, mi ne scias, ĉu la komitatoj kaj la ĉeestantoj scias pri tiu eh iniciato “Ni semas”. Eble diri vorton, estas estas kvazaŭ eh helpi aktivulojn en diversaj* [is interrupted]  
 – *(Mi) petus al <name> klarigi, estas estas lia iniciato*  
 [- Yes?  
 – I’d (say), I just wanted, I don’t know whether the committee members and participants know about this uh initiative “We sow”. I maybe say a word, it it is something like helping activists in different (is interrupted)  
 – (I’d) ask <name> to explain, it it is his initiative]  
 [144 (spa-eng; disc; Lille) 72:52–73:13]
- (69) *Pardonu, mi ne tute kaptas la rilaton [...] Tio estas evidente grava, sed [...]* [Sorry, I do not quite understand how this is related to (...). It is obviously important, but (...)]  
 [144 (eng; disc; Lille) 1:20]

### K. Anticipating criticism

Occasionally, speakers make self-critical comments on the adequacy of their speeches (Examples (70) and (71)) or express doubts as to whether they are qualified enough to contribute to a topic (Examples (72) and (73)).

- (70) *La fleksebleco de Esperanto – kiel ni bone scias ĉiuj [...] mi nur ripetas ĉi tie banalaĵojn – [...] helpas* [The flexibility of Esperanto helps – as we all know well (...) I’m just repeating banalities here] [103 (hun; pres; Lille) 108:20]
- (71) *Bone, mi komencis paroli pri politiko* [OK, I’m starting to talk about politics]  
 [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 16:02]
- (72) *Mi ne estas sperta en lingvistiko* [I am not experienced in linguistics]  
 [107 (zho; pres; Lille) 0:40]
- (73) *[...] vi konas pli bone ol mi* [(...) you know better than I do]  
 [134 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 1:05]

The speakers comment on deficiencies in their own communicative behaviour, relative to what might be expected in the specific situation, namely addressing relevant issues (Example (70)), sticking to the topic (Example (71)) or having the necessary knowledge to answer a question properly (Examples (72) and (73)), and thus the main function of these utterances might be described as preventing criticism or “anticipating sanctions prophylactically” (Hübler, 2011, p. 130). Couper-Kuhlen and Thompson (2005), who call this strategy “concessive repair”, characterise it as “highly interactional”.<sup>78</sup>

78. Various types of repair are studied in Chapter 19.

This section has shown that metacommunicative utterances are employed for a variety of functions. There are many different ways for authors to comment and reflect on their own texts and to interact with an audience. It is often difficult to allocate a concrete occurrence of metacommunication to a particular category. Not only do items that serve the purpose of textual organisation often also take the form of interactions with the audience, as discussed above, but there are also overlaps of function within individual categories of our classification. This is because interactants often intend to fulfil several communicative goals at the same time. The utterance *mi ŝatus aldoni ion* ('I would like to add something', 117 [???, disc; Lille] 40:14), in this particular situation, seems to serve mainly to announce the speaker's intention to take the floor and to call the audience's attention to it, but simultaneously it communicates how the successive information should be seen in relation to what has been being discussed. Therefore, we agree with Techtmeier (1984) and Markkanen et al. (1993), who consider metacommunication to be in principle multifunctional. The following section will provide further insights into the use of metacommunication by analysing its linguistic forms.

### 18.3 Properties of metacommunicative utterances

#### 18.3.1 Position within the text

As the examples in Section 18.2 illustrate, metacommunicative utterances can both precede and follow the message that they relate to.<sup>79</sup> Their positions depend on their functions. Introductions to topics and macrostructures are, as expected, prospective, whereas anaphoric elements and evaluations of participants' contributions are retrospective. In other functions, such as managing linguistic form (F) or labelling illocutions (D), utterances are found in both positions.

The positioning of metacommunicative utterances within texts has not been widely examined in ethnic languages. Tanskanen (2007, p. 91) finds utterances in "retrospective, mid-message and prospective" positions in computer-mediated interaction (but does not give their prevalence in each case). Hübler (2011, p. 111) argues:

As to the position of metacommunicative clauses, it is most common that they follow the utterance that they refer to. Only where the speaker takes him/herself as target may we find a reversed order, in which the utterance referred follows. This restriction, of course, is not surprising; it is, after all, only in this circumstance that the speaker of a metacommunicative utterance knows what it will be that s/he (cataphorically) refers to.

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79. We exclude some subtypes of metacommunication, such as references to visual aids, from this discussion as these utterances often occur simultaneously with the pictures or diagrams, e.g. in PowerPoint presentations.

In contrast to Hübler's assessment, the majority of metacommunicative utterances in our dataset precede the utterances they refer to. Introducing topics is the most frequent function. As for textual reviews and previews, cataphoric references dominate over anaphoric ones.

If we take the metacommunicative utterances as described in the above functions as a basis, 51% of them comment on subsequent content, whereas 32% refer to preceding information. This underlines their general character as text-planning devices. Speakers employ metacommunication more often to look ahead than to react to specific circumstances, unlike, for example, repairs (see Chapter 19).

### 18.3.2 Personal pronouns

A large number of studies reveal that personal pronouns occur with high frequency in metacommunicative utterances. Ädel (2010; 2012), using corpus-linguistic methods in her studies on academic English, even took the occurrence of personal pronouns as a starting point for her investigations. She retrieved potential examples by searching for the personal pronouns *I*, *we*, and *you* and then analysed the examples manually.

Our exploration confirms the close relationship between metacommunication and personal pronouns: 65.1% of the metacommunicative utterances in the dataset used here include a form of *mi* (I), *ni* (we), or *vi* (you). This is not surprising given the interpersonal character of metacommunication. That about one third of the occurrences do not include a personal pronoun (see, for example, 29, 36, 43 and 58 in the previous section) however, indicates that a study on metacommunication cannot be comprehensive without considering impersonal utterances.

The most frequent personal pronoun is the first person singular *mi*, which is used in 43.9% of metacommunicative utterances. This is empirical support of Vande Kopple's (1985, p. 83) characterisation of metacommunication: it "signals the presence of the author". The second person pronoun *vi* can be found in 11.5% of utterances. Its use shows the implicit dialogic character of monologic genres, such as other-orientation of lectures and presentations (see Examples (74) and (75)).

- (74) *Pri tio vi tuj aŭdos* [In an instant you'll hear about this]  
[74 (ces, pres; Lille) 21:52]
- (75) *Vi vidos nur unu solan ekvacion en la prelego, kiun vi vidas nun sur la poŝtmarko*  
[You will see only one single equation in the lecture, which you see now on the stamp] [80 (heb, pres; Lille) 3:05; the  $E=mc^2$  formula is shown on a commemorative postage stamp dedicated to Einstein]

The first person plural pronoun *ni* can be observed mainly in two functions. First, it can be used as the inclusive or pedagogical *we* to refer to both speaker and addressee and thereby create a sense of togetherness (see Examples (76) to (78)).

- (76) *Do ni faru nun ĝeneralajn konsiderojn* [So let's make general considerations]  
[98 (ita; pres; Lille) 33:16]
- (77) *Ni prenu ekzemplon* [Let's take an example] [85 (eng; pres; Lille) 17:28]
- (78) [...] *nun, kiom ni traktu pri eksteraj rilatoj* [(...) now, how much should we talk  
about external relations] [100 (eng; disc; Lille) 107:13]

As the examples show, *ni* is preferentially used in volitive constructions (marked in Esperanto by the ending *-u*) in this function. Second, the pronoun can be used as part of the conventionalised form *ni diru*, which is used as a metacommunicative signal of *hic* and *nunc* word choices, as described in F (see Example (44)). We will discuss the use of this and other ready-made phrases in the following section.

### 18.3.3 Metacommunicative utterances that have become set expressions

Metacommunication can also be verbalised in the form of conventionalised language. *So to say / so to speak, in other words* and *as it were* are examples in English, whereas in German we find *sozusagen, wie gesagt, ich sag' mal* and many other set phrases. Esperanto is no exception in this respect: *kiel diri?* ('how to say'), *por tiel diri* ('so to say') and *ni diru* ('we should say' / 'let's say') are ready-made constructions or phraseological units (see Chapter 21) that are employed for metacommunicative purposes. Through frequent use they have become routine formulae that are stored as a whole. These lexicalised items have the "advantages of being quickly retrievable and of being familiar to the hearer as well as to the speaker" (Pawley & Syder, 1983, p. 218), which allows the speaker time to prepare the communication that follows. Due to their conventionalised nature, however, *kiel diri, por tiel diri* and *ni diru* are less conspicuous than alternative metacommunicative markers aiming at performing the same function (*socialiste, por tiel diri, kiel oni povus kompreni tiun ĉi vorton* 'socialist, so to say, as one could understand this word' [40 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 8:34]).

In our dataset *kiel diri, por tiel diri* and *ni diru* serve the purpose of managing linguistic form, as described in F (see also Fiedler, 1999, pp. 277–281). *Kiel diri* generally signals the search for an appropriate expression. It is therefore often accompanied by pauses or hesitation (see Example (79)).

- (79) *Mi antaŭ kelkaj jaroj konstatis, ke ILEI en Svedio havis la opinion ke tiuj testoj, ITK-testoj, estas eh (.) kiel diri eh ili estas akceptitaj ĝuste de la Eŭropa Unio. Mi debatis tion [...] [Some years ago I realised that ILEI in Sweden was of the opinion that these tests, the ITK tests, are uh (.) how to say uh have just been accepted by the European Union. I contested this (...)]*  
[38 (swe; disc; La Chaux-de-Fond) 58:18]

- (80) *Hieraŭ ni mal (1) kiel diri [...] inaŭguris [...] [Yesterday we op- (1) how to say (...)* inaugurated (...)] [141 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 2:40]

*Por tiel diri* and *ni diru* are similar in their function. They precede or follow a word or phrase that the author has reservations about and marks accordingly as a spontaneous creation. In Examples (81) and (82), *por tiel diri* accompanies the speaker's search for an adequate description of some illustrations. In Examples (83) and (84) we find figurative expressions signalled in this way (*dinosaŭro* 'dinosaur' for a behind-the-times person and *sensuka* 'without sap' for uninspired writing), whereas in Example (85), the focus is on the word *diverĝo* ('divergence'), which might be considered a sort of euphemism in the particular context. Finally, in Example (86), a speaker uses *ni diru* to introduce an analogy.

- (81) *Ĝi ankaŭ funkciis kiel por tiel diri kvazaŭ neŭtrala ŝildo [It also functioned as a kind of, so to say, neutral shield]* [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 22:19]
- (82) *Ĝi enhavas kelkajn belajn bildojn, skeĉojn por tiel diri [It contains some beautiful pictures, sketches so to say]* [164 (eng; oth; Lille) 72:56]
- (83) *Krome, ni diru, ke li laŭ mi estas unu el la malnovaj dinosaŭroj, kiuj ankoraŭ opinias, ke raŭmismo [...] ankoraŭ povas esti proponata kiel alternativo [...] [Besides, let's say that according to me, he is one of the old dinosaurs who still believes that raumism (...) is plausible as an alternative (...)]* [36 (ita; infl; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 24:08–24:48]
- (84) *Povas ŝajni vanta veto traduki verkon de San Antonio en iun ajn lingvon. Laŭ nia scio multaj nacilingvaj tradukoj estas se ne fuŝaj ni diru sensukaj. Sed ĝuste tiun riskon ni prenis [...] [It seems a hollow bet to translate a book by San Antonio into any language. According to our knowledge, many translations into ethnic languages are, so to say, insipid, if not bungled. But we took on just this risk (...)]* [75 (fra; pres; Lille) 11:32–11:57]
- (85) *Do tio estas alia ni diru diverĝo en niaj du [...] rigardoj [So this is another so to say divergence in our two points of view]* [36 (ita; infl; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 27:55–28:08]
- (86) *La spaco kurbiĝas pro la gravito de granda maso, same kiel eh ni diru eh surfaco de kaŭĉuko kurbiĝas se vi metas en ĝin iun pezan objekton [Space warps because of the gravity of a huge mass, in the same way as er let's say uh a rubber surface warps when you put a heavy object onto it]* [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 26:02–26:20]

As the examples illustrate, *ni diru* and *por tiel diri* are not just phrases employed to buy time in a situation where a speaker fumbles for a suitable word, as their literal meanings might suggest; they simultaneously work as highlighters that put the linguistic elements to which they refer at the centre of attention. Finally, it is worth



mentioning that the conventionalised metacommunicative utterances discussed here are idiosyncratic, i.e. their use is subject to individual preference. This is also true for *ĉu ne*, a set phrase for tagging questions (see Chapter 23).

#### 18.3.4 Variation in the use of metacommunication

The use of metacommunicative utterances depends on a variety of factors. In their analysis of academic articles, Fandrych and Graefen (2002) find different frequencies of metacommunication depending on the academic **discipline** of the authors. Hyland (2005) describes how usage patterns reflect the knowledge domains and argument forms of various academic disciplines. Another cause of variation in the use of metacommunication is **genre**. Conference presentations and lectures contain high numbers of utterances, above all text-structuring devices. Discussions after talks and speeches, working group meetings and debates are rich in items that evaluate participants' contributions or are related to the organisation of the speech event. Participants are granted the right to contribute to the discussion (see Example (87) and 88), and they vie for the floor (see Examples (89) and (90) or to keep the floor (Example (91)).

- (87) <name>, *koncize, mi petas* [<name>, concisely, please] [72 (eng; disc; Lille) 72:26]
- (88) <name>, *ĉu vi volas ion diri pri via rolo en [...]* [<name>, do you want to say something about your role in (...)] [151 (eng; disc; Lille) 8:15]
- (89) *Ĉu mi rajtas?* [May I?] [157 (eng; disc; Lille) 98:29]
- (90) [...] *unu aldono* [one more thing] [73 (zho; disc; Lille) 48:04]
- (91) *Ĉu mi rajtas kompleti tion* [May I finish this one] [128 (hin/urd; disc; Lille) 18:26]

(For a more detailed description of Esperanto used in debates, see Chapter 21). In contrast, metacommunication that focuses on linguistic form, e.g. managing terminology, can be found equally frequently in all genres we have investigated.

Our study does not confirm a correlation between the **length** of texts and the extent of metacommunication.<sup>80</sup> Even short contributions often include explicit metacommunicative signals of speaker intentions. Occasionally, we find so-called brackets (Schiffrin, 1980) that mark the beginning and termination of a contribution to the discussion:

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80. Busch-Lauer (1995, pp. 51–52), for example, in an analysis of academic English, states that the longer the text, the more metacommunication occurs.

- (92) *ĉi tio ja estas pli- pli ja komento ol demando [...] do jen mia kontribuo* [this is indeed more- more a comment than a question (...) so, this is my contribution]  
[74 (jpn; disc; Lille) 55:35–56:33]
- (93) *Mi volas paroli iomete pri flugfolioj kaj informiloj kaj tiel plu [...] Do, mi nur volis fari tiujn komentojn* [I want to speak a bit about flyers and information leaflets and the like (...) So, I just wanted to make these comments]  
[100 (eng; disc, Lille) 44:08–46:50]

As mentioned in the introduction, a number of studies have revealed differences in the use of metacommunication according to speakers' **cultural backgrounds**. As our examples show, metacommunication in Esperanto is employed by interactants with a multitude of native languages and cultures.<sup>81</sup> Variation can therefore be observed according to L1 influences, which are also some of the features that users of the planned language expect. Esperanto speakers have not acquired the language – as is generally the case in foreign language learning – in order to speak it in a way a native speaker of that language does,<sup>82</sup> but rather to use it in an international community. This implies that the method of presenting a topic or conveying information to an audience is in general different. Our dataset includes examples where speakers with English as their L1 obviously structure their Esperanto texts in a way that confirms author-responsibility, which is generally ascribed to academic English (for example, by Clyne, 1981, 1987; see Fiedler, 2015e), but we can also find texts or speeches where Esperanto speakers from Israel, Pakistan or Japan use metacommunication for exactly the same purpose. As in Esperanto communication, a number of factors must be taken into consideration in addition to L1 influences, such as language proficiency, experience in international communication by means of other foreign languages, homogenizing effects of Esperanto meetings, and individual identities beyond the language and culture that speakers were born into. A generalisation on the basis of a few examples does not seem to be justified here. One might instead say that, as regards cultural styles for academic writing and speaking, the cultural peculiarity of Esperanto communication lies in the fact that it is not culture-specific.

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81. The dataset upon which this investigation draws includes speakers of the following native languages (as far as they are known to us): Bengali, Czech, Chinese, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Spanish, Ukrainian, and Urdu.

82. This aspect is vividly illustrated by the title of a recent article on the use of English in the sciences: “,Das ist das Problem, das hinzukriegen, dass es so klingt, als hätt’ es ein Native Speaker geschrieben” [‘That’s the problem, to do it in a way that it seems a native speaker did it’] (Gnutzmann & Rabe, 2014b).

There is, however, a peculiarity of (international) Esperanto meetings that should be mentioned in this context. It is the common practice of speakers to mention their name and congress number before entering the discussion, which allows the audience to identify the speaker from the booklet of participants.

- (94) *Mi estas <name>, kongresnumero 834. Kaj mi nur volis aldoni [...]* [I am <name>, congress number 834. And I just wanted to add (...)]  
[157 (eng; disc; Lille) 34:45]
- (95) *<name>, kongresnumero 328. Mi volas reveni al la rimarkoj de <name> kaj la respondo de <name>* [<name>, congress number 328. I want to get back to the remarks by <name> and the response by <name>]  
[144 (spa; disc; Lille) 41:50–42:01]
- (96) *Bonvolu, jes, sinjoro. Kaj ne forgesu diri nomon kaj kongresnumeron* [Yes, please, Sir. And please don't forget to say your name and congress number]  
[(72 (eng; disc; Lille) 4:15]

An influential factor driving variation in the use of metacommunication is **mode**. Studies of English have shown that metacommunication is a common feature of both spoken and written texts, but that oral communication includes higher frequencies of metacommunication than writing (Ädel, 2012). A number of factors characterising spoken interaction in real time, such as time constraints and the opportunity to include members of an audience in the conversation, give rise to a broad range of specific metacommunicative functions. This can be verified for Esperanto communication. Whereas the majority of functions described in Chapter 18.2 occur in both modes, some are restricted to oral speech events, as the following table illustrates:<sup>83</sup>

**Table 8.** Examples of metacommunicative utterances in written texts (labelled according to their classification in oral communication presented in Chapter 18.2, A-K)

Function	Example in writing
Introducing topics (A)	<i>Eble mi unue devas iom priskribi la lingvan situacion en Skotlando.</i> [Perhaps I should first describe the language situation in Scotland a bit.] ( <i>Monato</i> 10/2014 p. 20)
Structuring communicative events (B)	<i>Por preparoli la efikojn de proteinadsorbado, unue mi enkondukas la terminon “proteino” kaj poste mi prezentas faktojn por substreki la gravecon de proteinadsorbado.</i>

83. The examples from written texts were taken from Esperanto journals.

Table 8. (continued)

Function	Example in writing
	<p><i>En estontaj artikoloj mi planas doni trarigardon de la teoriaj kaj eksperimentaj konoj pri proteinadsorbado, sed en tiu ĉi artikolo la temo limiĝas al la prezento de proteinoj kaj la kialoj de indeco esplori pri la adsorbado de proteinoj al diversaj surfacoj.</i></p> <p>[To discuss the effects of protein adsorption, first, I introduce the term “protein” and then I present facts in order to underline the significance of protein adsorption. In future articles I plan to give an overview of theoretical and experimental knowledge of protein adsorption, but in this article, the topic is restricted to the presentation of protein and the reasons why it is worthwhile to explore the adsorption of protein on various surfaces.] (<i>Scienca Revuo</i> Vol. 65, 232, 2015, p. 1)</p>
Referring to visual elements and to subsequent or previous text passages (C)	<p><i>Rimarko: unue aperas la skota vorto, poste, inter parentezoj, la islanda [...]</i> [NB: First comes the Scottish word, then, in brackets, the Icelandic one (...)] (<i>Monato</i> 10/2014 p. 20)</p> <p><i>Ekzemplon de rekta pruvo mi donos sube.</i> [I’ll give an example of a direct proof below.] (<i>Scienca Revuo</i> 64, 2013, p. 1)</p>
Labelling illocutions (D)	<p><i>[...] mi kaptas la okazon danki al vi, sinjoro redaktoro, kaj viaj kunlaborantoj pro vere elstare redaktita revuo [...]</i> [(...) I seize the opportunity to thank you, Mr editor, and your colleagues, for the really outstandingly edited journal (...)] (letter to the editor, <i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)</p>
Managing time and situation (E)	<p><i>Ĉi tiu artikolo raportos laŭ ambaŭ vidpunktoj sed, por esti mallonga, nur pri la ĉefaj elementoj.</i> [This article will report from both perspectives, but for reasons of length, only about the most important elements] (<i>Interlinguistica Tartuensis</i> IX, 2009 p. 145)</p>
Managing linguistic form (F)	<p><i>[...] D-ro Jörg Haider [jerg hajda] estas landestro de Karintio [...]</i> [Dr Jörg Haider (jerg hajda) is president of Carinthia] (<i>Monato</i> 1/2015 p. 19)</p>
Highlighting the relevance of information (I)	<p><i>[...] oni devas denove substreki, ke influo de la latina lingvo en Eŭropo [...]</i> [(...) it should be underlined again that the influence of Latin in Europe (...)] (<i>Interlinguistica Tartuensis</i> IX, 2009 p. 99)</p>
Evaluating others’ talk (J)	<p><i>Mi estas incitita de la intervjuo de &lt;nomo&gt;. Li certe rajtas havi sian propran opinion, sed mi esperas, ke ĝi ne kongruas kun la opinio de la redakcio.</i> [I am troubled by the interview of &lt;name&gt;. He certainly has the right to his personal opinion, but I hope that it is not congruent with the editor’s opinion.] (letter to the editor <i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)</p>
Anticipating criticism (K)	<p><i>Miaj informoj ne estas absolute fidindaj, sed mi havas la impreson, ke ja regule kaj ofte okazas tiuj kondamnoj, sed en okcidento oni tutsimple ne raportas ilin [...]</i> [My information is not completely reliable, but I have the impression that these condemnations do occur often and regularly, but in the West they are simply not reported (...)] (<i>Monato</i> 4/2016 p. 6)</p>

As should be expected, examples of functions G (managing channel) and H (checking understanding) are not found in written texts.

To gain further insight into the differences between metacommunication in spoken and written forms of communication, we present in the following the results of a comparative study of a text that exists both as a tape-recorded speech and in writing. The written version was submitted for conference proceedings prior to the talk (see Barandovská-Frank, 2015). The analysis concentrates on the speaker's use of metacommunicative utterances and possible devices that function as equivalents in the written text. Additional features of oral communication, such as greeting the audience, hesitation phenomena, fillers (e.g. *do; sekve* 'so'/well'), false starts, repairs etc. will not be taken into account.

**Table 9.** Metacommunicative utterances in an oral academic presentation alongside the corresponding passages from the written version

Oral presentation <sup>a</sup>	Written article <sup>b</sup>
<p><i>Mi ne komencas mian prelegon tiel ĝojige. Aŭskultu.</i>  <i>„La homoj estas senzorgaj, ili malrespektas kaj detruas la naturon, [...]”</i> [I am not starting my lecture in such a nice way: listen up. “Human beings are careless, they disregard and destroy nature, (...)”] (14:58–15:12)</p>	<p>1. <i>Enkonduko</i>  <i>„La homoj estas senzorgaj, ili malrespektas kaj detruas la naturon, (...)”</i> (p. 6)            [1. Introduction            “Human beings are careless, they disregard and destroy nature, (...)”]</p>
<p><i>Kiu estas tiu homo?</i>            [Who is this man?] [...] (16:19)</p>	<p>2. <i>Vivo</i>  <i>Ĉiuj libroj kaj artikoloj pri Alano la Granda (Alain de Lille, Alanus ab/de Insulis, Alanus Magnus) asertas, ke li estas [...] p. 6</i>            [2. Life            All books and articles about Alain de Lille (Alain de Lille, Alanus ab/de Insulis, Alanus Magnus) assert that he is (...)]</p>
<p><i>Mi diris al vi</i> [I told you] (20:05)</p>	
<p><i>Mi ankoraŭ montras lian tombon. [...] Rigardu, ke sub liaj piedoj estas ŝafetoj. Kaj pri tio vi aŭdos poste.</i> [I am showing his tomb. Please note that there are little sheep below his feet. You will hear more about this later.] (20:30/21:47)</p>	<p><i>Alano mortis en [...] Tie li estis ankaŭ entombigita kun jena epitafo: Alanum brevis hora [...] p. 7</i>            [Alain died in (...) He was also buried there with this epitaph: Alanum brevis hora (...)]</p>
<p><i>Nun ni venas al la unua legendo.</i>            [Now we come to the first legend.] (21:56)</p>	<p><i>La unua parto de la legendo diras proksimume jenon: (p. 7) [The first part of the legend says approximately the following:]</i></p>
<p><i>Tio estis unua parto de la legendo.</i>            [This was [the] first part of the legend.] (24:15)</p>	

Table 9. (continued)

Oral presentation <sup>a</sup>	Written article <sup>b</sup>
<i>La dua [...]</i> [The second (...)] (24:39)	<i>La dua parto de la legendo povas esti precize datita [...]</i> (p. 8) [The second part of the legend can be precisely dated (...)]
<i>Tio estas fino de la legendo. Kaj nun ni venu al la faktoj.</i> [This is the end of the legend. We should now come to the facts.] (27:12)	<i>Alano do malkovris sian veran identecon kaj la ĝojigita papo donis al lia disono du klerikojn, al kiuj li diktis siajn verkojn.</i> (= last sentence, followed by a new paragraph) (p. 8) [So Alain discovered his real identity and the delighted Pope put two clerics at his disposal, to whom he dictated his works.]
<i>Mi pardonpetas, ke ĝi estas tiom larĝa, sed tio ne estas mia kulpo.</i> (referring to a picture) [I apologise that it (= the picture) is so large, but it's not my fault.] (27:21)	
(showing a slide of the title page of a work) <i>Pri kiu mi ankoraŭ okupiĝos en la estonta tempo.</i> [Which I will deal with in the future.] (29:13)	
(showing a slide of a list of works) <i>Pri tiu ĉi verko ni hodiaŭ iomete parolos.</i> [This is the work we will talk about a bit today.] (30:39)	
<i>Do estas dialogo</i> [So it's a dialogue] (33:29)	
<i>Mi ŝanĝas ridon en larmojn, kaj ĝojon en tristecon, Aplaŭdon en plendon, ŝercojn en ploron, Ĉar vidas mi naturon silenti pri siaj leĝoj. Nenio ĝojiga.</i> [I change a smile into tears, and joy into tristesse, Applause into complaint, jokes into weeping, As I see that nature is silent about its laws. Nothing pleasant] (34:22)	<i>In lacrymas risus, in luctus gaudia verto In planctum plausus, in lacrymosa iocos Cum sua naturam video decreta silere.</i> ( <i>Mi ŝanĝas ridon en larmojn, kaj ĝojon en tristecon, Aplaŭdon en plendon, ŝercojn en ploron, Ĉar vidas mi naturon silenti pri siaj leĝoj.</i> ) p. 11
<i>Estas eksteredza filo, imagu.</i> [We are talking about, <b>imagine</b> , an illegitimate son.] (37:44)	<i>[...] la diino Venuso faris eraron: dum Kupido estas ŝia legitima filo el geedziĝo kun Himeneo, ŝi krome kuniĝis kun Antigenio kaj naskis filon [...]</i> (p. 14) [(...) goddess Venus made a mistake: whereas Cupid is her legitimate son from her marriage with Hymenaeus, she additionally had a relationship with Antigenio and bore a son (...)]

(continued)

Table 9. (continued)

Oral presentation <sup>a</sup>	Written article <sup>b</sup>
<i>Mi jam menciis tiun belan gramatikan metaforon.</i> [I already mentioned this beautiful grammatical metaphor.] (48:23)	<i>En la verko troviĝas gramatikaj metaforoj, ĉar gramatiko ja estis la unua el la mezepokaj “artoj” kaj [...] (p. 15)</i> [The work contains grammatical metaphors, because ultimately grammar was the first of the medieval “arts” and (...)]
<i>Tio estas la lasta bildo. [...] Ni havas verŝajne ankoraŭ unu minuton por demandi nin kion tiu dialogo diras al ni hodiaŭ.</i> [This is the last picture. We probably still have one minute to ask ourselves what this dialogue is telling us today.] (52:40–07)	6. Aktualeco [6. Topicality]

a. Dataset no. 74 (26 July 2015).

b. See Vergara (2015, pp. 4–18).

The comparative analysis, relying only on data from a single presentation, should not be generalised, but it does reveal a number of intriguing results. Whereas in the written version, the author relies mainly on enumerated headlines, structuring formulae (*la unua parto*, *la dua parto*) and on paragraphing to communicate successfully, she employs a variety of metacommunicative devices in her speech. For example, she explicitly marks the beginning of her presentation by telling her audience to listen, and even includes a comment on this utterance itself (*Mi ne komencas mian prelegon tiel ĝojige* ‘I am not starting my lecture in such a nice way’) so as to prepare the audience for the upcoming content. Next (see the second item in Table 9) we find a question as a structuring element that draws attention to its answer. This procedure is a way of facilitating information processing and at the same time enlivening the talk (Bamford, 2005). In addition, the spoken text includes anaphoric and cataphoric references (*Mi diris al vi* ‘I told you’; *Pri kiu mi ankoraŭ okupiĝos en la estonta tempo* ‘Which I will deal with in the future’) as well as references to pictures and their quality (*Mi ankoraŭ montras lian tombon. Rigardu, ke [...]* ‘I am showing his tomb. Please note that ...’; *Mi pardonpetas, ke ĝi estas tiom larĝa, sed tio ne estas mia kulpo* ‘I apologise that it is so large, but it’s not my fault’) and verbalised transitions to individual text passages (*Tio estas fino de la legendo. Nun ni venu al la faktoj* ‘This is the end of the legend. We should now come to the facts’). Some pieces of information are highlighted either to amuse the listener by means of irony (*imagu* ‘imagine’) or to enhance their understanding of the subsequent text (*Do estas dialogo* ‘So it’s a dialogue’). Finally, the author makes a comment on the amount of time remaining (*Ni havas verŝajne ankoraŭ unu minuton* ‘We probably still have one minute’), as a way to transition into her conclusion.

The speaker employs a variety of metacommunicative devices to guide her audience during her presentation. These devices serve to compensate for some of the inherent advantages of written communication, e.g. the opportunity to read passages twice, look up words and check sources. In her talk she refrains from presenting Latin originals and bibliographical notes that are included in the article. Instead, she provides the listeners with synonyms and rephrasings of items they might not know (*la sep gravaj pekoj, la sep ĉefaj malvirtoj* ‘the seven deadly sins, the seven major vices’), a strategy that will be described in more detail in Chapter 19.3.1 under “Synonyms and paraphrases”.

#### 18.4 Some concluding remarks on metacommunication in Esperanto

Our study has revealed that metacommunication plays an important part in Esperanto interaction. Speakers make extensive use of it for the purpose of organising their texts and maintaining a successful relationship with other participants in all the genres under investigation. They orient the audience regarding how they want their communication to be interpreted and reflect on others’ input as well as on the conditions of the communicative event. The use of metacommunication is clear evidence that Esperanto is a fully fledged language that is also successfully used in complex linguistic discourse.

Our study suggests that the analysed speech contains a rather high concentration of metacommunicative utterances. As regards the functions of metacommunicative utterances identified here, we find parallels with the results of investigations on other languages, especially (academic) English and German (Ädel, 2010; Mauranen, 2010; Fandrych, 2014). On the whole, the use of metacommunication does not seem to differ much from what we might find in mother-tongue communication or talk in another (foreign) language. This suggests that metacommunication is heavily influenced by factors such as genre and context (academic content) and the globalised text norms that are characteristic of these factors – a hypothesis which will need to be confirmed by an investigation based on a much larger dataset. A comparative quantification of data on other languages is difficult due to the lack of comparative data.

As regards the linguistic means used with metacommunicative function, a number of language-specific features can be found. They include structuring elements that allude to phenomena of Esperanto culture, and the emergence of stereotypical constructions for text structuring and commenting which have become set expressions due to recurrent use. It is also worth mentioning the convention to present oneself at the beginning of an oral contribution using one’s congress number.



Metacommunication is closely related to several other topics addressed in this book, and we will return to the topic when discussing ready-made constructions marking the use of repairs (Chapter 19) and phraseology. The study has also shown differences in spoken and written communication. This aspect will be further explored in Chapter 23. Finally, it is worth noting that metaphorical language use (to be discussed in Chapter 21) shares some of the functions of metacommunication, as it helps us to understand and present complex phenomena more easily and to focus our attention on significant information.

## Working towards mutual understanding: Repairs

### 19.1 Introduction

Esperanto is acquired and used as a second language and therefore spoken with different levels of proficiency. Its speakers come from a multitude of linguistic, cultural and educational backgrounds. These two factors pose a challenge for mutual understanding in communication. On the other hand, as we have seen in the previous chapter on metacommunication, its speakers are characterised by high degrees of communicative awareness and of motivation to make their communicative exchanges successful. We might therefore expect them to employ strategies for preventing and resolving non-understanding. These include a technique called “repairs”, which has been the focus of conversation analysis in recent decades. Schegloff (2000, p. 207) defines repairs as “practices for dealing with problems or troubles in speaking, hearing, and understanding the talk in conversation”. Since the seminal study by Schegloff et al. (1977) that dealt with English-language repairs, the phenomenon has been analysed in a range of languages (e.g. Finnish, French, German, Spanish, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian, Chinese).<sup>84</sup> A number of cross-linguistic investigations have addressed the question of the extent to which the characteristics of repairs depend on the morphosyntactic structures of languages (e.g. Fox et al., 2009a; Fox et al., 2009b; Németh, 2012). In recent years, researchers have turned their attention to repairs in English as a lingua franca (e.g. Mauranen, 2006; Kaur, 2011a, b; Watterson, 2008).

The following example can serve as an illustration of the topic discussed in this chapter. It is a contribution to a discussion during an interlinguistics conference in which a Cuban speaker refers to a paper on the further development of Esperanto.

- (97) *Ĉu ekzistas esploroj por eviti la eh dialektiĝon de::de Esperanto (de) la lingvo mem. Ĉar ekzemple eh, kiel dirite antaŭe, ni venas el pluraj landoj (.) kaj ni havas niajn bazajn esprimojn en niaj (.) gepatraj lingvoj kaj: tio faras, ke ekzemple multaj homoj eh prenas en konsideron (.) kiam oni parolas, oni multfoje esprimas eh frazojn, kiuj jam estas eh faritaj en naciaj lingvoj kaj eh mi volus scii ĉu ekzistas*

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84. For a survey see Kitzinger (2013).

*esploroj. Mia esperantista vivo estas tre juna, estas tri jaroj kaj kelkaj monatoj nur. Mi ne scias, ĉu ekzistas esploro, ĉu ekzistas verkoj por eviti la (.) dialektiĝon de de Esperanto. Kaj mi parolas pri tio: mi volas (.) trovi kernaĵon eh aŭ kernon, kiu estu gvidilo por mi por scii: tio estas la bazaj esprimoj de nia lingvo Esperanto kaj ke ne temas pri naciaj bazaj esprimoj. Ĉar mi ekzemple havis jam la sperton, ke mi parolis kun eŭropanoj, (.) eh: mi ne diru eŭropanoj, mi diru alilandanoj kaj-, por fari eh ĝenerale, kaj mis- eh mi aŭskultis eh proprajn naciajn bazajn esprimojn kaj mi diris: bone, eh eble mi komprenas, kion vi volas diri, sed vere mi ne centa- mi ne sentas, ke tio estas Esperanto, ĉar mi mem povus diri (.) de la hispana lingvo aŭ de la kuba hispana varianto mi povus elĉerpi kelkajn (.) bazajn esprimojn, kiujn nur kubanoj komprenus. Pro tio mi ŝatus respondon, havi respondon al tio.*

[Are there any studies to avoid the uh emergence of dialects of of Esperanto (of) the language itself. Because for example uh, as said before, we come from several countries (.) and we have our basic expressions in our (.) mother tongues and this makes that for example many people uh include (.) when one speaks one often expresses uh phrases which have been uh made already in national languages and uh I would like to know whether there are studies. My Esperanto life is very young, it's only been three years and some months. I don't know if there is a study, if there are works to avoid the (.) emergence of dialects of of Esperanto. And I speak about this: I want (.) to find a core thing uh or a core that might be a guide for me to know: these are the basic expressions of our language Esperanto and not basic expression of national languages. Because I for example have already experienced that I spoke to Europeans (.) uh I should not say Europeans, I should say people from other countries, to put it uh generally, I h- uh I heard uh (their) own national basic expressions and I said: good, uh perhaps I understand what you want to say, but truly I do not vee- I don't feel that this is Esperanto because I myself could say (.) from the Spanish language or the Cuban Spanish variety I could extract some (.) basic expressions that only Cubans would understand. That's why I would like an answer to have an answer to this.] [143 (spa; pres/disc; Lille) 93:33–96:34]

The question was posed in a spontaneous way, without any apparent written preparation.<sup>85</sup> The sequence includes expressions of hesitation (*eh*) and short pauses (marked by ()), which are typical of this kind of oral communication. The speaker uses a number of techniques to attend to possible trouble in understanding. We find, for instance, a repetition of the preposition *de* in line 1, which might have the function of “buying planning time”. The speaker is obviously searching for a suitable word to express what he has in mind, namely ‘Esperanto as a linguistic system’

85. We can of course not exactly say to what extent the question was immediately triggered by one of the conference presentations before and formulated *hic et nunc* or preformulated due to the speaker's previous preoccupation with the topic.

(in contrast to, say, Esperanto as a community, idea, etc.), and he finally decides to clarify this by the addition (*de la lingvo mem* ‘of the language itself’). Having repeated the purpose of his request (*mi volus scii ĉu ekzistas esploroj* ‘I would like to know whether there are studies’) in line 5/6, he finds it necessary to add a reason why he needs information about the topic and has not been able to acquire this information about it so far – by saying that he has been an Esperanto speaker for only a relatively short period of time.<sup>86</sup> In this sentence he offers a synonym to aid comprehension (*ĉu ekzistas esploro, ĉu ekzistas verkoj* ‘if there is a study, if there are works’). As he is not interrupted by the chair, he starts reformulating his question in line 8, introducing this part metacommunicatively (*kaj mi parolas pri tio* ‘and I speak about this’). This second part presents, in principle, the same content as the one before, but is more detailed due to personal experience and example. In line 8 the speaker carries out a self-repair (*kernaĵon eh aŭ kernon* ‘a core’; consisting of the root *kern-* ‘core’, the ending *-o* for the noun and the suffix *-aĵ-* ‘thing’, with the latter being possible but not necessary to express the meaning ‘something related to a core’). The self-repair in line 11, (*eŭropanoj [.] eh: mi ne diru eŭropanoj, mi diru alilandanoj kaj-, por fari eh ĝenerale* ‘Europeans [.] uh, or I should not say European, I should say people from other countries to put it uh generally’), which is metacommunicatively marked again, and the one in line 15 (*de la hispana lingvo aŭ de la kuba hispana varianto* ‘from the Spanish language or the Cuban Spanish variety’) are focused on the content rather than on the form. The speaker generalises his statement in the first case (*eŭropanoj – alilandanoj* ‘Europeans – people from other countries’), whereas he imposes a lexical restriction in the second (*hispana – kuba hispana* ‘Spanish – Cuban Spanish’). His last self-repair (*mi ŝatus respondon, havi respondon* ‘I would like an answer, to have an answer’) takes the form of adding a word.

This initial example is revealing in a number of senses. In general, it does not differ much from what we might find in mother-tongue communication or talk in another foreign language (apart from the fact perhaps that someone who had learned English, French or German for three and a half years would not be able to express themselves so well). The conversation includes different types of repair, such as repetitions and rephrasings, which refer to either linguistic form or content. Furthermore, it illustrates that ‘repair’ – in contrast to the word’s actual meaning – does not presuppose that a mistake was made and has been corrected now. In fact, all occurrences initiated as problems by the speaker here (*kernaĵon, eŭropanoj* instead of *alilandanoj, la hispana lingvo, mi ŝatus respondon*) are suitable and correct expressions. Finally, the example illustrates that repairs are often ‘flagged’,

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86. As this type of conference generally brings together specialists in the field of Esperanto studies, this purpose (of preventing criticism) is at least one possible function of the statement.

i.e. signalled, for example by hesitation markers or by metacommunicative utterances. This chapter will describe repair actions such as those in this first example in more detail and give an overview of repairs that are characteristic of Esperanto communication.

The findings reported emerged from the analysis of 257 randomly chosen instances of repair that were identified in a sub-corpus of six hours that was compiled on the basis of the dataset described in Chapter 5, including a representative selection of genres (see Table 1). Overall, repair proves to be a frequent strategy in Esperanto. One instance of repair was carried out every 84 seconds (or 1.4 minutes), with high rates especially in discussions after lectures and presentation, in classroom interaction and at touristic events. This seems to demonstrate relatively high frequency in comparison to studies, for example, on English as a lingua franca.<sup>87</sup>

**Table 10.** Number of repairs in various genres

Genre (see Table 1 in Chapter 5)	Instances of repair per hour
Presentation	37
Informal or small talk	41
Discussion	57
Touristic or cultural event	61
Conversation and talk in educational context	61

Complete understanding, as communication research has shown, is an idealisation. Smith (2009, p. 17) points out:

Although we may never be able to totally understand another's feelings and perspectives in a cross-cultural situation ..., we can attempt to increase our likelihood of understanding or at least decrease the possibility of our misunderstanding by developing a greater awareness of three of the dimensions of understanding (intelligibility, comprehensibility and interpretability).

In Smith's framework, intelligibility refers to people's ability to identify words and utterances, and comprehensibility to the understanding of the meaning of these

<sup>87</sup> Smit (2010, p. 189), in her investigation of English as a lingua franca in higher education, found that a repair was carried out every 69 seconds (341 instances in 393 minutes) and regards this result as high frequency when compared to Dalton-Puffer (2007), for example, who mentioned a number of 300 instances in 560 minutes. We are aware that a comparison is only possible to a limited extent due to the different fields of usage (in the case of Smit [2010] and Dalton-Puffer [2007] the datasets are restricted to classroom interaction, which according to our findings is a domain with high frequencies of repair) and because of partly diverging definitions of repair. The examples chosen to illustrate different types and features of repairs in this chapter originate from the entire dataset described in Chapter 5.

words and utterances. The third component, interpretability, refers to the recognition of the content or purpose of an utterance, i.e. it is concerned with their pragmatic implications.

Esperanto is generally characterised by high degrees of intelligibility. This is mainly due to its phonological characteristics, such as flexibility of phonetic realisation (see Chapter 9). Nevertheless, our dataset contains four occurrences where the lack of intelligibility causes repairs. In three of these cases, it is above all the speakers' peculiar word stress (influenced by their French mother tongue) that makes their speech unintelligible. The fourth is example (144) below.

Misunderstandings can have various reasons. In Example (98), a classroom situation, a student asks about the term *sufiksoido*. He wants to know whether the element *-id* in this word relates to the meaning of the suffix *-id* in Esperanto (offspring) or whether the term expresses the meaning 'suffix-like' or 'quasi-suffix'. The teacher does not understand what the pupil is getting at, so that the problem cannot be solved within the interaction between the two speakers. Similarly, in Example (99) an answer is misunderstood as a question for clarification.

(98) A: *Demando.*

B: *Jes?*

A: *Ĉu tiu <sup>o</sup>ido estas nia -ido, "descendant de la sufikso"?*

B: *Do kio, la lingvo Ido?*

A: *Ĉu estas "ido de sufikso" aŭ ĉu estas pseŭdo-sufikso?*

B: *Tio estas eh: en tiu sama kategorio kiel -ul kaj -ej, ĉar ĝi memstare ankaŭ funkcias, ĉu ne?*

A: *Jes, mi-, en tiu vorto sufiksoido: "pseŭdo", ne "filo de"?*

[...]

B: *Mi ne uzis "pseŭdo-sufikso", ĉu ne, pro tio mi ne enmetas*

A: *Sed tiu persono, kiu baptis ilin, sufiksoidoj, kion ili volas diri, kvazaŭ-sufiksoj?*

[...]

B: *Tiuj, kiuj konsideras tiujn elementojn, -ul, -ej, -id kaj aliaj eh: sufiksoidoj, tio estas kvazaŭ-sufikso; tio emfazas, ke ili estas efektive tre similaj al radiko, tute same kondutas, ĉu ne?*

[A: A question.

B: Yes?

A: Is this 'ido' our *-ido*, "offspring of the suffix"?

B: So what, the language Ido?

A: Is it "offspring of a suffix" or is it pseudo-suffix?

B: This is uh: in that same category as *-ul* and *-ej*, because it also functions independently, doesn't it?

A: Yes I-, in this word *sufiksoido*: "pseudo", not "son of"?

(...)

B: I did not use *pseudo-suffix*, did I, therefore I don't insert

A: But the person who christened them pseudo-suffixes, what did they want to say, quasi-suffix? (...)

B: Those who consider those elements, *-ul*, *-ej*, *-id*- uh: suffixoids, this quasi-suffix; this emphasises that they are in fact very similar to a root, (that they) behave quite similarly, you know.]

[31 (por-hun; edu; Poznań) 86:20–87:37]

(99) A: *Ĉu vi aŭdis pri "redundo"?*

B: *Jes.*

C: *Ripeto de*

A: (louder) *Redundo. Kion tio signifas?*

C: *Ripeto*

(A asks on)

[A: Have you heard of "redundancy"?

B: Yes.

C: Repetition of

A: (louder) Redundancy. What does that mean?

C: Repetition]

(A asks on)

[20 (hun-?-por; edu; Poznań) 15:23–15:35]

All told, examples of misunderstanding are very rare in our dataset, which is surprising considering the huge amount and variety of interactions between speakers of different linguo-cultural backgrounds that it contains. There is not a single case of a communicative situation in our dataset in which speakers give up and resort to their mother tongue because they are not able to resolve their problems in understanding, something that has been described as happening occasionally in the use of English as a lingua franca (Björkman, 2013, p. 137; Firth, 1996, p. 254). Instead, Esperanto speakers try to secure understanding pre-emptively, for example by means of metacommunicative signals, as shown in the previous chapter, or by repair work, as will be described in the following.

## 19.2 Types and structure of repairs

Schegloff et al. (1977) make a fundamental distinction between the initiation and the production of a repair, as the person who performs the repair is not necessarily the one who initiates it (see Table 11). In the majority of cases repair is *self-initiated*, i.e., as we have seen in the introductory example (97), the speaker cuts off his talk to replace a word (*kernaĵon*) or phrase (*la hispana lingvo*) with more suitable ones (*kernon*, *la kuba hispana variantanto*) or to insert a word (*havi*) that had been omitted. In *other-initiated* repair, someone other than the original speaker initiates the repair.

An example is (100), where a recipient repeats his question highlighting the question word (*kiam* ‘when’) and giving a candidate answer (*kiam li estis infano* ‘when he was a child’), in this way prompting an answer. As regards the production (or completion) of the repair, it is, however, the speaker who provides the repair solution himself, which is why Excerpt (100) is an example of other-initiated self-repair. By contrast, in (101) the speaker initiates a repair by searching for a specific word and another speaker accomplishes the repair by offering it. Excerpt (101) is therefore an example of *self-initiated other-repair*. In the same way that self-repair can issue from either self-initiation or other-initiation, other-repair can issue from self-initiation or other-initiation (Schegloff et al., 1977, pp. 364f.). Chapter 19.3 is about repairs in Esperanto talk and will provide examples of all four constellations. We should already mention here, however, that in overcoming misunderstandings in communication interactants generally prefer self-repair.

Table 11. Types of repair

Self-repair	Other-repair
Self-initiated (e.g. a speaker replaces a word with a more suitable one)	Self-initiated (e.g. a speaker lacks a word and asks for assistance)
Other-initiated (e.g. someone asks a speaker for an explanation)	Other-initiated (e.g. someone corrects a speaker’s grammar mistake)

(100) A: *Mi vizitis [...] ankaŭ la Einstein-Museum.*

B: *ah*

A: *Estas du*

└ (*muzeoj*)

C:

└ *Kiam li loĝis en Berno?*

A: *Jes, li loĝis tie, kaj ( )*

C: *Sed KIAM, kiam li estis infano?*

A: *Ĉirkaŭ nul kvin, nul kvin estas tiu mirinda jaro, kiam li publikigis la specialan teorion (...)*

[A: I visited (...) the Einstein Museum as well.

B: *ah*

A: There are two └ (museums)

C:

└ When did he live in Bern? (Obviously understood as a temporal subclause: when he was living in Bern?)

A: Yes, he lived there, and ( )

C: But WHEN, when he was a child?

A: Around 05, 05 is that wonderful year when he published his special theory (...)

[37 (swe-deu-hun; infl; La Chaux-des-Fonds) 7:10–36]



- (101) A: *Vi prenas esperantikan vidpunkton, eble neŭtraleco de komunikado kaj pere de tiu vidpunkto, de tiu glas- eh eh jes kiel oni diras pere de tiuj eh eh*  
 B/C: *okulvitroj*  
 A: *okulvitroj, pardonu, pere de tiuj esperantikaj okulvitroj vi vidas la mondon*  
 [A: You take an Esperanto-related view, maybe neutrality of communication, and by means of this view, of this glas- uh uh yes, how do you say, by means of these uh uh  
 B/C: glasses  
 A: glasses, sorry, by means of these Esperanto-related glasses you see the world] [196 (ita-?; pres; Lisbon) 1:49:00]

Repairs consist of the repairable, the repair initiation and the repairing segment (Rieger, 2003). The first component, the problem or trouble source often becomes apparent to the recipient as a repairable item only because of the repair initiation, and, as we have seen above, the phenomena addressed can include passages where no discernible error occurs. Schegloff et al. (1977, p. 363) point out that “[i]n view of the point about repair being initiated with no apparent error, it appears that nothing is, in principle, excludable from the class ‘repairable’”. Repairs can be initiated in a number of different ways. As we have seen in Example (97) to 101, cut-offs, fillers, sound stretches and other hesitation markers (*eh*) are common in self-initiated repairs. For other-initiated repairs, Kitzinger (2013, p. 249) mentions *sorry?*, question words and repeats of trouble source items which give speakers the opportunity to provide a repair themselves. The repairing segment repairs the item that was perceived as a problem, for example by providing a previously missing word, as in Example (101), or by repeating a word with clearer pronunciation, as in Example (100).

### 19.3 Repairs in Esperanto talk

#### 19.3.1 Self-initiated self-repairs

##### *Repetitions*

Repetitions<sup>88</sup> represent a very frequently occurring type of self-repair which is carried out in the same turn as the trouble source.<sup>89</sup> The elements that are repeated can be words, parts of words or several lexical items, as Examples (102) to (104) show.

- (102) *la tiel nomata subjunktivo de la de la verbo esse*  
[the so-called subjunctive of the of the verb *esse*] [156 (deu; pres; Lille) 21:12]
- (103) *ni ĵus preterpasos la kolo- la kolonon de Napoleono* [we are just about to pass the col- the column of Napoleon] [118 (fra; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 100:10]
- (104) *kiam vi estas ĉe la supervendejo kaj vi prezentas viajn aĉetojn al la eh al la la (.) ĉe la la kaso ĉu ne*  
[when you are at the supermarket and you present your purchases to the uh to the the at the the cash desk, don't you] [88 (eng; pres; Lille) 1:52–2:04]

As the examples suggest, the main function of repetitions as repairs is to buy time to plan. This can also be seen in the fact that they co-occur with delaying productions (*eh*) (Kitzinger, 2013, p. 239), fillers (*ĉu ne*) and in combination with other types of repair, as in Example (104) (*al la la (.) ĉe la*). The examples also show that function words are repeated more often than content words, as the speaker concentrates on producing the most important meaning-bearing element of his sentence.

We should not conclude the discussion of this first subtype of repair without mentioning that, of course, not all repetitions function as repairs. In Examples (105) and (106) speakers repeat words in order to achieve a special emphasis.

- (105) *mi nur volas atentigi, ke temas pri ege ege granda kongreso*  
[I just want to draw your attention to the fact that it is a very very large congress]  
[71 (?; disc; Lille) 50:24]
- (106) *ĉar estas tre tre tre taŭga ilo*  
[because (it) is a very very very apt instrument] [152 (hun; disc; Lille) 1:12]

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88. Németh (2012) prefers the term 'recycling'.

89. Due to their ubiquity, it is not possible to provide quantitative data on repetitions. The number of instances of repairs mentioned in the introduction to this chapter does not include repetitions.

### Reformulations

Speakers correct their speech for various reasons. They become aware that they have mixed up words (see Examples (107) to (109)), should use a more precise word (Examples (110) to (112)) or have made a grammar mistake. As regards mistakes, incorrect marking of the accusative ending *-n*, a recurrent problem for a large number of speakers, permeate (see Examples (113) to (115)).

- (107) *Ĉu iu verkis romanon ĉi tie, en la hispana aŭ en Esperanto?* [voice from the audience] *rekontojn* (.) *rakontojn* [Did someone write a novel here, in Spanish or Esperanto? (voice from the audience) stories (.) stories]  
[178 (deu; pres; Havana) 14:49]
- (108) *Ĉiam brilas en Karlsbad, oni diras; kelkfoje sub la nuboj aŭ nebuloj (3) aŭ nuboj* [The sun always shines in Karlsbad they say; sometimes below the cloud- fogs (3) or clouds]  
[18 (swe; edu; Poznań) 86:12]
- (109) *Do, nigra truo estas priskribita per nur du datumoj. Nur du numeroj aŭ nombroj eh difinas* [So, a black hole is described by only two datasets. Only two numbers or numbers<sup>90</sup> uh define]  
[80 (heb; pres; Lille) 8:21–34]
- (110) *Por simpligi, por resumi, ni estos tie, kie la soldatoj estis por celebri la Paskan meson, kelkaj horoj antaŭ ol morti.* [To simplify, to sum up, we will be there where the soldiers were in order to celebrate the Easter mass, a few hours before their death.]  
[140 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 16:25–38]
- (111) *Vi havas duonhoron (.) kaj bonvolu iomete (jam) pli frue fini ke estu (.) loko por demando tempo por demando* [You have half an hour and please finish a bit earlier so that there is place for a question time for a question]  
[1 (hun; infl; Poznań) 19:41]
- (112) *Tio estas estas eh prefikso aŭ eh prefiksoido* [This is is uh a prefix or uh a prefixoid]  
[156 (deu; pres; Lille) 20:27]
- (113) *kiel eh eh speguligon (.) speguliĝon* [as a uh uh reflecting (.) reflection]  
[156 (deu; pres; Lille) 24:25]
- (114) *Do antaŭ tri jaroj aperis (.) tiu reformon, reformo, pardonu, tiu reformo celas [...]* [So three years ago, this reform (+ accus.), reform, sorry, occurred, this reform aims to (...)]  
[103 (fra; pres; Lille) 22:26–41]
- (115) *Kiel konkludo ni povas diri ke Esperanto havas riĉan kolekton de rezultintigaj formoj [...], ke ĝi kovras ĉiujn bazajn tipojn tipOJN, sed estas pli facile ol [...]* [As a conclusion we can say that Esperanto has a rich collection of resultative forms (...), that it covers all basic types types (+ accus.), but that it is easier than ...]  
[7 (fra; pres; Poznan, 0:59–1:08)]

90. With regard to ‘number’, Esperanto distinguishes between *numero* as an array of digits and *nombro* as a quantity, which sometimes leads to confusion.

Occasionally, speakers get muddled in a syntactic structure and decide to start their sentence again:

- (116) *Kaj tiu genio (.) nun devas eh (2) prijuĝi eh (1) la (1) viran (.) eh pardonu; Devas prijuĝi eh (.) la (.) agon de homoj aŭ la meritojn de homojn [sic]* [And this genius (.) now has to uh (2) judge uh (1) over the (1) manly (.) uh sorry; (He) has to judge over the deeds of men or over the merits of men]  
[74 (ces; pres; Lille) 41:55–42:17]
- (117) *Kaj tion ili povis mezuri dank' al (.) eh (.) la (.) Ili povis mezuri eĉ unu ondolongon* [And this they could measure thanks to (.) uh (.) the (.) They could measure even one wavelength]  
[73 (heb; pres; Lille) 11:54]
- (118) *Do li ĉiam eh li ne havis apriorajn ideojn; (.) li HAVIS, sed li ĉiam provis ion* [So, he always uh he didn't have a priori ideas; (.) he DID, but he always tested something]  
[104 (eng; pres; Lille) 4:05]

As mentioned above, repairs provide a planning advantage for speakers, which is sometimes necessary as they have to concentrate on an important word. For the same reason, false starts can often be found in the ongoing process of word formation by means of elements of the agglutinative system, including the creation of new or ad hoc terms:

- (119) *pri:: la:: (.) sekxa orientiĝo kaj la:: m::an- eh: (.) la:: mandekstreco- eh oh dekstra-maneco, (.) estas eh: (.) estas diferenco* [with regard to (.) sexual orientation and the hand- uh (.) right-handed-ness uh oh dexterity (.) there is err (.) there is a difference]  
[12 (deu; disc; Poznań) 23:13–26]
- (120) *li ekspozii:- (.) ĉu ekspoziiĝis? (2) ekspoziciis,* [he exhibit- (.) Is it exhibitified? (2) exhibited]  
[125 (fra; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 12:25]
- (121) *en la jaro 1960 estis eksumita lia korpo (.) ĉu oni diras ekshumaciita? (.) Kio estas la ĝusta vorto, @(. )@* [In 1960 his body was exhumed (.) or does one say exhumified? (.) What is the right word, @(.)@]  
[74 (ces; pres; Lille) 61:25]

The examples shown so far represent corrections of linguistic form. Of course, self-repair can also focus on the content of a message, as in (122) and (123).

- (122) *en la dua jarcento, (.) pardonu, en la dekdua jarcento* [in the second century, (.) sorry, in the twelfth century]  
[74 (ces; pres; Lille) 16:03]
- (123) *proksimume de mil naŭcent kvindek du ĝis- mil okcent, mil okcent kvindek du* [approximately from 1952 until- 1800, 1852]  
[102 (fra; tour; Lille) 4:19]

The insertion of additional words is more often aimed at factual rather than linguistic adequacy:

- (124) [...] *la naftolea industrio. Tio estas unu el la plej ĉefaj mondonantoj por esplor-laboroj en la maro pri robotoj en la maro* [(...) the oil industry. This is one of the main investors in explorations in the sea, in robots in the sea] [199 (ita; pres; Hanoi) 15:42]
- (125) *ĉar lesba (.) havas- (.) povas havi pli politikan signifon* [because «lesbian» (.) has- (.) can have a more political meaning] [12 (eng; disc; Poznań) 7:29]

We will return to content-related repairs later.

### *Synonyms and paraphrases*

A common way of securing understanding is the addition of lexical elements with similar meanings or of explanatory paraphrases. In our dataset this technique is applied above all in context with terminology (Examples (126) and (127)).

- (126) *Sed tiuj idoj fekundi, eh do eh tiuj (.) ne povas produkti la sekvantan generacion* [But these offspring cannot be fecund, uh so uh these ones cannot product the next generation] [149 (jpn; pres; Lille) 97:42–53]
- (127) *se iu virino ne povas koncipiĝi facile ne povas facile havi infanon* [if a woman cannot conceive easily cannot have a child easily] [149 (hun; pres; Lille) 17:43]

Exogenous word forms are occasionally substituted by endogenous formations (see Example (128)) and word formation processes are made obvious (see Example (129)).

- (128) *Li sidis [...] en karcero, en malliberejo* [he sat in prison, in prison; *malliberejo*: *mal-* ‘opposite’, *liber-* ‘free’, *-ej-* ‘location’] [74 (ces; pres; Lille) 32:42]
- (129) *Pardonpetoj estas socia rit- rit-aro, do aro de ritoj* [Apologies are a social rite-rite-collection, a collection of rites]. [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 30:06]

Other reasons for the use of synonyms and paraphrases might be that speakers fear that their figurative use of a word would not be understood by everyone (see Example (130)) or that the formation of a word depends too much on the equivalent in their native language (see 131):

- (130) *nun mi provos vendi al vi, nun mi provos reklami por vi* [now I’ll try to sell you, now I’ll try to advertise for you] [149 (ben; pres; Lille) 42:45]
- (131) *Post tiu honorvino aŭ amik amikecglaso ni iros al la restoracio, do bonvolu [...]* [121 (fra; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 27:10]  
[After this honorary wine or glass of friend friendship, we will go to the restaurant, so please (...)]

Speakers' endeavours to make themselves understood can also be influenced by local or acoustic conditions. In Example (132), people arrange to meet at the end of a festive event by shouting to each other over a distance of about twenty metres:

- (132) *ĉe la pordego ni povas saluti, [...] ĉe la elirejo enirejo* [we can meet up at the gate, (...) at the exit entrance] [171 (?; cerem; Lille) 4:30]

### Offering variants

The specific type of repairs that we will address in this section seems to be unique to Esperanto communication. They are closely related to the language's character as an L2, as a planned language which came into being as a project with a minimal grammar to be adopted and further developed by an international speech community (see Chapter 8). What we are discussing here is a continuum ranging from self-repairs in the proper sense of the word, as described above, to culture-specific allusions. We start with Examples (133) and (134), which represent typical instances of self-repair. They show speakers' insecurity in the use of word formation affixes.<sup>91</sup> A speaker becomes aware of his or her mistake and self-corrects it immediately (although not always successfully, as Example (134) illustrates).

- (133) *Estas ŝanĝo. Do A ŝanĝas eh eh ŝanĝiĝas al eh eble B aŭ R aŭ C* [There is a change. So A changes uh uh changes itself into uh maybe B, or R, or C] [149 (jpn; pres; Lille) 92:12–24]
- (134) *Kio surprizas- Kio surprizigas al mi ankaŭ estas [...]* [What surprises- What surprisifies me is also (...)] [165 (spa; pres; Lille) 17:35]

In a number of occurrences, however, as represented in Examples (135) and (136), the second word does not seem to have to be corrective in character, but rather to offer a variant. The speaker seems to signal 'I'm not sure which form is the correct one or (if both are right) which is preferable. So choose yourselves'. One might say that in these cases the repairable is identified, but the repair is not performed.

- (135) *Mi ne kredas, ke ekzistas vere virtuala komunumo, estas teknologia produkto (.) produktajo* [I don't believe that there is a really virtual community, it's a technological product (.) product thing] [41 (srp; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 2:14]

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91. Above all, the suffixes *-ig/-iĝ-*, used to make intransitive verbs transitive and transitive verbs intransitive, cause problems in Esperanto, as their application presupposes that the character of the verb used is known.

- (136) *Oni transprenis la vortojn de la kolonizianto kolonianto kaj oni enkadris en tiu ĉi [...] [One took over the words of the (maybe) colonialiser coloniser and put (them) into this framework (...)] [42 (hun; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 40:18]*

As we can infer from the intonation, the lack of delaying production and the frequent use of the conjunction *aŭ* ('or') (see Examples (137) to (140)), interactants occasionally present candidate alternatives in the awareness of the existence and legitimacy of competing versions. They offer variants to show their knowledge about the situation, as is clearly indicated by metacommunicative signals such as *kion vi preferas* ('whatever you prefer') (see Example (138)).

- (137) *Tio ankaŭ estas unu el miaj unuaj rememoroj pri Svisio (.) pri Svislando eh kiam eh mi veturis dum ferioj el Italio trans Svislando aŭ Svisio [This is one of my first memories of Switzerland (.) of Switzerland uh when uh I went during (my) holiday from Italy across Switzerland or Switzerland]*  
[5 (ces; infl; Poznań) 22:08–23]
- (138) *Jam dum la antikveco estis Cezaro kiu eh planis invadi Anglion Anglujon mi ne scias kion vi preferas, do [...] [As early as in ancient times it was Caesar who uh planned to invade England I don't know what you prefer, so (...)]*  
[118 (fra; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 101:30]
- (139) *[...] kiun ni povas similigi al komunumo kaj havas tian patriotan sencon, ĉu kiam ni diras Esperantio aŭ Esperantujo, tio estas nur [...] [(...) which we can equate with a community and has such a patriotic sense, whether when we say Esperanto-Land, this is only (...)] [40 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 18:07]*
- (140) *En eh internacia socio-forumo en la Reto estas Facebook aŭ Vizaĝpaĝo (sic; usually Vizaĝlibro) [In uh the international social forum on the Internet there is Facebook or Face-page]*  
[104 (jpn; disc; Lille): 15:37–52]

Finally, there is a group of instances in which speakers mark this peculiarity of Esperanto explicitly by means of humorous allusions. The linguistic phenomenon is either implicitly known as such by the interactants or it was already addressed in a previous part of the communicative event. In the latter case, the allusive repetitions contribute to the creation of coherence and might, in addition, be considered expressions of solidarity and politeness. Interlocutors' reactions often show that the speaker's intention was understood.

- (141) *mi [...] estas lingvisto (.) lingvistino @(.)@ – Ni devas demandi <name> [I'm (...) a linguist (.) female linguist @(.)@ – We should ask <name>]*  
[128 (deu–hin; disc; Lille) 13:07–18; the second speaker refers to a previous paper which tackled sexist language use in Esperanto]

- (142) *Vi transsaltis punkton dek du ĉi tie eh pri jarraporto kaj tiel plu kaj tio estis (1) kazo aŭ okazo de sufiĉe granda eh interkorespondado de akademianoj* [You left out topic twelve here uh about the annual report etc. and this is (1) a **case or occasion** of relatively intensive uh correspondence between members of the Academy] [71 (eng; disc; Lille) 55:35–50; allusion to a long-term debate within the Esperanto Academy about whether *kazo de* ‘a case of’ or *okazo de* ‘occasion of’ should be the correct form, which was mentioned before – see 25.5.4]

The examples presented here constitute a kind of list of ‘unsolved cases’, with the explicit marking of the female sex by the suffix *-in-* (Example (141)),<sup>92</sup> the formation of the names of countries (Examples (137)–(139)),<sup>93</sup> and the translation of proper names (Example (140))<sup>94</sup> being of prominent importance. Example (142) can be considered a humorous sideswipe at the *Akademio de Esperanto*, which is frequently criticised by speakers for not being active enough.

### 19.3.2 Other-initiated self-repairs

The matters that are subject to repair here are seldom errors. Interactants raise queries because of mishearings, which can be caused by background noise or unclear pronunciation as in the following examples:

- (143) *Ni devas ŝanĝi tiujn ŝablonaĵojn – Kion ni devas ŝanĝi? – (ŝablonaĵoj)* [We have to change these routine patterns – What do we have to change? – (routine patterns)] [176 (spa; pres; Havana) 34:10]

92. Gender marking in Esperanto is asymmetrical, as in many European languages. This and growing linguistic egalitarianism have led to debates on sexism in the language and to some confusion as to which nouns for female persons must be marked with *-in-* and which need not. See Fiedler (2015c) for a recent overview.

93. Names of countries are either primitive roots (*Irland-o* ‘Ireland’) or were originally derived by the suffixoid *-uj-* (‘container’) from the name of the main nation (*German-uj-o* ‘Germany’). As the latter kind of formation has been criticised on ideological and linguistic grounds, many speakers have adopted forms with a (pseudo-)suffix *-i-* for countries (*German-i-o*), which have the advantage of higher international recognisability, but as a drawback stand outside the system of word formation.

94. As in all other languages it is a question whether foreign proper names should be left untouched or assimilated in some way. Because of the various background traditions of its speakers, with regard to Esperanto this debate has been very prominent since the early days of the language, albeit without any consensus so far.



- (144) *Ĉe la pinto estu kleraj [kə'leraj] personoj – Ĉe la pinto estos? – KLERAJ* [At the top should be educated (sic!) people – At the top should be? – EDUCATED people] [38 (ita-swe; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 61:37–49]

Occasionally, listeners are not familiar with a specific term and want to make sure that they have understood it correctly (Example (145)) or they ask for clarification about an abbreviation (Example (146)).

- (145) A: *Ĝi [la raporto] parolas pri la graveco krei diskurson, ĉar ne ne ne temas nur pri celoj, sed ankaŭ gravas diskurso.*  
 B: *Diskurso? Diskutadon vi celas.*  
 A: *Ne, diskurson.*  
 C: *Kio estas diskurso, ĉar hodiaŭ mi jam aŭdis tion dekfoje.*  
 [...]
 A: *Mi povas klarigi. Estas kompleksa rezulto [...] estas eh ideologie ideologia rezulto kiun oni povas eh trovi en tekstoj, en filmoj ktp., estas maniero rigardi aferon.*  
 [A: It (= the report) speaks about the importance of creating a discourse, as it is not not not only aims that matter, but also discourse is important.  
 B: Discourse? You mean a discussion.  
 A: No, a discourse.  
 C: What does discourse mean, because I have heard it today ten times already.  
 (...)  
 A: I can explain. It is a complex result (...), it is uh an ideologically ideological result that one can uh find in texts, in films, etc., it is a way of regarding something.] [198 (por, disc; Lisbon) 73:35-74:40]
- (146) *Kion signifas (???) – UGK? La universala gravita konstanto.* [What does (???) mean? – UGK? The universal gravitational constant] [80 (?–heb; pres; Lille) 24:57]

Example (147) does not refer to a linguistic form, but to a fact. An interactant's protest, *inverse* ('the other way round'), makes the speaker aware of his mistake and initiates his self-repair (although A's *ah ne* 'oh no' indicates that he might have noticed it himself at about the same time):

- (147) A: *kromosom°kombinioj°, - kombinoj (.) estas ikso ikso, (.) kiu estas kion ni nomas (.) viriĉo, (.) estas ikso ipsilono, (.) ⊥ ah ne: fakte es-*  
 B: *⊥ inverse*  
 A: *inverse: do. (.) ikso ikso estas tiu (.) (tiel nomata) virino.*  
 [A: chromosome combinatijons, combinations (.) there is X-X (.) that is what we call male, (.) there is X-Y, (.) ⊥ oh no in fact it-

B: ⊥ the other way round

A: the other way around; so (.) X-X is this so-called

woman.]

[12 (eng; disc; Poznań): 13:40–53]

Although the number of examples in this category is relatively small and we can never be sure how many participants of the speech events described here would have accepted mishearing and misunderstanding in these or similar cases if the repair had not been initiated, our study suggests that Esperanto speakers react directly and openly to situations in which understanding is hampered. This refers to hearing, as the frequent reproaches *Mi ne aŭdas* ('I can't hear/understand'), *uzu mikrofonon* ('use the microphone') that are typical of almost all oral speech events in the Esperanto community show (see Chapter 18.2.2), but also to situations in which intelligibility and comprehensibility are at stake and therefore called for by means of repair strategies. People learned the language to be able to communicate internationally and they insist on doing so when the opportunity presents itself.

Our findings suggest a contradiction to the so-called let-it-pass principle (Firth, 1996) which has been described as characteristic of lingua franca communication in English (Meierkord, 1996; Seidlhofer, 2011; Watterson, 2008). House (2003, p. 558) describes this principle as follows:

As long as a certain threshold of understanding is achieved, ELF participants appear to adopt a principle of 'Let it pass', an interpretive procedure which makes the interactional style both 'robust' and explicitly consensual. While one might assume that such a procedure endangers effective communication, as the superficial consensus may well mask deeper sources of trouble arising out of differences in culturally based knowledge frames, lingua franca talk turns out to be, in fact, basically meaningful and 'ordinary'. Unclear talk is routinely 'passed over' on the common sense assumption that it will either eventually become clear or end up as redundant.

As Firth (1996, p. 237) points out, the principle is applied in order to "imbue talk with an orderly and 'normal' appearance, in the face of extraordinary, deviant, and sometimes 'abnormal' linguistic behaviour". This argument might be a first explanation of why the principle is not valid for Esperanto. In contrast to English as a lingua franca, which represents the exception to the ordinary use of the language by native speakers, a 'marked' kind of language use in Firth's terminology, Esperanto was created for communication among non-natives. Its use in cross-cultural interactions is its default application.<sup>95</sup>

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95. In addition, it is noteworthy that recent studies have challenged the general validity of the let-it-pass principle in ELF communication (e.g. Björkman, 2013; Cogo & House, 2017; Gnutzmann, 2015; Mauranen, 2006).

## 19.3.3 Self-initiated other-repairs

The occurrence of this type of repair is not surprising. After all, Esperanto is used as a secondary language and even fluent speakers can occasionally not know a word about a specific topic or have problems retrieving a lexical item that they do know. They then ask their interlocutors for assistance. Word search is signalled or initiated differently. In Example (148), the speaker offers words that are similar in meaning to the one she/he is in need of, so that an interactant is quickly able to help out with the adequate expression, whereas in Examples (149) to (151) we find more explicit appeals for help.

- (148) *Ĉi tie estas eh elefanto eh eh mal- eh mal- – mamuto.* [This is uh an elephant uh uh mam- uh mam- – mammoth.] (140 (?–deu; tour; Lille-Arras) 18:32]
- (149) *hierau ni mal- eh eh °kiel oni diras° – inaŭguris memortabulon* [yesterday we un- uh nh how do you say – inaugurated a commemorative plaque] [141 (fr; tour; Lille-Arras) 2:41]
- (150) A: *De kio dependas via financado?*  
 B: *De la <name of organisation>. [...] Estas malfacile diri, ĉar ili fakte ne tute publike diras kiuj – eh kiuj kiujn [...] projektoj meritas, ĉar eh mi provis dufoje kaj unufoje mi eh havis du recenzojn aŭ kio (.) kiel nomiĝas en Esperanto?*  
 A: *Prijuĝoj.*  
 B: *Prijuĝoj jes, mi havis du prijuĝojn, kaj la unua estis bona kaj la dua estis tute stranga.*  
 [A: What does your funding depend on?  
 B: On <name of organisation>. (...) It's hard to say, because in fact they don't say openly which uh which uh which (...) projects deserve, because uh I tried twice and the first time I uh had two examinations or what (.) what's the word in Esperanto?  
 A: Reviews.  
 B: Reviews, yes, I had two reviews, and the first one was good and the second one was totally strange.] [5 (deu-pol; infl; Poznań) 64:33]
- (151) A: *Je via dekstra flanko estas tiu planto por plibonigi la bieron [...] Mi forgesis la nomon en Esperanto. [...]*  
 B: *Lupolo.*  
 A: *Jes, luplo.*  
 B: *Lupolo.*  
 A: *Lupolo, dankon.*  
 [A: On your right side there is this plant for improving beer. (...) I've forgotten the name in Esperanto. (...)]

B: Hops.

A: Yes, hob.

B: Hops.

A: Hops, thank you.] [118 (fra-?; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 44:54–45:18]

Word searches are often initiated by code-switching (see Example (152)). This strategy will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 22.

(152) *Kiel oni diras diversion? – Diversio.* [How do you say *diversion?* – *Diversio.*]  
[140 (fra-deu; tour; Lille-Arras) 9:55]

More often than not, the original speaker's dealing with the repairable decides on whether an other-repair occurs or not. In Example (153), a discussion on Buddhism, the proper name *Birmo* ('Burma') is used, first, in its correct form by the head speaker. Later on, a participant asks him a question and uses an incorrect expression, *Birmao*, which is passed and left uncorrected, before the first speaker switches to the correct name again in his answer.<sup>96</sup> By contrast, in Example (154), the speaker's use of the confirmation-seeking particle *ĉu?* ('is it?') initiates an other-repair followed by a short exchange on the names of the country.

- (153) A: *la konflikto en Birmo [...] mi vizitis Birmon [...]*  
B: *tiu popolo, kiu estas forprenata el Birmao [...] la budhistoj en Birmao.*  
A: *Mi parolis pri <name> en Birmo [...] la rilatoj inter Birmo kaj Siamo.*  
[A: the conflict in Burma (...) I visited Burma (...)  
B: this people, who are taken away out of Birma (...) the Buddhists in Birma  
A: I was talking about <name> in Burma (...) the relations between Burma and Siam.] [83 (zho-deu; disc; Lille) 8:23–9:11 / 38:23–39:17 / 41:13]
- (154) A: *Se vi estas en Azio, vi povas diri Vjetnamio eh Kamboĝo, Birmao ĉu Birmao?*  
B: *Birmo.*  
A: *Birmo? Mi dankas.*  
B: *Aŭ Mjanmaro (1) depende de via politika sinteno.*  
All: *@(.)@*  
[A: If you are in Asia, let's say Vietnam uh Cambodia, Birma. Is it Birma?  
B: Burma.  
A: Burma? Thank you.  
B: Or Myanmar (1) depending on your political attitude.  
all: *@(.)@* [85 (eng-deu; pres; Lille) 39:20]

<sup>96</sup> Hülmbauer and Seidlhofer (2013), in a study on ELF, claim that ELF speakers tend to repeat their interlocutors' wrong form for reasons of solidarity, giving the use of *information* as a countable noun as an example. While this may be right or not for ELF, a similar behaviour is inconceivable in an Esperanto context. At least, it could not be observed in our dataset.

### 19.3.4 Other-initiated other-repairs

This fourth type of repair is characterised as rare by the majority of authors. Schegloff et al. (1977, p. 380) in their classic study based on data from native speakers of English point out: “[O]ther-correction is highly constrained in its occurrence”. Norrick (1991, p. 80) explains the reluctance associated with other-repair as follows: “Other-correction poses a potential face-threat between approximate equals, because it entails a judgement by one participant about a gap in the other’s speaking ability or world knowledge.”<sup>97</sup> As regards second-language communication, the preference of self-repair over other-repair finds support in studies by Mauranen (2006), Kaur (2011b), House (2012) and others. An exception is Smit’s (2010, p. 222) investigation of ELF in higher education. She finds that in her corpus “[i]n contrast to everyday communication (Schegloff, Jefferson and Sacks, 1977) [...] other-repair was used very frequently overall”. The author explains this with a “strongly-felt interactional focus” (p. 223) in her setting of investigation.

The “preference for self-correction” proposed by Schegloff et al. (1977) is, in principle, confirmed in our dataset of Esperanto communication. The majority of instances (75.5%) are self-repairs. This mainly goes back to the large number of synonyms, paraphrases and variants that are provided to secure understanding, as described in Chapter 19.3.1. The other-corrections found are occasionally performed in a rather direct way, especially if they concern linguistic issues, as in Example (155), where a speaker is interrupted by another’s correction.

- (155) A: *Kaj Lukas afable transprenis.*  
 B (and others): *Luca.*  
 A: *Ne, Luca, mi volas diri Luca.*  
 [A: And Lukas was so kind to take over.  
 B (and others): Luca.  
 A: No, Luca, I want to say Luca. [71 (swe-?; disc; Lille) 37:14]
- (156) A: *Jaro 2015 estu solenata [...]*  
 B: *2017*  
 A: *Kaj mi diris?*  
 B: *Vi diris 2015.*  
 A: *Ah pardonu, 2017 evidente.*  
 [A: The year 2015 should be celebrated (...)  
 B: 2017  
 A: And I said?

97. Concerning the association of other-repair and face threat, see also House (2012, p. 189), Smit (2010, pp. 220f.), Svennevig (2008, p. 345) and Bremer et al. (1996, p. 90).

B: 2015

A: Ah, sorry, of course 2017] [72 (pol-eng; disc; Lille) 35:22–38]

(157) A: *Vi trovos, ke Paĉjo kaj Panjo permesas al vi stumpigi la radikon, eĉ forĵeti kelkajn nebezonatajn [...]*

B: °Tio ne estas en la Fund L amento.°

A: L Jes?

B: *Tiuj du ne estas en la Fundamento.*

A: *Dankon, jes jes.*

[A: You'll find that *Paĉjo* (Daddy) and *Panjo* (Mommy) enable you to truncate the root, even to throw away some unnecessary (...)

B: This is not in the Fund L amento.

A: L Yes?

B: They are both not in the Fundamento.

A: Thank you, yes, yes.]

[149 (ben-deu; pres; Lille) 55:27–45]

The other-corrections mentioned so far refer to content. In this subtype, as is generally the case in all types of repair in our dataset, however, the overwhelming majority of actions (87.8%) refer to linguistic form. The examples represent a range of different speech events. Example (158) is part of an official debate with a group of podium speakers addressing the audience. Speaker A, reacting to a participant's comment, is made aware by a colleague on the podium that his use of the term *ide-alisto* ('idealist') might not be the right one. In Example (159), a tourist excursion, the guide mixes up two similar words (*konduti* 'behave' and *konduki* 'lead'), which results in several people's corrections. Example (160), an excerpt from a conference presentation, and Example (161), from a discussion after a conference presentation, are interesting as well and will be discussed below.

(158) A: *Do ni povas esti revuloj, sed ne estu in- ne estu idealistoj*

L esta-

B: L (?Malrealisto?)

A: *malrealistoj, pardonu.*

[A: So we can be dreamers, but should not be in- not be idealists

L be-

B: L (?Utopians?)

A: Utopians, I'm sorry.] [72 (hun-eng; disc; Lille) 11:15–27]

(159) A: *Ĝi kondutas la veturilojn de Lille ĝis Parizo.*

(several): *kondukas*

A: *kondukas, pardonu*

[A: It behaves the vessels from Lille to Paris.

(several): *leads*

A: *leads, sorry]*

[131 (fra-fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 1:43]

- (160) A: [...] *ĉar eh unu celo de la projekto estas krei apo* ⊥ (...)  
 B: ⊥ *aplikaĵon*  
 A: *aplikaĵo, kiu ĉiu povas uzi. [...] kaj la aplikaĵo estis kreita, estos fakte ĉar ne estas finita (...)*  
 [A: (...) because uh one aim of the project is to create an app ⊥ (...)  
 B: ⊥ application  
 A: an application that everybody can use (...) and the application was created, will be, actually, as it has not been finished]  
 [205 (fra; pres; Rotterdam) 12:42–13:01]
- (161) A: *Nun (mi) devus paroli absolute emociiĝinte. Mi devas kisi ŝin. (several people: @(.).@, applause) Mi esperantistiĝis en la okdekaj jaroj kaj mi mamsuĉis la radion, mamsuĉis la radion.*  
 several: @(.).@ oho  
 B: *la radion*  
 A: *Mia Esperanto kreskiĝis* ⊥ *danke*  
 C: ⊥ *kreskis*  
 D: ⊥ *kreskis*  
 A: *kreskis ja, mi estas tre nervoza*  
 several: @(.).@  
 A: *eh danke al la elsendon elsendoj de Svisa Radio Internacia, de Pola Radio, de Ĉina Radio Internacia, kaj mi estas fidela aŭskultanto de ĉi tiu virino, kiun mi amegas kaj ŝategas.*  
 [A: Now (I) should speak full of emotion. I have to kiss her. (several people: @(.).@, applause) I became an Esperantist in the 80s and the radio was mother's milk to me was mother's milk to me.  
 several: @(.).@ oho  
 B: the radio  
 A: My Esperanto grewed ⊥ thanks to  
 C: ⊥ grew  
 D: ⊥ grew  
 A: grew, yes, I'm very nervous  
 several: @(.).@  
 A: uh thanks to the broadcast broadcasts of Swiss Radio International, Polish Radio, Chinese Radio International, and I am a devoted listener of this woman, whom I love and like very much.]  
 [3 (por-?-hun; pres; Poznań) 11:45–12:31]

In Example (160), the speaker's neologistic term *apo* ('app') is corrected into *aplikaĵo* ('application') by a member of the audience, who might have been encouraged to do so because the speaker's presentation was rather hesitant and not without mistakes and perhaps also because she assumed the word would be used several times during the presentation. The correction was willingly accepted by the speaker,





- B: L for ten years  
 A: For ten years; and I was uh a boy, when I- uh my parents uh uh uh had  
 uh had friends and uh my uh my Canadian.  
 A: a goose  
 B: No not Ca- not Canadian (.) GOOSE]  
[17 (pol-hun; edu; Poznań) 4:04–36]<sup>98</sup>

Apart from interactions between parents and children and teachers and pupils, Norrick (1991) considers talk exchanges between native (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS) a type of communication that is characterised by a perceived asymmetry in information or ability, which makes other-repair an unmarked action. Norrick (1991, p. 78) points out that

[...] reason dictates that parents, teachers, and NSs other-correct children, students, and NNSs, in order to help them achieve equal status; and children, students, and NNSs generally go along with this organisation of repair in their own interests.

However, Norrick restricts this to native speakers and non-native speakers who know each other well. In addition, referring to a study by Faerch and Kasper (1982), he highlights the level of language proficiency as an important factor: “What the beginner accepts as helping might seem an un-called-for imposition by someone farther along” (Norrick, 1991, p. 78).

In Esperanto communication, as a rule, non-native speakers talk to non-native speakers. The interactants use a language that had to be learned by everybody, so that there are always differently competent speakers who have to assist each other to accomplish successful communication. Other-correction is therefore a ubiquitous feature even outside learning contexts. Whether it is actually performed depends on the interactants and their behaviour in a specific situation. Insecurity will provoke correction of an error that might remain uncorrected in a different situation, as we saw in Examples (153) and (154) (*Birmo – Birmao*).

Our last example shows that other-repair does not have to be tantamount to face-threat. It is an excerpt from a working-group meeting. The participants are discussing the procedure of a future panel and the question of whether members of the audience should be allowed to ask questions freely or whether they should write them on slips of paper in advance for the panel to answer later.

- (163) A: *Ŝajnas, ke plej multaj el tiuj kiuj esprimis sin ĉi tie estas por la slipoj, ĉar tio estas pli sekura.*  
 Several: *Jes.*  
 A: *Sed mi aldonu tamen, ke en Roterdamo kaj Bonaero ĝi bonege funkciis kaj ne estis iu malbona afero.*  
 B: *Sed ni ĉiuj povus tamen citi ekzemplojn de de la kontraŭo de tio, nome kunsidojn kiuj malbone funkciis pro manko de slipoj.*

- A: *Ah, manko de slipoj*
- B: *Jes.*
- C: *└ ne ne*
- D: *└ ne ne ne tiel manko, neuzo de slipoj [...]*
- B: *[...] kiam oni ne uzas slipojn, foje oni eble havas sukcesajn rezultojn, sed ĝenerale tiaj kunsidoj ne bone sukcesas, ĉar homoj venas kun frenezaj demandoj pri frenezaj aferoj kaj oni devas okupiĝi pri tiuj aferoj dum se oni havas slipojn oni povas [...] kaj eĉ tute fantazie krei slipojn kiuj ne ekzistas.*
- Several: *@(1)@*
- [A: It seems that most of us here are for slips of paper, as this is more secure.
- Several: *Yes.*
- A: But I have to add, however, that in Rotterdam and Buenos Aires it worked very well and there was nothing bad about it.
- B: But all of us could, however, name examples of of the opposite, namely meetings which worked badly for the lack of slips.
- A: Ah, a lack of slips.
- B: Yes.
- C: *└ No no.*
- D: *└ No no not so much a lack, but the disuse of slips [...]*
- B: (...) when one doesn't use slips, sometimes perhaps one has successful results, but mostly such meetings don't work well, because people come with crazy questions about crazy things and you have to bother about these things, while if you have slips you can (...) even from your imagination make up slips which don't exist.
- Several: *@(1)@* [71 (swe-eng-?-hun; disc; Lille) 53:38–54:53]

The imminent danger of misunderstanding made other-repair necessary in this example of repair in interaction. At the end of this sequence of successful negotiation of meaning (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005, pp. 166–167),<sup>99</sup> the corrected speaker has not only held his own as a respected speaker of Esperanto, but underlined his expertise by making his interactants laugh.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the occurrence of all types of repair in Esperanto can also be caused by an intralinguistic factor. Unlike other languages, Esperanto can be learned sufficiently well even by adults. Precision in their foreign language use is therefore an attainable goal for Esperanto speakers, which might encourage them to be correct or even hypercorrect in some situations. As a speaker in our interview study said:

99. The authors describe the ‘negotiation of meaning’ approach as analysing the “conversational exchanges that arise when interlocutors seek to prevent a communicative impasse occurring or to remedy an actual impasse that has arisen” (Ellis & Barkhuizen (2005, pp. 166–167).

*Kiam mi en la angla- mi- mi scias ke mi ne povas uzi ĝustan lingvaĵon, do mi simple (.) babiladas se- sen zorgi pri gramatiko, sed en Esperanto mi kelkfoje haltas kaj cerbumas kaj poste diras, kion mi volas diri. Mi ne povas uzi fuŝan lingvaĵon.* [In English, when I- I- I know that I can't use it correctly, so I simply (.) chat without bothering about grammar, but in Esperanto sometimes I stop and rack my brain and afterwards I say what I want to say. I can't use bad expressions.]

[46 (swe; int; -) 15:41–16:03].

#### 19.4 Some concluding remarks on repairs in Esperanto

The study has shown that repair actions are an immanent component of Esperanto communication and a highly relevant strategy to ensure understanding. All the four types of repair described by conversational analysts (e.g. Schegloff et al., 1977) for mother-tongue interactions can be observed: self-initiated and other-initiated self-repair as well as self-initiated and other-initiated other-repair. The special character of communication in a planned language becomes evident in the high frequencies of two special types of self-repair: first, the addition of lexical replacements (synonyms and paraphrases) to enhance understanding (see Examples (126) to (132)); and second, the presentation of unresolved repairables as variants (see Examples (137) to (140)). The frequency of other-initiated other-repair distinguishes Esperanto communication from mother-tongue exchanges by adult speakers and the use of English as a lingua franca, as described by some authors. This behaviour can be explained by speaker attitudes and the specific conditions of acquisition of Esperanto as a non-native language. Esperanto speakers are aware that obeying the linguistic norm is of utmost importance for the use and further dissemination of the planned language, and they regard the inclusion of speakers with different degrees of proficiency as ordinary. More competent speakers feel responsible for correctness, while less competent ones do not seem to be concerned about threatening face, but see correction rather as friendly help. Speakers' mutual interest in successful communication forms the basis of this behaviour.

Our analysis not only provides an opportunity to gain insight into speakers' behaviour and attitudes towards Esperanto, i.e. the interactants doing repair work. It also allows conclusions to be drawn about the language and its potential repairables. The recurrence of particular linguistic phenomena in repair sequences suggests that there are – independent of individual lexical gaps – items that are problematic for Esperanto speakers of certain linguistic backgrounds leading to insecurities in their use of the language. These include the use of particular suffixes (such as *-ig* and *-iĝ* for speakers of English), syntactic constructions (especially the accusative case for speakers of Western European languages) and the formal similarity of particular

lexical items (e.g. *konduto/konduko; renkonto/rakonto*). A study on repair work can therefore be useful from a linguo-didactic point of view.

Esperanto is often mentioned in the same breath as harmony, doing good and an ideal world (Okrent, 2009, p. 11; Wright, 2000, p. 246). This study shows that the communication carried out in it does not necessarily have that content. The language is used to discuss all kinds of aspects of our lives, to solve problems and to express values and emotions. This is often done in a direct and unmodulated way so as not to hamper clarity and efficiency, which does not allow room for compromise with regard to linguistic correctness. This result is in line with previous studies on features of Esperanto texts. A comparison between book reviews in English and Esperanto (Fiedler, 1992, p. 155), for example, concludes as follows:

In der Gesamtheit und verglichen mit dem englischsprachigen Korpus, tritt in den Esperanto-Texten negative Kritik jedoch recht offen und deutlich zutage. Dies ist insbesondere dort zu beobachten, wo es um die Darstellung und Vermittlung der Sprache geht, also in Sprachlehrbüchern, Wörterbüchern u.ä.

[As a whole and in comparison with the English-speaking corpus, negative criticism does however occur rather openly and clearly in the Esperanto texts. This can be observed particularly in situations that are concerned with the presentation or teaching of the language (= Esperanto), i.e. in textbooks, dictionaries, etc.]

Finally, it is noteworthy that pronunciation is not among the major repairables in Esperanto, which contrasts with the use of English as a lingua franca (see Kaur, 2011a, who subdivides a repair type “Modelling ‘Standard’ Pronunciation”). We will return to this topic in Chapter 24 on the acceptance of accents in Esperanto.



# Humour

## 20.1 Introduction

When we hear of a planned language for the first time and consider the definition that we gave in Chapter 7 (“a language consciously created [...] with the goal of facilitating international linguistic communication”), then play on words, allusions and humorous discourse are certainly not the first things that spring to mind. Instead, we would usually associate a planned language with efficiency, ease of acquisition, regularity with no exceptions, and an absence of ambiguity. Nevertheless, as the frequent occurrence of the symbol @ (indicating laughter) in the examples in this book illustrates, humour is ubiquitous in Esperanto communication and linguistic elements play an important part in evoking it. This is not only documented by dissertations on this topic (e.g. by Lloancy, 1985; Mel’nikov, 2004), by anthologies or collections of examples (e.g. Alòs i Font & Velkov, 1991; Ĝivoje, 1973; MacGill, 1986, 2012; Maul, 1987; Mel’nikov, 2008), but also experienced very quickly by people who acquire the language. Already in beginners’ courses, learners might greet one another by saying “Salaton!” (‘salad’) instead of “Saluton!” (‘[I express a] greeting’) and ask riddles such as “Kial ĝirafo neniam solas?” (‘Why is a giraffe never alone?’) (answer: “Ĝi havas kolegon.” It has a colleague/long neck; “kol-eg-o” from “kol-” [neck] and “-eg”, augmentative suffix).

Philippe (1991, p. 86), who considers speakers’ “linguistic play instinct” to be a factor triggering language change in Esperanto, points out:

*Der vorwiegend agglutinierende Sprachbau, das produktive Wortbildungssystem, die im „Fundamento“ verankerte uneingeschränkte Aufnahmefähigkeit gegenüber fremdem Sprachmaterial wie auch die ethnische Ungebundenheit des Esperanto ermöglichen, dass sprachlicher Spieltrieb, Variationslust und Kreativitätsdrang des Menschen sich im Esperanto viel mehr ausleben lassen als in den überwiegend flektierenden, traditionsgebundenen Ethnosprachen Westeuropas.*

[The predominantly agglutinative structure of Esperanto, the productive word-formation system, the unlimited ability to accept new material from other languages anchored in the *Fundamento* as well as the ethnic independence of Esperanto enable the human linguistic instinct, inclination for variation, desire to be creative to live much more than in the predominantly inflectional, traditional ethnic languages of Western Europe.]

An essential characteristic of the playful use of language is its intentionality. Misprints and slips of the tongue are not considered here, although they are of comic value occasionally, as (164) shows. The speaker pronouncing *historio* ('history') more as *histerio* ('hysteria') is obviously not aware of her slip of the tongue.

- (164) A: *Nia lingvo havas tiom da kulturo, tiom da histerio dum cent tridek jaroj, ke estas temo por- hm?*  
 Several: ⊥[@(1)@  
 B: ⊥*histerio*  
 C: *Vi diris histerio.*  
 A: *Histerio? @Ĉu? Nu de tempo al tempo@.*  
 [A: Our language already has so much culture, so much hysteria during 130 years, that it is a topic for- hm?  
 Several: ⊥@(1)@  
 B: ⊥*Hysteria*  
 C: You said hysteria.  
 A: *Hysteria? @Really? Well, from time to time@.*  
 [188 (hun; pres; Poznań) 12:33–12:55]

The humorous occurrences that we are concerned with here are conscious and deliberate on the part of speaker or writer. The deviations from ordinary language use serve specific purposes and are often performed according to recurrent rules, which will be described in this chapter.

The chapter consists of two parts. Drawing on the description of Esperanto in Chapter 11, the first will analyse what makes Esperanto a language that can be used for ludic communication. We will describe the main types of “language play” (Crystal, 1998) in Esperanto (such as playing around with proper names, initials, phraseological units and, above all, punning based on pseudo-homonymy) and compare these with techniques found in ethnic languages. This part draws on a large variety of written and spoken texts as well as on previous investigations of the topic (Fiedler, 1999, 2001a; Fiedler, 2004, 2010b). The second part is devoted to the pragmatic functions that humour serves in Esperanto communication. This includes an investigation of speaker attitudes and other extralinguistic factors that encourage creative language use in Esperanto. This second part will be based on the dataset described in Chapter 5. Before we start our analysis, it will be useful to shed some light on how humour basically works.

## 20.2 Humour theories

The majority of researchers explain humour and laughter from a cognitive point of view. They agree on the fact that it is based on incongruity; we laugh at things that surprise us, that present a conflict between what we expected and what actually occurs. The things that are out of place can take many different forms, such as the juxtaposition of a very tall, thin man and a short, round man as we find them in comic strip protagonists, or an ostentatiously dressed person at a party amidst a group of casually dressed guests, or the clown who wears outrageously large shoes. Our focus is on humour that is caused by incongruity in language, on situations in which normal expectations of language use are broken. Classic examples include riddles and jokes involving words with more than one meaning, like *kolego* from the example in the introduction, or the deliberate overuse of linguistic elements, as in (165), a love letter consisting only of affixes that are used with word class endings to form words, a peculiarity of Esperanto described in Chapter 11, or (166), the fake logos of well-known Esperanto journals. Here, in the satirical Esperanto journal *La KancerKliniko* ('the cancer clinic'), by adding a single letter, *Literatura Foiro* ('literary market') becomes *Literatura Foriro* ('literary departure'); and *Sennaciulo* ('nationless person') turns into *Senila nulo* ('senile nothing'), referring to the paper's outdated character, which is then further intensified by a large number of obituaries covering the entire front page.

- (165) *Etino mia, via foreco malebligas [...] nian geon, ĉu vi baldaŭe apudos min? Sen vi, mia indulino, kiel aĉas la hodiaŭo! For de vi, njo ineto mia, kial antaŭeni ĝis la morgaŭo? [...] endas ke plej baldaŭe ni ree geiĝu. Ek alenu al mi [...] mia idigonto. Mi senaĝigas vin, nenio plu sur vi: via ekstero superindas ĉion!*

[My little one, your absence makes (...) our being together as a couple impossible, will you be next to me soon? Without you, my worthy person, how awful is the present day! Away from you, my dear little one, why go forward to the next day? (...) it is necessary that we come together again at the soonest time. Come on, make me get into you (...), my future offspring producer. I take the things off you, so that nothing more is on you: your exterior surpasses everything!]

(*Kontakto* 4/1977 p. 10; quoted from Mel'nikov 2008: 10)

- (166) (false logos)





Example (167) represents the contrastive juxtaposition of stylistically different texts. It is a selection of four texts from Raymond Queneau's famous *Exercices de style* (1947) in the Esperanto translation by I. Ertl.<sup>100</sup>

(167) a. *La bazo*

*Sur la linio "S", en vigla trafikhoru. Ulo pli-malpli dudeksesjara, mola ĉapelo kun galono anstataŭ rubando, kolego kvazaŭ oni tiris ĝin. Multaj elbusiĝas. La pritraktata ulo ekindignas kontraŭ najbaro. Lia riproĉo: li ĉiufoje ekpuŝas lin, kiam iu preterpaŝas. Plendaĉa tono laŭintence malica. Ekvidante liberan sidlokou, li tuj ekposedas ĝin. (...)* (p. 1)

[The basis

In the S bus, during the rush hour. A guy of about 26, a soft hat with a cord instead of a ribbon, a long neck as if someone had torn on it. Many people are getting off. The guy in question gets annoyed with a man standing next to him. He reproaches him for jostling him every time someone passes. An accusing tone with a malicious intention. When he sees a vacant seat, he takes it immediately.]

b. *Metafora*

*Meze de la tago, ĵetita en la aron de sardinoj, kiuj veturis en koleoptero kun blanketa abdomeno, kokido kun granda, senpluma kolo subite ekpredikis al pacema sardino, kaj lia humide protesta oracio disvastiĝis en la etero. Poste, altirite de vaka spaco, la birdeto tien forflugis. (...)* (p. 2)

[Metaphorically

In the centre of the day, tossed among the shoal of travelling sardines in a coleopter with a big white carapace, a chicken with a long, featherless neck suddenly harangued one, a peace-abiding one, of their number, and its parlance, moist with protest, was unfolded upon the air. Then, attracted by a void, the fledgling precipitated itself thereunto.]<sup>101</sup>

c. *Precizigoj*

*Je la 12-a kaj 17, en aŭtobuso de la linio "S", 10 metrojn longa, 2,1 m-ojn larĝa, 3,5 m-ojn alta, en la distanco de 3600 m-oj de sia elveturpunkto, en momento, kiam ĝi estis ŝarĝita per 48 personoj, virseksa individuo, havanta la aĝon de 27 jaroj, 3 monatoj kaj 8 tagoj, pezanta 65 kg-ojn, de la alteco de 1 m 72, portanta sur la kapo ĉapelon 17 cm-ojn altan, ĉirkaŭitan de 35 cm-ojn longa rubando, alparolas alian individuon, havantan 48 jarojn, 4 monatojn kaj*

100. In *Exercices de style*, the author tells the banal story of a man who rides an overcrowded bus in Paris, in ninety-nine different ways (e.g. as a dream, a technical description and a letter to authorities), demonstrating the enormous variety of styles in which storytelling can occur.

101. The English versions of this text were taken from Barbara Wright's translation of Queneau's book.

*3 tagojn, pezantan 77 kg-ojn, de la alteco de 1 m 68, per 14 vortoj, prononcitaj dum 5 sekundoj, aludantaj certajn nevolajn, 15–20 milimetrajn translokiĝojn. Poste li sidiĝas ĉirkaŭ 2 m-ojn 10 cm-ojn pli malproksime. (...) (p. 4)*

[Precision

At 12.17 p.m., in a bus of the S-line, 10 metres long, 2.1 metres wide, 3.5 metres high, in a distance of 3,000 metres from its starting point, at a moment when it was loaded with 48 people, a person of the masculine sex having the age of 27 years, 3 months and 8 days, weighing 65 kg, 1 m 72 cm tall, wearing on his head a hat 17 cm in height around which there was a 35 cm-long ribbon, spoke to another person aged 48 years, 4 months and 3 days, weighing 77 kg, 1 m 68 cm tall, using 14 words, speaking for 5 seconds alluding to some involuntary displacements of 15–20 mm. Afterwards he sat down about 2 m and 10 cm away.]

d. *Oficiala letero*

*Mi havas la honoron informi Vin pri la sekvantaj okazintaĵoj, kiujn mi, ne malpli objektiva ol ŝokita atestanto, povis observi.*

*Ĉi tagon, en tagmezaj horoj, mi troviĝis sur la platformo de aŭtobuso, supreniranta la straton Courcelles en la direkto de la placo Champerret. La menciita aŭtobuso estis homplena, mi ne hezitus diri eĉ pli ol permeseble, ĉar la kontrolisto toleris la penetron de ĉiam pluraj veturantoj sen akceptebla motivo, instigita de troa filantropio, pro kio li kredis sin rajtigita malobservi la koncernan regularon, proksimiĝante al la limoj de nia indulgemo. Ĉe ĉiu haltejo, la ambaŭdirekta movado de la pasaĝeroj neeviteble provokis certajn frotadojn, kiuj instigis unu el tiuj pasaĝeroj al protesto, tamen timema. Mi ne povas lasi nemenciita, ke li foriris sidiĝi tuj, kiam tio fariĝis ebla. [...] Pro la skizitaj kondiĉoj, mi tre petas Vin, Sinjoro, indiki al mi, kiajn konkludojn mi devas tiri de la priskribitaj okazintaĵoj, kaj kian konduton, laŭ via opinio, mi devos teni en mia plua vivo.*

*Permesu al mi, Sinjoro, certigi Vin pri mia almenaŭ plej granda kaj perfekta konsidero. (pp. 7–8)*

[Official letter

I beg to advise you of the following facts of which I happened to be the equally impartial and horrified witness.

Today, at roughly twelve noon, I was present on the platform of a bus which was proceeding up the rue de Courcelles in the direction of the Place Champerret. The aforementioned bus was fully laden – more than fully laden, I might even venture to say, since the conductor had accepted an overload of several candidates, without valid reason and actuated by an exaggerated kindness of heart which caused him to exceed the regulations and which, consequently, bordered on indulgence. At each stopping place the perambulations of the outgoing and incoming passengers did not fail

to provoke a certain disturbance which incited one of these passengers to protest, though not without timidity. I should mention that he went and sat down as and when this eventuality became possible (...) In view of these circumstances, I would request you to be so kind, Sir, as to intimate to me the inference which I should draw from these facts and the attitude which you would then deem appropriate that I adopt in re the conduct of my subsequent mode of life.

Anticipating the favour of your reply, believe me to be, Sir, your very obedient servant at least.]

As (165) to (167) show, Esperanto is able to express contrasts by using endogenous linguistic devices, such as its rich system of word formation, and it also has the capacity to mirror verbal humour in other languages by using these means creatively in translation. As regards the latter, it speaks for itself that Esperanto translators have not hesitated to deal with works as challenging in their language-based humour as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *Winnie-the-Pooh* and the *Asterix* comic series.

Several researchers have described humour as a violation of Grice's conversational maxims (e.g. Attardo, 1994; Dubinsky & Holcomb, 2011, pp. 89–93; Kotthoff, 1998; Morreall, 2009, pp. 3f.). Grice (1975) proposed that in communication (in the sense of bona fide discourse) participants proceed according to an implicit overarching guideline that he terms the cooperative principle:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged. One might label this the COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLE.

(Grice 1975, p. 45)

A set of guidelines, called conversational maxims, underlie the cooperative principle:

Maxims of quantity:

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange).
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

Maxims of quality:

1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

Maxim of relation:

1. Be relevant.

Maxims of manner:

1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity).
4. Be orderly. (Grice 1975, pp. 45–46)

In comic discourse, humour is evoked by the deliberate violation of maxims. As regards our examples above, all of them actually draw their comic potential from a deviation from what Grice suggests in his set of default expectations. For example, (165) violates the maxim of manner, being obscure with its limitation to a specific group of vocabulary (affixes), while (167c) flouts the maxim of quantity, blatantly providing too much information. Our perception of something unexpected, inappropriate or exaggerated makes us laugh about these instances of language use.

As regards our feelings and the motivations involved, there are two different interpretations, a social and a psychological (or psychoanalytical) one. The first, which is often called superiority theory (or aggression theory), explains our tendency to laugh when someone we despise becomes the butt of the joke. Thomas Hobbes explains laughter as caused by both something unexpected and the triumph that we feel about mishaps or defects of others, speaking of “sudden glory”:

(...) [W]hatsoever it be that moveth laughter, it must be new and unexpected (...) I may therefore conclude, that the passion of laughter is nothing else but sudden glory arising from a sudden conception of some eminency in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly;

(Hobbes, 1987 [1650], p. 19)

Jokes in which other people appear stupid amuse us because we feel superior to them or we are simply happy about our own advantage, the fact that it was not us who slipped on the banana skin. In this context it might be interesting to ask the question of what Esperanto speakers laugh at. Who are the typical butts of Esperanto jokes? A categorisation of jokes sent in by Esperanto speakers on the website [ridejo.ikso.net](http://ridejo.ikso.net)<sup>102</sup> includes groups that might also be found in other speech communities.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup>. It included 1,538 jokes (mainly narrative jokes, but also caricatures and memes) on 21 March 2017.

<sup>103</sup>. See, for example, the project *LaughLAB. The Scientific Quest for the World's Funniest Joke* (2002).

- Married life (*geedzeco*): 11.8%
- Children (*infanoj*): 8.5%
- Doctors and patients (*kuracistoj kaj pacientoj*): 7.9%
- School (*lernejo*): 6.7%
- Men (*viroj*): 6.8%
- Women (*virinoj*): 6.5%

One type of joke often mentioned in support of the superiority theory is the so-called ethnic joke. In almost every country people tell jokes at the expense of another nation or group of people, although the group that is targeted varies. Jokes expressing prejudice and stereotypes, such as “Scots are mean” or “Poles steal cars”, do not seem to fit into a community aiming at solidarity and equal rights, and, indeed, they represent a small group of 1.8% of those on the website. The jokes in question seem to be translations from national languages, and as we know from Shifman et al. (2014), translated Internet jokes are among the “secret agents of globalization”. What is intriguing in this context is what occasionally counts as an “ethnic” group in Esperanto jokes. As a counterpart of the classic Englishman, Irishman and Scotsman who enter a pub, or three politicians from different countries meeting in heaven (or hell), representatives of different planned languages take centre stage here, as Examples (168) and (169) illustrate:

(168) *La mensogodetektilo*

*Volapukisto, Esperantisto kaj Idisto amuziĝas per mensogodetektilo. Unue la Volapukisto:*

- *Mi pensas ke mi povas plene ĝuste konjugacii la Volapukajn verbojn*  
*BIP*
- *Do, almenaŭ mi scias bone la sonojn de la vokaloj.*  
*Ĝi ne reagas.*

*La Esperantisto sekvas:*

- *Mi pensas ke mi neniam forgesas la akuzativon.*  
*BIP*
- *Nu, mi pensas ke mi kapablas trapasi la C1-KER-ekzamenon.*  
*Neniu sono.*

*Jen la Idisto:*

- *Mi pensas...*  
*BIP*

[The polygraph

Three speakers of Volapük, Esperanto, and Ido have fun with a polygraph. First comes the Volapük speaker:

- I think I can conjugate the verbs in Volapük totally correctly.  
BEEP

- OK, at least I know how to pronounce the vowels.  
No reaction.  
Followed by the Esperanto speaker:
  - I think I’ll never forget the accusative.  
BEEP
  - Well, I think that I’m capable of succeeding in a C1 language exam.  
No sound.  
Now the Ido speaker:  
– I think...  
BEEP]
- (See <http://ridejo.ikso.net/sxerco/1596>)

(169) *Kiom ofte*

*Okaze de la vegetarisma seminario renkontiĝas volapukisto, interlingvaisto kaj esperantisto, ili konversacias kaj komparas siajn lingvojn.*

*La volapukisto demandas la interlingvaiston: “Dirŭ, kiom ofte la litero ‘L’ aparas en la himnō dā interlingvō?”*

*La interlingvaisto kalkulas kaj respondas: “In nostra himna es 17 literas ‘L’! Et in voŭtra himna, ŝenioro di Esperanto, quiomas literas ‘L’ es in himna di Esperanto?”*

*La esperantisto kalkulas longtempe kaj poste diras: “192.”*

*Jen la volapukisto miras: “Tiom mŭlte? Ĉu vi pŭvŭs kanti tiŭn al ni?”*

*Kompreneble, la esperantisto bonvolas: “En la mondon venis nova sento, la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la ...”*

[How often

At a vegetarian convention speakers of Volapük, Interlingua, and Esperanto meet, they converse and compare their languages.

The Volapük speaker asks the speaker of Interlingua: “Tell me, how often does the letter L appear in the hymn of Interlingua?”

The Interlingua speaker counts and responds: “In our hymna es 17 letteras L! And in you hymna, ŝenioro of Esperanto, how many letteras L es in himna de Esperanto?”

The Esperanto speaker counts for a long time and says: “192.”

The Volapük speaker asks surprised: “So much? Could you sing it for us?”

Of course the Esperanto speaker agrees: “En la mondon venis nova sento, la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la la ...”]

(See <http://ridejo.ikso.net/sxerco/1600>)<sup>104</sup>

<sup>104</sup> The existence of a hymn or anthem is a special feature of some planned languages. As regards Esperanto, Zamenhof’s poem *La Espero* (‘The Hope’), which opens with *En la mondon venis nova sento* (‘Into the world came a new feeling’), and expresses the enthusiasm typical of the early days of the language, is considered the Esperanto anthem. Some parts and expressions of its text have become popular catchphrases among Esperanto speakers, as we will see in Chapter 21.

Ethnic humour is not only underrepresented in the collection of jokes on ridejo. ikso.net, it is also rare in our dataset, which will serve as a basis for our description of humorous discourse in the second part of this chapter. We find a riddle (Example (170)) and an example of self-ironic humour by a French tour guide (Example (171)). Note that in Example (171) the speaker adds an explanation of the joke. We will return to those comments in the second part of this chapter.

(170) A: *Kio estas la plej maldika libro en- de la mondo?*

[...]

B: *Mia ŝparlibro. @[...]*

A: *Ne, famaj norvegoj.*

[A: What is the thinnest book of- in the world?

(...)

B: My savings book. @

A: No, famous Norwegians.] [5 (swe; infl; Poznań) 84:24–85:05]

(171) A: *Do vera internacia grupo. [...] Estas belgoj, estas britoj, bulgaro, ĉinoj, danoj, finnlandanoj, francoj, germanoj, hispanoj, hungaroj, israelano, italoj, japanoj, kanadanoj, nederlandano, poloj, tajvano, usonanoj. Imagu!*

B: *Kaj bretono!*

all: *@(.)@*

A: *Ĉu- @(.)@ Kaj bretonano. Ĉu vi scias, ke Bretonio ne estas Francio, @(1)@ Estas aparta lando.*

[A: So, a really international group. (...) There are Belgians, there are Brits, a Bulgarian, Chinese people, Danes, Finns, French people, Germans, Spaniards, Hungarians, an Israeli, Italians, Japanese people, Canadians, a Dutchman, Poles, a Taiwanese, US-Americans. Imagine!

B: And a Breton!

All: *@(.)@*

A: Do- @(.)@ And a Breton. Do you know that Brittany is not France, @(1)@ It is a separate country.] [130 (fra; tour; Lille) 3:37–4:31]

Ethnic humour leads us to a third humour theory, the relief or release theory, which is closely related to Sigmund Freud. It links laughter and humour to breaking taboos. When we tell or listen to a joke about a topic that we are embarrassed to confront, such as sex, death, bodily functions or authority figures, we override our internal censor. In Freud's view, comedy is an instrument for people to free themselves from inner tensions and to gain psychic release because they are able to vent their instincts without restraint. For Freud (1905, p. 159), laughter is "Ausdruck der lustvoll empfundenen Überlegenheit" (it expresses a pleasurable sense of superiority), which again refers to the close relation to the superiority theory. As Raskin

(1985, p. 40) points out, the three approaches actually “characterize the complex phenomenon of humour from very different angles and do not at all contradict each other – rather they seem to supplement each other quite nicely.”

### 20.3 The linguistic resources of Esperanto for creating humour

#### 20.3.1 Language-based humour

Humour is very diverse in nature and can be studied from different perspectives. In this section we are concerned with linguistic or language-based humour. Our dataset includes a large number of humorous situations. In (172), for example, a speaker opening a debate attempts to produce humour by beginning on a pleasant note, which is shown to be appreciated by participants’ laughter.

- (172) A: *Kelkaj demandoj estas tre facile respondeblaj – tiujn mi povas mem respondi – aliaj estas multe pli malfacilaj kaj mi (do) transdonos la taskojn al la aliaj.*  
 all: @(. )@  
 [A: Some questions can be answered easily – those I can answer myself – other ones are much more difficult, and (so) I hand the tasks over to the others.  
 All: @(. )@ [114 (swe; disc; Lille) 47:00–17]

Although the humour in this example is definitely linguistically conveyed, uses like these will not be discussed here as it is not the language itself that gives rise to funniness. Our focus in this section is on language-dependent humour, on manipulations of language and the breaking or bending of rules for producing a humorous effect. Language is not only a means of communication; beyond this primary function, it can also become the subject of communication. Alexander (1997) speaks of “verbal humor”. Hockett (1977) illustrates the difference by his distinction between poetic (i.e. language-based) and prosaic (i.e. situation-based) jokes.

Linguistic humour is intentional, as we mentioned above in the context of Example (164). This means that the deviations from standard use that will be addressed in this section are not mistakes or the result of insufficient learning, which are frequent in a language that is almost entirely acquired as an L2, but deliberate innovative uses with the aim of evoking humour or producing intellectual pleasure. Language play can have a rich variety of forms. Authors produce ambiguity, they toy with names, dialects, styles and the two possible readings of idioms, they overuse certain types of morphemes or sounds and play with graphological elements. The great variety of forms necessitates classification. Most authors base their typologies on the levels of the language system (Alexander, 1997; Ermida, 2008; Fiedler, 2003a;



Ross, 2005), but we think that the most suitable starting point for discussing linguistic humour in Esperanto is the actual occurrence of this phenomenon. Together with the material collected for previous studies on the topic (Fiedler, 2001a, 2004), the dataset described in Chapter 5 represents a rich basis for gaining an insight into the scope of language play in Esperanto and the techniques favoured by its users. We will structure the presentation according to the levels of the linguistic system to allow for a comparison with other languages.

### 20.3.2 Main types of language play in Esperanto

#### A. *Creating pseudo-homonymy*

Ludic communication occurs in all languages. Nevertheless, individual languages show preferences for particular techniques that serve language play (Redfern, 1984, pp. 156ff.), and peculiarities can be expected for Esperanto too. Mark Twain, in his famous essay “The Awful German Language”, wrote that this language did not contain words but “alphabetical processions”. The potential of the German language to create long compound words is often exploited for humorous purposes (as in the classic *Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaftskapitänsgattin*). Although overlong word creations are not among the most typical forms of language play in Esperanto,<sup>105</sup> the language does offer the potential to employ this technique. An example is *dinitropolisakarozidoputinidometilenoido*, a word invented by Gonçalo Neves for his story *Fakistoj* (1991) to mock scientists and their language.

English, by contrast, is famous for its puns based on homonymy, as in Shakespeare’s sonnet 138:

(...)  
*Therefore I lie with her, and she with me,*  
*And in our lies we flattered be.*

As described in Chapter 11, international vocabulary is adapted to Esperanto according to specific rules, so that instances of homonymy are restricted to exceptional cases.<sup>106</sup> In addition, there are identical forms:

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105. As a rule, long words are not characteristic of Esperanto. Studies for a frequency dictionary for Esperanto (Quasthoff et al., 2014) which is mainly based on Internet sources revealed that the most frequent longest words in Esperanto texts are words from other languages.

106. Cherpillod (2003, p. 286) mentions examples such as *lukso* (a) ‘luxury’, (b) ‘lux’ (the unit of illuminance).

- of an appellative and a name, e.g.  
*ramo* (‘battering ram’) – *Ramo* (‘Ram/Rama’, avatar of Vishnu)  
*liro* (‘lyre’) – *liro* (‘lira’ [currency])
- of an affix used with a word class ending and an appellative or proper name, e.g.  
*ero* (*er-o* ‘element, part’) – *ero* (‘era’)<sup>107</sup>  
*ina* (*in-a* ‘female’) – *Ina* (female name)
- of an appellative, a proper name or affix and an abbreviation, e.g.  
*amu* (‘love’, imperative) – *AMU* for Adam Mickiewicz University  
*la pena* (‘the arduous/laborious’, from *peno* ‘effort’) – *la PEN-a* [*komitato*] (referring to the writers’ association – *Lapenna* (referring to Ivo Lapenna) (see our introductory example in Chapter 1).

Furthermore, we might speak of morphological homonymy (or pseudo-homonymy) in examples such as the aforementioned *kolego*, i.e. when a lexeme consisting of a morpheme and a word class ending (*koleg-o*) and a word that results from word formation (*kol-eg-o*) have identical forms. Further examples are:

*etaĝo* (*etaĝ-o* ‘floor, storey’) – *etaĝo* (*et-aĝ-o* ‘little’ + ‘age’ + N)  
*tubero* (*tuber-o* ‘bump, knot’) – *tubero* (*tub-er-o* ‘tube’ + ‘part’ + N)  
*konkludi* (*konklud-i* ‘to conclude’) – *konkludi* (*konk-ludi* ‘shell’ + ‘to play’).

This can also concern the syntagmatic level:

*literaturo* (‘literature’) – *litera turo* (‘letter’ Adj + ‘tower’ N)  
*piediri* (*pied-iri* ‘foot’ + ‘go’, i.e. ‘to go on foot’) – *piediri* (*pie diri* ‘pious’ Adv + ‘say’, i.e. ‘to speak piously’).

These types of intentional misinterpretations of morphological structures, which are often referred to as “mistranĉoj” (miscuts) in Esperanto (see Mel’nikov, 2008, pp. 82–84), have a long history in the language. Raymond Schwartz (1894–1973), the master of Esperanto punning and one of the instigators of a Parisian Esperanto cabaret (“La Verda Kato” ‘The Green Cat’) in the mid-1920s, wrote the following poem about the various periods (*aĝoj* ‘ages’) in a man’s life:<sup>108</sup>

107. Nowadays the usual word form is *erao*, in order to avoid this homonymy.

108. The poem is here reproduced from Dahlenburg (2013, p. 26). For a detailed analysis of Schwartz’s Esperanto language play see the doctoral dissertation by Lloancy (1985).

*En supra ĉambro, lulo ... lulo;  
Anĝele dormas la etulo: Et-aĝo.*

*Sed baldaŭ li el dorm' sin ŝiras  
Kaj pri la bela mondo miras: Mir-aĝo.*

*Jam ne plu side li tamburas,  
Sed tra la dom' explore kuras: Kur-aĝo.*

*Kun vundoj li (kaj sen rubandoj)  
Revenas el stratbubaj bandoj: Band-aĝo.*

*Kaj baldaŭ sekvas li kun ĝojo  
Knabinon ĉien sur la vojo: Voj-aĝo.*

*Al ŝi li donas sian nomon  
Por fondi kune novan domon: Dom-aĝo.*

*Li tiam estas tre utila  
Fortika viro, kvankam vila: Vil-aĝo.*

*Kaj post rapida tempopaso  
Postrestas nur senviva maso: Mas-aĝo.  
P.S.*

*Ni ne apliku al Virino  
Ĉi tiun viv- kj rimo-saĝon,  
Ĉar de l'komenco ĝis la fino  
Ŝi ĉiam havas saman aĝon: Avant-aĝo.*

[In an upper room, rock-a-bye  
Angelically the little one sleeps:  
Second-storey/Young age.

But soon he tears himself from sleep  
And wonders at the world:  
Mirage/Age of wonder.

No longer does he sit and drum,  
But runs exploring through the house:  
Courage/Running age.

Now with wounds (without his ribbons)  
He comes home from his street gangs:  
Bandage/Gang age.

And soon he follows with joy  
A girl everywhere on the street:  
Voyage/Street age.

To her he gives his name  
To found a new home:  
A shame/Home age.

He is very productive then,  
A strong man, if hirsute:  
Village/Hairy age.

And as time rapidly passes,  
Only a lifeless lump remains:  
Massage/Lump age.

PS:

Let us not apply to a woman  
This rhyming wisdom about life,  
For from beginning to end  
She has the same age:  
Advantage/Advanced age.]<sup>109</sup>

Uses like these are not restricted to collections of puns and jokes, however. Manipulating language for the sake of comic effect at the micro-level of the morpheme is widely employed in everyday spoken and written Esperanto communication, as the following examples illustrate:

- (173) *Tuŝis min la ĉagreno de John Stanley [...], kiu dum multaj jaroj serĉas perditan rimajon pri kato. Vera kata-strofo! Kvazaŭ lia kato malaperis senrevene en kata-kombon.* [I was touched by John Stanley's annoyance (...), who has been looking for a lost rhyme about a cat for many years. A real cat-astrophe! As if the cat had forever disappeared in a cat-acomb.] (Monato 6/95, p. 6)
- (174) *Trie, Kiam amo regas (ne konfuzu kun Kiam amoregas aŭ Kia mamoo regas!!!)* [Thirdly, *Kiam amo regas* ('When love is ruling'; book title) (not to be confused with – approximately: 'When love is made intensely', from *amor-eg-i* 'make love' + intensifying suffix, or with – approximately: 'What a breast is ruling'!!!)] (Kontakto 156, 6/96, p. 14)
- (175) *Gratulon kaj dankon, do, al Hauptenthal pro tia premierigo de la granda E.T.A. en nia literaturo.* [So, congratulations and thanks to Hauptenthal for introducing the great E.T.A. (*eta* 'small') into our literature.] (Fonto 203, 11/97, p. 15; about E.T.A. Hoffmann)

In (176), as frequently found in journalistic texts, the reader will only be able to understand the playfully cryptic headline (*eraro* 'mistake' vs *er-ar-o* 'collection of particles') having read the complete article, which enhances suspense and intellectual joy.

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109. Translated into English by Jordan (1988, pp. 148–149).

(176) *De eraro al er-aro*

*La ĵusan septembron sinjorino envagoniĝinte en Hamburgo, rimarkis en Kolonjo, ke ŝia valizo mankas. Jam en la kolonja stacidomo ŝi raportis pri ties ŝtelo. La faktoj montriĝis tamen iom aliaj, kiam la fervoja polico post iom da telefonado raportis, ke oni estas trovinta ŝian valizon en Hamburgo sur la kajo. Ŝi evidente simple estis forgesinta porti ĝin en la vagonon. Tamen ŝia feliĉo ne daŭris tre longe. Sciigis, ke la hamburga fervoja polico estis suspektinta, ke tiu strange orfa valizo entenas bombon. Do oni pro sekuro per eksplodigilo tuj neniigis ĝin.*

(From ‘mistake’ to ‘collection of particles’. This September a woman who had got on a train in Hamburg noticed in Cologne that her suitcase was missing. Still at Cologne station she reported it as stolen. The actual situation turned out to be a bit different, however, when the railway police reported after a couple of phone calls that her suitcase had been found in Hamburg on a platform. Obviously, the woman had simply forgotten to take it with her into the carriage. But her luck did not last very long. It became known that the Hamburg railway police was suspicious that the strangely orphaned suitcase might contain a bomb. So they detonated it for security reasons.] (Monato 11/95, p. 4)

Occasionally, visual elements are used to illustrate the ambiguity of a word, as in Example (177), a creation of the Hamburg Esperanto group, playing around with the words *kanto* (‘song’), *konkurso* (‘contest’), *konko* (‘shell’), and *urso* (‘bear’).

(177) (*Esperanto* 5/2015, p. 106)



Occasionally, play on words is based on correct morpheme analysis. As we described in Chapter 11 using *lernejo* (lit. ‘place of learning’, conventionally used for ‘school’) as an example, despite the compositional and highly transparent character of the Esperanto word formation system, words are lexicalised. The accentuation of individual elements, then, is a playful way of recalling their motivational basis.

A case in point is the name of the language, *Esperanto*. Speakers generally use it without being aware of its meaning as ‘somebody who hopes’,<sup>110</sup> so that the creative actualisation of its elements and their meaning, as in Examples (178) and (179), has surprising effects including a jocular note:

- (178) *Ni estas Esperantistoj, ni povas esperi.* [We are Esperantists, we can hope.]  
[79 (pol; oth; Lille) 17:35]
- (179) *Nome de la belgaj esperantistoj mi deziras al vi la plej specialan kaj neforgeseblan pacan, Esperantegan kongreson* [On behalf of the Belgian Esperantists I wish you the most special and unforgettable peaceful Esperanto congress/intensive-hope congress]  
[69 (nld; cerem; Lille) 110:47]

### B. *Playing with abbreviations*

Acronyms and initialisms are a fruitful source of language play. For example, funny new readings of common initialisms abound (see Example (180)).

- (180) *IKU = Internacia Kongresa Universitato. Aŭ: Iuj Kafefe Umadas* [IKU = International Congress University. Or: Some hang around in a café]  
[*Esperanto* 9/95, p. 151; caption]

The following text, the introduction to a newspaper section that is announced as dealing with Esperanto in relation to education, science and culture, toys with the acronym *UNESCO*, combining it with all possible interrogative pronouns in the system of correlatives (see Chapter 11, Table 7) in order to stress the large variety of possible topics:

- (181) (...) *Do antaŭen per UNESKiO, UNESKiE(N), UNESKiA, UNESKiAL, UNESKiEL kaj UNESKiU.* [So let’s go ahead by means of ...] [Esperanto 4/2014 p. 41]

In Example (182), the author makes fun of the organisational structure of the speech community by mentioning the abbreviations of some Esperanto institutions in rapid succession and adding some that blatantly do not exist.

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110. As mentioned in Chapter 8, “Esperanto” was the pseudonym that Zamenhof used in the *Unua Libro* (‘first book’).

(182) *Nek ĉe la Akademio, nek ĉe CED aŭ IEMW, UEA, SAT, ĈIT, GUT aŭ TUTEPAPP (Tutmonde Universala Transnacia Esperanta Provizejo por la Amasigado de Paperoj kaj Polvo) [...]*

[Neither at the Academy, nor at CED or IAMW, UEA, SAT, ĈIT, GUT or TUTEPAPP (Globally International Universal Transnational Esperanto Place for Provision with Masses of Paper and Dust) (...)]

[Johansson, 1996, *Ĝis revido, krokodilido!*, p. 61]

Increasingly, punning acronyms are gaining ground in Esperanto, with founders of organisations and initiatives taking care to choose names whose initial letters form a word to create a pun, such as *TIR* (*tir-i* ‘draw’) or *AMO* (*am-o* ‘love’):

(183) *Tutmonda Inform-Reto [...]* *kiu tiras la tutan agadon* [Global information network (...) which drives the entire activity] (199 (hun; disc; Lille) 4:15)

(184) *AMO – Aktivula Maturigo*  
 [...] *La unua AMO – ne forgesbla!* [AMO – maturation of active members.  
 One’s first love – unforgettable!] [*Esperanto* 5/2014, p. 109]

In Example (185), the punning acronym is further combined with a wordplay based on the similarity between *AM-bilancio* (‘Aktivula-Maturigo balance sheet’) and *ambulanco* (‘ambulance’), which gives rise to a metaphorical extension. In Example (186), the acronym is part of a catchphrase including a sophisticated pun that gains its effect from the conscious shifting of word boundaries.

(185) *AM-bilancio pri 2014 pozitivis*  
*Ni pesu la unuan jaron de la nova programo de UEA pri Aktivula Maturigo (AMO). Kiun verdikton? Ne necesas ambulanco – post la naskiĝo sen grandaj malfacilaĵoj, la paciento bone fartas kaj kreskis pli rapide ol atendite. [...]*

[AM results for 2014 are positive. Let us evaluate the first year of the new UEA programme about the maturation of active members (AMO). What is the verdict? There is no ambulance necessary – following a birth without any great difficulties, the patient is doing well and growing more rapidly than expected. (...)] [*Esperanto* 1/2015]

(186) *En AMO, festas ni, EK! Sep-oka;*  
*Sen AMO restas vi – eks-epoka.*

[in AMO/love, we celebrate, off! Seven-eighth; Without AMO/love you stay – in a former epoch.] [*Esperanto* 2/2015, p. 35]

Finally, at the morphological level, blends or portmanteau words are occasionally created for humorous purposes. As in Freud’s (1905, p. 18) classic example “Ich saß neben Salomon Rothschild und er behandelte mich ganz wie seinesgleichen, ganz familionär (‘I sat beside Salomon Rothschild and he treated me quite as his

equal, quite familionairely’) (from familiär/familiarly + Millionär/millionaire), two words are combined into one whilst removing material from one or both of the source words. Although they are not part of Esperanto word formation, mother tongue influences mean that blends are now creeping into Esperanto usage too. One example is “kilogramatiko” as a popular name given to the 598-page Esperanto grammar *Plena Analiza Gramatiko* by Kalocsay and Waringhien (1985). More recent expressions include *Muzaiko* (*muziko* ‘music’ + *mozaiko* ‘mosaic’), the name of a 24-hour Internet radio station, and *SeminaRIO*, an Esperanto seminar in Rio de Janeiro. Spontaneous creations such as *kompufono* (from *komputilo* ‘computer’ and *telefono* ‘telephone’) to designate a smartphone or *Breliro* (from *Brita* ‘British’ and *eliro* ‘exit’) as an equivalent to Brexit, which has been heard occasionally, do not seem to have gained currency.

### C. Toying with proper names

Proper names can also represent a popular basis for creating humour. As word-class endings can, in principle, be used without exception, the creative modification of personal or place names knows almost no bounds. Expressions such as *ŝerlokolmsajo de Doyle* (*Esperanto* 12/1999, p. 217; ‘a Sherlock-Holmes-ism by Doyle’) or *la lepuila gazeto* (*La Gazeto* 6/1997, p. 19; ‘[Jacques] le Puil’s newspaper’) are amusing to Esperanto readers, who might derive pleasure from deciphering the basis of these creations and become aware of the expressiveness of Esperanto word formation when looking for equivalents in their mother tongue. In a similar vein, the name *Karlo* has become the focus of interest in (187):

(187) [...] *Post baptofesto, la bebo havas sian nomon. Oni ankoraŭ estas konscia, ke ĝi povintus esti alinoma, ke anstataŭ Karlo, oni povintus lin nomi Petro. Sed semajnoj, monatoj, jaroj pasas, kaj fatofare, paralele je lia knabiĝo, Karlo karliĝas. Rigardu lin: li havas karlan buŝon, karlajn okulojn, karlan paŝadon, karlan voĉon ... mallonge, li estas Karlo kaj ne plu estas imageble, ke oni povus lin nomi Petro.*

[(...)] After baptism, the baby got his/her name. One is still aware that he/she could have received another name, that instead of Karlo (Carl) one could have named him Petro (Peter). But weeks, months, years pass, and fate decrees that parallel to his becoming a boy, Carl is becoming Carl (lit. Carl is carling). Look at him: he has got a Carl-ish mouth, Carl-ish eyes, a Carl-ish gait, a Carl-ish voice ... in short, he is Carl and it is no longer conceivable that one could call him Peter.]

(*La Gazeto* 4/94, p. 3)

It is popular to exploit the similarity between Esperanto appellatives and proper names to produce humour, as with *ĉe-ĉe-ni* (‘at/with at/with us’) and *Ĉeĉeni* (‘Chechenia’, i.e. Chechnya) in (188) or *Trump* and *trumpet-* (‘trumpet’) in (189).



(188)

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# La KANCERKLINIKO

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\* politika \* kultura \* skandalema \* ajnista \*

*Fin-hik-fine, ni 'stas ĉe-hik-ĉe ni!* [Fin-hick-finally we're at/with at/with us]

(LKK 1–3/1995, p. 1)

(189)

**La KancerKliniko**  
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**Donald Trump  
 trumpetas ion ajn!**



*Mi malpermesos al ĉiuj muzulmanoj eniri Usonon, krom al tiuj, kiuj bone parolas Esperanton!*



*Mi malhelpos meksikanojn eniri Usonon, ĉefe tiujn, kiuj parolas volapukon aŭ idon!*



*Mi punos la virinojn kiuj abortis, krom la edzinoj de esperantistoj!*



*Mi taksos draste ĉiujn produktojn el Ĉinio, krom la poemoj de Mao Zifu (kiujn mi taksas bonajj)!*



[Donald Trump trumpets anything! Speech balloon top left: I forbid all Muslims to enter the USA, except for those who speak Esperanto well!; top right: I will hinder the Mexicans from entering the USA, mainly those who speak Volapük and Ido!; bottom left: I will punish women who miscarried [sic; Presumably it should be *abortigi* 'had an abortion'], except for the wives of Esperantists!; bottom right: I will charge drastic tariffs on products from China, except for the poems by Mao Zifu [= an Esperanto poet], which I rate highly!]

[LKK 4–6 2016, p. 1; the use of *taksi* ('rate') as a false friend ('to tax') in the first part of the sentence seems to be deliberate here]

The two examples represent the front pages of the long-standing Esperanto satirical magazine *La KancerKliniko*, which is known for language use of this kind. Play of this type can also arise spontaneously in oral communication (see Example (194) below and further examples in Chapter 26).

Occasionally, the identity or similarity between a word or an expression in an ethnic language and a word or expression in Esperanto is employed to produce humour. Example (190), which comes from our personal email correspondence with a Swedish Esperanto speaker, illustrates this.

- (190) *Alteriĝinte en Schiphol 2014–05–10 mi tuj vidis reklamon por iu Rabobank. Tiu nomo laŭ mi montras grandan honestecon. En Svedujo kaj aliaj landoj ja ekzistas rabobankoj, sed ili kaŝas sin malantaŭ aliaj nomoj.*

[After my landing in Schiphol 2014–05–10 I immediately saw an advertisement for a Rabobank (“Robberybank”, *rab-i* ‘rob’, *bank-o* ‘bank’). In my mind this name shows a high degree of honesty. In Sweden and other countries robberybanks do exist, but they conceal themselves behind other names.]

(16 May 2014)

In literary works, we find so-called telling names, which express a semantic relation to a character’s features, such as appearance or profession. They are often playful and humorous, as the examples from Julio Baghy’s satirical novel *Hural!* (1986/1930) illustrate:

- (191) *s-ino Korsenmon* [Mrs Heart-without-Money]; *s-ro Vilibald Hakperman* [Mr Willibald Chop-with-the-Hand; a butcher]; *generalo Venknejam* [General Victory-not-yet]; *Goliat Mordlanaz* [Goliath Bite-the-Nose; policeman]; *Oskar Blindfid* [Oskar Blind-Trust]; *s-ino Banksef* [Mrs Banksafe]; *ĵurnalo Ĉioscio* [journal Omniscience].

*Mistero ĉe nigra lago* [‘Mystery at Black Lake’] by Sten Johansson (1997), a story about six Esperanto-speaking children who have an adventure during their holidays, shows that names of literary characters do not just serve humorous effects. Here the name of one of the protagonists, *Timo* [‘fear’], is relevant for the story. The boy, who is rather shy and frightened at the beginning, is frequently teased by the slogan *Timo ne konas timon* [‘Timo doesn’t know fear’/Timo’s never timid]. A translator from Esperanto into another language might be challenged by the task of finding an equivalent wordplay in the target language.

#### D. *Phraseology – a treasure trove of verbal humour*

Humour and intellectual pleasure can also arise from items that are larger than words, such as catchphrases, proverbs, formulae, which we will describe and classify in more detail in Chapter 21. Their polylexemic character and relatively fixed structures and meanings make them an ideal basis for linguistic play. Because listeners expect them to occur in their stable forms, a deviation from this stability causes surprise, attention and often laughter as described above in our introduction. The following headline is an example of such a playful modification, in this case of the well-known proverb, *All roads lead to Rome*, which has found its way into Esperanto as *Ĉiuj vojoj kondukas al Romo*.

- (192) *Ĉiuj vojoj al La Chaux-de-Fonds kondukas al kaoso*. [All ways to La Chaux-de-Fonds lead to chaos] (*La Letero de l'Akademio* 1–3/1992, p. 3)

The addition of *La Chaux-de-Fonds*, the location of an Esperanto cultural centre, catches the reader's attention, while the substitution of the place name *Romo* with *kaoso* turns the generally positive content of the proverb into a negative one.

Creative reshapings of catchphrases, slogans, proverbs and other types of pre-fabricated speech are widespread in Esperanto. They will be extensively presented in Chapter 21. It is the pleasure that people experience when they recognise something familiar in modified catchphrases that makes uses like these so attractive, and this pleasure is increased further when the humorous manipulation concerns highly reputed works of Esperanto literature, as in our final example, from the Esperanto youth journal *Kontakto*, in which a series of cartoons encourages people to use condoms (see Example (193)). A young man, who is obviously embarrassed, asks the way to a pharmacy, and an elderly woman sitting nearby remarks that condoms can be bought from the vending machine in the petrol station. This cartoon would probably work in a number of languages and cultures. What makes it interesting is the title of the cartoon series, *La bona ingo* ('The good cover'), an obvious euphemism for 'condom', but also an allusion to the book *La bona lingvo* ('The good language'), an influential work on the merits of Esperanto.

(193)



*Kontakto* 145 (1995:1)

#### 20.4 Humour as a discursive strategy

The first part of this chapter has provided a survey of the enormous potential that Esperanto has to create wordplay and evoke humour. The examples that we have chosen, from both oral and written communication, offer evidence that many speakers make ample use of the opportunities the language provides. In the following sections we present the findings of our examination of humour as a discursive strategy on the basis of the dataset described in Chapter 5, with a focus on the functions that humorous discourse aims at, on recurrent text types or genres that are typically used to evoke humour in Esperanto and on the humorous devices that are mainly employed.

Holmes (2000, p. 163) defines humour as “utterances which are identified by the analyst, on the basis of paralinguistic, prosodic and discursal clues, as intended by the speaker(s) to be amusing and perceived to be amusing by at least some participants”. We consider laughter as such a clue to identifying humorous talk, but laughter can also serve other functions, such as hiding embarrassment or nervousness, and humour is not always successful and not necessarily followed by laughter. In addition, in our experience there are many different types of laughter, which we attempt to consider by marking its intensity (through various combinations of the symbol @) and providing information on tone, loudness, etc. using comments in parentheses.

#### 20.4.1 Functions of humour in Esperanto interactions

Studying humorous discourse in Esperanto communication is intriguing for at least two reasons. The first is the international character of the speech community. Although humour is a universal phenomenon, the way it is produced and perceived in interactions varies across languages and cultures (Holmes & Hay, 1997; Lewis, 1999). As Chiaro (1992, p. 5) points out, “[t]he concept of what people find funny appears to be surrounded by linguistic, geographical, diachronic, sociocultural and personal boundaries”. How then is humour used in Esperanto by speakers influenced by differing assumptions about humour because of socialisation in their particular native languages and cultures? Furthermore, for almost all of its speakers Esperanto is a foreign or second language. To be humorous in a foreign language is a challenge, as Davies (2003) and Bell (2007) have shown for English. In ethnic languages, deviating from a standard form or bending a linguistic rule (which is what verbal humour finally consists in) for humorous or expressive reasons can even be a risk for non-native speakers, as it might be taken as a language mistake, as Piller (2002) and Prodromou (2007) have shown. As a foreign language Esperanto is always spoken with different levels of proficiency, and for a joke to be successful it should be jointly appreciated by all participants in a communicative setting.

As research shows (see, for example, Holmes & Marra, 2002; Rogerson-Revell, 2007), humour can be used to both positive and negative effects. It can serve to include or exclude participants. In our dataset, humour is mainly used as an inclusive strategy. In accordance with Brown and Levinson’s (1978) description of joking as a positive politeness strategy, it serves to entertain, to establish solidarity and intimacy and to pursue and achieve affiliation. Humour is, in the words of Attardo (1994, p. 323), “a tool to facilitate in-group interaction and strengthen in-group bonding”. In this function it can be found in all communicative settings included in our dataset, such as working group meetings (see Example (194): here a speaker places the focus on the place name *Orlando*, which is also the first name of one of the participants), excursions (Example (195)) and lectures (see Examples (196) to (198)).

- (194) A: *Ni havas iom da sperto pri tio [...] Ĉio dependas de la membreco. Estas grandaj konferencoj, kiuj ne taŭgas, malgrandaj, kiuj tamen taŭgas, ĉu ne. Mi povas, <name>, pensi pri du spertoj [...]*  
 B: *Jes, ni estis en Orlando.*  
 C: *En Orlando? @*  
 Several: @@  
 B: *Jes, mi rememoras, ke ni estis en Orlando, ĉar [...]*  
 [A: We have some experience with this (...) Everything depends on the membership. There are huge conferences, which are not suitable, small ones that fit, however. I can think of, <name>, two events (...)]

B: Yes, we were in Orlando.

C: In Orlando? @

Several: @@

B: Yes, I remember that we were in Orlando, because (...)

[198 (eng-eng-hun; disc; Lisbon) 100:45–103:20]

- (195) *Ekskurso ne estas kurso* [An excursion is not a course]  
[118 (fra; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 9:39; note the similarity  
between *ekskurso* ('excursion') and *kurso* ('course')]
- (196) *Tiu ĉi Kleriga Lundo devas esti ankaŭ klariga lundo* [This Education Monday  
must be a clarification Monday too] [86 (eng; pres; Lille) 1:47; note the  
similarity between *kleriga* ('educational') and *klariga* ('clarifying')]
- (197) *MK- Ĉu vi mokas?* [Are you mocking?]  
(85 (deu; pres; Lille) 13:20; *MK* is pronounced in the same way  
as the noun *moko* formed on the basis of *moki* 'to mock']
- (198) *Vi eble renkontis, denove ĉe la Reto, la tiel nomatajn paroladojn TED. Bedaŭrinde  
tiu mallongigo TED ŝajnas maltaŭga por prezento de paroladoj* [Perhaps  
you, again on the Internet, have come across the so-called TED lectures.  
Unfortunately, the abbreviation TED ('to bore') doesn't seem suitable for the  
presentation of speeches] [86 (eng; pres; Lille) 22:45–23:05]

Humour can be used as a strategy to cope with difficult communicative situations. As Norrick and Spitz (2008) show, it can be a resource for forestalling or mitigating conflict in interactions. There are a number of situations in our dataset in which interactants with different opinions or confronted with delicate questions use humour as such a strategy (see also Example (163) in Chapter 19.3.4). In Excerpt (199), a formal meeting at which board representatives of the Universal Esperanto Association answer members' questions, a participant (A) asks why he cannot find detailed statements on how much money the association spends on organising its annual international congresses. A board representative (B) provides a convincing explanation, but has to admit that it would be possible to publish a report that is accessible to all members. When the questioner then asks whether the board representative (B) will ensure that this will be done in future, the latter agrees, emphasising his attitude towards transparency by using an Esperantised foreign word (*glasnosto*). The unconventional word choice is successful in producing humour, as the audience's reaction shows.

- (199) A: [...] *do mia demando estas, kial ĝi [la bilanco] ne aperas kaj ĉu aliloke mi povas trovi informojn pri detalaj elspezoj kaj enspezoj de pasintaj Universalaj Kongresoj.*
- B: *Jes, tute bona demando fakte, dankon. Eh estas efektive tiel ke la- pro tio ke la kongresoj tre varias laŭ kosto [...] la fina kalkulo prenas sufiĉe da tempo kaj tiu- precipe tiu raporto devus esti alirebla sed laŭ mia kompreno ne estis ĝis nun la kutimo eh publikigi tiujn ciferojn en la retejo.*
- [...]
- A: *Dankon pro via tre klara respondo. Kaj ĉu tio signifas ke vi deziras ke en la venonta jaro aperu tiaj ciferoj?*
- B: *Jes, mi estas por maksimuma malfermiteco fakte glos- glasnosto*  
 L *en UEA, termino de antaŭ kelkaj jaroj, ĉu ne, eh. Jes*
- Many: L @@@
- A: Dankon.
- [A: (...) Well, my question is why it (the balance sheet) does not appear and whether I can find information about details of expenditure and income of previous World Esperanto Congresses somewhere else.
- B: Yes, indeed a very good question. Thanks. Uh it is actually so that the- because of the fact that the congresses differ very much in terms of costs (...) the final accounting takes quite some time and this- especially this report should be accessible but according to my understanding it has not been the custom with us uh to publish these figures on the net.
- (...)
- A: Thanks for your straight answer. And does this mean that you would like those figures to be published next year ?
- B: Yes, I am for maximal openness, in fact glos- glasnost L in the UEA, to use a term coined a few years ago uh, yes.
- Many: L @@@
- A: Thank you.] [72 (?-eng; disc; Lille) 56:46–59:32]

In Example (200), a meeting of the Buddhist society, a participant shows his concern about recent developments in Burma and Buddhists' attitudes towards people of other religions. The representative of the Buddhist society gives a rather comprehensive description of relationships between Buddhism and other religions, ending with the modified catchphrase *Por esti bona budhano ne sufiĉas nomi sin tia* ('To be a good Buddhist it's not enough to call yourself one'),<sup>111</sup> which is presented in a jocular tone of voice and followed by laughter from the audience.

111. *Por ke lingvo estu internacia, ne sufiĉas nomi ĝin tia* ['For a language to be international, it is not enough to call it so'] was Zamenhof's motto that formed the epigraph of the first Esperanto textbook, *Unua Libro* (Zamenhof, 1887).



(200) A: *Mi trovis la interesan informon [...] pri la Rhohingva, pri tiu popolo, kiu estas forpelata de Birmao kaj do mi iomete estis ŝokita, ke budhanoj eĉ mortigis kelkajn homojn [...] Oni ja nun vidas, ke la Islamo estas kelkfoje tre energie ne nur defendi sian terenon, sed ankaŭ etendiĝi al aliaj terenoj; kaj ili estas plejparte ne inkludaj. Pro tio mi opinias, ke la budhistoj en Birmao volis elŝovi tiun religion, kiu eble ĝenos la pacon. Kion vi pensas pri tio?*

B: *[...] en la klasikaj kronikoj [...] oni povas legi, ke [...] oni uzis budhismon kiel ilon por batali, [...] kaj dum la tuta historio [...] ofte budhismo miksiĝis kun aliaj religioj. Kaj tiel okazis eĉ inter la Tibetanoj, [...] similiĝis al tio en Eŭropo, en la Eŭropa mezepoko, inter Francio kaj Anglio, kiuj [...] havis eĉ centjaran militon inter si; eh do por esti bona budhano ne sufiĉas nomi sin tia.*

Several: @@@ (cautious, suppressed)

[A: I've found the interesting information (...) about the Rohingya, about these people, who are expelled from Burma and so I was a bit shocked that Buddhists even killed some people (...) Now you can see that Islam sometimes has energy not only to defend its territory, but also to reach other territories; and mostly they are not inclusive. Because of that I think that the Buddhists in Burma wanted to expel this religion, which might put peace in danger. What do you think about that?

B: (...) in the classical chronicles (...) you can read that (...) Buddhism was used as a weapon of war, (...) and throughout history (...) Buddhism often mixed with other religions. And so it happened even among the Tibetans, (...) it became similar to what we find in Europe, in the European Middle Ages, between France and England, which (...) even fought a hundred years' war with each other; uh to be a Budd- to be a good Buddhist it's not enough to call yourself one.

Several: @@@ (cautious, suppressed) [83 (deu-?; disc; Lille) 38:18–41:47]

Example (201) presents part of a conversation among colleagues during a coffee break. Speaker A complains that her programme has not been funded by their umbrella organisation (= organisation 1) as generously as another programme (organisation 2), when speaker B informs her in a polite way (*eh ne pardonu* 'uh no excuse me') that her complaint is not justified because the money for the other project did not come from the holding organisation, but from a different fund. Speaker A then argues that this information should have been made public, but speaker C replies that several journals reported on it. The conversation continues with an exchange about content and the people responsible for the two projects concerned, but a kind of tension can be felt, which can also be seen in the fact that,

in contrast to the talk before this point, four of the total of seven interactants fall silent. Speaker C tries to ease tensions by saying that she and her organisation have always appreciated A's work and reported on it. This is welcomed by speaker A, who adds that people often focus primarily on their own project or support people from their region (*bone jes vi estas @@ tamen @ lokalpatriotoj* 'well yes you are @@ however local patriots, after all') and followed by a five-second pause. Afterwards (see the lines in bold letters) speaker A takes up the conversation by mentioning in a jocular voice that a fund (a bequest) has to be found for A's project and her proposal is followed by her own laughter. This attempt at humour is quickly accepted and highlighted (*aŭskultu, aŭskultu* 'hear, hear' and *notu tion, notu tion* 'note this, note this') by other speakers, who join in common laughter after someone proposes to murder someone. In the following turns, the interactants compete in modifying and further extending the proposal. Interventions are often followed by general laughter, thereby showing that the introduction of humour successfully reanimated the conversation and re-established a relaxed atmosphere.

- (201) A: *eh se mi komparis nun (.) la- (.) kiom da MONO <nomo de organizaĵo 1> pretas investi por (.) eh <nomo de organizaĵo 2> TIE estas la granda diferenco (.)* ⊥ *eh:*
- B: ⊥ *hm ne:: (.) pardonu tio estis heredaĵo kun la celo- tio ne estis mono de <nomo de organizaĵo 1> (.) estis heredaĵo kun la celo por la <nomo de organizaĵo 2> ⊥ ĉu?*
- A: ⊥ *kio ki- KIE kie (ĉar) tion oni ne skribis*
- C: *estis (.) en pluraj komunikoj: en gazetara komuniko de <nomo de organizo 1> mi ne memor- me- ne ⊥ mi memoras estis <name>(.) nederlandanino, kiu havis kurson [...] kaj heredis monon.*
- A: ⊥ *mhm*
- B: *kaj tiun monon uzis <nomo de organizo 1> do ne por (.) subtaksi vian laboron, simple estis (.) CEL:-DONA; (.) heredaĵo.*
- A: *do tion oni ne klare- oni anoncis [...]* ⊥ *fakte*
- B: ⊥ *estis gazetara komuniko certe.*
- A: *°mhm° (.) bone (.) (do mi ne volas) (.) (konkurenci (.) mi fakte) (.) ĉiuj (.) volas kunlabori kaj ankaŭ kun (.) eh <nomo> ĉu ne, mi invitis lin ĉi tien kaj (.) eh en la lasta momento li (.) tamen rezignis ĉar- [...]* [...] 9:10

- B: [...] (.) informoj ja aperis, eh: (.) kompreneble eble ne en sufiĉa (.) KVANTO sed (estas) skribitaj materialoj en la gazetaro. (.) sed ni ĉiam, (.) ni ĈIAM (.) per la sondokumentoj @(subtenis vin)@  
 ⊥@(2)@
- A: ⊥ do bone jes vi estas @(2)@ (.) tamen @ lokalpatriotoj, ĉu ne @  
 kaj (vi disaŭdigas nin,) @(2)@
- B: jes: kompreneble ĉar tiuj ja- (.) kaj estas tiu eh estas (atingeblo) la tuta komunumo ĉi tie. (.) sed ne nur eh (.) ne, ĉi tie estas (pli) internacie (.) eh valorata, do BONE ke- (.) ke tio (.) nun trovas kroman emfazon (5) se estus specifa heredaĵo por <nome de la nuna projekto> @
- Several: @@
- C: Aŭskultu aŭskultu
- B: Notu tion, notu tion
- D: Montru kiun mortigi
- All: @@@@
- B: Ne mortigi. Al tiu persvadi heredigi la monon.
- C: Unue ⊥persvadi
- E: ⊥devus esti tre riĉa persono
- F: Ne rigardu min.
- All: @@
- [A: uh: when I compare now (.) the- (.) how much MONEY <name of organisation 1> is ready to invest into (.) uh: <name of organisation 2> there is a big difference: (.) ⊥uh
- B: ⊥hm no:: (.) sorry that was an inheritance intended- this was not money from <name of organisation> (.) was an inheritance intended for the <name of organisation 2> ⊥wasn't it?
- A: ⊥what whe- WHERE where (because) one didn't write about this
- B: it was (.) in several communications, in press releases of <name of organisation1>. I don't remem- mem- I remember (<name of donor>) (.) a woman from the Netherlands who took a course [...] and donated money
- A: mhm
- B: and this money was used by <name of organisation 1> not uh to (.) underestimate your work, simply was (.) aim:-giving: (.) inheritance.
- A: well this wasn't clearly announced [...] ⊥in fact
- B: ⊥ There was a press release certainly.

- A: °mhm° (.) well (.) (then I don't want) (.) (to compete (.) I actually) (.) all (.) want to cooperate and also with (.) uh: <name> don't we? I invited him to come here and (.) uh: in the last moment he (.) nevertheless refused because-(...) 9:10
- B: information did appear, uh (.) of course not in sufficient (.) QUANTITY but (there is) written material in the press. (.) but we always, (.) we ALWAYS (.) by means of sound documents @(supported you) @ L@(2)@
- A: L well yes you are @(2)@ (.) however @ local patriots, after all) @ and (you broadcast us) @(2)@
- B: yes, of course as these are- (.) and this is uh (an achievement of) the whole community here. (.) but not only uh (.) no here it is (more) internationally (.) uh appreciated so it's GOOD that- (.) that it (.) (receives additional emphasis) this year (5) **if there was a (specific) inheritance (.) for <name of the project at hand>@**
- Several: @@**
- C: listen, (.) listen**
- B: note this, note this**
- D: (you) indicate who is to be killed**
- All: @@@@**
- B: not killed (.) to be persuaded (.) to bequeath the money**
- D: first L to persuade**
- E: L it would have to be a very rich person**
- F: Don't look at me**
- All: @@] [2 (hun-pol-fra-deu-?; infl; Poznań) 7:06–10:43]**

Exchanges like the one in bold letters above strengthen interpersonal relationships. A good laugh helps to establish rapport. In-group bonding can also be established at the expense of others, however. As Cameron (2001, p. 174) argues, “collectively disparaging and ‘trashing’ people who are absent increases solidarity and intimacy among those who are actually present”. Successful joking of this type requires the fulfilment of two conditions (see Brkinjač, 2009): first, the person who is the butt of the joke has to be known to everyone, along with his or her particular foible. Second, participants have to approve of such humour and agree with making the person the topic of humorous conversation. The two preconditions are not necessarily easy to fulfil in the heterogeneous speech community of Esperanto. In the dataset we find only one example of joking about absent others. It refers to Marjorie Boulton (1924–2017), a British author and poet, who is highly valued in the community, but also known for her charming English way of pronouncing Esperanto. It seems to fulfil the two conditions mentioned, as the laughter reveals.

- (202) A: *Iam ĉe la bankedo sidis Marjorie Boulton* L<sub>apud</sub> Ivo Lapenna  
 B: L<sub>@@</sub>  
 C: @jes  
 A: *kaj ŝi diris* (imitating an English accent) *Ĉe mi ĉio estas internacia*  
 Several: @@  
 A: *Kaj li diris: escepte de la elparolo*  
 all: @@@  
 [A: Once at a dinner Marjorie Boulton sat L<sub>next to</sub> Ivo Lapenna  
 B: L<sub>@@</sub>  
 C: @yes  
 A: and she said (speaker is imitating an English accent) with me  
 everything is international  
 Several: @@  
 A: and he said: with the exception of your pronunciation  
 All: @@@] [37 (ita; infl; La Chaux-des-Fonds) 47:15]

‘Conflict talk’ (Norrick & Spitz, 2008) is altogether rare in our dataset. There are, however, situations where people express their criticism or discontent openly. Examples include a meeting at which a speaker shows her strong dissatisfaction with the small print and coloured print that an Esperanto journal has introduced, saying the following in a loud and harsh tone:

- (203) *Laŭ mia opinio la revuo estu legEBLA; legINDA aŭ legENDA estas alia demando, tion aliaj povas juĝi, sed la revuo estu legEBLA*  
 [In my opinion the journal should be readable, (whether it is) worth reading or necessary to read is another question, others can judge this, but the journal should be readable] [72 (deu; disc; Lille) 47:37–52].

The second example occurs when two groups claim the same meeting room. When the people who already occupied the room kept being disturbed by the others’ opening the door and protesting, a speaker said, using a zeugma, “Fermu la pordon, sed antaŭ ĉio la buŝon!” (‘Shut the door, but, above all, your mouth!’). The two examples show that it is not only in collaborative interactions that speakers exploit Esperanto’s abundant opportunities for creative word formation and stylistic expression.

### 20.4.2 Humorous devices in conversation

Working with a dataset allows us to identify preferred types of humorous discourse. Joke-telling and other narrative forms of humour that are relatively independent genres in themselves and that interrupt the flow of interaction are not typical of the language use under examination. Humour in Esperanto is mainly interactive. The devices that we found to be characteristic are closely related to and situationally embedded in the flow of conversation: teasing, allusions, and interruptions (heckling).

#### A. *Teasing*

In our dataset, teasing occurs in informal settings, such as conversations during meals, but also in debates and working group meetings. Researchers often state that teasing occurs among people who know each other well or have shared a history of interactions to which the teasing can be linked (Günthner, 2013). In fact, it seems necessary that interactants know at least one detail about the other to confront them with this detail in a provocative way. In Example (204), participant A invites another speaker to join him for dinner at a table that he has already shared with a group of six to eight other people whom he met only a short time before. In Example (205), taken from a debate, speaker A teases a member of the audience because of his preference for a certain suffix that he is known for (both *-uj* and *-i* can be used to designate countries). Note the metacommunicative comment that he adds, obviously, to ensure that the remark is accepted as an attempt at humour:

(204) *Estas multaj germanoj, multaj. Tamen ili ne krokodilas.*

[There are many Germans, many. However, they don't "crocodile / behave like crocodiles", i.e. speak their native language in an Esperanto surrounding.]

[124 (eng; tour; Lille-Boulogne) 19:08]

(205) *Tio jam okazis, ekzemple inter Francio kaj Italio. Aŭ Francujo kaj Italujo. Mi omaĝas vin per la uzo de tiu sufikso, <name>.*

[This already happened, for example between France and Italy. Or France and Italy. I pay tribute to your use of this suffix, <name>.]

[100 (spa; disc; Lille) 39:08; the person addressed is known by Esperanto-speakers to accept the latter version only]

As the object of teasing in these examples is simultaneously a person (or, as in Example (204), several people) and a characteristic of the language and its community (namely, the habit of using one's mother tongue in Esperanto circles – see Chapter 21 on *krokodili* – and the fact that there are different schools and opinions concerning the use of some linguistic elements in Esperanto), the two speakers can be sure that their teasing will not be misinterpreted as an attack.

Teasing is often employed as a type of criticism, however. In Example (206), a working group meeting, speaker A presents himself as the leader of the group:

- (206) *Se la germanoj ĉesus klaĉi, tiam ni povus komenci la kunsidon.* [If the Germans stopped gossiping, we could start the meeting.] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 0:51]

The example shows the ambiguous nature of teasing (Schnurr, 2009): it can function as an expression of solidarity or as an insult. The members of the group in (206) knew one another very well and had developed a shared repertoire of linguistic practices during their regular meetings that included supportive humour. Therefore, this example can be considered ‘bonding teasing’ (Boxer & Cortés-Conde, 1997) employed to emphasise common ground, which was answered accordingly by the participants addressed, namely by the playful remark “La germanoj neniam klaĉas!” (‘The Germans never gossip!’ 158 (deu; disc; Lille) 1:08), which merely feigned indignation.

### B. Allusions

In this section we will address allusions, i.e. intertextual references. Although they are considered a form of indirect wording or hidden formulation, we do not just presuppose that allusions are intentional on the part of the speaker but that they are also meant to be recognised by the recipient. As in Example (207), speakers often refer to well-known phrases taken from Zamenhof’s works.

- (207) A: *Bonvenon!*  
 B: *Bonvenon, vi povas aliĝi al nia grupo, jes.*  
 A: *Al rondo familia.*  
 A-E: @@  
 [A: Welcome!  
 B: Welcome, you can join our group, yes.  
 A: Our family circle.  
 Several: @@] [(128 (hin-urd; disc; Lille) 33:10]
- (208) *Mi kore salutas vin [...] kaj deziras al vi belegan kaj fruktodonan centan Universalan Kongreson kun multaj amikoj, kunvenoj inter homoj kaj homoj.*  
 [I greet you cordially (...) and wish you a wonderful and fruitful 100th World (Esperanto) Congress with many friends, meetings between people and people.]  
 [69 (deu; cerem; Lille) 1:56:38]<sup>112</sup>

In Example (209) the speaker relies on the audience’s knowledge of Kennedy’s phrase *Ich bin ein Berliner* and, transferring its semantic value to the current communicative event (the speaker’s speech at the 100th World Esperanto Congress)

112. Allusion to Zamenhof’s words in his speech at the First Esperanto Congress in 1905: “[...] hodiaŭ inter la gastamaj muroj de Bulonjo-sur-Maró kunvenis ne francoj kun angloj, ne rusoj kun poloj, sed homoj kun homoj (‘... today between the hospitable walls of Boulogne-sur-Mer, there meet not Frenchmen with Englishmen, not Russians with Poles, but people with people.’”

attributes special importance to it. The effect of Example (210) results from the different character of the things that are juxtaposed, a song by an Esperanto pop group (*Kajto*) and a lecture on Einstein's theory of relativity.

(209) [...] *Por diri la saman aferon per aliaj vortoj: En certa mezuro ĉiu esperantisto sentas sin ankaŭ Bulonjano.*

[(...) To say the same in other words: to a certain extent every Esperanto speaker also feels like an inhabitant of Boulogne.] [69 (eng; cerem; Lille) 70:50]

(210) *Laŭ nia nuna teorio [...] ĝi estas la praeksplodo, nome ke la universo komenciĝis en iu momento kaj [...], la plej bonan respondon [...] donis Kajto antaŭ unu horo: En la komenco estis nenio, kaj tiam eĉ tio eksplodis @@@*

[Given our present theory (...), the Big Bang Theory, namely that the universe started at a certain moment and (...), the best answer (...) was given by Kajto an hour ago: in the beginning there was nothing, and then even that exploded @@@] [73 (heb; pres; Lille) 58:36–59:13]

The 'text' that an intertextual reference uses as a basis is not necessarily a written or spoken piece of communication. It can also be people's experience, a fact or frame of knowledge or the values people share. In this context, allusions in Esperanto communication frequently refer to the world of Esperanto or planned languages. Examples (211) to (214) illustrate the often self-ironic character of these references. Here, speakers mock the restricted dissemination of Esperanto (211), other planned languages (212), US-Americans (or, more precisely, native speakers of English) (213) and the inefficiency of the work of the Esperanto Academy (214).

(211) *En la kazo, ke [la proceso] estas en la kastilia, komprenas nur la juĝisto, kaj la advokatoj; en la kazo, ke estas en la kataluna, [...]; en la kazo, ke estas en Esperanto, komprenas neniu @@@.*

[In the event that it (the lawsuit) is in Castilian, only the judge will understand, and the lawyers; in the event that it's in Catalan, (...); in the event that it's in Esperanto, nobody will understand @@@.]

[39 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 4:05–21]

(212) *Estos sur via konto. Mi nur donas al vi tion [= la kvitancon] pro sekureco, se intertempe okazas la fina venko de Ido.*

[It will be on your account. I'm giving this (the bill) to you only for security, in case the final victory of Ido occurs in the meantime.]

(personal communication 28 July 2015, Lille)<sup>113</sup>

113. This remark is humorous for several reasons. *Fina venko*, a term normally associated with Esperanto (see Chapter 8), is used here in connection with Esperanto's competitor, Ido.



- (213) *(Havu plenan) respekton al la kunparolanto, eĉ se la kunparolanto estas usonano; mi ŝercas @@.*

[Have full respect towards your interlocutor, even if your interlocutor is an American; I'm kidding @@.] [172 (eng; pres; Havana) 48:37]

- (214) *De tempo al tempo en la Akademio okazas diskuto pri kio entute faras aŭ devus fari la Akademio. Do evidente oni sciis kion fari en la jaro 1923 aŭ 24 kaj intertempe forgesis.* (all: @)

[From time to time in the Academy there is a discussion of what the Academy actually does or should do. Obviously, they knew what to do in 1923 or 24, and they have since forgotten. (all: @@)]

[164 (eng; oth; Lille) 75:03–21; at an auction, a 1924 book with the title *Jarlibro de la Lingva Komitato kaj de ĝia Akademio. Difino kaj devoj de la lingvaj institucioj* ('Yearbook of the Language Committee and its Academy. Definition and Duties of the linguistic institutions') is offered]

Allusions can also refer to people's familiarity with visual elements such as logos (see also Example (166)):

- (215) The word Esperanto in the style of the Coca-Cola logo  
(source: <http://www.ikso.net/de/projektoj/eldonajxoj.php>)



- (216) (Modification of the famous British home front poster of the Second World War, *Keep calm and carry on* [source: <https://medium.com/@wendyecotta/keep-calm-and-speak-esperanto-601aa01163ba>, see also Fiedler, 2019a])



### C. Heckling

Humorous interjections can be observed in various types of interactions. Example (217) occurred in a lecture. It was especially appreciated by members of the audience because of its reference to the lecture's content (*nigraj truoj* 'black holes'). Comments like these make interactions coherent and establish a kind of cooperation between lecturer and participant. Other forms of heckling represent ironic comments on a statement. In Example (218), a singer announces the group's next song, and a member of the audience reacts to the banal content as if it were full of excitement. In another cultural programme, in Example (219), after an obviously mediocre presentation, the artist's confession of her lack of professionalism is laconically commented on by a member of the audience by *ĉu*.<sup>114</sup>

- (217) A: *Kaj poste mi liberigos vin, vi povos forkuri per la rapideco de forkuro @@.*  
 B: *Ĉi tie estas nigra truo.@@@*  
 [A: And after that I'll let you go, you can run away with escape velocity. @@  
 B: There's a black hole here. @@@] [82 (heb; pres; Lille) 4:25–37; the term *rapideco de forkuro* ('escape velocity') was used in the lecture]
- (218) A: *Juna knabo sekrete amas junan virinon.*  
 B: *Nekredeble*  
 Several: @@@  
 [A: A young man secretly loves a young woman.  
 B: Unbelievable  
 Several: @@@] [13 (ndl-?; tour; Poznań) 38:40]
- (219) *[...] mi ne estas profesia kantistino – Ĉu? [...]*  
 [I'm not a professional singer – Really?] [166 (zho-deu; tour; Lille) 107:17]

Self-reflexive humour can also be found in this subtype, as Examples (220) and (221) show. Examples (222) and (223) provide evidence of the popularity of spontaneous wordplay: the homophonic clash of *ili sin taksas* ('they consider themselves') with *sintaksas* ('to syntax') gives rise to a creative analogy, *morfologias* ('to morphology'), which is widely appreciated (222). In Example (223), a discussion about the reflexive pronoun *sin* ('oneself'), a speaker plays with the misinterpretation of the verb *singulti* ('to hiccup') as *sin gulti*.

- (220) *Mi neniam aŭdis pri teroristoj-esperantistoj. – Aŭ ĉiuj estas.* [I've never heard of Esperanto-speaking terrorists. – Or all are.]  
 [79 (pol-deu; disc; Lille): 15:05]

114. The particle is used to signal alternative questions in Esperanto. It can be found in a large number of pragmatic functions (Wennergren, 2020, Chapter 17.2, 22.2; Libert, 2016).

- (221) A: *Do, ĉu ni formu cirklon?*  
 [...]
 B: *Rondon.*  
 A: *Rondon? Nu, ĝi tamen estas cirklo.*  
 C: *Cirko, aha?*  
 A: *Pardonu, sinjoro prezidanto de la Akademio.*  
 C: *Cirkon ni faru? Nu, la tuta kongreso estas cirko.*  
 Several: @@@  
 [A: Well, should we form a circle?<sup>115</sup>  
 (...)  
 B: A round.  
 A: A round? Well, but it's a circle nevertheless.  
 C: A circus, aha?  
 A: I apologise, Mr. President of the Academy.  
 C: We should form a circus? Well, the whole congress is a circus.]  
 [158 (eng-swe-deu; infl; Lille) 0:18–0:40]
- (222) *Estas homoj, kiuj sin taksas – Kaj @morfologias@.* – All: @@@@  
 [There are people, who think of themselves / do syntax – And @do morphology@. – All: @@@@] [19 (por-spa; edu; Poznań) 69:41]
- (223) A: *Temas pri la refleksiva pronomo “sin” [...] En kelkaj slavaj lingvoj ĝi estas uzebla sendepende de la persono de la subjekto [...] En Esperanto [...] “mi sin duŝas” laŭ mi estas eraro, “mi MIN duŝas” estas la ĝusta.*  
 [...]
 B: [...] *kaj ŝerce, <nomo> ĉu mi rajtas diri “mi singultas”?*  
 [A: The topic is the reflexive pronoun “sin” (...) In some Slavic languages, it can be used independently from the person of the subject (...) In Esperanto (...) in my opinion “mi sin duŝas” (‘I shower myself’) is a mistake; “mi MIN duŝas” is correct.  
 (...)  
 B: (...) and just for fun, <name>, can I say “mi singultas” (‘I hiccup’)?<sup>116</sup>]  
 [114 (nor-?; disc; Lille) 60:23–62:18]

These examples illustrate Esperanto speakers’ predilection for ludic behaviour and at the same time the important role that language-based humour plays in it. They can hardly resist an opportunity for spontaneous punning over the course of an interaction.

115. In Esperanto, *cirklo* is used as a term to designate the face in geometry, a disc, and (often with a capital letter) the parallels describing the pole regions, as in *la arкта cirklo* (‘the Arctic Circle’).

116. The root *singult-* does not include *sin* as a pronoun but is monomorphic.

### 20.4.3 Failed humour

We began this chapter by raising some doubts as to whether humour as we know it from our mother tongues might be possible in an international speech community using a planned language. Subsequently, after more than sixty examples of creative wordplay and other types of humour, these doubts will surely have been dispelled. This does not mean, however, that all attempts at humour are necessarily successful. As Bell and Attardo (2010) describe and exemplify, there is a variety of reasons why humour can fail, i.e. why participants do not notice a speaker's intention to amuse. Non-native speakers might simply not know the meaning of words (for an example concerning English, see Pullin Stark, 2009, p. 167) or not understand the incongruity of the joke or they might not recognise the specific pragmatic force of an utterance such as irony. In the examples of failed humour in our dataset, various reasons seem to overlap. In Example (224), a conversation over lunch, people are talking about the schedule of a symposium they are attending. Having discussed the menu, with the majority deciding on a soup, one of the participants plays with the innovative creation of *supozio*, a combination of *simpozio* ('symposium') and *supo* ('soup'), to which, however, no one reacts with laughter. One explanation is that participants simply did not hear it, misheard it as *supozo* ('supposition') or were focused too much on the topic of their conversation, the organisational frame of the symposium, that they did not expect a witty comment:

- (224) A: <nomo> (.) *kiam komenciĝos la simpozio?*  
 B: *eh morgaŭ ma ⊥tene je la naŭa kaj kvin*  
 C: *⊥la supozio estas*  
 A: *kaj mia kontribuo estas morgaŭ ankaŭ?*  
 B: *via (kontribuo) estas postmorgaŭ*  
 [A: <name> (.) when will the symposium start?  
 B: uh tomorrow mor ⊥ning at five past nine  
 C: *⊥the soupposium is*  
 A: and my talk is tomorrow, too?  
 B: your (talk) is the day after tomorrow]

[1 (span-hun-hun; infl; Poznań) 15:22]

At the beginning of this chapter, we also described how ethnic humour is seldom part of our dataset and noted that it does not play an important role in the collection of jokes at ridejo.ikso.net. Its absence may result from adjustments on the part of Esperanto speakers, who obviously do not consider this type of humour appropriate for the speech community. Example (225) confirms that interactional trouble can occur if participants lack the background knowledge necessary to enjoy humour based on national stereotypes. The reaction is in stark contrast with those in Examples (211) to (214), where people burst into laughter because allusions emphasise what Esperanto speakers have in common.

### 20.5 Some concluding remarks on humour in Esperanto

The study confirms that Esperanto communication is often marked by humour. It helps to establish rapport and to nurture solidarity among the members of the speech community. Teasing, alluding and heckling have been found to be major types of humorous discourse. To a considerable extent, humour is language-based, with Esperanto speakers making use of the planned language's morphological and syntactic potential to invent humorous wordplay. Another characteristic of Esperanto humour is the frequent reference to the culture of the speech community, above all its literature, speakers' behaviour, and peculiarities of the planned language including unresolved language questions. A shared knowledge of these characteristics forms a solid basis for successful humour. The humorous manipulation of titles of highly reputed works of Esperanto literature shows that self-referential and self-ironic language uses are characteristic of the community: Esperanto speakers are definitely able to laugh at themselves. Further studies should consider the role of Esperanto speakers' first languages and cultures to address the question of how speakers communicating in Esperanto transfer their cultural conventions or adapt them to the needs of the multicultural speech community. An in-depth analysis of this complex issue will require a larger and more differentiated dataset than the one on which we have based our investigation.

## Phraseological units and metaphors

### 21.1 Introduction

The subject that we are exploring in this chapter – phraseology, the inventory of fixed expressions, idioms, proverbs, catchphrases and other ready-made constructions – is of special interest for Esperanto as it is the part of the language that is most closely related to its history and to the culture of the people who use it. Phraseology, like no other topic, provides an insight into the life of the Esperanto speech community and can therefore be considered proof of Esperanto as a living language.

Considering the function of a planned language as a means of worldwide communication among people of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds, one might ask whether the employment of idiomatic expressions is actually advisable. Mutual understanding has to be the top priority in communication and this can obviously be hampered by linguistic items that are semantically opaque or only partly transparent. The transfer of culturally dependent expressions from ethnic languages to Esperanto by authors and translators is therefore frequently the subject of heated debate among speakers, for example in book reviews (see Fiedler, 1999, pp. 295–297, 2001b). While some Esperanto speakers welcome the opportunities presented by the language to adopt figurative expressions from other cultures and regard them as a means of enriching and increasing expressiveness, others fear a loss of homogeneity or a danger of misunderstanding.<sup>117</sup> Zamenhof adopted a balanced position towards idioms:

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117. For an extreme position see Kadoya (2013, p. 17), who rejects the use of any phraseology in Esperanto: “Ĉar frazeologiaĵoj grandigas malfacilecon lerni esperanton, tio signifas, ke la lernokosto multiĝas proporcie al la malfacileco. [...] Profunde lerni aŭ posedi esperanton devas esti plej malfermitaj al ĉiuj. [...] Malfermiteco de esperanto estas unu el la necesaj kondiĉoj por lingva egaleco kaj justeco, kvankam ĝi ne estas sufiĉa kondiĉo. Frazeologiaĵoj almenaŭ parte helpas detrui malfermitecon.” [As phraseological units enhance the difficulty to learn Esperanto, this means that the learning costs increase proportionally with difficulty. (...) Learning and possessing Esperanto profoundly has to be most open for everyone. (...) Openness of Esperanto is one of the necessary conditions for linguistic equality and justice, although it is not a sufficient condition. Phraseological units help destroy openness at least partly.]

[...] *La vera stilo Esperanta estas nek slava, nek germana, nek romana, ĝi estas – aŭ almenaŭ devas esti – nur stilo simpla kaj logika.*

*Tamen ĉio devas esti en ĝusta mezuro. Ankaŭ en Esperanto troviĝas diversaj (ne multaj) idiotismoj, kaj tute malprave kelkaj Esperantistoj ilin kontraŭbatalas, ĉar lingvo absolute logika kaj tute sen idiotismoj estus lingvo senviva kaj tro peza; sed kvankam kelkaj el la Esperantaj idiotismoj estas prenitaĵ ankaŭ el la lingvoj slavaj (dum aliaj estas prenitaĵ el aliaj lingvoj), ili tamen estas ne slavismoj, sed esperantismoj, ĉar ili fariĝis parto de la lingvo.*

(Zamenhof 1962 [1911]: 119, original emphasis)

[The true style of Esperanto is neither Slavic nor Germanic nor Romance, it is – or at least should be – just a plain and logical style.

However, everything has to be in the right measure. In Esperanto there are some (not many) idioms, as well, and some Esperanto speakers fight against them without good reason, because an absolutely logical language without idioms is a dead and heavy language; but although some of the Esperanto idioms were taken from Slavic languages too (while others were taken from other languages), they nevertheless are not Slavisms, but Esperantisms, because they have become a part of the language.]

If we consider the wide application that Esperanto has since achieved in written and spoken communication – as a literary medium (for both original and translated works), as a language of everyday conversation, as a family language and as a language for special purposes – the development and use of phraseology seems to be a natural process. A planned language that claims to be a fully fledged language must include equivalents for political terminology such as *Cold War* or *Iron Curtain*, and it has to be able to cope with the challenges posed by translations. By way of an example: in the funny scene in *Astérix le Gaulois* (Goscinny & Uderzo, 1961), when the Romans try to produce a magic potion with the result that everyone including the little dog Dogmatix suffers from excessive hair growth, the French original evokes humour by an excessive accumulation of idioms referring to hair. Of course, if it is to convey the same humour, a stylistically equivalent translation has to resort to phraseological units in Esperanto in the same way as translations into other languages do. As Richmond (1993, p. 97) shows, the planned language can keep up well with, for example, the English version (see Table 12).

Command of a language includes proficiency in the use of phraseology – a fact acknowledged by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which aims to provide a common basis for the development of curricula, teaching materials and levels of proficiency for foreign language learning in Europe. Knowledge and appropriate use of phraseological units is considered to

**Table 12.** Phraseological units referring to ‘hair’ in *Astérix le Gaulois* (Gosciny & Uderzo, 1961) in the French original and the translations into English and Esperanto (taken from Richmond, 1993, p. 97, with translations of the Esperanto versions and the German equivalents added from Gosciny & Uderzo, 1968, pp. 41–42)

French	English	German	Esperanto
<i>Parlons sans couper les cheveux en quatre ! (Asterix)</i>	<i>Talk away then! Let's not split any hairs</i>	<i>Verhandeln, aber ohne lange Haarspaltereien!</i>	<i>Bone, sed ni ne disfendu harojn.</i> ('Good, but we should not split hairs.')
<i>Je ne veux plus qu'on parle de cheveux !!! (Centurion)</i>	<i>Will you shut up about hair!!!</i>	<i>Ich kann das Wort Haare nicht mehr hören!!!</i>	<i>Mi ne plu volas aŭdi ion pri haroj!!!</i> ('I don't want to hear anything about hairs any more!!!')
<i>Puisque c'est comme ça ... la barbe ! (Asterix)</i>	<i>Well, if you will beard us in our own tent...</i>	<i>Haargenau verstanden!</i>	<i>Mi ne ŝatas tiun tonon; vi bruligis al vi la lipharojn.</i> ('I don't like this tone; you got your moustache burnt.' Cf. English to get one's fingers burnt)
<i>D'accord, mais ne me prends plus à rebrousse-poil ! (Asterix)</i>	<i>All right, keep your hair on.</i>	<i>Gut! Du hast also ein Haar in der Suppe gefunden!</i>	<i>Barbo potenca, sed kapo senseenca!</i> ('A huge beard, but a senseless head!')
<i>Tout ceci est échevelé. Parle, nous t'écoutons ! (Asterix)</i>	<i>Or this talk will bristle with difficulties. Go on!</i>	<i>Das ist eine haarige Angelegenheit, aber kommen wir zur Sache!</i>	<i>Nu, parolu: Kion vi vilas .. eee ... volas?</i> ('Well, speak: What do you want .. eee ... want?'; <i>vilo</i> = an untidy tuft of hair)
<i>Il a un poil dans la main ! [Referring to Getafix] (Asterix)</i>	<i>[Getafix:] Try a hair of the dog?</i>	<i>[no matching pun]</i>	<i>Lupo ŝanĝas la harojn, sed ne la farojn.</i> ('A wolf changes its hair, but not its deeds') [Referring probably to the centurion, but this is not clear.]
<i>...Parfois il a un cheveu sur la langue aussi ! [Referring to Getafix] (Asterix)</i>	<i>He's a bit hare-brained sometimes! [Referring to Getafix.]</i>	<i>...daß die Römer am Ende stets Haare lassen!</i>	<i>...Li preskaŭ ŝiras la harojn.</i> ('He is almost tearing his hair [out]') [Referring to the furious centurion.]



be a relevant part of a learner's lexical competence (Section 5.2.1.1 of the CEFR) as well as a key factor in speakers' development of sociocultural competence:<sup>118</sup>

These fixed formulae, which both incorporate and reinforce common attitudes, make a significant contribution to popular culture. They are frequently used, or perhaps more often referred to or played upon, for instance in newspaper headlines. A knowledge of this accumulated folk wisdom, expressed in language assumed to be known to all, is a significant component of the linguistic aspect of sociocultural competence.

The following subgroups and examples of the so-called expression of folk wisdom are mentioned:

Proverbs, e.g. *A stitch in time saves nine.*

Idioms, e.g. *A sprat to catch a mackerel.*

Familiar quotations, e.g. *A man's a man for a' that.*

Expressions of:

belief, such as – weather lore, e.g. *Fine before seven, rain by eleven.*

attitudes, such as – clichés, e.g. *It takes all sorts to make a world.*

values, e.g. *It's not cricket.* (CEFR p. 120)

The phraseology of Esperanto is what shows convincingly that regularity and an absence of exceptions in a language are not necessarily accompanied by a lack of expressiveness. When the CEFR describes irregular forms and morphologically conditioned variation in Section 5.2.1.2 on grammatical competence, the Esperanto version has to resort to examples from English and German (e.g. *sing/sang, catch/caught, mean/meant, gut/besser*) (p. 122), as these peculiarities do not exist in Esperanto. As regards phraseology, however, it seems to be the equal of other languages in every way (KER 2007, pp. 126/127):

Proverbs, e.g. *Ne ŝovu la nazon en fremdan vazon.*

Idioms, e.g. *krokodili; kabei.*

Familiar quotations, e.g. *Ho, mia kor'!*

Expressions of

belief, e.g. *Restu tajloro ĉe via laboro.*

attitudes, e.g. *Post vetero malbela lumas suno plej hela.*

values, e.g. *Belaj rakontoj el trans la montoj.*

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118. Unfortunately, the CEFR is inconsistent as regards terminology. It uses a variety of expressions (e.g. “fixed formulae”, “idiomatic expressions and colloquialisms”, “patterns and expressions”, and “fixed phrases”) for the items that we call phraseological units in this chapter.

In our description of phraseological units in Esperanto in this chapter, prescriptive aspects, i.e. considerations of whether phraseology should be used or not, are not relevant. Our point of departure is again actual language use. We will show how phraseology is employed and serves its speakers, taking as a basis the speech events that constitute our dataset. Before this, however, some general introductory remarks concerning the phenomenon of phraseology may be useful.<sup>119</sup>

## 21.2 Definition

There are five main defining characteristics of phraseological units (PUs) (Burger et al., 2007; Fiedler, 2007b): (A) they have a polylexemic structure, i.e. we are concerned with word-groups and sentences here; (B) they are characterised, in principle, by syntactic and semantic stability; (C) they are lexicalised, i.e. as ready-made units of the lexicon they are not created productively by the speaker or writer as free combinations of words are, but reproduced; (D) they are marked by various degrees of idiomaticity (as a potential characteristic); and (E) very often, they have stylistic and expressive connotations. These features are characteristic of phraseology in general and can be verified for the phraseology of Esperanto. In the following, they will be explained in more detail and with special reference to the planned language.

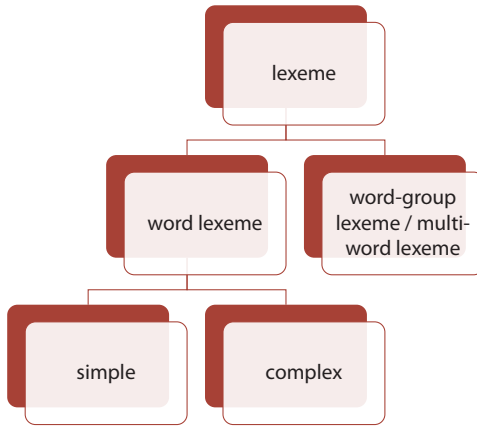
### A. The polylexemic character of phraseological units

The first characteristic, the polylexemic structure, was mentioned by Charles Bally as early as 1909. Referring to its form, he wrote that a phraseological unit (“*unité phraséologique*”) can be recognised by the fact that it is composed of several separately written words (“*qu’ un groupe est composé de plusieurs mots séparés par l’écriture*”, p. 75, original emphasis). It is useful to keep in mind that lexemes have different structures, as shown in Figure 7.

Phraseology research deals with multi-word items, such as the expressions in the right-hand column of the diagram, i.e. with phrases (e.g. *rompi al si la kapon*) and sentences (e.g. *Mankas klapo en lia kapo*), while the expressions presented in the middle column (*enkapigi* and *ventkapulo*) are the subject of morphology (word formation). As a defining criterion of a phraseological unit, polylexemic structure is not uncontroversial, however. It seems to be questionable whether it is correct to choose size, i.e. the orthographic structure, as a basis for separating PUs from

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119. The following sections on the definition and classification of Esperanto phraseology are, in part, based on previous explorations of the topic (see Fiedler, 1999, 2002b, 2007a, 2015d).



*kapo*  
(‘head’)

*enkapigi*  
(‘drum/instil sth. into sb.’  
lit. ‘cause [-ig] that it is  
in [en] the head [kap-]’)

*ventkapulo*  
(‘airhead’, lit. ‘windhead’,  
from *vent-* [‘wind’], *kap-*  
[‘head’], *-ul* [‘person’])

*rompi al si la kapon*  
(‘rack one’s brain  
[lit. one’s head]’)

*Mankas klapo en lia kapo*  
(‘there’s a flap/  
valve lacking in  
his head’, i.e. he is crazy,  
cf. he has a screw loose)

Figure 7. Word lexemes and phraseological units

non-phraseological items. Language use sometimes contradicts this principle. This is especially true for Esperanto with its flexible system of word formation, according to which a phraseological word group can be easily transformed into individual words. As regards our dataset, this criterion means that among the following examples, only Example (226) can be considered a phraseological unit:

- (226) *Kaj mi praktike devis fariĝi verkanto, mi devis fariĝi unu el la verkantoj, ĉar estis la sola maniero por (kritiki) malantaŭ la kuliso.*

[And in practice I had to become an author, I had to become one of the authors, because it was the only way to be critical behind the scenes.]

[71 (eng; disc; Lille) 25:23]

- (227) *Poste vi trovos ĉerpaĵojn el internaj leteroj de Akademianoj, kiuj iel montros la postkulisajn manovrojn.*

[Later you’ll find excerpts from internal letters by Academy members, which, one way or another, will show the manoeuvres behind the scenes]

[114 (ita; disc; Lille) 20:15]

Whereas *post/malantaŭ la kuliso(j)* ('behind the scenes') is without doubt a phraseological unit according to the defining criteria mentioned above, the derivative *postkulisaj*, created on its basis, is not part of the Esperanto phrasicon. Analogously, *harfendado* ('hair splitting', cf. *fendi harojn* 'split hairs') or the name of the protagonist in Reto Rossetti's *El la Maniko* (1955), *profesoro Klapelkap*, which alludes to the saying *Mankas klapo en lia kapo* mentioned in Figure 7, have to be excluded.

Although because of the existence of writing variants – in our spoken dataset, for example, we are not able to distinguish *vole nevole* from *vole-nevole* or *volenevole* and *esperanto edzperanto* from *esperanto-edzperanto* – makes a decision on the phraseological character of a unit not always easy to arrive at, we agree with the majority of phraseology researchers, who maintain the criterion of the polylexemic character of a phraseological unit (Burger et al., 2007; Fiedler, 2007b, pp. 17–19) and recognise the word group as its lower limit. A compound such as *ventkapulo* (see Figure 7) shares the features of idiomaticity and connotative content, but as a compound it is not accepted as a part of the phrasicon.

## B. The semantic and syntactic stability of phraseological units

This feature makes phraseological units distinctive from a random combination of words as a syntagma. In contrast to ad hoc constructions, such units are conventionalised in content and structure. Only over considerably long periods of time, if ever, will phraseological units change their meanings. As for the structure of a phraseological unit, substitution tests can be applied to prove the syntactic stability of a unit. Compare the following example from English:

- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- \*A sparrow in the hand is worth two in the bush.
- \*A bird in the hand is worth three in the bush.
- \*A bird in the cage is worth two in the bush.
- \*A bird in the hand is worth two in the tree.

In a similar vein, in the case of such a well-known Zamenhofian expression as *per flugiloj de facila vento*<sup>120</sup> Esperanto speakers reading or hearing

- \**per flugiloj de agrabla vento* (*agrabla* 'pleasant') or
  - \**per flugiloj de facila sento* (*sento* 'spirit')
- would feel that something is wrong or out of place.<sup>121</sup>

120. '[O]n the wings of an easy wind'; *Per flugiloj de facila vento* is a line from Zamenhof's poem *La Espero* ('The Hope') (see footnote 104; see also Example (280)).

121. For situational modifications of phraseological units, see Chapter 21.4.3.

The stability of a phraseological unit has to be considered a relative criterion, however, as variation is possible within definite constraints. There are structural variants, in which the use of function words (prepositions, determiners, etc.) may vary, or constituents within the phrase can be used in the singular or plural, as for example in

English *by / in leaps and bounds* and *down the tube / tubes*,  
 Esperanto *froti la manojn / froti siajn manojn/froti al si la manojn* ('to rub one's hands') and *aliaj tempoj, aliaj moroj / alia tempo, aliaj moroj* ('other times, other customs / another time another custom')

In addition, lexical constituents (autosemantic elements such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, etc.) can vary, as for example in

English *to sweep sth. under the carpet / rug* and *to throw / cast pearls before swine*;  
 Esperanto *demeti / levi la ĉapelon* ('to take one's hat off / to raise one's hat') and  
*kaptita ĉe freŝa faro / kulpo.* ('caught red-handed, lit. at fresh deed / fault')

As the examples show, phraseological variants also abound in ethnic languages. The range of variation seems to be larger in Esperanto, however, because of the multitude of speakers' native languages. This is also the reason for a third type of variation – phraseological synonyms, in which identical or similar contents are expressed by different expressions based on different images. Compare, for example, the following Esperanto proverbs whose basic meaning is that 'a trifling cause may have a serious effect':

*unu fajrero estas sufiĉa por eksplodigi pulvon* ('one spark is enough to make powder explode'),  
*pro najleto bagatela pereis ĉevalo plej bela* ('because of a little nail the most beautiful horse perished'),  
*ofte de kaŭzo senenhava venas efiko plej grava* ('a trifling cause often has a very serious effect'),  
*unukopeka kandelo forbruligis Moskvon* ('a one-kopek candle burnt Moscow down'),  
*de malgranda kandelo forbrulis granda kastelo* ('because of a small candle a great castle burnt down'),  
*unu fava ŝafo tutan ŝafaron infektas* ('one shabby sheep will mar the whole flock'),  
*unu ovo malbona tutan manĝon difektas* ('one bad egg spoils the whole meal').

The extensive variation in Esperanto phraseology can also be explained by the relative lack of Esperanto native speakers – who would normally decide on the basis of their intuition whether an utterance is correct or not. Structural and lexical differences are not at once recognised as odd or wrong, while in ethnic languages

minute deviations can result in the dissolution of a phraseological unit (e.g. German \**einen Löffel abgeben*, French \**avoir un bras long*, English \**to lose the head*), which, together with their stylistic-pragmatic restrictions, makes using phraseological units so difficult in ethnic foreign languages.

The variability described above does not mean, however, that the criterion of semantic and syntactic stability is inapplicable to Esperanto. Playful manipulation of phraseological units, as in Raymond Schwartz's coinage *Kaj tiel staras la demando. Kiam ĝi estos laca, ĝi sidiĝos* (Schwartz *Kun siaspeca spico* 1971, p. 156) ('And this is how the question stands. When it gets tired, it sits down') make us aware of the fixed nature of their structure. The effect of phraseological manipulations, i.e. text-related modifications such as the addition or substitution of lexical elements (see examples in 21.4.3), is based on their stability.

### C. Lexicalisation

This feature of a phraseological unit is closely related to its stability. The term 'lexicalisation' is used to describe the fact that a phraseological unit is retained in the collective memory of a language community. As a fixed and ready-made unit, it is recognised and accepted as a part of the language. Phraseological word groups and sentences are memorised holistically by the language users. They are not produced anew like random sequences of words, but merely reproduced. This is also the reason why it is often sufficient to mention only a particular element of a phraseological unit as a cue. In the following newspaper headlines, the word *lanco* and the phrase *la monto granita* suffice to actualise the complete units *rompi lancon por iu* ('to break a lance for sth./so.', i.e. to give support) and the line of Zamenhof's poem "La Vojo" ('The way') *Eĉ guto malgranda, konstante frapante, traboras la monton granitan* ('Even a little drop, constantly falling, pierces the granite mountain'), which has become a catchphrase:

- (228) *Lanco por la Zamenhofa lingvo* [A lance for Zamenhof's language]  
[*Esperanto* 2/1990, p. 33; headline]
- (229) *La monto granita konkerita en Greziljono* [The granite mountain conquered in Grésillon] [*Esperanto* 12/2015, p. 245; the text is about an activists' meeting at the Esperanto centre of Grésillon that consisted of a series of sequential phases]

The process of lexicalisation of a phraseological unit as a multi-word designation is not very different from the lexicalisation of a simple word lexeme (see Bauer, 1983, pp. 45–50). It may start with a nonce-formation: a new expression is coined by a speaker or writer to fill some immediate need in finding an appropriate word, as

was the case with *baki esperantistojn* ('to bake Esperantists')<sup>122</sup> and *fek al X* ('screw X', expression of frustration, *feki* 'defecate')<sup>123</sup> in recent years, for example. The new coinage catches on, is gradually used by other speakers and becomes accepted as a lexeme – a process that is often called 'institutionalisation'. When it is lexicalised, it is permanently incorporated into speakers' mental lexicons, often adopting a specialist function as well as idiosyncratic meanings. Occasionally, variants of the same expression compete with one another for a certain time, as was the case in the 1990s with *Malferma tago* ('open day', cf. English *open house*) and *Tago de la malfermita pordo* ('day of the open door') as terms to describe events at which Esperanto institutions open their doors to the general public.

(230) *Tago de la malfermita pordo*

[...] *Ankaŭ la Internacia Esperanto-Muzeo, kvankam ĉiam ĝi estas senkosta, bonvenigis per speciala programo [...]*

[Day of the open door

(...) The International Esperanto Museum, although (admission) is always free, also welcomes (people) with a special programme]

[*Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Dec 1994]

(231) *Centra Oficejo: Malferma Tago*

*La Centra Oficejo invitis la membrojn de la nova tutlanda asocio Esperanto Nederland [...] al "Malferma Tago" la 26-an de novembro, sabate.*

[Central Office: Open Day

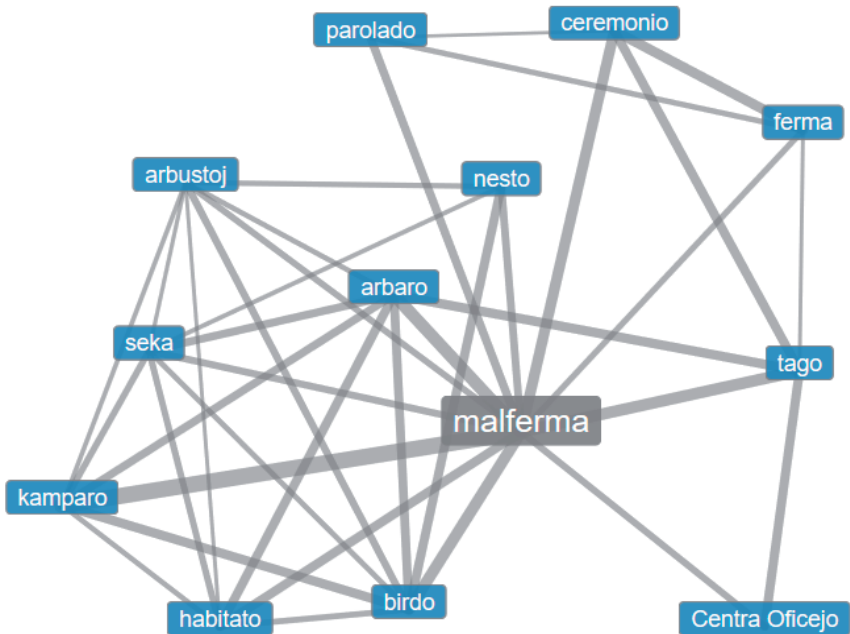
The Central Office invited the members of the new country-wide association Esperanto Nederland (...) to an "Open Day" on 26 November, Saturday]

[*Esperanto* 1/1995, p. 18]

122. Although the figurative use of *baki* ('bake') is well known in Esperanto – Zamenhof used, for example, *diversaj rapide bakitaj kaj rapide mortantaj projektoj* ('various quickly baked and quickly dying projects'), and *novbakita esperantisto* ('a newly baked esperantist', i.e. one who finished an Esperanto language course only recently) is even an entry in the *NPIV* (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 133) –, the verbal construction *baki esperantiston* is relatively new. We found a first example in a speech at an Esperanto teachers' conference in 2001 ([http://www.ilei.info/ipr/universitata\\_instruado.htm](http://www.ilei.info/ipr/universitata_instruado.htm)). The author used it in Esperanto due to her familiarity with the expression in several languages (personal correspondence). Since then it has become widely used, e.g. in official documents of the *Universal Esperanto Association* (see <https://www.yumpu.com/it/document/view/52413659/januario-februaro-marto-2012-kiraly-lajos/33>), by speakers from Cuba, China and Africa (cf., e.g., [http://www.espero.com.cn/se/txt/2010-08/03/content\\_288596.htm](http://www.espero.com.cn/se/txt/2010-08/03/content_288596.htm)).

123. *Fek!* is an interjection that is often used for cursing (cf. *NPIV*, Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 323). Its use as a formula, *Fek al X*, was probably popularised by the group *La Pafkliko*'s self-ironic rap song *Fek al Esperanto* (see <https://esperanto.stackexchange.com/questions/1633/what-is-the-full-sentence-of-fek-al-tio>).

Meanwhile the expression *Malferma Tago*, which seems to correspond with the linguistic system of Esperanto better than *Tago de la Malfermita Pordo* (probably a loan translation from German, *Tag der offenen Tür*) and is, in addition, shorter, has gained general acceptance, as can be seen in the following diagram based on frequencies. *Tago* is a “significant right neighbour” (i.e. collocator) of *malferma* (see Figure 8), and the expression is now mainly associated with the open day at the Central Office of the Universal Esperanto Association (*Centra Oficejo*) where this event occurred for the fiftieth time in April 2019.



**Figure 8.** Co-occurrences of *malferma* (<http://wortschatz.uni-leipzig.de>) (last access: 1 Feb 2020)

Lexicalisation does not necessarily mean codification in a dictionary. As an inventory of phrases, phraseology is unpredictable. New expressions are constantly making their way into language. In fact, phraseological units can originate in all fields of social life. As for Esperanto, apart from the domain of education or language learning (where *baki esperantistojn* had its origin), original literature and entertainment seem to be productive (e.g. *Ĉu vi sufiĉe ...?*, *Fine mi komprenas la radion!*,<sup>124</sup>

124. These two items mentioned are examples of book titles that have become Esperanto catch-phrases: Johán Valano wrote a series of detective novels between 1976 and 1982 whose titles started with *Ĉu* (e.g. *Ĉu vi kuiras ĉine?* ‘Do you cook Chinese?’, *Ĉu vi bremsis sufiĉe?* ‘Did you



*Ĝis la nokto-nokto-fin'* ‘until the very end of the night’ from the song *Ska-virino* by Esperanto Desperado). Expressions like these have a tendency towards lexicalisation. Some of them sink their roots into the language permanently, while others fall into disuse or disappear altogether. It would not be appropriate to restrict the Esperanto phrasicon to expressions in dictionaries because, on the one hand, there are numerous innovative units that have not yet found their way into a dictionary due to their novelty and, on the other, reference books often contain obsolete material or even entries that were never really in use. This issue will be discussed further in Chapter 21.3.

#### D. Idiomaticity

This feature describes the common phenomenon that the meaning of an expression is difficult or even impossible to derive from the meanings of its parts. Idiomaticity is treated here as an intralinguistic feature. Thus, expressions such as *reinventi la radon* or *perdi la kapon* are idiomatic in Esperanto because their meanings – ‘work on an idea or project that is no better than sth. that already exists’ and ‘become confused / lose control of oneself’ – cannot be decoded on the basis of their elements, and it is of marginal importance that there are similar expressions in other languages which might help us to understand them (cf. English *to reinvent the wheel*; French *perdre la tête*). Given the various linguistic backgrounds of Esperanto speakers, those helpful parallels in languages would never concern all possible mother tongues. In addition, in other cases, semantic and structural similarity may even be misleading and prove to be false friends (see, for example, the two different meanings of *to be over the hill* in English [‘to be no longer young or too old to do a particular thing’; see *Collins COBUILD*, 2004, p. 195]) and German [*über den Berg sein* ‘to have passed the worst point in an unpleasant or difficult situation’; see Röhrich, 1991/92, p. 173]).

Phraseological units are idiomatic to varying degrees. At one end of the scale there are real idioms, i.e. fully opaque expressions. At the opposite end of the scale, we find fully transparent PUs, which are, however, legitimately included in the phrasicon because they are polylexemic, stable, and lexicalised. Coulmas (1981) describes idiomaticity as a universal property which a language needs to expand its expressive possibilities. It guarantees the functioning and flexibility of a language,

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break enough?’). They are occasionally referred to as the *ĉu-romanoj* (‘whether-novels’). *Fine mi komprenas la radion!* (‘Finally I understand the radio’) refers to Eugène Aisberg’s introduction to radio technology (*Mi komprenas fine la radion! Amuza kaj populara enkonduko en la radioteĥnikon*, 1934). See also the examples using *Kredu min ...* in Chapter 18.2.2.

which has to meet different communicative requirements in a changing world. It does not come as a surprise, therefore, that Esperanto has idiomatic expressions.

Our studies suggest, however, that Esperanto speakers mainly resort to phraseological units that have low degrees of idiomaticity and that are known by the majority of speakers through common cultural sources or shared on the basis of experiences in the planned language community.

Anomalies, such as grammatical ill-formedness or the use of unique (fossilised) elements, as we know them from ethnic languages,<sup>125</sup> do not occur often in Esperanto. Among the rare examples is the frequently used formula *Jam temp' está* ('it's about time'), written in Zamenhof's first version of the language, *lingwe uniwersala*, the so-called Pra-Esperanto created in 1878 (Cash, 1992, p. 16) (see Chapter 8).

## E. Connotations

In Esperanto as in ethnic languages, phraseological units (PUs) are often used to place emphasis on the speaker's or writer's intention and to make a text more expressive. As we shall see in Chapter 21.4, PUs are applied with a large variety of functions: they serve to evaluate events and people, they are used to attract attention, to illustrate facts or to organise texts. They can promote solidarity on the part of the reader or listener, evoke humour and put people at ease. Their expressive character becomes obvious when we compare phraseological with non-phraseological uses:

- (232) *Mi celas la krepovon de herooj el sango kaj karno.*  
 [I aim for the creativity of heroes by flesh and blood.] [*La Gazeto*, 3/96, p. 13]  
*el sango kaj karno – vivaj/vivoplenaj* ('lively / full of life')
- (233) *La Ruĝa Kruco havigis medikamentojn kaj nutraĵojn al la bezonantoj. Sed ĉio ĉi estis nur guto en la oceano.*  
 [The Red Cross provided medicine and food for those in need. But all this was just a drop in the ocean.] [Teodoro S. Švarc (Tivadar Soros) 1965,  
*Maskerado ĉirkaŭ la morto*, p. 149]  
*guto en la oceano – ne estis sufiĉa* ('was not sufficient')
- (234) "Certe estis almenaŭ unu-du mortoj, alikaze la polico **ne donus furzon**."  
 [Certainly, there were at least two, three murders, otherwise the police wouldn't give a damn (lit. a fart).] [Trevor Steele 1992, *Memori kaj forgesi*, p. 26]  
*ne doni furzon – ne serioze okupiĝi/ne zorgi*  
 ('not to deal with sth. seriously' / 'not care')

125. For example, English *dog eat dog* and *to be at loggerheads*.

The substitution of the phraseological units in the left column with the non-phraseological lexemes on the right in these examples leads to semantically comparable or even equivalent propositions. With regard to their connotative meanings, to the associations they trigger, however, there are losses. The sentences without the PUs are less pithy and less impressive.

Example (234), by the Australian writer Trevor Steele, illustrates that phraseological units are often used for stylistic effect. In literature, this practice can be connected with the purpose of characterising protagonists. This is often done by a character's own speech, the so-called linguistic portrait. In *Heroo de nia epoko* ('A hero of our time'), Steele (1992) makes effective use of phraseology as a rhetorical device with this function. See, for example, the protagonist's vulgar expressions in (235) and (236) and the contrastive phrase in the narrator's language in (237):

- (235) *Kiel aŭtentika proleto li celis, ke liaj gefiloj ne devu "ŝovadi merdon", lia ŝerca aludo al la peza laboro de segejisto.* [As an authentic proletarian, he wanted his children to not have to "shovel shit", (which was) his humorous allusion to a sawyer's hard work.] (p. 66)
- (236) "[...]. Povra olda pisulo, li kakis la lastan fojon." [(...) The poor old pisser, he was shitting for the last time.] (p. 85)
- (237) *Miaj gepatroj jam delonge vendis la butikon [...] kaj transiris al sia Kreinto.* [My parents sold the shop a long time ago (...) and met their Maker.] (p. 78)

In addition, phonostylistic properties such as rhyme, rhythm and rhetorical devices contribute to the expressiveness of phraseological units. Many figures of speech manifest themselves in them. Compare the following examples:<sup>126</sup>

metaphor	<i>fari el muŝo / muso elefanton</i> ('to make out of a fly / mouse an elephant'; cf. <i>to make a mountain out of a molehill</i> )
metonymy	<i>savi sian haŭton</i> ('to save one's skin')
hyperbole	<i>morti pro enuo</i> ('to die of boredom')
comparison	<i>silenti kiel tombo</i> ('to remain silent as a grave')
alliteration	<i>Tut-Tera Teksaĵo</i> ( <i>World-Wide Web</i> )
parallelism	<i>Kiom da homoj, tiom da gustoj</i> ('As many people, as many tastes')
ellipsis	<i>Laboro finita – ripozo merita</i> ('Work done – rest deserved')

The rhythm of Esperanto proverbs often reminds us of equivalents in other languages:

126. For rhetorical figures see also Chapter 21.7.

*Aliaj tempoj, aliaj moroj* (Other times, other customs);

*Kiu groŝon ne respektas, riĉecon ne kolektas* ('The one who doesn't take care of the penny won't get rich'; cf. English *Take care of the pennies/pence and the pounds will take care of themselves* and German *Wer den Pfennig nicht ehrt, ist des Talers nicht wert*).

Whereas the fixed word stress on the penultimate syllable can impose a restriction on the creation of euphonic proverbs in Esperanto, the flexible and productive word formation system (with word category suffixes) can be employed to make them stylistically impressive:

*Inter lupoj krii lupe* ('Among wolves cry like a wolf'; lit. 'wolf-ishly', *-e* marks adverbs);

*Langa vundo plej profunda* ('A wound caused by the tongue [i.e. by words] is the deepest'; lit. 'tongu[e]-ish', *-a* marks adjectives).

Rhyme is the most conspicuous stylistic feature of Esperanto proverbs. The majority of rhyming proverbs are characterised by the traditional pure rhyme on the stressed penultimate syllable:

*Jen la tubero en la afero* ('Here's the knot in the affair' = There is a snag to it),

*Ne ŝovu la nazon en fremdan vazon* ('Don't push your nose into so. else's affairs', lit. 'vase').

*Peko kaj eraro estas ecoj de l'homaro* ('Sin and mistakes are characteristics of mankind', i.e. the Esperanto way of saying *Errare humanum est*; cf. English *To err is human*).

The characteristics described in this section make phraseological units, especially proverbs, pithy and catchy and assure their recognisability and memorability. It is because of these features that merely alluding to a proverb is often sufficient to evoke the whole thing.

### 21.3 Classifications

There are different ways to classify phraseological units. For most of the conventional types of phraseological units that are distinguished in other languages, Esperanto examples can be readily found (see Table 13).

Table 13. Conventional subtypes of PUs

Type of PU	Examples
Nomination	<i>fera kurteno</i> (the Iron Curtain), <i>diabla cirklo</i> (a vicious circle)
Saying	<i>transiri la Rubikonon</i> (to cross the Rubicon); <i>balai ion sub la tapiŝon</i> (to sweep sth. under the carpet / rug)
Binomial	<i>Dirite, farite</i> ('Said, done', cf. <i>No sooner said than done</i> ), <i>finita kaj glatigita</i> ('finished and smoothed'; cf. English <i>done and dusted</i> )
Proverb	<i>Du militas, tria profitas</i> ('Two wage war, the third benefits', cf. <i>When two people quarrel, a third rejoices</i> ), <i>Unu hirundo printempon ne alportas</i> ( <i>One swallow doesn't make a summer</i> , lit. 'spring')
Catchphrase ("winged words")	<i>La reĝo mortis, vivu la reĝo</i> ( <i>The king is dead, long live the king</i> ), <i>la nepoj nin benos</i> ('the grandchildren will bless us', line from a Zamenhof verse)
Routine formula	<i>Kion fari?</i> ('What can be done about it?'), <i>Laste, sed ne balaste</i> ('Last, but not as a ballast', cf. <i>Last but not least</i> )
Stereotyped comparison	<i>mola kiel vakso</i> ('soft as wax'), <i>ruza kiel vulpo</i> ('sly as a fox')
Stereotyped constructions with functional verbs (paraphrasal verbs) <sup>a</sup>	<i>preni en konsideron</i> (to take into consideration), <i>doni atenton</i> (to pay attention)

a. Also called *support verb constructions* (Evert & Krenn, 2005, p. 114) or *light verb constructions* (Gledhill, 2014, p. 335).

The peculiarities of Esperanto as a planned language suggest a need for a classification of PUs on the basis of their origin. Three groups can be distinguished:

- a. The quantitatively largest group is made up of those units that have entered the language through various other languages. These are loan translations, from Greek mythology and from the Bible, which today are some of the most widely disseminated proverbs (e.g. *Mano manon lavas* – cf. Latin *Manus manum lavat*). A surprisingly large number of PUs are known in both European and Asian languages. Examples include *versi oleon en la fajron* ('pour oil into the fire') (Engl. *to add fuel to the flames*, Chin. *huǒ shàng jiāo yóu*) (Schue, 1985, p. 93; Jiang et al., 2009, p. 185), *Temp' estas mono* (Engl. *Time is money*; Jap. *Toki wa kanenari*) (Azuma, 2012, p. 214) and *Kie estas volo, tie estas vojo*, (Engl. *Where there's a will there's a way*, Bahasa Indonesia *Ada kemauan, ada jalan*) (Fiedler & Rak, 2004, pp. 134f.). In fact, as collections of proverbs show (e.g. Iscla, 1995; Paczolay, 1997; Strauss, 1994), because of common sources, language contact, universal features and regularities in human cognition and collective experience, but also independent parallel developments, PUs often have equivalents in a large number of languages (Fiedler, 1999, pp. 339–343, 2007b, pp. 62f.; Piirainen, 2012, pp. 514–522). Piirainen's (2012) collection of *Widespread Idioms* includes 190 items, 103 of them with an Esperanto equivalent.

Furthermore, individual speakers more or less spontaneously introduce expressions from their native languages which may enjoy international currency (ad hoc loans). These may have the character of occasional formations showing striking similarities to their ethnolinguistic bases, as in the following examples:

- (238) *Estas malfacile kompari pomojn kun citronoj. Eĉ jam komparo kun la antaŭulo (por mi la Langenscheidt-eldono de 1993) ne estas tiel facila. Unuavide, oni pensus, ke oni komparas giganton kun nano [...]*  
 [It is difficult to compare apples and oranges (lit. compare apples with lemons). Even the comparison with the predecessor (to me, the *Langenscheidt* edition of 1993) is not that easy. At first glance, we might think that we compare a giant with a dwarf (cf. Dutch *appelen met citroenen vergelijken*)  
 [*Monato* 10/2007, p. 23; Flemish author]
- (239) *en 1867 Usono aĉetis de Rusio Alaskon por 7,2 milionoj da dolaroj. Multaj opiniis, ke tio estis mono ĵetita al la vento.*  
 [in 1867 the USA bought Alaska from Russia for 7.2 million dollars. Many people thought that this was money down the drain (lit. money thrown to the wind); cf. Russian *бросать деньги на ветер*]  
 [*Monato* 4/1996, p. 22; Russian author]
- (240) (...) *tiu batalo malfermis sian kurtenon per akuzoj pri falsaj insektidoj, semoj, cigaredoj kaj vinoj.*  
 [(...) this battle began (lit. opened its curtain) with accusations of false insecticides, seeds, cigarettes and wine; cf. Chinese *kai mu*]  
 [*El Popola Ĉinio* 12/1990, p. 23]

This group of phraseological units developed, first, because of Esperanto's position as a means of communication in a second-language community which is in turn in permanent contact with a diversity of ethnic languages, and, second, because of properties of its linguistic structure favouring the adoption of foreign lexical material. There are obvious parallels to language-contact phenomena in bilingual speakers, as they have been described for the phraseology of various languages.<sup>127</sup> The influences on Esperanto, however, are much more international than the influences on other languages.

- b. The second group represents a peculiarity of planned language phraseology: the conscious creation of units. The majority of such 'planned' proverbs go back to Zamenhof, who in 1910 published the *Proverbaro Esperanta* ('Esperanto

127. For the influence of German, for instance, on the Sorbian language see Wölke (1992, 1995), and of Hungarian on the German language spoken by a minority in Hungary, Földes (1996). For the impact of English on various European languages in the field of phraseology, see Section II in Furiassi et al. (2012).

Proverb Collection’) based on a collection compiled in Russian, Polish, German and French by his father, Marcus Zamenhof. It contains units such as *Ĉio transmara estas ĉarma kaj kara* (‘Everything on the other side of the ocean is charming and precious’) or *Neniu estas profeto en sia urbeto* (‘No one is a prophet in their own little town’; = is recognised in their own country), which are very popular with Esperanto speakers today.

As Zamenhof’s collection is based on traditional European proverbs, the social values conveyed by some of them are outdated from today’s perspective. This is especially evident in proverbs on the position of women. Women are described as talkative and malicious. Their place is in the home and they should not interfere:

*La lango de virino estas ŝia glavo* (‘A woman’s tongue is her sword’)

*Virino scias, tuta mondo scias* (‘A woman knows, the whole world knows’)

*Kie diablo ne povas, tien virinon li ŝovas* (‘Where the devil cannot go, he pushes a woman’)

*Kie regas virino, malbona la fino* (‘Where a woman rules, the end is bad’)

*Virino bonorda estas muta kaj surda* (‘A good woman is mute and deaf’).

Similar proverbs can be found in many European languages (cf., e.g., *A woman’s place is in the home*; *Lange Haare, kurzer Verstand*; *A mulher e a mula, o pau as cura*). Mieder (1987) speaks of “the obvious anti-feminism prevalent in proverbs”. Our analyses, however, reveal that these proverbs are among those from Zamenhof’s collection that cannot be considered common knowledge of the speech community.

As regards their euphonic character, the grammar of Esperanto provides good opportunities to create catchy PUs, especially proverbs. Zamenhof, for example, made extensive use of the set of Esperanto correlatives, the so-called *tabelvortoj*, described in Chapter 11. Their use in proverbs results in parallel structures, including patterns such as *kiu(n) ... tiu(n)*, *kio(n) ... tio(n)*, *kie(n) ... tie(n)*, *kiam ... tiam*, *kies ... ties* etc.:

*Kiu kaĉon aranĝas, tiu ĝin manĝas* (‘The one who makes the mess [lit. prepares the gruel] has to tidy it up [lit. eat it]’),

*Kion mi ne scias, tion mi ne envidias* (‘What I don’t know doesn’t make me envious’),

*Kie regas la forto, tie rajto silentas* (‘Where force rules, rights are silent’).

As described in Chapter 11, syntactically Esperanto belongs to the so-called SVO-type of languages and the existence of a marked accusative (-*n*) and various inflectional devices allows for great flexibility in word order. A deviation from the ordinary, or expected, word order is, however, stylistically marked. The most frequent type of inversion in Esperanto proverbs is the use of the direct object in front of the verb:

*Urson evitu, bopatrino ne incitu* ('A bear avoid, a mother-in-law don't provoke'),  
*Arbon oni juĝas laŭ la fruktoj* ('A tree one judges by its fruits').

As epithets are normally placed before the noun, a change of this order is felt as emphatic:

*Kapo majesta, sed cerbo modesta* ('A majestic head, but a modest brain'),  
*Amiko fidela estas trezoro plej bela* ('A true friend is the most beautiful treasure').

In addition, we find verbs and adverbials in front position (e.g. *Ŝirigiĝis fadeno sur la bobeno* 'The thread on the bobbin broke off'; = something went wrong; *Ĉe table malplena babilo ne fluas* 'At an empty table conversation doesn't flow'). Even the expected order of auxiliary and main verbs can be switched:

*Pri gustoj oni disputi ne devas* ('About tastes one cannot dispute'; unmarked word order: *oni ne devas disputi*),  
*Kiu mordi ne povas, kisi ekprovas* ('The one who cannot bite tries to kiss'; unmarked word order: *Kiu ne povas mordi, ekprovas kisi*).

Finally, we can find a combination of different types of stylistic inversion:

*Azenon komunan oni batas plej multe* ('The common donkey is beaten most'; fronting of the direct object + inversion of epithet and noun),  
*Murmuregas la urso, sed danci ĝi devas* ('The bear grumbles, but it has to dance'; fronting of the verb + inversion of auxiliary and main verb – *sed ĝi devas danci*).

- c. A third group is made up of PUs which have their origin in the language and cultural life of the Esperanto community. These reflect such things as communicative history, sociological characteristics, the speakers' collectively held ideals, and aims, traditions, and Esperanto literature, as the following examples show:

*Esperanto – edzperanto* ('Esperanto – husband/wife-provider / matchmaker', a catchphrase referring to the phenomenon that a considerable number of Esperanto speakers find their partners in Esperanto circles)  
*Ne krokodilu!* (lit. 'Don't be a crocodile!' = Speak Esperanto when amongst Esperanto speakers: friendly admonition at Esperanto meetings as an expression of linguistic loyalty)<sup>128</sup>

128. The verb *krokodili* (lit. 'to crocodile / behave like a crocodile') is one of the rare fully idiomatic expressions that exist in Esperanto. Its origin is not entirely clear. There are several suggestions in the literature as to why someone's behaviour in using his/her mother tongue instead of Esperanto in an Esperanto context is called *krokodili*. Vilborg (1993, p. 67) mentions a café in Paris in the 1930s where Esperanto speakers met frequently. An Italian waiter working there (Ferrari) is said to have called a group of elderly esperantists who talked to each other mainly in French the crocodiles (*krokodiloj*) derogatorily. From this, a verbal form was created by local



*La nepoj nin benos* ('The grandchildren/descendants will bless us', a quotation from Zamenhof's well-known poem *La Vojo*)

*Manifesto de Raŭmo* ('Manifesto of Rauma'; an Esperanto document which was proposed for ratification at an international Esperanto youth congress in Rauma, Finland, in 1980. It criticises the traditional aims of the Esperanto speech community and defines it as a "mem elektita diaspora lingva minoritato" ['self-elected diasporic language minority']) (see Chapter 8)

*eterna komencanto* ('eternal beginner', with regard to language proficiency)

*pasporta servo* ('passport service' = international network of hosts providing free lodging for Esperantists)

*interkona vespero* ('acquaintance/welcoming evening', traditional element of an Esperanto event)

*verda stelo* ('green star', symbol of Esperanto)

*fina venko* ('final victory'; the expression refers originally to the time when every person on earth speaks Esperanto or when Esperanto will have been generally recognised as an international means of communication; presently often used in the sense of 'in a very distant future' or 'never' – see Mel'nikov, 2015, p. 135)

*interna ideo* ('internal idea', main element of the ideology of Esperanto [Esperantism], which has its origin in Zamenhof's humanist-pacifist aim to create and disseminate a common language in order to banish war from human societies (*forigi la militon el la homa socio*) as well as to nurture fraternity and justice among all peoples (*frateco kaj justeco inter ĉiuj popoloj*) (Kökény & Bleier, 1986/1933, p. 250)

*rondo familia* ('family circle' = synonym for the Esperanto speech community, coined by Zamenhof)

*unua bulteno* ('first bulletin', the first of two leaflets or brochures describing plans for the annual Esperanto World Congresses)

*kongresa libro / kongreslibro* ('congress book', book or brochure that all participants of an Esperanto World Congress receive; it contains information about the place of the congress, the programme including lectures, excursions and other events, as well as the list of participants).

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young speakers: *Almenaŭ ni ne krokodilu!* ('At least we should not crocodile!'), which then rapidly gained currency. According to Wood (1979, p. 445), the meaning of *krokodili* goes back to the renowned Esperanto teacher Andreo Cseh: "The historical circumstances were, in fact, the direct-method Esperanto language, first in the prisoner-of-war camps of Eastern Europe during World War I, and later in various countries during the between-war period. As realia he used model animals, associated with various defects or abilities in the use of the language; the crocodile, of course, failed to speak Esperanto when he was supposed to." By way of analogy, some Esperanto speakers use *aligatori* ('to alligator') to mean 'to speak one's native language with sb. speaking it as a second language' and *kajmani* ('to cayman') to mean 'to converse in a language that is native to neither speaker' (e.g. English as a lingua franca) (Pilger, 1998, pp. 2, 18).

This type of phraseological unit is especially interesting as these expressions disprove the thesis that a planned language, by its very nature, ‘lacks culture’ (see Fiedler, 2010b, 2015b). Within its communicative history, the Esperanto speech community has not only produced a large number of artefacts in the field of literature, music, cabaret, etc., it has also given rise to shared values, traditions, patterns of behaviour and ideas in highly conventional forms of speech. As a consequence, most of the above expressions can only be understood by Esperanto speakers on the basis of their sociocultural background knowledge. There are, of course, *eternal beginners* in many languages and in many fields, but to fully understand this expression in Esperanto we have to know something about how relatively easy it is to learn the basics of the language, which makes it possible to achieve a substantial degree of communication with only rudimentary knowledge. And the title of a short story by Sten Johansson (1996), *Interkona mateno* (‘get-to-know morning’) is funny only because the average Esperanto speaker is familiar with *Interkona vespero* (‘get-to-know evening’), the denotation of a traditional meeting on the first evening of an Esperanto event, as a set phrase.

The classification into these three types of phraseological units according to their origin is of course an abstraction. Since it is sometimes difficult to find out whether there is a model structure in one of the ethnic languages, the dividing lines between the three groups (a), (b) and (c) may often appear indistinct.

A previous investigation, based on 500 PUs found in a comprehensive corpus of written and spoken texts and on a questionnaire study on the knowledge of phraseology among Esperanto speakers (Fiedler, 1999), suggests that the majority of PUs are loan translations (49.0%). Original Esperanto items constitute the phrasicon of the planned language at 14.4%, whereas 36.6% of Esperanto PUs go back to Zamenhof’s collection *Proverbaro Esperanta*. Although the latter figure indicates a relatively high proportion of items, we have to consider that this amounts to only 7% of the 2,630 units in this collection. Only a very small part of the *Proverbaro Esperanta* can be considered common knowledge among the speech community – which shows the limitations of planned processes in a functioning planned language (Schubert, 1989).

More often than not, speakers prefer the ad hoc translation of a proverb or phrase from another language to an entry in Zamenhof’s collection. An example might be useful to illustrate this. Zamenhof, in analogy to the expressions in the other languages of his father’s collection, created the catchy phrase *granda frakaso en malgranda glaso* (lit. ‘a big smash in a small glass’) (ProvE no. 659).<sup>129</sup>

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129. In this proverb, *frakaso* is to be understood as ‘the loud noise that a disruption produces’. The *NPIV* (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002, p. 362) describes the meaning of the proverb as “granda bruo por nenio” (‘loud noise about nothing’).

In Esperanto communication, however, we observe that speakers often resort to their own versions based on mother-tongue uses, as the following excerpts from an Internet discussion forum show:

- (241) Finfine la afero ne estas tre grava – kaj fakte nur **ŝtormo en la akvoglaso**, kiel diras germanlingvanoj. Mi nur volis atentigi pri tio, ke oni ne disvastigu tekstojn kolbasigitajn en la gugla tradukmaŝino sen esti poluritaj.  
[Finally, the matter is not very important – and in fact only a storm in a teacup (lit. a storm in the water glass), as German speakers say. I just wanted to make us aware of the fact that one should not disseminate texts that were put into the Google translation machine like sausages without having been polished.]  
[<http://www.liberafolio.org/arkivo/www.liberafolio.org/2012/forpasis-josi-semer/>, 2012–04–05]
- (242) *En mardo (sic!) ekis diskuto pri la publikeco de la estraraj protokoloj en la retlisto de la komitato. Tie <name> amplekse komentis la temon, kiun li nomis “ŝtormo en tetaso”.*  
[In March a discussion started about the public character of the board’s minutes on the Internet list of the committee. There <name> extensively commented on the topic, which he called “a storm in a teacup”.] [<http://www.liberafolio.org/arkivo/www.liberafolio.org/2007/sekretajprotokoloj/>, 2007–04–21]
- (243) – *Krom tio, konante <name>, mi sincere ne kredas, ke li faris tion nur por instigi partoprenadon de membroj de <name of an organisation> [...] Kaj lia naiveco pri havi multajn membrojn por ricevi subvenciojn [...]*  
– *Ĉu nur al mi ĉi-ĉio aspektas kiel ŝtormo en akvoglaso?*  
[– In addition, knowing <name>, I sincerely do not believe that he did this only in order to instigate participation of the members of <name of organisation> (...) And his naivety about having many members for receiving subsidies (...) – Is it only to me that all this looks like a storm in a teacup (lit. ‘storm in a water glass’)]?]  
[Facebook, 2016–12–26]

Those Zamenhofian phrases and proverbs that are in use, however, are very well known by the majority of speakers and frequently found, for example, in the Esperanto press, where they serve as headlines and captions (see Fiedler, 1999, pp. 216–260).

#### 21.4 The use of phraseological units

Phraseology is widely used in Esperanto. Previous studies have shown that phraseological units can be found in both written and spoken communication and in a variety of genres, in which they produce profound communicative effects

(see Fiedler, 1999, 2015d). In this chapter, we will shed some light on the general text-constituting function of PUs, their text-structuring function and their text-related modification.

#### 21.4.1 PUs as text constituents

Phraseological units produce their full communicative effect only in specific situational contexts. They constitute textual meaning and develop textual coherence, making them much more than mere embellishment. More than anything else, this text-constituting function of PUs is based on their complex structure. Since they are polylexemic (constituting word groups and sentences), as described above, isolated phraseological constituents can be reiterated to play a specific role in the text. Sometimes a PU becomes the main element of the text structure. Examples can be found in literary texts as well as in journalism, as the following examples illustrate. In (244), from Jean Forge's (1923) novel *Abismoj* ('Abysses'), the element *fadeno* ('thread') in the phraseological unit *pendi ĉe fadeno* ('hang by a thread') forms the starting point for a vivid and imaginative description of the protagonist's mood. In (245), an acceptance speech, the parallel repetition of the phrase *turni la dorson al io/iu* ('turn one's back on sth./sb.') at the end of decisive paragraphs makes the text solemn and impressive.

- (244) *Jes, nur ĉe fadeno pendis mia vivo kaj mia espero, pendis mia bieno, mia brutaro, mia domaro. Kaj mi konsideris ĉi tiun fadenon jam forta. Ĉu mi povis scii, ke tiu fadeno apartenis al la fadenaro de aranea reto, al kiu mi pendigis min, esperante, ke mi sukcesos suprentiri min per tiu fadeno, kiun mi kaptis. Ĉu mi povis supozi, ke tiun fadenon faris kruela araneo – malica virino? La fadeno estas disŝirita, kaj mi falas en teruran abismon [...]*

[Yes, my life and my hope hung only by a thread, and so hung my estate, my livestock, my farm. And I did consider this thread to be strong. Could I have known that this thread belonged to a network of threads in a spider's web in which I had suspended myself, hoping that I would draw myself upwards by means of this thread which I caught. Could I have supposed that this thread was made by a cruel spider – a malicious woman? The thread was torn apart and I am falling into a terrible abyss (...)] [Jean Forge, 1923, *Abismoj*, p. 118]

- (245) *Ricevante tiun ĉi premion, mi spertas samtempe fieron kaj humilon. De tempo al tempo homoj starigas al mi demandon: Kial vi dediĉas tiom da tempo kaj energio al la afero Esperanto? Ĉiam denove mi pripensas, kaj ĉiam denove mi trovas abundajn kialojn [...]*  
*Tial estis neeble al mi dum mia vivo perfidi tiun mirindan homon [Zamehof], kies klarvido, obstino, celtravo kaj esenca homeco, kaj la modesto kiu animis ilin,*

*estas tiom profunde admirindaj. Al tiu homo kaj al Esperanto mi neniam povus turni la dorson. [...]*

*Ligas min al Esperanto ankaŭ la fakto, ke la esperantistoj estas pravaj. Tio, kion ni pretendas rilate nian lingvon, estas vera, konstatebla kaj pruvebla. Kaj tial senĉese min agacis kaj obstinigis tiuj, kiuj diras pri Esperanto malveraĵojn. [...]*

*Fronte al tia traktado mi neniam povis turni la dorson. [...]*

*Trie, ligas min al Esperanto ties granda esprimivo, kiu ankoraŭ ne estas plene malkovrita. [...]* Al tio mi neniam volus **turni la dorson**.

[Receiving this prize, I am experiencing at the same time pride and humility. From time to time, people ask me: why do you dedicate so much time and energy to the affair of Esperanto? Again and again, I think about it and all over again I find abundant reasons (...)]

Therefore, it is impossible for me during my life to betray this wonderful man (Zamenhof), whose clear vision, persistence, purposefulness and essential humanity, and whose modesty, which emanated from these, are so profoundly admirable. On such a human being and on Esperanto I could never **turn my back**. (...)

What links me with Esperanto is also the fact that Esperantists are right. What we claim concerning our language is true, ascertainable and provable. And therefore the people who tell untruths about Esperanto always set my teeth on edge and make me dig my heels in (...) On such treatment I could never **turn my back**. (...)

Thirdly, what ties me to Esperanto is its enormous expressiveness, which has not yet been fully revealed. (...) On this I could never **turn my back**.]

[*Esperanto* 10/1995, p. 161]

Examples like these illustrate how the text-constituting potential of phraseology can be employed by authors. Further examples will be given in Chapter 21.4.3 on modifications. The next section will focus on the fact that phraseological units can be frequently found in recurrent positions of a text.

#### 21.4.2 PUs as text-structuring elements

Phraseological units can perform important structuring functions: proverbs and catchphrases are often found in recurrent positions, especially at the beginning and at the end of paragraphs. In an initial position a PU can provide a core reference for textual expansion. Authors like to take general truths expressed in proverbs as a starting point for their reports and arguments, as in the following examples: an article about youth riots in British cities, and an article about language instruction.

(246) *Malstulta sezono*

Paul GUBBINS

*Kiam vi legos ĉi tiujn vortojn, estos finiĝinta la tiel nomata stulta sezono. “Stulta sezono” nomas ĵurnalistoj – almenaŭ en Britio – la periodon, ĝenerale en aŭgusto, kiam mankas novaĵoj. [...] Tiam plenas ĵurnaloj, radio-programoj, per “stulta”, do malpli seriozaj raportoj. Tertremo: Arbo falinta. [...]*

*Tamen la ĉi-jara stulta sezono [...] montriĝis oble pli malstulta ol en la pasinteco. Terglobe dominis novaĵ-bultenojn la ekonomia krizo.*

[Non-silly season]

Paul Gubbins

When you read these words, the so-called silly season will be over. “Silly season” is what journalists – at least in Britain – call the period, generally in August, when newsworthy events are lacking. (...) Then journals and radio programmes are full of “silly”, that is, less serious, reports. Earthquake: a tree has fallen down. (...)

However, this year’s silly season (...) turned out to be a whole lot more non-silly than in the past. All over the world, the economic crisis dominated the news.]

[*Monato* 10/2011, p. 7](247) *La unua leciono*

*Ĉiu scias la proverbon: “Unua paŝo iron direktas.” Sendube la unua E-leciono havas eksterordinaran signifon por la futuro de la loka lingvoinstruado. [...]*

[The first lesson]

Everybody knows the proverb: “The first step decides the direction.” Without any doubt, the first Esperanto lesson is of enormous significance for the future of local language instruction. (...) [*Internacia Pedagogia Revuo* 3/1995, p. 14]

When phraseological units mark the end of a text or paragraph, they can serve the function of a comment, as with the passage from Zamenhof’s poem *La Vojo* in example (248), or they are used as an evaluative concluding signal, as in the book review in (249).

(248) *Eĉ se oni devus labori vane dum kelkaj jaroj, ŝajnas al mi ke la rezultoj estos ĉiamaniere tre bonaj: “Eĉ guto malgranda, konstante frapante, Traboras la monton granitan.”*

[Even though we had to work in vain for some years, it seems to me that the results will be very good: “Even a little drop, constantly beating, bores through the granite mountain.”]

[*La Gazeto* 6/1997, p. 8]

- (249) *Ju pli oni legas aŭ aŭskultas tiun eposan verkon, oni pli kaj pli konvinkigas, ke ĝi estas gravega kontribuo al la monda literaturo. La temo estas universala, nome la situacio de la homaro en la tempo kaj en la kosmo. Ĝi estis parte inspirita de la verko Cantos de la usona poeto Ezra Pound, kaj ĝi memorigas min pri Canto General de la ĉiliano Pablo Neruda. Ofte grandaj mensoj simile pensas.*

[The more one reads or listens to this narrative poem, the more one becomes convinced that it is a significant contribution to world literature. The theme is universal, it is the situation of humankind in time and space. It was partly inspired by the work *The Cantos* by the US poet Ezra Pound, and it reminds me of *Canto General* by the Chilean Pablo Neruda. **Often great minds think alike.**]  
[Esperanto 3/2011, p. 64]

The text-structuring function of PUs can even be observed in such complex communicative events as a congress spanning several days. During the opening ceremony of the 100th World Esperanto Congress in Lille, the speaker introduced the audience to a local proverb, which he returned to at the very end of the congress in his closing speech:

- (250) *Mi venis al Lillo antaŭ kelkaj tagoj kaj havis okazon pasigi tempon kun mia kolego ĉi tie, la prezidanto de LKK, kiun mi prezentos al vi post momento, kaj eh per li iom klariĝis pri la kulturo de la regiono. Estas diraĵo en Lillo ke eh se mankas suno en la ĉielo kiel ofte okazas, tamen neniam mankas suno en la koroj de la Lillanoj. [applause] Sed kiel vi povis konstati jam venante al la kongresejo, ke kiam okazas Esperanto-kongreso en Lillo tiam mankas nek suno en la koroj nek suno en la ĉielo. Do dankon, ke vi alportis la bonan humoron kaj la bonan veteron al Lillo.*

[I came to Lille some days ago and had the opportunity to spend some time with my colleague here, the president of the local committee, whom I will introduce to you in a moment, and uh through him the culture of the region became clear to me a bit. There is a saying in Lille that uh if the sun is absent from the sky, which is often the case, nevertheless the sun is never absent from the hearts of the citizens of Lille. (applause) But as you already realise when coming to the congress building, when there is an Esperanto congress in Lille, then neither the sun in people's hearts nor the sun in the sky is missing. So, thanks for bringing along a good mood and good weather to Lille.]

[69 (eng; cerem; Lille) 6:15–7:11]

- (251) *La vetero ne estis ĉiam (1) la plej hela, sed la suno certe brilis en niaj koroj. Ĝuste laŭ la popola diro de la ĉi-tieaj homoj.*

[The weather was not always (1) the brightest, but the sun certainly shone in our hearts. Just as the popular expression of the local people goes.]

[171 (eng; cerem; Lille) 6:55–7:10]

### 21.4.3 Modifications

A large number of phraseological units are not used in the form that we expect or as they are listed in dictionaries. We are not talking about variations here, as they were described above, but about ad hoc exploitations, i.e. innovative uses that are closely related to a specific situation or text. Authors alter catchphrases, slogans, proverbs and other types of PUs deliberately with specific purposes in mind, as illustrated in Chapter 20 on the production of humour.

Occasionally, the creative expansion of a phraseological unit extends throughout an entire text. In Example (252), the phrase *inventi la radon* takes centre stage in an article on language reform. The elements *inventi* ('invent') and *rado* ('wheel') are repeated several times and modified by additional elements (e.g. *inventi gramatike*, *leksike* 'invent grammatically, lexically ...'; *genrolingva rado* 'a wheel of gender-related language use').

- (252) [...] *Tamen per la cetere bona tendenco esti originala oni ne devas troigi. Tiel ekzemple la troigado esti je ĉiu prezo kaj kontraŭ ĉia racio "originala" trovisian bildon ankaŭ en niaj lingvoj per la sintagmo "ne inventi denove la radon". Bedaŭrinde ankaŭ en la historio de Esperanto – se iu socia fenomeno kontinue daŭras pli ol 100 jarojn, oni jam prave povas paroli pri historio – fantomas provoj, inventi radon ĉu gramatike, ĉu leksike, ĉu ortografie, ĉu stiluze. Fariĝis preskaŭ parto de esperantpopola folkloro, tuj post la duonsukcese farita ekzameno A proponi certajn lingvajn reformojn en la verko de d-ro Zamenhof. Tian nove inventitan "radon" mi trovas ankaŭ en via prezento de "riismo" [...] Kaj nun pri la "invento de rado" en tiu ĉi ideo [...] La genre neŭtrala formo [...] Ne estu partieca inter morta objekto, planto, besto kaj homo, ja sub la principo de absoluta neŭtraleco ili ĉiu/ĉio por si estas la samo, kaj inter si ili ĉiuj estas la samo. Do ankaŭ en la tabelo de korelativoj oni devus inventi genrolingvan "radon" por ne esti partieca ĉu objekte, ĉu animale, ĉu home. [...]*

[...] However, the otherwise worthy tendency to be original should not lead to exaggeration. Thus, for example, such exaggeration for the sake of "originality" at all cost and against all reason has also found its expression in our languages through the syntagm "not to reinvent the wheel". Unfortunately, also the history of Esperanto (if any social phenomenon steadily endures for more than 100 years, one can legitimately speak of history) is haunted by attempts at **inventing the wheel**, grammatically, lexically, orthographically, stylistically. It has almost become part of popular Esperanto lore to propose this or that linguistic reform in Dr Zamenhof's invention as soon as you have passed exam level A halfway successfully. I also find such a **newly invented "wheel"** in your presentation of "ri-ism" (...) And now about the **"reinvention of the wheel"** in this idea (...) The gender-neutral form (...). Don't take sides among a dead object, plant, animal and human being; after all, on the principle of absolute



neutrality each of them is the same and among themselves they are the same. Thus, in the table of correlatives one would have to **reinvent a gender-linguistic “wheel”** in order not to be partial as regards an object, animal, human being. (...)] [Esperanto aktuell 1/2015, p. 27]

In Example (253), an editorial in the journal *Esperanto* (6/2010, p.123), the phrase *esti en la sama boato* (cf. English *be in the same boat*) is of central importance to the message. It is used in the headline and in the final sentences of two of the paragraphs of the text. Furthermore, it is playfully contrasted with another phrase, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!* (lit. ‘We should dig our furrow’, a traditional Esperanto motto), and, finally, by using the constituent *boato* (‘boat’) and other lexical elements from the same word field (e.g. *flosi* [‘float’], *veli* [‘sail’]) in isolation the author starts a complex interplay around the literal and the figurative meanings of the two expressions.

(253) *Ni estas ĉiuj en la sama boato kaj devas noveme kunveli*

*Kiu laŭ vi estis la ĉefa problemo de UEA en la pasintaj 50 jaroj? Ĉu la puĉo en Hamburgo? Homaj bedaŭrindaĵoj. [...] Ĉu la malfrue alvenantaj Jarlibro aŭ revuo? Ni delonge lernis trateni tion. Ĉu la falanta membronombro? Jes, sed falas la membronombro ankaŭ en la landaj asocioj kaj en la lokaj societoj, kaj ne ekzistas specife universal-asocia solvo de ĉiunivela problemo. Se ni problemas kune, ni solvu kune.*

*Por alproksimiĝi al la problemo, ni unue tuŝu la temon de Usono. [...] Usono estas hodiaŭ tio, kio estis hieraŭ Francio. Esperanto rajdis sur franca ĉevalo ekde Bulonjo, kaj estis atentata; se hodiaŭ reaktuala alvoko al Esperanto estus veninta el la usona kontraŭkulturo, ni estus nun en bona pozicio, kiel... la rokmuzika industrio. [...]*

*Nun ekzistas potenco pli aktuala ol Usono: la reta mondo [...]. Malaperis la tradicia rilato inter la mono, la loka sindediĉo de maljunuloj kaj la energio de la junularo. Kaj ni ne sukcesis, en la reta mondo, instali funkciantan maltradician kunligon inter tiuj faktoroj.*

*En tiu malsukceso, ni trovas nin en la sama boato, kiel la monda muzika industrio; kaj ni devos lerni kunflosi. Tio signifas iom ekskutimigi la retorikon de senlikva **fosado** (L estas likva konsonanto) kaj **sulkoj**, ĉar tiu retoriko respiegulas tion, kio dividas nin kaj malhelpas solvon. En solida mondo de **sulkoj**, ĉiu emas rigardi sin mem la centro de la movado, ĝia plej grava parto.*

*Ĉiu **fosas sian sulkon** kaj ne emas helpi **fosi** alilokajn **sulkojn**.*

*[...] oni devas iamaniere teni la Esperanto-movadon funkcianta kaj laŭeble kreskanta en Germanio, Usono, Japanio kaj samtempe loke kaj internacie. La demando estas, kiamaniere malplej dolore forlasi la **sulko-fosan** racion kaj kol-ektive fronti al la fakto, ke nun ni ĉiuj estas en la sama, nova boato.*

*[...]*

*Sed ankaŭ en la nuna mondo, nur malrapide oni lernas lingvojn, aŭ konvinkas najbaron pri la lernado de Esperanto, aŭ vartas instituciojn kaj festivalojn tra la jaroj.*

*Por plufari tion efike, por pluirigi la **boaton** de Esperanto, por konvinki la mondon pri la bezono pri lingva justeco, ni bezonas ĉiujn **boatistojn** kaj ili devas kunlabori inter si, estimi unu la alian, helpi unu la alian. Internaciuloj, landuloj, lokuloj kaj retuloj, ni ĉiuj faras ion utilan. Neniu havas en sia poŝo la sekreton por triumfigi Esperanton, sed se tio eblas, tio okazos nur se ni kunlaboros.*

*Fiere kaj kunlabore konstruu kun ni movadon de homoj kapablaj **kunveli**. Ni **velu** antaŭen kun kredo, fervor', kiel kantas Grabowski.*

[We are all in the same boat and have to sail innovatively together.

What in your opinion was the UEA's (= Universala Esperanto-Asocio 'Universal Esperanto Association') main problem over the past fifty years? The putsch in Hamburg? Human weaknesses. The late arrival of the yearbook or the journal? We have long since learned to cope with this. The declining membership? Yes, but the number of members is falling in the national and local associations as well, and there is no specifically Universal-Association solution to an all-level problem. Common problems call for common solutions.

In order to approach the problem, we should first address the topic of the US. (...)

The USA today is what France was yesterday. Esperanto has been riding the French horse since Boulogne [= since the first international Esperanto congress in Boulogne-sur-Mer in 1905] and has gained attention; if today a renewed call to Esperanto had come from the American counter-culture, we would now be in a good place, like (...) the rock music industry (...)

But now there is a power that is more up-to-the-minute than the USA: the world of the Internet. [...]

The traditional relationship among money, the local commitment of older people and the energy of the young has disappeared. And we have not managed, in the world of the Internet, to establish a new non-traditional connection among these factors. In this failure we find ourselves **in the same boat** as the international music industry; and we will have to learn to **float together**.

This means to a certain extent to break out of the rhetoric of dry ('non-liquid') **digging** (L is a liquid consonant) and **furrows** [= in the original a play on words: flosi / fosi 'float/ dig'], because this rhetoric reflects what divides us and hinders a solution. In a solid world of **furrows**, everybody tends to regard themselves as the centre of the movement, as its most important part. Everybody **digs** their own **furrow** and nobody likes to help **dig furrows** in other places.

(...) [S]omehow we have to keep the Esperanto movement functioning and, if possible, growing in Germany, the US, Japan and also at the same time locally and internationally.

The question is how to give up the **furrow-digging** approach while causing as little pain as possible and collectively face the fact that we **are all in the same, new boat**.

(...)

(...) But in today's world, too, it is only slowly that we learn languages, convince a neighbour that it is worthwhile learning Esperanto, or foster institutions and festivals over many years.

To continue our work effectively, to drive **the boat** of Esperanto forward, to convince the world of the necessity of linguistic justice, we need all **sailors** and they have to cooperate with one another, respect each other, help each other. Those working on the international, national, local levels, on the Internet, we all do something useful. None of us has the secret in their pocket for the triumph of Esperanto; if it is possible, it will only happen if we work together.

Build up a movement with us, with pride and cooperation, of people who are able to **sail** with us. Let's **sail** forward with faith and fervour, as Grabowski<sup>130</sup> sang.]

Creative reshapings of PUs or allusions to them are widespread in Esperanto. Casual conversations at dinner, but also the press, are where we expect to find intertextual allusions of this kind. The world of pretexts that can be alluded to is rich for Esperanto communication. It includes the various cultures of the world derived from individual speakers' native cultural backgrounds and, in addition, the culture of the planned language community. We offer two illustrations: modifications of Hamlet's *To be or not to be: that is the question* (in Esperanto: *Ĉu esti aŭ ne esti: tiel staras la demando*) and the first line of the refrain of Zamenhof's poem "La vojo" *Nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne flankiĝante ni iru la vojon celitan* ('Only directly, courageously and without turning aside, we must follow the path to the goal').

- (254) *Ĉu esti aŭ ne esti: tiel staras la demando*  
*Ĉu meti aŭ ne meti? Tiel staras la demando – almenaŭ kiam pri komoj temas.*  
 [To put or not to put: that is the question – at least when we are talking about commas] [Esperanto 2/1995, p. 28]
- (255) *Ĉu genri aŭ ne genri?* [To gender or not to gender?] [La Gazeto 1/1994, p. 5]
- (256) *Ĉu fundamenti aŭ teoriumi?* [To stick to the *Fundamento* or to theorise?]  
 [La Gazeto 3/1994, p. 6]
- (257) *Ĉu rimi aŭ ne rimi – tiel staras la demando en la cerbujo de multaj poetoj.* [To rhyme or not to rhyme – that is the question in the mindset of many poets.]  
 [La Gazeto 6/1994, p. 14]
- (258) *Ĉu feki aŭ ne feki?* [To defecate or not to defecate?] [Monato 1/1999, p. 23]
- (259) *Futbali aŭ ne futbali ... Jen staras la demando, ja por milionoj.* [To play football or not to play football ... That is ultimately the question for millions.]  
 [Kontakto 6/1998, p. 5]

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130. Antoni Grabowski (1857–1921), a Polish chemical engineer, was an outstanding Esperanto activist whose translations had an enormous impact on the development of Esperanto as a literary language.

- (260) *Ĉu knedi aŭ ne knedi?* [To knead or not to knead?]  
 [La Ondo de Esperanto 4/2007, p. 150; review of the collection of Esperanto slang expressions, *Knedu min, sinjorino*, whose title is a modification itself – see Chapter 18.2.2, footnote 77]

See also the following examples by Raymond Schwartz, which put an emphasis on the similarity between words (*esti* ‘to be’ – *vesti* ‘to dress’ – *estri* ‘to boss’):

- (261) “*Ĉu vesti aŭ nevesti?*” *kiel sopiras Hamleto* [...]. [‘To dress or not to dress?’ as Hamlet yearns] [Schwartz ... *kun siaspeca spico!* 1971, p. 173]
- (262) *El “Hamleto” li parkere citis al la tuta lando: “Estri aŭ ne estri?” vere, tiel staras la demando.* [From “Hamlet”, he quoted by heart to the whole country: ‘To boss or not to boss?’ indeed, that is the question] [Schwartz *Verdkata testamento* 1926, p. 101]
- (263) Nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne flankiĝante ni iru la vojon celitan  
*Rekte, kuraĝe, eĉ se flankiĝante: IFEF progresas* [...] [Directly, bravely, even if turning aside: IFEF progresses] [*Esperanto* 1/1995, p. 12]
- (264) [...] *nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj ne Frank-iĝante* [...]. [(...) just directly, bravely and not turning into Frank (...)] [IF 2/1993, p. 61; with a reference to Helmar Frank, an Esperanto researcher]
- (265) *Modifita “proverbo”: nur rekte, kuraĝe kaj tre difinite ni diru la vorton benitan.* [A modified “proverb”: just directly, bravely and very defined we should say the blessed word] [*Monato* 2/1996, p. 22]
- (266) – *Kie ili renkontiĝas?*  
 – *Nur iru rekte antaŭen kaj ne flankiĝante* [...] [– Where are they meeting?  
 – Just go directly forward and without turning aside (...)]  
 [31 Mar. 1997, Duderstadt]
- (267) [...] *ni iru la vojon ĉe-litan* [(...) we should go the way to bed] [Alòs i Font & Velkov, 1991, p. 22]
- (268) *Recenzi talentan satiron en kiu rolas aktuale agantaj esperantistoj [...] malfacilas ĝuste pro la risko enfali kaptilon de partiiĝo [...] dum vi ŝatus resti neŭtrala kaj iri la propran vojon, eĉ se tiu lasta ne estas ‘klara kaj rekta kaj tre difinita’.* [It is difficult to review a talented satire in which active Esperantists play roles (...) it is difficult especially because of the risk of falling into the trap of partisanship (...) when you would like to be neutral and go your own way, even if the latter is not “clear and direct and very definite”.] [*La Gazeto*, 1/1996, p. 19]

Uses like these can also be found in everyday conversations, in speeches and debates, as we will see in the examination of PUs occurring in our dataset.

## 21.5 Analysis of the Esperanto phraseology in the dataset

The phraseological occurrences in our dataset (see Chapter 5) corroborate the majority of properties mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter concerning the various types, functions and uses of PUs. Speakers make extensive use of phraseology to render their speech more expressive: for example, to illustrate a fact, to attract attention, to express an ironic undertone, to evoke humour, to put the listener or reader at ease, or to be euphemistic.

As for the types of phraseological units, loan translations predominate, accounting for 77% of all PUs, i.e. speakers transfer expressions from their native languages, as they consider them to be well known in various languages (see Examples (269) and (270)) or to be based on sufficiently transparent images (see Examples (271) to (273)):

- (269) *Ni devas pri tio konscii, ke tio estas nur pinto de la glacia monto, kion ni per la vortoj diras / Se iu venas de ekstere, ne konante nin, ne estante el la sama kulturo, ofte tiun grandan, tutan parton de la glacia monto – tion ne konceptas.*  
 [We have to be conscious about the fact that this is just the tip of the iceberg, what we say with our words / If someone comes from outside, not knowing us, not being from our culture, they often have no conception of this whole huge part of the iceberg.] [18 (hun; edu; Poznań) 42:52 / 43:17–32]
- (270) *Do ni devas trovi en niaj socioj nigran ŝafon kaj pro tio ni mem daŭre sekurigas nin / Do la nigra ŝafo estas iu eksterstaranto.*  
 [So, we have to find in our societies a black sheep and because of this we constantly protect ourselves / So the black sheep is someone from outside] [94 (nld; pres; Lille) 26:20 / 63:28]
- (271) *[...] pro tio, ke jam ni laboras je la rando de niaj kapabloj se temas pri tempo, ĉefe, ĉu ne [...]*  
 [(...) given the fact that we are already working at the limit of our abilities, above all, in terms of time you know (...)] [99 (eng; disc; Lille) 80:05–17]
- (272) *Tio al ni ne eblas kaj tute kontraŭas la etikon de esperantista kunlaboro [...] nu tio estas bedaŭrinda kaj ni faras kion ni povas por glatigi la vojjon por ke la sesa Afrika kongreso de Esperanto okazu en bonaj kondiĉoj kun granda subteno kun granda partopreno de esperantistoj el aliaj mondopartoj.*  
 [This is not possible and completely contradicts the ethics of Esperanto cooperation (...) well this is regrettable and we do what we can to pave the way so that the sixth African Esperanto congress can take place in good conditions and with strong support with strong participation by Esperanto speakers from other parts of the world] [157 (eng; disc; Lille) 49:42–50:13]

- (273) *Ni povas referenci al tiuj rezolucioj kaj tio estas vere **atuto en niaj kartoj**, tio donas al ni vere firman bazon.*  
 [We can refer to these resolutions and this is really a trump card, it gives us a truly firm basis.] [163 (fra; disc; Lille) 26:21–32]

If speakers decide to mention a culture-specific phrase or proverb from their native language, perhaps to lend their expression a specific tone or if they are not sure about the acceptability of a phrase in Esperanto, they often add metacommunicative markers to signal these uses and aid understanding:

- (274) *Do mi ne kantos. Sunas hodiaŭ. En Francio oni diras: Se oni malbone kantas, poste pluvos* [So I won't sing. The sun is shining today. In France we say: if you sing poorly, later it will rain.] [118 (fra; tour; Lille) 24:08]
- (275) *Kiu volas frakasi la glacieron kiel oni diras en aliaj lingvoj* [Who wants to break the ice, as they say in other languages] [143 (spa; pres/disc; Lille) 78:47]

Instead of *frakasi la glacieron* ('shatter the ice'), used in Example (275), the dataset also contains *rompi la glacieron* (*frakasi* 'shatter', *rompi* 'break') (113, 40:50). In general, within this group of loan translations, variants are frequent, as the occurrences of *kapti la okazon* ('seize/grab the opportunity') illustrate:

- (276) *Mi havis unu monaton ĉion aranĝi. [...] Mi kaptis la okazon, mi ne havis tempon ĉion kontroliĝi ĉar mi volis [...]*  
 [I had one month to arrange everything. I seized the opportunity, I didn't have time to have everything checked because I wanted (...)]  
 [71 (hun; disc; Lille) 30:12–25]
- (277) *Mi nur volis profiti la okazon prezenti la plej junan partoprenanton de la kongreso.*  
 [I just wanted to take the opportunity to present the youngest participant of the congress] [69 (?; cerem; Lille) 126:55 – a participant of a congress interrupts the procedure of welcoming speeches to hold up the secretary's baby]
- (278) *Fakte pri tiu pasedukado estas tri aksoj [...] Unua akso konsistas el [...], la dua akso estas uzi la okazon reagante al iu situacio, kaj la tria akso estas kurso [...]*  
 [In fact, as regards this peace education there are three axes (...) The first axis consists of (...) the second axis is to use the opportunity to react to a certain situation, and the third axis is a course (...)] [103 (fra; pres; Lille) 61:53–62:28]

About 20% of the phraseological occurrences in the dataset include what we called original PUs in Chapter 21.3. These are expressions closely related to the history of the speech community, for example phrases from Zamenhof's works or literary works by other authors that have become catchphrases (see also Examples (63), (64) and (263) to (268)):

- (279) *Ideologo: vidante belan knabinon li pensas pri venko (.) fina*  
 [Ideologist: watching a beautiful girl, he thinks about victory, the final one]  
 [29 (pol; tour; Poznań) 68:10]
- (280) *Do, la granda ŝanĝo venis sur armiloj de milita vento, dum la Dua Mondmilito.*  
 [So, the huge change (in the evolution of the computer) came on the wings of  
 a wind of war, during the Second World War.] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 7:30,  
 allusion to the phase *per flugiloj de facila vento*  
 from Zamenhof's *La Espero*; see footnote 120]
- (281) *Ĝis la ludduona paŭzo la okcidentsaharanoj sukcesis fari kvar golojn kontraŭ  
 nulo. Tamen la pacaj batalantoj plubatalis kaj ni estis optimismaj pri nia sorto  
 en la dua duono.*  
 [By half-time the West-Saharan team had succeeded in scoring four goals to nil.  
 But the peaceful fighters fought on, and we were optimistic about our destiny  
 in the second half.] [169 (eng; cerem; Lille) 8:16–42, *pacaj batalantoj*  
 'peaceful fighters' is used in Zamenhof's *La Espero* to refer to Esperantists]

Only three phrases stem from Zamenhof's proverb collection:

- pli bone hodiaŭ ovo ol poste bovo* [better an egg today than later an ox] [37 (ita; infl;  
 La Chaux-de-Fonds) 17:00, see ProvE no. 2008: *Pli valoras tuj ovo, ol poste bovo*],  
*Neniu povas esti profeto en sia propra hejmo* [Nobody can be a prophet in their own  
 home] [2 (hun; infl; Poznań) 11:03, see ProvE no. 1716: *Neniu estas profeto en  
 sia urbeto*]; and  
*Jen la tubero en la afero* [Here's the knot in the affair, = There is a snag to it] [198  
 (eng; pres; Lisbon) 9:40, see ProvE no. 536: *Estas tubero en la afero*].

This low percentage can be explained by the spoken character of our dataset. In spontaneous oral communication, speakers are not able to check the wording of the constructions they want to use as they would in written text production, and thus avoid using a phrase that they have not entirely grasped. The slight deviation from Zamenhof's original construction in the first example lends support to this explanation.

The structuring function of PUs mentioned above can also be observed in our dataset. Above all, rhetorical formulae can be found in this function. For example, we found *Jam temp' está* (see Chapter 21.2 D) in the dataset used by teachers and conference convenors to admonish speakers during a break to get back to work or to tell presenters that they are running out of time, e.g. in [2 (pol; infl; Poznań) 5:30]. In (282), in his evaluation of a congress, a speaker mentions a number of conclusions that should be drawn for future events and introduces his last point with the phrase *laste (sed) ne balaste* (lit. 'last, [but] not as ballast'; cf. *last but not least*).

- (282) *Tiu ĉi kongreso estas bona, ĝi estas en (ordo). Mi nur parolas pri iuj dek procentoj kiuj povus esti pli bonaj [...] tamen ni fajlu ĉe tiuj malglataĵoj. [...] Ni povas [...] Kaj laste ne balaste, ni devas zorgi, ke tiujn spertojn kiujn ni prenas ni konservos je la- por la venontaj kongresoj.*

[This congress is a good one, it is OK. I only speak about some ten per cent that might be better (...) but we should smooth those rough patches. We could (...) And last but not least we have to take care that we'll keep in mind these experiences that we have gained in the- for the following congresses.]

[144 (deu; disc; Lille) 86:12–87:13]

Modifications of phraseological units, as described in Chapter 21.4.3, can also be found in our dataset of spoken communicative events. For example, in (283), the phrase *la tria aĝo* ('the third age'), which is often used to denote the phase after people's active professional lives (when they have time to deal with the language [again]), is turned into *la kvara aĝo* ('the fourth age'), as the speaker alludes to his return to gainful employment after having been a pensioner for some time. The addition of *Budapeŝta*, referring to a literary school of Esperanto poets (*la Budapeŝta skolo* 'the Budapest school') to the expression *tra la lupeo* ('through the magnifying glass') in (284) leads to an appealing combination of a metaphoric with a metonymic expression.

- (283) *Sed mi ne plu estas emerito, mi (?-is) al la kvara aĝo, mi estas eksa emerita profesoro [@@@], kaj nuntempe mi estas gastprofesoro, mi estas multe pli aĝa ol emerita profesoro [@]*

[But I am no longer a pensioner, I (?-ed) to the fourth age, I am an ex-retired professor (@@@), I'm a visiting professor now, I'm much older than a retired professor (@)]

[114 (swe; disc; Lille) 13:43–57]

- (284) *Kalocsay ne vojaĝis tiel multe, li estis profesoro ĉe la universitato, departementestro ĉe la kliniko, kie li operaciis. Do li vidis la popolon en Budapeŝta, tra Budapeŝta lupeo.*

[Kalocsay did not travel that much, he was a university professor, head of department in a clinic, where he did operations. So, he saw the people in a Budapestian, through a Budapestian magnifying glass.]

[40 (ita; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 6:36–59]

A considerable part of our dataset are debates at forums, committee sessions and working group meetings. These communicative settings are characterised by a large number of recurrent phrases used to coordinate the order of speakers' contributions, such as *doni la parolon* ('to give the floor'), *preni la parolon* ('to take the floor'), *ricevi la parolon* ('to be given/have the floor') or *malfermi/ĉesigi la diskuton* ('to open/close the discussion'). As regards votes, the following phrases have the status of fixed expressions (collocations):



*esti por la akcepto (de la raporto)* ('to be for accepting [the report]')  
*esti kontraŭ ...* ('to be against -')  
*Ĉu estas sindetenoj?* ('Are there abstentions?')  
*Bonvolu levi la manon* ('Please raise your hands')  
*fari (proceduran) proponon* ('to make a procedural proposal')

The following excerpt will illustrate such recurrent phrases and expressions:

(285) [...] *Jen nia raporto. Mi proponas ĝin al via akcepto. [...] Do mi ne vidas emon por diskuto, ĉu estas pliaj komentoj de la reviziantoj? Kiu estas por la akcepto de tiuj raportoj? Kiu estas kontraŭ? Sindetenoj? Tri sindetenoj. Dankon. Neniu kontraŭ kaj tri sindetenoj. [...] Ĉu estas pliaj intervenoj pri tiu agadkampo entute? Se ne, mi petas vian voĉon pri akcepto de raporto de la rekomendoj el la el la komitata forumo pri konsciigo. Se vi estas por akcepto de tiuj du rekomendoj (.) proponoj, bonvolu levi la manon. Koran dankon. Klare la plimulto. Kiu estas kontraŭ la akcepto? Kiu sin detenas? Neniu. Koran dankon. [...] Mi nun malfermas tiun raporton al la diskuto [...]*

[This is our report. I propose it for your adoption (...) Well, I don't see any inclination for discussion, are there further comments by the auditors? Who is for the adoption of these reports? Who is against it? Any abstentions? Three abstentions. Thank you. No votes against and three abstentions (...) Are there any further interventions about this field of activity as a whole? If not, I ask for your vote on the adoption of these two recommendations from the from the committee's forum on awareness campaigns. If you are for adopting these two recommendations (.) proposals, please raise your hand. Many thanks. A clear majority. Who is against adopting them? Who abstains? Nobody. Many thanks. (...) I am now opening this report for discussion (...)]

[157 (eng; disc; Lille) 27:50–34:28]

## 21.6 Historical phraseology: A pilot study

The phrasicon of any living language is subject to change. As a consequence of societal changes, new expressions gain currency. Schreiber et al. (2012, p. 3) consider a phraseological unit a neologism "(1) if it is a new form with a meaning not known previously or (2) if a known form has a new phraseological meaning from a certain point in time". They also state that the neologism "has to be known by a reasonable number of speakers in a reasonably large region" (p. 3). The authors describe the difficulties of detecting phraseological neologisms: the task is hampered by the low frequency of occurrences in corpora and the fact that most corpora contain mainly written language, while phraseological units are expected to first occur in spoken communication (for a discussion on spoken vs written Esperanto see Chapter 23).

A small-scale diachronic study using Esperanto journals from 1892 to 1947<sup>131</sup> shows that texts from the early periods of Esperanto history contained a large stock of PUs that are used in present-day Esperanto journals. These include:

#### Binomials

*tiam kaj tiam* ('every now and then')

(*La Marto* 5/1924, p. 19; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 6)

*vole nevole* ('willy-nilly')

(*Espero Katolika* n-ro 82, 1930, p. 387; *Esperanto Triumfonta* 7 Aug 1936, p. 3)

*jen kaj jen* ('here and there' / 'from time to time')

(*Poŝta Esperantisto* 1–2/1913, p. 1; *Juna Esperantisto* 2/1914, p. 14)

*de tempo al tempo* ('from time to time')

(*Verda Mondo* 11/1927, p. 22; *Espero Katolika* 3/1935, p. 4)

*man' en mano* ('hand in hand')

(*Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 5; *La Revuo Esperanta* 2/1935, p. 40)

#### Nominations

*Salomona juĝo* ('Solomonic judgement')

(*Lingvo Internacia* 1/1909, p. 179; *Esperanto* 3/1933, p. 52)

*la nuda vero* ('the naked truth')

(*Poŝta Esperantisto* 8–9/1913, p. 42; *Espero Katolika* 3/1922, p. 165)

(partly with historical character)

*la Tria regno* ('the Third Reich')

(*Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct 1933, p. 5; *Aŭstria Esperantisto* 3/1938, p. 4)

*la flava danĝero* ('the yellow peril')

(*Esperanto* 3/1928, p. 56; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 13 Nov 1931, p. 1)

#### Proverbs

*Kie estas volo, tie estas vojo* ('Where there's a will, there's a way')

(*Espero Katolika* n-r 83, 1930, p. 403; *La Nova Epoko* 11 Aug 1932)

*Vivi estas batali* ('To live means to fight')

(*Esperanto* 1/1916, p. 118; *Esperanto* 3/1933, p. 59)

#### Routine formulae

*kiel dirite* ('as [already] said')

(*La Lernanto* 25 June 1927; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 30 May 1937, p. 2)

*Mil diabloj!* ('A thousand devils!')

(*Lingvo Internacia* 1913, p. 398; *Heroldo de Esperanto* 15 Oct. 1933, p. 6)

131. Provided by ANNO (<http://anno.onb.ac.at/>), a catalogue of digitalised journals by the Austrian National Library in Vienna.

Some PUs have changed their structure and found more stabilised forms (e.g. *doni mortan baton* → *doni mortobaton* [‘to deal a death blow to sb.’]; *Ne estas novaĵo sub la suno* → *Nenio nova sub la suno* [‘Nothing new under the sun’]). A few expressions found in the journals do not seem to be used any more. An example is *kavaliro de la verda stelo* (‘knight of the green star’),<sup>132</sup> used to denote an Esperanto speaker.

In Chapter 21.2 (B) we characterised PUs as relatively stable in form and content. Nevertheless, phrases can sometimes change their meaning. An example is the unit *fosi sian sulkon* (‘to dig one’s furrow’). The use of the phrase in Esperanto is closely related to the history of the planned language. It entered the language at the beginning of the twentieth century, when reformers left Esperanto to follow the project of a modified (or improved) Esperanto, Ido, created by Louis Couturat and Louis de Beaufront, which led to vigorous debates (see Chapter 8). Théophile Cart (1855–1931), a French university professor who edited the journal *Lingvo Internacia* from 1907 to 1914, introduced *Ni fosu nian sulkon!* It was coined on the basis of a French expression used in a fairy tale, where it expressed the meaning that it is better to make use of an instrument than to discuss its flaws (Mel’nikov, 2015, p. 215). He used the phrase to refer to what is known as the Ido schism, i.e. it meant speakers should not discuss in vain what can be improved in Esperanto but instead should go on working for their common aims. In this sense, it became widespread fast, as the following examples from Esperanto journals show:<sup>133</sup>

(286) [...] *Kaj nun ni eble tro forgesis en niaj polemikoj, ke, se Esperanto estas nur lingvo, la demando pri lingvo internacia estas socia demando. La perfekteco de la ilo estas certe elemento de l’sukceso, sed nek la sola, nek la ĉefa. [...]*  
*Esperantistoj, karaj kunbatalantoj, trankvile kaj konfide ni fosu nian sulkon.*  
*Th. Cart*

[(...) And now in our polemics we have perhaps too easily forgotten that, if Esperanto is only a language, the international language question is a social question. The perfection of the instrument is certainly an element of success, but neither the only one nor the principal one (...) Esperantists, dear fellow fighters, let us dig our furrow calmly and confidently. Th. Cart]

[*Lingvo Internacia* 4/1908, p. 149)

132. An expression alluding to the coinage “Don Quixote the knight of the white moon” which was used in an invitation to the 5th International Esperanto Congress in Barcelona in 1909 published in several journals (e.g. *Amerika Esperantisto* July 1909, p. 141 and *Lingvo Internacia* 1909, p. 2012). Several years later, in *Espero Katolika* 3/1935, p. 15, we find: *Ankaŭ el Praha (Ĉeĥoslovakio) ni ricevis bonegan verkajeton de unu el la „Junaj kavaliroj de la verda stelo” [...]* [‘Even from Prague (Czechoslovakia) we received a very good little piece of work from one of the young knights of the green star’].

133. The catchphrase was also printed as a motto on the cover of the journal *Lingvo Internacia*.

- (287) *Kroata Esperantisto (Marto) – Pri Reformoj*  
 [...] Esperanto disvastiĝas senĉese, kaj ĝiaj sinceraĵoj kondukas ĝin al fina celo, ne deklinigite de la diversaj gustdiferencoj. Mi konkludas per la devizo de nia estiminda kunfrato Lingvo Internacia: „Ni fosu nian sulkon!“ Stanislaw Tomić  
 [Kroata Esperantisto [March] – About Reforms  
 (...) Esperanto spreads constantly, and its sincere adherents lead it to the final aim without being swayed by the various differences in taste. I conclude with the motto of our esteemed brother Lingvo Internacia: “Let’s dig our furrow!” Stanislaw Tomić] [Lingvo Internacia 1910, p. 186]
- (288) *Simile alvokas al ni P-ro Cart per la trafaj signaldiroj: “Ni fosu nian sulkon! Ni restu fidelaj!” Jen bona kaj mallonga laborprogramo.*  
 [Similarly, Professor Cart calls upon us with the striking signal words: “Let’s dig our furrow! Let’s stay loyal” This is a good and short working programme.] [Esperanto 1911, p. 82]

We should note that a number of occurrences in those early days include playful modifications of the catchphrase, from which we can deduce that linguistic creativity in Esperanto is not just a characteristic of today’s language use:

- (289) *Ni simple daŭrigos fosi nian modestan sulkon, en kiun la praktikaj, aplikaj societoj, “UEA” kaj fakaj grupoj ĵetas la semon, kiu kreskos por riĉa, de l’homaro benota rikolto!*  
 [We should simply go on digging our modest furrow, into which the practical, applied societies, “UEA” and specialist groups throw the seed, which will grow to produce a rich harvest blessed by mankind.] [Lingvo Internacia 1910, p. 242]
- (290) *Paris – Esperanto [Junio] – La Rabistoj ...*  
*Sinjoroj de Beaufront kaj Couturat, la nuntempe oficialaj aŭtoroj de la “Internaciona Linguo”, ne prezentas sian Idion [sic] al la mondo, ne! Ili ĝin nur prezentas al ... la Esperantistoj. Ili ne konkurence, senmaske, kuraĝe fosas sian sulkon, ne! Ili postvenas en nian sulkon, sekvas nian armeon, kiel la korvoj pretaj por ataki ĉiun malfruiĝinton. [...]*  
 [Paris-Esperanto (June) – The Robbers  
 Mr de Beaufront and Mr Couturat, now the official authors of the “Internaciona Linguo” (= Ido), do not present their language to the world, no! They only present it to ... the Esperantists. They do not dig their furrow in competition, without a mask, bravely, no! They come behind us in our furrow, follow our army like the crows ready to attack everyone who is a latecomer.] [Lingvo Internacia 1908, p. 328, original emphasis]

- (291) *En esperantista deputataro ekzistas ankaŭ kvar partioj malsimilaj kaj tamen ne Idistaj: I-a Konservemulo: Deklaracio de Boulogne estas unu fojon por ĉiam akceptita, nek Zamenhof nek la aŭtoritato povas decidi la plej malgrandan reformeton. Ni fosu kaj refosu nian unu sulkon ĝis la fino de la mondo. Estu malbenata la plugisto kiu lasas sian foson ŝtonan por provi sulkon malpli ŝtonozan! Por konservemulo, ŝtonoza ne ekzistas. II-a Progresistoj [...]*

[In the Esperanto chamber of deputies there are four parties which are different from one another, but not [belonging to] Ido. The first: the Conservative: the Declaration of Boulogne is once and forever accepted; neither Zamenhof nor authority can decide the tiniest reform. We should dig and dig again our one furrow till the end of the world. Damned be the digger who leaves their stony furrow to try a furrow that is less clogged with stone!<sup>134</sup> For a conservative, stone-ridden does not exist. The second: the Progressive (...)]

[*La Langue Auxiliaire* May 1909, p. 105]

In the 1920s and 1930s, the noun *sulko* alone was often used figuratively, in the sense of ‘a task, (new) branch or activity’ in the work for Esperanto, as in Examples (292), a report on the foundation of an Esperanto radio association, and (293), in which readers of an Esperanto journal are encouraged to donate money to support its financial survival.

- (292) *[...] Simpatia saluto kaj sincera helpopromeso de ĉiu Esperantista ligo, societo kaj grupo, kaj de ĉiu unuopa samideano, iru al tiu nova Asocio kaj ĉefe al niaj spertaj kaj lertaj pioniroj D-ro Pierre Corret, el Parizo, kaj H.A. Epton, el Londono, kiuj akceptis la premegan funkcion konduki ĝin tra la nova sulko, kiu sin prezentas al nia agado.*

[...] A nice greeting and sincere pledge by each association, society and group of Esperantists, and by each single fellow thinker / Esperanto supporter, should go to this new association and above all to our experienced and skilful pioneers, Dr Pierre Carret of Paris and H. A. Epton of London, who have accepted the weighty function of leading it through the new furrow that presents itself to our activity.]

[*Belga Esperantisto* 3–4/1924, p. 30]

- (293) *[...] Ĉiu gazeto kia ajn bezonas subtenon financon, ideo ideala ĝin bezonas des pli multe, ĉar ĝi silente kalkulas kun bonaj koroj de geamikoj. Tiuj scias, ke la pozicio de Esperanto ne estas tiel firma, kiel ĝi devus esti. Kaj perdita sulko donas argumenton al malamikoj de la lingvo. Ili diros, ke la ideo ne kapablas vivi.*

134. The author plays with the two adjectives *ŝtona* and *ŝtonoza*. In Esperanto, only the first one is official: *ŝtona* (‘stony’) is used to express any relationship to ‘stone’ (consisting of, appearing like, containing, etc.), and the context shows what exactly is meant. Ido introduced an additional suffix, *-oz*, with the specific meaning of ‘containing’.

[...] Any kind of newspaper needs financial support, an idealistic idea needs it even more, as it tacitly reckons with friends' good hearts. These know that the position of Esperanto is not as firm as it should be. And a lost furrow provides enemies of the language with an argument. They will say that the idea is not capable of surviving.] [Marto 11/1928, p. 1]

When Théophile Cart died in 1931, the catchphrase created by him dominated his obituaries, both in its original wording, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!*, referring to the Ido crisis, and in a wider sense as 'to continue one's efforts for Esperanto' (see Example (294)). This more general meaning is also expressed in Example (295), a report on the twentieth congress of the German Esperanto Association:

- (294) *Malĝoja sciigo venis el Parizo. Mortis Prof. Th. Cart [...] Firma, kiel ŝtalo, li bataladis la duonon de sia vivo fervore por Esperanto, kuraĝe kontraŭ ĉiuj malamikoj de nia ideo. "Ni fosu nian sulkon!" tondris lia voĉo en la mezo de la kirlanta tumulto okaze de la Idista Intrigo. [...] Fajraj vortoj liaj ekrememorigis nian tutan anaron pri nia sulko, kiun ni havas la devon fosi. Por la homaro estonta, por nia neparo ni devis ne deflankiĝi. [...]*

*"Ni fosu nian sulkon!" estos por ĉiam la devizo de la fidelaj esperantistoj. Liaj vortoj estos de ni en la estonteco pli bone observataj, kaj ni promesas per lia glora nomo, ke neniam deflankiĝante ni fosadas nian sulkon por la bono de la homaro.*

[Sad news came from Paris. Prof. Th. Cart has died (...). As strong as steel, he fought half of his life eagerly for Esperanto, courageously against all enemies of our idea. "We have to dig our furrow!" his voice thundered in the middle of the whirling tumult surrounding the Idists' intrigue (...) His fiery words reminded all our members of the furrow that it is our obligation to dig. For the future of mankind, for our grandchildren we were not allowed to deviate. (...)

"We have to dig our furrow!" will be the faithful Esperantists' motto forever. His words will be better observed in the future and we promise by his glorious name that, never deviating, we will dig our furrow for the benefit of mankind.]

[*La Revuo Orienta* July 1931, p. 193]

- (295) *[...] Sincere ni eldiras ankaŭ en ĉi tiu loko dankon al la ne-germanaj amikoj, kiuj plibeligis nian kongreson per ĉeesto, al la organizinta Trio, al la kongresintoj mem! Ni daŭrigu, fosi nian sulkon: ni laboru kaj esperu!*

[...] In this place as well, we pronounce our sincere thanks to our non-German friends who brightened up our congress with their attendance, to the trio of organisers, to the participants themselves! We should continue, dig our furrow: we should work and hope!] [Germana Esperantisto 6/1931, p. 91]

The PU *fosi la sulkon* is a frequently used expression in Esperanto today,<sup>135</sup> and it is in the wider sense expressed in (295) that the majority of speakers understand it now. It is no longer used with reference to the historical context that brought it into being, i.e. meaning ‘to give up discussions about possible improvements of Esperanto and work for its dissemination sticking to the linguistic norms’, although alterations to Esperanto (e.g. the introduction of new affixes, the use of neologisms) are among commonly discussed topics within the speech community. *Fosi la sulkon* has adopted a wider meaning as ‘to continue one’s work for Esperanto and its targets in spite of all setbacks and adverse circumstances’, as can be seen in (296) to (298):

- (296) *Mi estas feliĉa, ke mi restis dum tuta 50-jara epoko fidela leganto de EPĈ. Tiu luksa gazeto rekompencis min per pliperfektigo. Mi estas dankema al ĉiuj, kiuj preparas ĝin. Mi deziras al la redakcio kaj al ĉiuj legantoj, ke en pluaj jaroj ili sukcese fosu sian sulkon.*

[I am happy that I remained a faithful reader of EPĈ during the whole fifty-year epoch. This richly produced journal repaid me by perfecting my Esperanto. I am grateful to all those who produce it. It is my wish that the editors and all readers will dig their furrow successfully for many years to come.]

[*El Popola Ĉinio* 8/2000, from a letter to the editor]

- (297) *Dankon. Do mi volas danki nome de <name> por tiuj tre diversspecaj honorigoj kaj se li ĉeestus li certe dirus: jam sufiĉas la honorvortoj. La plej bona honorigo estas la daŭrigo de la laboro. Ĉiu inter ni fosu sian sulkon por la komuna afero.*

[Thank you. So, I would like to say thanks on behalf of <name> for these very diverse forms of honour, and if he were here, he would certainly say: enough with the words of honour. The best form of honour is to continue the work. Each of us should dig their furrow for our common cause.]

[191 (deu; pres; Lisbon) 39:00–39:43]

- (298) *Niaj tradiciaj paradigmoj de Landaj kaj Fakaj Asocioj kaj lokaj grupoj ne kapablus ne nur atingi tiom da homoj, sed igi ilin eklerni la lingvon. La projekto Duolingo kaj similaĵoj ne naskiĝis el nenio. [...] ĉio ĉi fontis en la generacioj de lojalaj esperantistoj, kiuj kontraŭ ĉiaj obstakloj diligente kaj eĉ obstine ‘fosis siajn sulkojn’.*

[Our traditional paradigms of national and specialist associations and local groups would not only not be able to reach so many people, but could not make them learn the language. The Duolingo project and projects like it did not come

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135. As in ethnic languages, this assertion does not mean that every speaker is familiar with its meaning. See, for example, the following entry on a learners’ platform: <https://www.en.lernu.net/hr/forumo/temo/9763> – *Aliajn nekutimajn diraĵojn mi ne komprenas, interalie „Ni fosu nian sulkon“*. Kion tio signifas? [I don’t understand other unusual sayings, among them “Ni fosu nian sulkon”. What does that mean?]

into being out of nothing (...) all this has its source in the generations of loyal Esperantists who diligently and even obstinately ‘dug their furrows’ against all obstacles.] *[Esperanto 1/2017, p. 13]*

In addition, we observe that *fosi sian sulkon* is used to stress that a certain activity or effort is individual in character, different from the activities or effort of other people (see Examples (299) and (300)):

- (299) *Do mi ekz. tre ĝojas ke <name of an organisation> plenumas efikan rolon laŭ sia memelektita vojo. Se ne eblas organizita kunlaborado, ĉiu do fosu sian sulkon, kun tiuj homoj apud kiuj eblas efika kunlaborado. Sed tamen prefere oni evitu neutilan konkurencadon kaj ĉefe, oni evitu misfamigi Esperanton mem per fuŝa informado, ridindaj argumentaĉoj au aĉaj absurdaĵoj.*

[Thus, for example, I am very pleased that <name of organisation> fulfils an efficient role along its self-chosen way. If it is not possible to organise cooperation, everybody should **dig their own furrow**, next to those people with whom efficient cooperation is possible. However, it is nevertheless preferable to avoid useless competition and above all one should avoid denigrating Esperanto itself by means of botched information, ridiculous argumentation or wretched absurdities.] *[Libera Folio 2011–04–29]*

- (300) *Ĉu oni bedaŭru, ke JES (kredeble) ne estos 200-homa, sed verŝajne 400-homa renkontiĝo? Eble, sed pri tio decidu evidente tiuj, kiuj aranĝos JES-on. Se tiuj homoj deziras aranĝi ion, kio celas fariĝi ĉirkaŭ 400-homa, tiam ili faru tion [...] Klopodu pri organizado de malpli grandaj renkontiĝoj tiuj, kiuj deziras tiajn. Ĉiu fosu sian preferatan sulkon.*

[Should one regret that JES will (likely) not be a meeting of 200 participants, but probably of 400? Perhaps, but this should be decided obviously by those who organise JES. If those people wish to arrange something that aims to have 400 people, they should do it. (...) Those who wish to organise less big events should take steps to organise those. Everybody should **dig their preferred furrow**.] *[Libera Folio 2009–01–06]*

As the examples show, the phrase in this general meaning is associated with the past and with traditional ways of dealing with Esperanto. This general meaning was also observed above (see Example (253) in Chapter 21.4.3), where the author combined both meanings when using *fosi sian sulkon* with regard to previous or old-fashioned strategies and contrasted it with *esti en la sama boato*.

Our observation of the use of the PU *fosi sian sulkon* in two different historical moments, at the beginning of the twentieth and of the twenty-first centuries, reveals changes with respect to several properties of the unit. There is semantic change, including both an expansion in meaning and a specialisation, and there are two



structural changes. First, the phrase has moved from a fixed catchphrase, *Ni fosu nian sulkon!*, to a verbal phrase, *fosi sian sulkon*, that can be freely adapted to fit the required syntax. Second, *sulko* has become more than a phraseological constituent and has taken on individual metaphorical meaning. Further research into historical phraseology should deal with the change of meaning that particular PUs have undergone, and it could address topics, such as the effects that the employment of phraseological units has on literary works in particular periods in the history of Esperanto, the rise and development of particular types of PUs (e.g. binomials such as *lerte kaj sperte* ‘with skill and experience’), and the change in form and function that can be observed for routine formulae (e.g. *Kiel vi fartas?* ‘How are you?’, which is presently mainly used in its shortened form, *Kiel vi?*).

### 21.7 Metaphors and similes

As we have seen in the previous sections of this chapter, a considerable proportion of phraseological units have non-literal meanings. Metaphors are key elements in proverbs, for example – such as *Inter lupoj krii lupe* (‘Among wolves, cry like a wolf’) and *Lupo ŝanĝas la harojn, sed ne la farojn* (‘A wolf changes its hair, but not its deeds’). Based on a relationship of similarity, which might be objective or subjective, the properties of one concept (in the case of our proverbs, of an animal) are transported to another concept without explicitly mentioning the basis of the relationship, the *tertium comparationis*.

We owe to Lakoff and Johnson (1980) the insight that metaphors are conceptual in nature. They are not merely a literary device but a fundamental and ubiquitous procedure of everyday language. The two authors treat metaphors as primarily a matter of mind, as a set of abstract-and-concrete mappings between two domains. We understand an abstract concept (target domain) in terms of a concrete (or source) domain that we have experienced. Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 49) mention expressions such as *He is known for his many rapid conquests; She fought for him, but his mistress won out; He fled from her advances*, and others, as evidence for the conceptual mapping LOVE IS WAR. Although relying on linguistic examples, the cognitive explanation of metaphor shifts the attention away from language (“the locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another”, Lakoff 1993, p. 203) and puts its focus on conventionalised metaphors (Cameron & Deignan, 2006). Here, we recognise ideas from cognitive metaphor theory, but, taking authentic language data from spoken interaction as a starting point, we focus on novel metaphors, or “dynamic metaphors” as Hanks (2006) calls them. We aim to analyse metaphors

in use, including their linguistic, semantic and pragmatic qualities, and we also consider affective factors, i.e. speakers' attitudes, values and emotions, as these play a role in the emergence of metaphors.

The difference between a metaphorical proverb (or in general a figurative PU) on the one hand, and a metaphor as a figure of speech on the other, is that the non-literal meaning of the former is already known by the speaker of the language. Idioms are fixed and conventionalised. Their meanings can be retrieved from the mental lexicon. This is different in novel metaphors, which can be understood even if we have never heard them before. It is what makes metaphors so interesting: they create imagery by means of unexpected descriptions of a subject, making us aware of connections that we may not have thought of before. Metaphors are therefore more creative, semantically richer and more flexible than idioms. Many idioms were originally metaphors that caught on and became a frozen pattern with a fixed meaning. Their metaphorical motivations, i.e. the interaction between the two domains, can however be reactivated by modifications, as we have seen in previous sections (see, e.g., Examples (244), (252), (253), and (290)).

The decision as to whether a particular figurative expression constitutes a metaphor or a phraseological unit is not always easy to make and might be subjective. It depends on whether an individual speaker is familiar enough with the unit to recognise it as something known, fixed and associated with a certain meaning, or whether he or she encounters the expression as something novel – painting a picture that nudges him or her into thinking. In (301) and (302), speakers describe the situation where people are in an uncertain state or condition or are confronted with an insecure future:

(301) A: *Mi povus imagi ke oni trovus eble inter junaj homoj kiuj ofte ne havas perspektivon [...] multaj junaj intelektuloj **pendas en la aero**.*

B: *Jes*

C: *Nu preskaŭ ĉiuj. Tio ĉefe estas la ĝenerala situacio en Eŭropo.*

D: *Ekzakte.*

E: *nur dependas ĉu ili pendas aŭ pendumas @*

[A: I could imagine that one might find [someone] maybe among young people, who often do not have a perspective (...) many young intellectuals **are in limbo**.

B: Yes.

C: Well almost all. That's mainly a general situation in Europe.

D: Exactly.

E: It only depends on whether they hang [in the air] or hang.]

[158 (deu-?-ita-eng; disc; Lille) 30:33–31:10]

- (302) *Do mi petas vin voĉdoni favore ankaŭ (por) la dua propono ĉar tie estas plano por konkretigi la aferon por ke ĝi ne plu ŝvebu en la aero kiel ĝi foje estis en la pasintaj du jaroj por nia grupo, sed ni havu klaran limdaton por la sekvontaj semajnoj, estu homoj, kiuj laboras [...]*

[Thus I ask you to vote in favour of the second proposal as well because there is a plan to make the thing concrete, so that it does not **float in the air** any more, as occurred once in the past two years for our group, but we need to have a clear deadline for the next weeks, there must be people who work (...)]

[157 (ita; disc; Lille) 146:30–146:56]

On the basis of participant observation, we can judge that the expressions *pendi en la aero* and *ŝvebi en la aero* were understood by the interlocutors in the figurative sense described above. The phrases are not known to us, however, as conventional phrases in Esperanto, neither can their phraseological character be verified by dictionaries or corpora. Both of them could therefore be considered dynamic metaphors. Knowing that speaker A in (301) is German and being German native speakers ourselves, we are sure, however, that *pendi en la aero* is a loan translation of *in der Luft hängen* ('hang in the air', cf. *up in the air* ['still to be settled'] in English). The same might be true for the expression *ŝvebi en la aero* coined by the Italian Esperanto speaker in (302), so that as a result one might call *pendi en la aero* and *ŝvebi en la aero* variants of a (potential) PU in Esperanto, but, as we are not familiar with Italian, this expression appears to us to be a metaphor opening our minds to imagine a person floating in the air, so that from our perspective *pendi en la aero* is labelled a PU and *ŝvebi en la aero* a metaphor.

Our dataset includes a large number of metaphorical expressions that we do not consider phraseological units, but ad hoc coinages, i.e. novel metaphors, which is why we address metaphor in this separate section. In our first example of a metaphor, in (303), an author presents language learning as a walk through a forest, and in (304), we are invited to think of nature and seasons.

- (303) *[...] neniŭ povas finfine fanfaroni, ke “nun mi regas la lingvon”. Lingvo estas senfina arbaro, bunta kaj densa, tra kiu oni promenadas kolektante fruktojn, foliojn, radikojn; ĉiam la lingvo subite montras ion nekonatan, ion surprizan.*

[(...) nobody can finally boast “now I have a command of the language”. Language is an endless forest, colourful and dense, through which one walks collecting fruits, leaves, roots; the language always shows something unknown suddenly, something surprising.] [Esperanto 11/2014, p. 223]

- (304) *Sed tiuj komputiloj estis tre komplikaj kaj estis tre malrapidaj kompare kun aliaj. Kaj do, kio estis tute kontraŭpraktika. Kaj oni nomas tion “periodo de artefaritinteligenteca vintro”. Do post la entuziasmo estis vere periodo kie la neĝis- neĝo falis kaj nenio pli movis-moviĝis.*

[But those computers were very complicated and were very slow in comparison with other ones. And so, this was completely impractical. And they call this the “period of the winter of artificial intelligence”. So, after the enthusiasm there really was a period where it was- the snow was falling and nothing mov- was moving any more] [98 (ita; pres; Lille) 23:36–24:12]

Another difference between idiomatic PUs and metaphors involves their form. As explained in Chapter 21.2.1, phraseological units are polylexemic in nature: they have the structure of word groups and sentences. Metaphors, by contrast, can also be figurative one-word units. An example is *talpo* (‘mole’) with its figurative meaning of a “person who works in an organisation and secretly passes important information to another organisation or country” (*Oxford Advanced ...*, 2000, p. 986), which is known in a number of languages. Interestingly enough, in addition to this, a second figurative meaning of *talpo* occurs in Esperanto. In the 1960s, the use of *talpo* was popular in the sense of ‘someone who works for Esperanto diligently but without much knowledge of aims being therefore more detrimental than beneficial for a dissemination of the language’. This use had its origin in German Esperanto circles,<sup>136</sup> but gained currency internationally, so that Corsetti et al. (1987, p. 23) included the expression in their collection of Esperanto slang words, defining it as “tro fervora Esperanto-aganto, kiu fuŝas pro miopeco” (‘an overly enthusiastic Esperanto activist who bungles because of shortsightedness’). A questionnaire study (Fiedler, 1999) revealed that only a small proportion of Esperanto speakers are familiar with this interpretation of the word today. This specific use does not occur in our dataset, unlike the first of the two figurative senses of *talpo* (as someone secretly disclosing information), which is found several times. An example is given in (305):

- (305) A: *Nur aldonon: <name> estas fakulino por terminologiaj aferoj [...] kaj nun ŝi doktorigās en Genevo. La interesa afero estas, ke ŝi sukcesis dum mallonga tempo eniri ĉiujn gravajn estrarojn de neesperantista terminologia mondo, ŝi eĉ estas membro de [...]*
- B: *Nu jes.*
- A: *Kaj tiujn homojn ni bezonas, kiuj estas ĉe la neesperantista fako sed povas preni la (?) -on al Esperanto.*
- C: *Do baze oni bezonas esperantologiajn talpojn, jes [...]*
- All: @@@

136. Cf. the explanation in the German Esperanto journal *Germana Esperanto-Revuo* (5/1965, p. 55): “[...]‘samideanoj’, kiuj blinde laboras resp. mallaboras por Esperanto, kiuj vivas kaj agas en obskura mallumo kaj mallerte antaŭenŝovas sin damaĝante la movadon” (‘Esperanto followers / esperantists [‘sam-ide-an-o = same + idea + member] ‘who blindly work or rather do the opposite of it, who act in obscure darkness and clumsily push forward themselves damaging the movement’). The journal also contained a column “talpajo” (‘mole acts’) with respective examples from the Esperanto press.

[A: Only an addition: <name> is a specialist in the field of terminology (...) and now she is working on her PhD in Geneva. The interesting thing is that within a short time she managed to join all the important boards of the non-Esperantist terminological world, she is even a member of (...)]

B: Well, yes.

A: And these are the people we need, those who are (Esperantists) and specialists in other fields and can take the (???) to Esperanto.

C: So, basically we need Esperantological **moles**, yes ...

All: @@@ [151 (deu-swe-eng; disc; Lille) 12:50–13:25]

Further one-word metaphors include the following:

- (306) *Ĉar, se vi konsideras [...] kiel flagŝipo, unu el la prestiĝaj programoj de la kongreso*  
[Because, if you consider (...) the flagship, one of the prestigious programmes of the congress] [157 (heb; disc; Lille) 55:30]
- (307) *Sed neniu ĝis nun sukcesis briditi tiujn homojn*  
[But nobody has been successful in bridling these people until now] [158 (eng; disc; Lille) 47:53]
- (308) *Estis sinjoro <name>, kiu fiŝkaptis min*  
[It was Mr <name> who hooked me. (lit.: caught me in the fishing net)] [79 (pol; disc; Lille) 9:18]
- (309) *JoMo, la reĝo de la Esperanta etna-revolucia rokenrolo*  
[JoMo, the king of Esperanto ethno-revolutionary rock'n'roll] [Esperanto 6/2016, p. 138]

The metaphors in our dataset are often extended over longer phases of speech, as Example (310) illustrates. This discussion on sexes starts with an introduction of the letters GLAT (which stand for *Gejoj, Lesbaninoj, Ambaŭseksemuloj, Transseksemuloj* ‘Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transsexuals’) in Esperanto, which leads to A’s critical question whether such an abbreviation does not reinforce the allocation of people into categories and giving them labels. Speaker B, agreeing with A, then introduces the image of putting human beings into “boxes” (*skatoloj*), which from this point onwards pervades the entire discussion:

- (310) A: *Mi volas [...] restarigi fakte demandon al vi tamen, ĉar per tiuj literoj vi tamen iasence kreas novajn kategoriojn, plurajn, konsentite, eĉ multajn eble, sed tamen kategoriojn [...] Ĉu vi vere pensas, ke tio solvas la problemon, ke ni kreas novajn etikedojn kvazaŭ, ĉu ne tamen la vera problemo estas [...] ke ne eblas ke ni etikedas homojn kaj ĉu ne ĉiu estas simple individuo kaj povas esti ĉiu ajn miksaĵo de preferoj, aspektoj kaj simple estas kontin*  
LUO

B: *Ĉmi pensas, ke vi diras tre gravan aferon, nu jes ni simple havas tiujn skatolojn de ina kaj iĉa, kaj de eh samseksema ambaŭseksema, fakte ekzistas tiom da skatoloj ke se vi volas vere havi skatolon en kiu vi taŭgus, vi bezonas tiom da skatoloj kiom da homoj ekzistas @*

A: *jes*

B: *kaj vi pravas en tio, ĉar fakte ĉi tiuj literoj ktp. estas por ke ni povu paroli pri la afero [...] sed vi absolute pravas laŭ mia vidpunkto tiu ideo pri ĉi tiuj skatoloj jam malnoviĝas ni ja ne ni JAM pensas pri spektroj anstataŭ punktoj kaj skatoloj [...]*

[...]

C: *Mi celas al tio kion vi diris pri la malfermo de novaj, kelkaj skatoloj, aŭ multe pli [...]*

D: *Foje en la aliĝiloj estas simple praktikaj kialoj. Oni volas scii kun kiu vi emas dormi en la sama ĉambro, ĉar se estas komuna ĉambro, eble vi emas loĝi nur kun virinoj aŭ nur kun viroj [...] se ni restas kun tiuj skatoloj [...]*

[A: In fact I wanted to ask you the question once more, however, as by means of these letters nevertheless in a certain sense you create new categories, several (categories), true, even many maybe, but nevertheless categories (...) Do you really think that this solves the problem that we create new labels, as it were, isn't the real problem however that it isn't possible that we label people and isn't everybody simply an individual person and may be any mixture of preferences, aspects and simply a continu lum

B: I think that you are saying a very important thing, well, we simply have these boxes of female and male, and eh of homosexual bisexual, in fact there are so many boxes that if you want to have a box that really fits for you, you need as many boxes as there are people @

A: *yes*

B: *and you are right about it, as in fact there are these letters, etc. so that we should be able to talk about the thing (...) but you are absolutely right from my point of view this idea about these boxes is already getting old and we don't we ALREADY think about continua instead of points and boxes (...)*

[...]

C: *I wanted to address what you said about opening these boxes, some, or even many (...)*

D: *Sometimes in the application forms there are mere practical reasons. One wants to know with whom you want to sleep in one room, because if there is a common room, perhaps you would like to live with women or only with men (...) if we stay with these boxes. (...)*

The subjects that Esperanto speakers choose as target domains reflect that they are aware of communicating in an international speech community. The metaphors in our dataset are based on three subjects that are common in many cultures: nature, the human body and technology. The nature-inspired metaphors include images of typical natural settings such as sunrise (Example (311)), representing ‘beginning’ and clouds (Example (312)) standing for fuzziness or lack of clarity (see also Example (303), which presented Esperanto as a forest).

- (311) *Saluton al ĉiuj, <name>, kongresa numero 977 [...] Se vi celas uzi Esperanton kaj (se vi) celas ke Esperanto estu daŭre uzata por ĉiutagaj bezonoj, al la komunumo mankas la parto de komerco. Komercaj iniciatoj en Esperantujo estas, sed estas ankoraŭ ĉe la sunleviĝo ni diru, ni estas ĉe la sunleviĝo de tiu epoko kaj se ni volas ke Esperanto prosperu evidente ni devas ankaŭ subteni komercajn iniciatojn, ĉu ne [...]*

[Hello everyone, <name>, congress number 977 (...) If you intend to use Esperanto and if your aim is that Esperanto be used continuously for everyday needs, the community lacks the aspect of commerce. Commercial initiatives in Esperantoland exist, but they are still at the sunrise so to say, we are at the sunrise of this epoch and if we want Esperanto to prosper, of course we should also support commercial initiatives, shouldn't we.]

[144 (ita; disc; Lille) 43:37–45:25]

- (312) A: *La demando estas nur ĉu la Akademio aprobas tion ĉar en la diskutoj en la reto kiuj estis, eble ses personoj eniris tiun debaton. Ĉi tio estas oficiala, do decidoraĵo de la Akademio, kiu decidu, ĉu plu studi la ideon de jura rekonigi de la Akademio aŭ lasi ĉion kiel nun ŝvebanta inter la nuboj*

B: *Ne ne.*

A: *Ni devos ion decidi.*

B: *Jes, la decido estos voĉdonado.*

[A: The question is only whether the Academy approves this because in the discussions on the Internet that took place, there were perhaps six people who entered the debate. This is official, and therefore the prerogative of the Academy, which should decide whether to further study the idea of legal recognition of the Academy or leave everything as it is now, floating in the clouds.

B: No no

A: We have to decide something

B: Yes, the decision will be a vote.] [71 (ita-swe; disc; Lille) 58:35–59:13]

Similarly, the human body serves as a source of metaphorical expressions shared by speakers from different cultures, as human conceptualisation is largely body-based. In Example (313), a controversial discussion on the separation of the international

youth organisation TEJO from its “mother” organisation UEA, two metaphors take centre stage in a speaker’s argumentation. First, he describes the process of becoming independent using the image of birds learning to fly (*disigi la flugilojn* ‘spread the wings’), and then he paints a picture of the umbilical cord connecting mother and child (*ligita en umbiliko* ‘connected at the navel’) to stress the unity of the two organisations.

- (313) *Tio fakte estas io, kion mi memoras el miaj fruaj TEJO-tagoj; ĉiam TEJO strebis tiel aŭ alie sendependiĝi de UEA kaj ĉiam UEA daŭre diris vi estas tro junaj aŭ vi estas tro senspertaj aŭ vi estas tro senrespondecaj. Sed ĉi tie, ŝajnas al mi, mi vidis sufiĉe respondecan sintenon kaj funde preparitan ŝajne ankaŭ kaj ne nur TEJO-anoj estas en tiu afero sed ankaŭ pli spertaj personoj kiel <name> kaj ĉiuokaze ili ne petas nian tujan konsenton, do estu ankoraŭ tempo por studi la aferon kaj kontroli pli profesie do ĉu ĝis iu dato en oktobro, ĉu ĝis iomete pli malfrue. Do ili nur petas la konsenton de la komitato **disigi siajn flugilojn**, ĉu ne, doni la benon por io kio, mi ankaŭ (vidas ke), estas motivigita ĉu finance [...] Do ili ne forlasas TEJO (sic!) kaj poste TEJO malaperos ĉar certe UEA kaj TEJO restas **ligitaj** ĉiuokaze **en umbiliko**, estas unu movado [...] La nunaj TEJO-anoj estas la estontaj gvidantoj de UEA, do mi ankaŭ donas la benon al tiu (projekto).*

[This in fact is something that reminds me of my early days in TEJO; TEJO would always strive to become independent of UEA in this or another way and UEA would continuously say you are too young or you are too inexperienced or you are too irresponsible. But here it seems to me I’ve seen a sufficiently responsible and seemingly thoroughly prepared attitude, and not only members of TEJO are (involved) in the affair but also more experienced people like <name> and at any rate they don’t ask for our immediate consent. So we still have time to study the affair and to check more professionally – perhaps up to some date in October or a little bit later. So they’re simply asking for the committee’s agreement to spread their wings, right? For the approval of something that is, I see, also financially motivated (...). So, they do not leave TEJO and afterwards TEJO will disappear because certainly UEA and TEJO remain connected at the navel, are one movement (...) The present members of TEJO are the future leaders of UEA, so I also give my approval to this (project)]

[157 (heb; disc; Lille) 149:57–151:37]

In two further examples within this group, the *Fundamento*, the linguistic norm of Esperanto, is associated with the skeleton of the human body (see Examples (314) and (315)). In (315), the metaphorical use encourages another speaker to add, as a further image, the role that the foundation (*fundamento*) plays for the construction of a building, which is appreciated by the audience:



- (314) *Sed tio estas ia skeleto, aŭ homo, kaj ni devas nutri. Kaj tiu nutrado, tio estas la kerno de la afero.*

[But this is some kind of skeleton, or person, and we have to nourish (lit.). And that nourishment, that is the core of the whole thing]

[76 (fra; pres; Lille) 19:16–27]

- (315) A: *Kaj alia demando pri tiu “arkaika” Fundamento. Tiu ja estas laŭ mia imago kiel skeleto kaj se oni ne havas skeleton, oni nur povas rampi sur la tero eh aliflanke, se oni estas nur skeleto, oni ne povas vivi, oni bezonas ankaŭ koron, cerbon kaj muskolojn do mi pensas ke oni bezonas kaj skeleton kaj muskolon kaj koron kaj cerbon.*

B: *Mi ŝatus tie aldoni alian metaforon pri la Fundamento. La fundamento de domo estas ĝuste tio, sen fundamento la domo ne povas ekzisti, sed la domo konsistas el multe pli ol la fundamento.*

(Applause)

[A: And another question about this “archaic” *Fundamento*. In my imagination this one is like a skeleton, and if one does not have a skeleton, one can only crawl on the ground eh, on the other hand, if one only has a skeleton, one cannot live, one also needs a heart, brain and muscles, so I think we need a skeleton as well as muscles as well as a heart and a brain.

B: I would like to add another metaphor about the *Fundamento*. The foundation of a house is exactly this, without a foundation the house cannot exist, but the house comprises much more than its foundation. (applause)]

[114 (swe-eng; disc; Lille) 48:50–49:57]

In a third group, the development of Esperanto is described using images from technology. In Example (316), reacting to criticism of the efficiency of an institution that he represents, a speaker, obviously elaborating his argumentation on the spur of the moment, first employs a body-related metaphor ( *piedoj por iri* ‘feet for walking’,  *oni ne povas iri sen la kapo* ‘you can’t go around without a head’) to then establish a relationship between the Universal Esperanto Association UEA and its central office and the engine ( *motoro*) of a car as the source of energy ( *UEA eh centra oficejo estas la motoro* ‘UEA uh the Central Office is the engine’), expanding the image finally to equate the importance of local agencies for Esperanto with the wheels of a car ( *la motoro ne povas turniĝi se ĝi ne estas ligita al la [...] radoj* ‘the engine cannot rotate if it is not connected to the [...] wheels’). In Example (317), wordplay is the starting point for the development of a technology metaphor. The abbreviation  *TIR* ( *Tutmonda Informa Reta* ‘International Information Network’) creates a meaningful acronym ( *tir-i* meaning ‘to draw’).

- (316) *Ekzistas kondiĉoj en la landaj asocioj vivantaj kiuj povas ebligi ke oni iru ankaŭ al la superaj instancoj. Ĉar sen la piedo, sen la piedo oni ne povas iri nur per la kapo al iu instanco. Se ne estas la bazo, tiam ne eblas fari tion, [...] Imagu aŭtomobilon sen motoro aŭ aŭtomobilon kun motoro sen radoj, UEA eh Centra Oficejo estas la motoro, ne estas radoj ne estas la landaj asocioj [...] kiuj agadas surloke, la motoro ne povas turniĝi se ĝi ne estas ligita al la neekzistantaj radoj [...]*

[There are conditions in the living national associations that make it possible for people to go to the superior authorities. Because without the foot, without the foot one cannot go only with the head to an authority. If there is no basis, then it is not possible to do anything. Imagine a car without an engine or a car with an engine without wheels, UEA uh the central office is the engine, there are no wheels there are no national authorities that work locally, the engine cannot rotate if it is not connected with the non-existing wheels (...)]

[72 (hun; disc; Lille) 73:02–47]

- (317) *Do informado pri Esperanto, ĉu ne, al la ekstera mondo ene de la movadaj formoj. Tio signifas, ke ni devas havi reton de kompetentaj bonvoluloj, kiuj akceptas tiun rolon [...] projekto, kiu nomiĝas T-I-R tir, kiu tiras la tutan agadon, fakte oni povas diri tiel, tutmonda informreto, tutmonda informa reto, tio signifas homoj estas en diversaj landoj, kiuj kreas, konsistigas tiun reton kiuj en sia loko propriniciate engaĝiĝas, akceptas tiun taskon, ke ili ofte kaj se necese en kampanjoj informas la lokan gazetaron, informas la eksteran publikon kaj organizas tiun laboron kun la lokaj aktivuloj aŭ Esperanto-grupoj [...] Tio estas unu ekzemplo de informado, informreto kaj tradukebloj, uzo de de nia reto TIR [...] ni bezonas homojn, kiuj aliĝas, sin anoncas por paroli, kunlabori en tio, por tiri la ĉaron de la Esperanto-movado kaj sorton de Esperanto; tutmonda informreto, do serĉu, anoncu, varbu vi ĉirkaŭ vi, aŭ anoncu vin mem por estu unu el tiuj tirantoj de la ĉareto. Dankon*

[So, information about Esperanto, right? For the external world, inside the structures of the movement. That means we need to have a network of competent people of good will who accept this role (...) a project named T-I-R tir, which draws the entire activity, in fact we can say so, a global information network, this means people in various countries who create, constitute this network, who in their place on their own initiative are engaged, accept this task that they often and if necessary in campaigns inform the local press, inform the external public and organise this work with the local activists or Esperanto groups (...) This is an example of informing, information networks and possibilities to translate, a use of our our network TIR (...) we need people who join (the network), who announce their intention to speak, to work together in order to draw the cart of the Esperanto movement and the destiny of Esperanto; a global information network, so search, announce, advertise around you, announce yourself to be one of those who draw the little cart. Thank you.]

[99 (hun; disc; Lille) 3:34–4:51, 11:07–12:21]

Metaphors are sometimes hard to differentiate from similes. As Aristotle (1954) put it, “the simile also is a metaphor ... the difference is but slight” (Rhetoric III, 4). In fact, Example (318) also produces a relationship between a source entity (*arbo* ‘tree’) and a target entity (*la ligo/ILEI* ‘the league/the International League of Esperanto-Speaking Teachers’), as we found in some of the nature-induced metaphors above. What makes this example different from metaphors is the explicit construction that connects the two (*similas al* ‘is similar to’):

- (318) *La ligo similas al granda arbo jam pli ol sesdekjara, ne emerita, espereble meritplena. La ligo produktis- produktas lernolibrojn kaj retkursojn (Esperanto etape) por modernaj telefonoj, sed apud ILEI ĉirkaŭ ĝi kreskas plej diversaj lerniloj, lernprogramoj kaj lernigaj retpaĝoj. Tio ĝojigas nin ĉiujn. Tiu granda arbo ne volas fari ombbron al alies agadoj kaj aktivadoj, tute male [...]*

[The League resembles a big tree that is already more than 60 years old, not retired, hopefully commendable. The league produced- produces textbooks and online courses (*Esperanto etape* ‘Esperanto step by step’) for modern telephones, but besides ILEI, around it all manner of learning tools, learning programmes and teaching Internet pages grow. This pleases us all. This big tree does not want to cast a shadow over others’ work and activities, not at all (...)]

[69 (fra; cerem; Lille) 92:35–93:15]

As a form of comparison, a simile involves overt reference to the two entities and does not therefore require as much interpretation as a metaphor, which expresses the relationship between source and target domain less immediately (Carter, 2016, pp. 125–127; Israel et al., 2004). The simile in Example (318) co-occurs with an instance of wordplay that is based on the similarity of the two words *emerita* (‘honourably retired’) and *meritplena* (‘commendable’).

One genre in which similes (but also extended metaphors) can be expected to play an important role is that of welcome or thank-you speeches at official conferences and receptions. See Example (319). In this speech, at the reception given by the mayor of the French town of Lille, the representative of the Universal Esperanto Association describes what unites Esperanto and Lille. He first describes the similarity between Esperanto and its symbol, the green star, and the town’s citadel, which was transformed from an object of military resistance to a peaceful garden. Secondly, in a tongue-in-cheek manner – as his talk as well as the audience’s reactions show – he draws parallels between Esperanto speakers and microbes spreading all over the world.

- (319) *Sed ĝi [= Lille] estas ankaŭ urbo rimarkinda pro du aliaj aferoj [...] Ĝi estas urbo de citadelo, eble kelkaj el vi jam havis okazon viziti ĝin dum la semajno [...] kial ĝi estis tiel eksteror- eksterordinara, tiu citadelo [...] nun kaj tiu citadelo, kian formon ĝi havas por esti tiel rezista al la atakoj de la tempo, la atakoj de la militoj? Ĝi havas la formon de stelo.*

All: @@@

*Kaj do la citadelo estas iusence bela simbolo por ni, des pli ĉar nun ĝi ne plu estas afero de la milito, ĉar ĝi transformiĝis en parkon, en parkon kun bestoĝardeno, en parkon kun grandaj avenuoj kaj floroj kaj botanika ĝardeno kaj tiel plu. Tio estas ĝuste la transformo kiun la esperantistoj celas porti al la mondo, al la mondo eterne militanta, ni portas ĝardenan citadelon.*

All: @@

*Kaj lasta rimarkindaĵo en la historio de Lille estas ke ĝuste en ĉi tiu urbo la granda franca sciencisto Louis Pasteur faris la unuajn eksperimentojn, kiuj montris la fonton, la kaŭzon de malsanoj. Do li malkovris la mikrobojn esence, li tiam ne havis la teknikon por videbli ilin kiel ni nun povas fari, sed li pruvis ke ili devas ekzisti. Kaj kio estas tiuj mikroboj, aferoj tre malgrandaj nevideblaj kiuj disiras tra la mondo tra la aero portante kun si ian misteran povon kiun homoj poste sentas en siaj korpoj, en siaj koroj? Nun, ni estas, ĉu ne? Ni esperantistoj, ni estas virtaj mikroboj @*

All: @@@

*Kiuj, kiel antaŭdiris Zamenhof en sia unua parolado en Bulonjo-ĉe-Marco, disiras tra la mondo nevideble flugante por porti la verdan spiriton kaj la senton kaj komprenon de paco kaj la kapablon interkompreniĝi al ĉiuj homoj de la mondo [a single attempt at applause]*

*Do @ do ni povas esti ankaŭ fieraj kongresi ĉi tie, ĉar Lille prezentas al ni tiajn belajn modelojn kaj metaforojn de nia afero. Koran dankon al vi.*

[But it (=Lille) is also a remarkable town because of two other things (...) It is a town with a citadel, maybe some of you have already had the opportunity to visit it during the week (...) why was it so extraor- extraordinary, this citadel (...) well, this citadel, what form does it have to resist all the attacks of the times, the attacks of the wars? It has the form of a star.

A: @@@

And so the citadel is in a certain sense a beautiful symbol for us, even more because it is no longer a thing of the war now, as it was transformed into a park, a park with a zoo, into a park with large avenues and flowers and a botanical garden and so on. That's exactly the transformation that Esperantists aim to carry into the world, into a world constantly at war, we are carrying a garden citadel.

All: @@

And one last remarkable thing in the history of Lille is that it was in this town that the great French scientist Louis Pasteur conducted his first experiments which showed the source, the reason for diseases. In this way, he essentially discovered microbes, back then he did not have the technology to show them that we now have, but he proved that they must exist. And what are these microbes, very little invisible things that spread into the world through the air carrying with them a kind of mysterious power that people feel later in their

bodies, in their hearts? Well, we are, aren't we? We Esperantists are virtuous microbes @

All: @@@

Who, as Zamenhof foretold in his first speech in Boulogne-sur-Mer, spread through the world, invisibly flying to carry the green spirit and the sense and understanding of peace and the capability to make oneself understood to all people in the world [a single attempt at applause]

So @ so we can also be proud to have our congress here because Lille presents to us those beautiful models and metaphors of our cause. Warm thanks to you.]

[153 (eng; cerem; Lille) 22:27–25:57]

If what researchers on stylistics tell us about the effect of a simile is correct – that the less plausible the relationship between the two items, the more impressive its effect – then (319) is especially successful. In addition, this last example illustrates the role that Esperanto culture plays for both the choice and the reception of rhetorical devices such as metaphors and similes in Esperanto communication. They mainly relate to the speakers' realm of experience, and, as this speech shows, to enjoy them to the full people have to be familiar with the history of the community (see the reference to Zamenhof's speech), its key texts ("la mondo eterne militanta" is a quote from Zamenhof's poem *La Espero*), with cultural elements and symbols such as the figurative meaning of the colour green and the green star as the manifestation of the community.

## 21.8 Some concluding remarks on phraseology and metaphors in Esperanto

This investigation has revealed that Esperanto possesses a rich phraseology. It shares with other phraseologies the attribute of uniting both universal and culturally specific components. In communication, phraseological units are applied with a large variety of pragmatic functions. Phraseology is not ornamental but fundamentally purposeful. It contributes to textual composition: PUs constitute textual meaning and develop coherence. In addition, our dataset confirms findings from previous examinations about the text-organising function of PUs and their situational modification. In a similar vein, metaphors and similes are often found at specific points in communicative events where they are used to express emotions and attitudes along with ideational content.

Phraseology should not be explored wholly in isolation. It often co-occurs with figures of speech such as metaphors and similes and with other stylistic devices such as wordplay. Their employment in discourse corroborates what we have already seen in Chapter 20 on humour: linguistic creativity is at the heart of the Esperanto speech community. It is not exclusive to poems and novels, but pervasive in all

genres that constitute our dataset. It can contain elements of preformulation but is often emergent in spoken language exchanges and co-constructed. Its use is often appreciated or explicitly commented on (see for example (315)), which indicates speakers' metalingual awareness.

Recently, research in English as a lingua franca has focused on L2 speakers' phraseological variation and creativity (Bell, 2012; Pitzl, 2012, 2015). A problem that emerges in this context is the extent to which the deviation from a standard (or canonical) form produced by a non-native speaker is accepted as creative alteration or dismissed as a linguistic mistake. Carter (2016, pp. xxvii) asks, "where are lines drawn between errors and creative uses of language by learners?" Prodromou (2007) found in an investigation that the same instance of a creative use of a PU (*I'm always glad when for example I bump into a new expression*) was accepted by a vast majority of respondents who were informed that it had been produced by an L1 speaker, whereas it was considered unacceptable by about half of the respondents within the group who were told it was a non-native speaker's utterance. As the many examples in this chapter show, Esperanto speakers seem to be better off in this respect. Creative language use is pervasive and highly appreciated in Esperanto communication, in word formation as well as in phraseology. Dasgupta (2021) points out:

[...] Esperanto, thanks to its far greater transparency and symmetry, takes a speaker to the point of unique and exact target-hitting that is the mark of the best athletes. Beyond the physical thrill of such performance, these resources make the speaker feel that she has all the power of a co-creator, equal to language itself. Learning Esperanto gives every speaker this unique access to a feeling that is not otherwise available in one's experiences in any other language – access to the heart of linguistic creativity itself.

This might be one of the reasons why Esperanto speakers do not like their language to be called a foreign language.<sup>137</sup>

Our pilot study on the rise and use of the phrase *fosi la sulkon* has shown that the investigation of the phraseological past of Esperanto is a rewarding topic and that much work in this field remains to be done. The existence and further development of the Esperanto phrasicon, which has to be seen in close relation to its speech community, proves to be an important criterion in establishing the transition from language project to actual language.

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137. A piece of anecdotal evidence: in the questionnaire study mentioned in this chapter as a basis for the original investigation on phraseology (Fiedler, 1999), many speakers reacted to the question of whether they knew a phraseological unit "from Esperanto or another foreign language" (*Mi konas la esprimon el Esperanto/el alia fremdlingvo*) with the indignant statement: *Esperanto ne estas fremdlingvo (por mi)!* ('Esperanto is not a foreign language [to me]!').



## Code-switching in Esperanto communication

### 22.1 Introduction

Language alternation has been intensively investigated in different fields in recent decades,<sup>138</sup> and research has led to the dissemination of a number of terms, including code-switching, code-mixing, or code-crossing. *Code-switching* will be used here as a general term to refer to all types of systematic alternation between two or more languages in oral or written communication. In our dataset, two basic types of code-switches can be distinguished which correspond to the conversational typology proposed by Auer (1999) (see also Stell, 2015). Auer (1999) distinguishes between alternational code-switching (language alternation) and insertional code-switching (code-mixing). In the case of the former type, the switch is often participant-related. This is illustrated in Example (320), where the tour guide, during an excursion, interrupts her commentary in Esperanto to thank the bus driver, who does not speak Esperanto:

- (320) *Ni dankas nian ŝoforon por la klarigo. Merci, Philippe. Mi volas [...]*  
 [We thank our driver for the explanation. **Merci, Philippe**. I would like to (...)]  
 [118 (fra; tour; Lille) 83:13]

- (321) *Ni povas demandi nian popolon enmetante en la en la sakon de la dokumentoj unu folion. Kiel bone vi trovis tiun kaj tiun aranĝon, kiun entutan impreson, ĉu bona aŭ malbona, smiley aŭ io simila. Per tio oni povas iom pli vaste ekkoni la impreson kiun havas la ordinara publiko.*

[We can ask our people by putting a piece of paper into the into the (conference) bag with documents. How good did you find this and this event, what is your general impression, good or bad, a **smiley** or something similar. In this way one can gauge the overall impression that the ordinary audience has.]

[144 (deu; disc; Lille) 86:35]

In insertional code-switching (code-mixing), “a content word (noun, verb, rarely adjective/adverb) is inserted into a surrounding passage in the other languages” (Auer, 1999, p. 314). Such insertion can be seen in Example (321), where a speaker

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138. For overviews of the research topic see, for example, Gross (2006), Mahootian (2006) and Gardner-Chloros (2013).



resorts to an expression that he would use in his native German, because he probably doesn't know it, or can't recall it, in Esperanto at that moment. The two types of code-switching are not only different in structure, but also with regard to their pragmatic function, as the examples show and as will be discussed in more detail later.

In addition to these two main types, our dataset includes a small number of occurrences of code-switching in which speakers unintentionally fall back into their L1. Example (322) presents one such slip of the tongue. The French host of a cultural programme of the *Internacia Arta Vespero (IAV)* (International Art Evening) uses a French word (*dernière*) instead of the Esperanto one and corrects her mistake immediately. Examples of this kind were dealt with in Chapter 19 on repairs.

- (322) *Dankon al ĉiuj artistoj, dankon al ĉiuj teknikistoj por tiu unua parto de la vespero. Nia jubila IAVo estas finita. Sed nun estas la koncerto de de Eruda Li. Do mi salutas vin tutkore dernière (.) lastfoje.*

[Thank you to all artists, thank you to all technicians for this first part of the evening. Our jubilee IAV is closed. But now it's time for the concert of of Eruda Li. So, I am greeting you cordially dernière (.) for the last time.]

[166 (fra; tour; Lille) 102:20–39]

Another type of contact phenomena that we do not include in our discussion in this chapter is quotations, as in Example (323), as quotations are not part of a speaker's utterance or text. Quotations are “mentioned, not used” in de Brabanter's (2004, p. 2) words. The same is true for words or phrases in another language that are given as object-language examples or explanations in texts on linguistic topics, as shown in Example (324):

- (323) *Strange, ke ni ne trovis unu la alian. Mi precipe atendis ĉe tiu ŝtuparo, ĉar mi pensis durch diese hohle Gasse muss sie kommen.*

[Strange that we didn't find each other. I was waiting specifically by this staircase, because I thought *durch diese hohle Gasse muss sie kommen* (lit. ‘she must come along this hollow alley’ – an adapted quotation from Schiller's “Wilhelm Tell”)]

[(deu; infl; Lille 26 July 2015), memory notes]

- (324) *Sed nun devas atenti. Estas multaj vortoj, kies reduplikado, se oni uzas dufoje, ne signifas la pluralon, ekzemple mata estas 'okulo', mata mata 'spiono'*

[But now [you] have to pay attention. There are many words whose reduplication, if one uses [them] twice, does not mean the plural, for example, *mata* is ‘eye’, and *mata mata* ‘spy’.]

[42 (hun; pres; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 44:31–47]

Because of their particular nature, we will not focus on quotations and object-language uses here. It is worth mentioning, however, that language alternations of these two types play an important role in Esperanto texts, something which can

be explained by the fact that Esperanto speakers are bilingual (if not plurilingual) speakers and that there is a strong interest in language-related topics within the speech community.

The phenomenon of code-switching has not been analysed in Esperanto communication so far, to the best of our knowledge. Concerning lingua francas, much research has been carried out on code-switching in English as a lingua franca (ELF). Meierkord (2002, p. 124) discusses language alternation phenomena as an expression of ‘communicative hybridity’ in lingua franca communication. Pözl (2003) describes the use of other-language material in ELF as “signalling cultural identity”. Pözl and Seidlhofer (2006) point out that switching to another language in lingua franca interactions has to be seen in relation to speakers’ ‘habitat’. According to Klimpfinger (2009), ELF speakers use code-switching for specifying addressees, signalling culture, appealing for assistance, and introducing ideas. Motschenbacher (2013, pp. 62ff.) describes three types of “micro-switching in ELF talk” in his study on language use during the Eurovision Song Contest: asking for assistance, creating the Eurovision experience, and greetings. Altogether, ELF researchers attach special significance to code-switching. Jenkins (2007, p. 35) points out that “in many countries of the expanding circle (...) code-switching and code-mixing have become the norm among their English-knowing bilinguals”.

Recent studies (e.g. Hülmbauer, 2011; Hülmbauer & Seidlhofer, 2013; Jenkins, 2015, 2017) have described communication by means of English as a lingua franca as a “multilingual mode” per se or a “multilingual franca” because – as the argument goes – it always includes different languages in addition to English (see Chapter 2). Hülmbauer and Seidlhofer (2013, p. 390) point out:

ELF is used as a shared resource which becomes activated in linguistically diverse settings. (...) No matter how much of the plurilingual influence is directly observable on the surface structure of ELF talk – the important thing is that there is, in principle, room for integration of plurilingual elements. ELF thus clearly has to be viewed as a multilingual mode.

To the authors of this book this seems an unjustified exaggeration. Hülmbauer and Seidlhofer’s examples, including wrong word formations such as *financiate* (for *finance*), the use of *information* as a countable noun, and the use of false friends (e.g. *studied grossly*) are not very convincing. True, uses like these can be frequently heard in ELF talk and do not hamper understanding. However, ELF users should not be credited too much for such allegedly creative forms, as these might simply turn out to be instances of poorly learned English ... a conclusion that might be proven by the fact that most of them would be corrected immediately if the passages were transferred into written communication.

As code-switching is a technique that occurs more frequently in informal speech styles (Poplack, 1981, pp. 179–180; Jones, 2005, p. 4), our dataset (see Chapter 5) provides a suitable basis for investigating this phenomenon. The aim of the analysis is to describe code-switching in Esperanto speech events with regard to their forms (from single words to complete microtexts) and the main functions that they serve. It will also include a quantitative study. We have seen in previous chapters (on metacommunication, repair work and phraseology) that speakers' practices are closely related to their attitudes toward Esperanto communication. This seems to be particularly true for the topic addressed in this chapter. It would therefore first be useful to shed some more light on a specific feature that characterises the Esperanto speech community – a speaker's position relative to the use of other-language material.

## 22.2 “Ne krokodilu” – language loyalty as a main characteristic of the Esperanto speech community

‘Krokodili’ (lit. ‘to crocodile/behave like a crocodile’) is one of the few fully idiomatic lexemes that exist in Esperanto. It means ‘to use one’s mother tongue in an Esperanto context’.<sup>139</sup> To do so is considered inappropriate in Esperanto circles. The admonition “Ne krokodilu!” (the ending *-u* marks the imperative of a verb) is sometimes heard at Esperanto meetings. Its use is an expression of the linguistic loyalty that characterises the speech community. For the majority of its speakers, Esperanto not only implies a means of communication but also a vehicle of culture which must be preserved and disseminated. So the planned language should be used whenever possible, even among speakers of the same language.

The following excerpts from conversations illustrate speakers' attitudes towards the phenomenon of *krokodili*. In (325), a Hungarian speaker insistently refuses to use her native language. In (326), speaker A seems to feel caught out or even criticised for not having spoken Esperanto and defends herself, although this was obviously not B's intention.

(325) *Mi ne komprenas ĉi tie la hungaran.*

[I do not understand Hungarian here.]

[36 (hun; infl; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 26:53;

(reaction of a Hungarian speaker when addressed in her native language by a Hungarian speaker at an Esperanto meeting)]

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139. See Chapter 21.3 (especially footnote 128) for a more detailed description.

- (326) A: *Sed vi ne estas el Svisio?*  
 B: *Ne, mi estas hungarino.*  
 A: *Ah jes, mi aŭdis ion, vi parolas la hungaran, parolis la hungaran kun li, ĉu ne? Via telefono antaŭ kelkaj minutoj, ĉu ne?*  
 B: *Jes, sed poste mi mem faris al mi la rimarkon, mi preferus paroli en Esperanto, ĉar ni estas en Esperanto-medio.*  
 A: *Jes jes jes, mi nur rimarkis.*  
 [A: But you are not from Switzerland?  
 B: No, I'm Hungarian.  
 A: Ah yes, I heard something, you speak Hungarian, you spoke to him in Hungarian, didn't you? (in) your phone call a few minutes ago?  
 B: Yes, but afterwards I made a note to myself, I'd prefer to speak Esperanto, as we are in an Esperanto environment here.  
 A: Yes yes yes, I was just pointing it out.]

[37 (deu-hun; infl; La Chaux-de-Fonds) 18:00–24]

In addition to the aim of politeness (by not excluding anybody by using a language that they do not understand), speakers have still other motivations for consistently using Esperanto. One is the fact that Esperanto speakers are geographically dispersed. Their opportunities to use the language not only in writing but also in oral interaction are restricted to brief meetings and conferences, which in their eyes have to be exploited as much as possible to practise the language. Furthermore, in view of the limited recognition that the planned language enjoys in the eyes of the general public, its speakers persistently strive to prove that it really is a fully fledged means of communication able to express every subtlety, so any switch to another language or their mother tongue, and the failure to retrieve a word in Esperanto, might be misinterpreted as a sign of Esperanto's shortcomings.

Peppering one's speech with English words and phrases for reasons of prestige and because English stands indexically for symbolic meanings, such as education, modernity, globalisation, youth, 'coolness' and informality, as has been explored by a number of researchers for various languages (Andersen et al. 2017; Androutsopoulos, 2007, 2013; Onysko, 2007; Onysko & Winter-Froemel, 2011), has traditionally been stigmatised in Esperanto. This attitude is often reflected in linguocritical contributions in Esperanto journals. For example, in an article with the telling title "Angla malsano fuŝas nian Esperanton" ('English disease messing up our Esperanto') a Finnish Esperanto speaker offers the following opinion on borrowing English words:<sup>140</sup>

140. It seems to be difficult to find clear-cut differences between borrowing and code-switching. A number of authors have discussed the relationship between these two types of contact form, using criteria such as frequency, degrees of assimilation and existence of an equivalent in the receiving language (Gardner-Chloras, 2013; Jones, 2005; Matras, 2009, pp. 110–114; Myers-Scotton, 1992; Onysko, 2007; Romaine, 1995).

*Estas tute nature, ke Esperanto enkondukas el la angla modernajn vortojn kiel ekz. ĵazo, ĵipo, ĵinzo k.a. kun ioma ortografia ŝanĝo konforme laŭ la postuloj de la strukturo de Esperanto. Kiam oni neglektas la principojn de Esperanto kiel “kunmeta” lingvo /aglutineco/, aŭ kiam oni volas anstataŭi jam kutimajn vortojn per pli “fajnaj” angladevenaj vortoj, oni misvojas ĝisrande de pereco. Ni analizu kelkajn kazojn:*

*1/Fuelo /fuel/ = brulaĵo estas nura kodo, nenion diranta pri sia funkcio, dum “brulaĵo” estas regule formita, sufiĉe mallonga kaj bela vorto, diranta esencon pri sia funkcio, tute sendepende ĉu temas pri ligno, karbo, benzino, nafto, uranio, kvankam en la lasta kazo okazas ne vera “brulado”, sed ĉenreakcio, tamen la sama vorto pro analogio estas uzenda, ankaŭ pro lingva ekonomio./*

(...)

*Ni ne dorlotu Esperanton per falsaj, malpropraj elementoj, ĉar tio estas “ursa” servo por nia lingvo kaj la tuta afero de internacia lingvo. Esperanto vivu per si mem! J. Jänntti, Finnlando*

[It is completely natural for Esperanto to introduce modern words from English, e.g. ĵazo (jazz), ĵipo (jeep), ĵinzo (jeans), etc. with some orthographic changes in accordance with the structural requirements of Esperanto. When one neglects the principles of Esperanto as a “composing” language (agglutination) or when one wants to substitute words that have already become habitual with “fine” words of English origin, one goes the wrong way to the brink of destruction. Let us analyse some cases:

1 /Fuelo/fuel = brulaĵo [brul- ‘burn’ + -aĵ ‘concrete thing’, i.e. something that is burnt] is a mere code saying nothing about its function, whereas “brulaĵo” is a regularly formed, sufficiently short and nice word that expresses the essence of its function completely independent of the fact of whether it concerns wood, coal, petrol, oil, uranium, although, in the latter case, there is no real burning, but a chain reaction, but for reasons of analogy the same word must be used, also for reasons of language economy.

(...)

We should not pepper Esperanto with false, foreign elements, as then we do our language, and the whole cause of an international language, a disservice. Esperanto can stand alone!]

[Starto 4/1980, p. 13–14]

In a similar way, the author of the following article criticises code-switching as snobbishness:

*Unu el miaj korespondantoj estas samideano el Budapeŝto, kiu skribas longajn leterojn en ne malbona Esperanto, sed li havas la kutimon spici siajn epistolojn ne nur per abundo da neologismoj, sed ankaŭ per anglaj vortoj kaj esprimoj. Jen kelkaj ekzemploj.*

“*La unua espero estas, ke la registaroj/ the Governments:/ ... fine rekonos kaj ekfavoros Esperanto.*”

“*Se paroli pri la ‘koloritaj ĝentlemanoj’/ : coloured gentlemen:/ ...*

« ... kiel la bona olda / : the good old:/ Majstro Zamenhof ... »

“*We are in the same shoes!*”

“*Se vi estas tiome ‘punctilious’ pri la interpretado (...)*”(…)

*Kial, do, la budapeŝta letterskribanto kaj tuta aro de aliaj esperantistoj havas la emon trudi anglaĵon al siaj samideanoj ? Mi povas proponi kialon, kiu estas tre memevidenta : la snobeco. Homo, kiu lernas fremdan lingvon volas uzi ĝin por parade montrian ofte nur suprajn lingvoscion. Ŝajnas, ke hodiaŭ la angla lingvo, estante ĉe la apogeo de sia sukceso, nutras la kulturan kaj edukon superecon de tiuj snoboj. (...)*

[One of my pen pals is a fellow thinker [= Esperanto supporter] from Budapest who writes long letters in an Esperanto that is not bad, but he has the habit of spicing his epistles not only with lots of neologisms, but also with English words and expressions. Here are some examples:

“The first hope is that governments (...) finally recognise and favour Esperanto.”

“When speaking about the ‘coloured gentlemen’ (...)”

“as the good old Master Zamenhof (...)”

“We are in the same shoes!”

“If you are that punctilious about the interpretation (...)” (...)

So why are the pen pal from Budapest and a whole group of other Esperantists so inclined to impose English stuff on their fellow thinkers? I can propose a reason which is self-evident: snobbishness. Someone who learns a foreign language wants to use it to show off his/her often only superficial language knowledge. It seems that today the English language, standing at the height of its success, nourishes the cultural and educational superiority of these snobs.]

[*La Brita Esperantisto* majo-aŭgusto 1980]

The opinions expressed in these two articles might explain the relatively low number of code-switches that we found in our dataset – a topic to which we will return.

As already mentioned, the Esperanto speech community is heterogeneous. Speakers learn and use Esperanto for very different reasons and stick to traditional values of the community to different degrees. It is therefore not surprising to find different attitudes towards the use of national languages at Esperanto meetings. See, for example, the following passage from a panel discussion at a World Esperanto Congress with a representative of the Universal Esperanto Association UEA (speaker C) reacting to a speaker who reproached some participants for not having continuously spoken Esperanto during the event.

- (327) A: Ĉiuj parolas (.)  
 B: ... la saman lingvon!  
 [...]  
 B: Kelkaj krokodilas.  
 C: Nu, ni provas zorgi, ke homoj sentu sin komfortaj ankaŭ uzi kiam necese la propran lingvon, ĉar ĉiuj estas multlingvaj almenaŭ dulingvaj.  
 [A: Everyone speaks (.)  
 B: ...the same language!  
 [...]  
 B: Some speak their national language in the Esperanto environment.  
 C: Well, we try to make sure that people also feel comfortable using, if necessary, their own language, because all are multilingual, at least bilingual.]  
 [79 (fra-pol-eng; disc; Lille) 10:57–11:27]

The recent trend within the speech community towards multilingual strategies at conferences (see Pietiläinen, 2010; Fiedler, 2018b) – an example will follow below – takes account of the insight that linguistic diversity could contribute to a growing recognition of Esperanto. Tonkin (2006, p. 24) argues,

*(...) pro nia insisto paroli inter ni en Esperanto, ni foje forŝlosas la komencantojn aŭ entute aperas antaŭ la publiko kiel nepretaj akomodigi al la eksterstarantoj. Pro lingvaj baroj ĉe la virtualaj landlimoj de Esperantujo, ni fermiĝas en ni mem, kaj montras malsimpation al komencantoj, al saĝaj kritikoj el ekstere, kaj eĉ al homoj, kiuj pretas nin helpi se ni nur pretas dediĉi al ili atenton. „La plej granda lingva barilo estas tiuj, kiujn ni mem konstruis, ĉirkaŭ nia insuleca kulturo,“ mi diris, foje iom frustre.*

[...] because of our insistence on speaking among ourselves in Esperanto, we sometimes exclude beginners or altogether appear to the public as unprepared to accommodate to outsiders. Due to language barriers at the virtual borders of Esperantoland, we close ourselves off and show a dislike for beginners, for constructive criticism from outside and even for people who are ready to help us if only we are ready to devote attention to them. “The biggest language barriers are those that we construct ourselves around our island-like culture,” I said, sometimes a bit frustrated.]

From the above we can conclude that code-switching in Esperanto communication involves the competing aspects of, on the one hand, speakers’ attitudes of language loyalty and group identity (which are possibly changing and have different degrees of relevance for individual speakers), which entail the stigmatisation of the phenomenon, and, on the other hand, the speakers’ plurilingual competences and their communicative experiences and behaviour in their native languages, where they are familiar with the ubiquity of bilingual practices in the media and on the Internet, especially as a consequence of the growing role of English (Androustopoulos, 2013; Fiedler, 2014; Zenner et al., 2014). This situation makes an analysis of language alternation phenomena in Esperanto particularly intriguing.

## 22.3 Types, functions and extent of code-switching

### 22.3.1 Code-switching and setting

Esperanto meetings and conferences often present themselves as multilingual gatherings. They are embedded in academic, cultural, touristic or other events. Let us analyse two recent occasions in our dataset in which Esperanto presents the default language (or the unmarked choice according to Myers-Scotton 1998) from this viewpoint. The first is the Tria Interlingvistika Simpozio (Third Interlinguistic Symposium) at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland (24th–25th September 2014). As a regular fixture in the university's calendar, it included talks in Esperanto (21), English (5) and Polish (13), with multilingual PowerPoint slides and discussions. Esperanto dominated as the language of informal talks during conference breaks. At the opening and during a dinner, several university representatives delivered speeches in Polish which were translated into Esperanto. For reasons of politeness, some of the speakers started their addresses with some introductory words or phrases in the host's language or in Esperanto.

The second example is the 100th World Esperanto Congress (100-a Universala Kongreso de Esperanto) (in the French town of Lille, July 25–August 1, 2015) which brought together 2,698 Esperanto speakers from eighty countries. The annual international congresses are highlights in the life of the speech community and are often regarded as the embodiment of its culture, and certainly the most evident demonstration of people's Esperanto identity (Edwards, 2010, p. 188). In principle, Esperanto is spoken at these congresses at all times, including excursions, concerts and theatre performances. Depending on the specific communicative situation (characterised above all by the interlocutors and their relationships to each other, the formality of the setting and the role of the language), other languages could also be heard in Lille, of course. Not only did congress participants occasionally choose to use their native tongue when talking to their compatriots to highlight their national identity, which means that they decided to *krokodili*, but French and English were also necessary for communicating with the congress service staff. Furthermore, parts of the cultural programme were pitched at the local population. When, for instance, the bands played their music for the congress participants, they introduced their Esperanto songs in Esperanto only; when they gave their concerts to citizens from Lille in another location, they spoke Esperanto and French or Esperanto and English. During the congress opening and closing ceremonies and at the mayor of Lille's reception, town representatives gave their speeches in French, which were interpreted into Esperanto, and congress representatives spoke Esperanto and were interpreted into French.

In settings like the meetings described above, Esperanto represents the pragmatically dominant language and can serve as a basis for code-switching when



speakers communicate in their native language, as in Examples (328) and (329), which include conversations among congress participants waiting for their buses on the excursion day in front of the congress building. Frequently used words such as *kongresejo* ('congress building') and *Akademio* (= *Akademio de Esperanto* 'Esperanto Academy') have the status of realia that can be best expressed in Esperanto:

- (328) *Des kongresejo, macht des schon um 8 auf? [...] Na, heit net, [...] aber sonst.*  
 [The *kongresejo*, does it open at 8? [...] Well, not today, but usually]  
 [118 (deu; tour; Lille) 3:23–38]  
*Heute wär an schöner Tag zum Fotografieren, heut sam er net da, vorm kongresejo mit den Fahnen. I mein bloß.*  
 [Today would be a nice day to take photos, today we aren't there, with the *kongresejo* and the flags. It just occurred to me.] [117 (deu; tour; Lille) 7:24]
- (329) *Das ist wirklich nicht so gut organisiert. Guck mal, selbst der Chef von der Akademio sucht noch seinen Bus.*  
 [This isn't really organised that well. Look, even the boss of the *Akademio* is still looking for his bus.] [118 (deu; infl; Lille) 3:10]

Code-switching is also constrained by the formality of a situation (Poplack, 1981, pp. 179–180). Examples (330) and (331) represent comparable functions: a speaker counts the number of people in a group, a linguistic performance that is generally difficult to deliver in a foreign language:

- (330) *Vi estas kun mi? [...] Do bone unu, du, en français, un, deux, trois, quatre [...]*  
 [Are you with me (in our group)? [...] Well then unu, du, in French, un, deux, trois, quatre ...] [122 (fra; tour; Lille) 12:26–40]
- (331) *Mi petas vin voĉdoni por la amendo [...] Kiu estas POR tia amendo? Bonvolu levi la manon. Do mi devas nombri (.) unu du, tri kvar [...] dudek du. Dudek du bone. Kaj kiu estas KONTRAŬ?*  
 [I ask you to vote for the amendment (...) Who is FOR the amendment? Please raise your hand. Well, I have to count (.) one two three four (...) twenty-two. Twenty-two good. And who is AGAINST it?]  
 [157 (eng; disc; Lille) 59:57–60:47]

The two speakers are similarly fluent and competent speakers of the planned language, who used only Esperanto in the passages before and after. Whereas the tour guide, who performs the speech act more or less for herself without addressing the tourists, falls back into her native language, French, the chair of a meeting of the UEA committee sticks to Esperanto during the vote count. Using another language would be unacceptable in an official meeting like this.

### 22.3.2 Functions of code-switching in Esperanto

As Matras (2009, p. 115) points out, speakers' motivations to choose one language over another are multiple and complex. They depend on attitudes among members of the speech community, communicative situations (see Chapter 22.2), but also an individual speaker's personality. It is the aim of this section to describe the most important motivations that can be identified in Esperanto communication, or rather our dataset of communication. These include the wish to express politeness in interactions with people from outside the community (Section A), to solve lexical problems (Section B), to enhance the degree of lexical precision (C) and to evoke humour (Section D).

#### A. *Expressing politeness*

By this function we mean the switch to an interlocutor's native language to acknowledge their national identity. Switches of this kind are frequently implemented in greetings and serve to save the positive face of interactants (Motschenbacher, 2013, p. 75). As described in relation to Example (320), including complete utterances, they represent alternational code-switches in Auer's (1999) classification. Blom and Gumperz (1972) call instances motivated by variables such as changes with regard to topics or interlocutors transactional or situational code-switches. This distinguishes them from metaphorical code-switches by which speakers express their momentary intentions, attitudes and emotions.

The following examples occurred in official situations, such as greetings and opening speeches during congresses and receptions. In (332), during the opening ceremony of the World Esperanto Congress, the representative of the International League of Esperanto-Speaking Teachers *ILEI* uses a bilingual mode to express her esteem for the French hosts. In (333), the mayor of the French town of Boulogne-sur-Mer addresses the participants of the same congress with a greeting in Esperanto:

(332) *Mesdames et Messieurs, les représentants de la ville de Lille et de la région.*  
*Altestimataj reprezentantoj de la urbo Lille kaj de la regiono.*

[Ladies and gentlemen, representatives of the city of Lille and of the region.  
(Esperanto:) Highly esteemed representatives of the city of Lille and of the region] [69 (fra; cerem; Lille) 91:41]

(333) *Bonvenon en Francio! [...]*

[Welcome to France (continuing in French:) My Esperanto isn't too good, which is why I will continue in French] [69 (fra; cerem; Lille) 11:23–41]

In both these speech sequences, the use of the other language is symbolic and strictly speaking communicatively superfluous. As Kimura (2015) describes in his investigation of language strategies in a German-Polish border region, a few words

in the addressee's language are already sufficient to achieve the desired effect of promoting cooperativeness and solidarity, and the mode is especially appreciated in the case of asymmetrical relationships, i.e. with a "small" language such as Polish (in Kimura's study) or Esperanto in our case.

### B. *Word search*

Discussing repairs in Chapter 19 (especially in Section 19.3.3), we found that, in the case of lexical problems, Esperanto speakers often create expressions using the resources of Esperanto word formation, as described in Chapter 11. Another strategy is that speakers draw on their multilingual repertoire and present the word in their mother tongue or another language, on the assumption that the interlocutor will be able to offer the equivalent in Esperanto. Gafaranga (2012) describes the close relationship between code-switching and repair sequences. In our dataset, code-switching is implemented in about 40% of all word-search sequences. In Example (334), during an excursion, a guide reports on the Courrières mine disaster in France in 1906. She uses French, her mother tongue, for some of the words she cannot remember easily in Esperanto and asks the French participants for confirmation:

(334) A: (about trapped miners) *Ili suĉis, ĉu estas suĉis? Sucer?*

B: *Jes.*

A: *Su- Suĉis le- le cuir? En Esperanto mi ne plu kapablas, ledon.*

[(about trapped miners) They sucked, is suĉi the right word, **sucer**?

B: *Yes.*

A: *Su- sucked le- le cuir? I can't continue in Esperanto, leather.]*

[127 (fra-?; tour; Boulogne-sur-Mer) 17:52–18:16]

In (335), a Cuban speaker lacking the Esperanto word to express 'lazy' provides the Spanish equivalent, *vago*, while in Example (336) another speaker of Spanish experiencing a lexical gap finds it more useful to offer an English word (*reluctant*):

(335) A: (on communication among youths) *La homoj hodiaŭ estas eh kiel oni povas esprimi vago?*

B: *pigra*

A: *pida, ili*

B: *PIGRA*

A: *Ili estas pigra pigraj kaj ne volas skribi kaj skribi al la estraro, sed simple faras kaj sendas.*

[A: (on communication among youths) People today are uh how can we express **vago**?

B: *pigra*

A: pida, they

B: PIGRA

A: They are pigra (= lazy) and don't want to write and write to the board, but simply do and send (accompanied by the gesture of pressing a computer key)] [192 (spa-spa; disc; Havana) 11:32]

(336) A: [...] *niaj fakaj asocioj, [...] multaj el ili montriĝas tre, mi ne povas uzi unu alian vorton ol la anglan, reluctant*

B: *malvolontaj*

A: *malvolontaj aŭ aŭ*

B: *malentuziasmaj*

A: *malentuziasmaj aŭ iel indiferentaj al la evoluo de [...], al lingvopolitikaj temoj.*

[A: (...) our specialist associations, many of them show themselves to be very, I cannot use another word but the English one, **reluctant**

B: *malvolontaj* (unwilling)

A: *malvolontaj* or or

B: *malentuziamaj* (unenthusiastic) or in a way indifferent to the development of (...), to linguopolitical topics.] [144 (spa-eng; disc; Lille) 8:35–9:03]

Code-switching that serves this function can be considered a sign of cooperation and solidarity in the speech community, based on the fact that Esperanto is a means of equitable communication as its speakers have had to learn it as a foreign language and therefore experienced for themselves how it feels to be a beginner. They are therefore generally eager to support other users in their endeavours to learn the language and to communicate successfully.

### C. *Enhancing precision*

Occasionally, code-switches in our dataset are motivated by the intention to provide the most appropriate term for a notion. This is sometimes the case with administrative vocabulary that cannot be readily expressed in Esperanto. In (337), a talk between two German speakers, it would not have been difficult for A to find an Esperanto equivalent for *Sprachenzentrum*, but this would not have been as specific as the German term.<sup>141</sup> Referring to Poplack (1980), Gardner-Chloros (2013, p. 196) calls this *mot juste switching*:

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141. *Sprachenzentrum* ('language centre') is the term that is generally used at German universities to designate the departments that are responsible for teaching foreign languages to students of non-philological subjects.

- (337) A: *Mi instruas Esperanton ĉe la universitato. [...] La Universitato de <name of the town> havas kurson de Esperanto por komencantoj [...]*  
 B: *En kiu kadro, en kiu fakultato?*  
 A: *Estas tiu Sprachenzentrum. [...] Do estis amuza historio [...]*  
 [A: I teach Esperanto at the university. (...) The University of <name of the town> has an Esperanto course for beginners (...)]  
 B: In which framework, in which faculty?  
 A: It's this Sprachenzentrum. (...) So, there was a funny story (...)]  
 [63 (deu; int; -) 9:27–57]

Code-switching that serves this function can be found, above all, in specialist contexts. Example (338) is taken from an Esperanto teachers' symposium. For reasons of clarity (and professionalism), a Swiss-French author prefers the internationally well-known term *curriculum* over a possible Esperanto equivalent. In Example (339), from a lecture in astronomy, a speaker introduces an Esperanto term and adds the English expression for reasons of clarity:

- (338) *Jam ĉe edukado.net estas curriculum pri edukado al kulturo de paco, kio estas ia vasta priskribo.*  
 [On edukado.net there is already a curriculum about education for a culture of peace, which is a rather general description.] [103 (fra; pres; Lille) 55:47]
- (339) (...) *estas multaj galaksioj en grupo. Tiu grupo kiu nomiĝas eh grapolo de galaksioj, cluster en la angla, povas kurbigi sunradiojn en tre interesaj manieroj.*  
 [(...) many galaxies in a group. This group, which is called uh cluster of galaxies, cluster in English, can bend solar rays in very interesting ways.]  
 [82 (heb; pres; Lille) 2:00]

Repetitions of this kind for reasons of precision are typical of academic contexts. In these examples, speakers and audience members using Esperanto in their fields of expertise are familiar with the terminology in ethnic languages, while the Esperanto equivalents might not have gained the status of technical terms.

#### D. Language play

The playful use of language is a typical feature of Esperanto communication and can be based on a multitude of strategies and techniques, as we have seen in Chapter 20. Although code-switching is not one of the most frequent of these, examples are easily found. In Example (340), a discussion on culinary terminology during a group meal leads to the creative combination of a German word (*Rübe*) with the Esperanto ending for plural nouns (*-oj*), much to the group's amusement.

- (340) A: *Bongustas, sed mi ne scias kio estas (1) napo*  
 B: *estas napo*  
 C: *ah, napo, tion mi konas, estas "Rübe" en la germana*  
 A: *Ne, napo estas eh la flava*  
 C: *estas diversaj*  
 B: *diversaj Rüboj*  
 A/B/C & others: @@@@  
 B: *nova pluralo – Rüboj*  
 A/B/C & others: @@@  
 [A: Tastes good, but I don't know what it is (..) a turnip  
 B: it's a turnip  
 C: oh, I know turnip, it's "Rübe" in German  
 A: No, turnips are uh the yellow ones  
 C: there are various kinds  
 B: various Rüboj  
 A/B/C & others: @@@@  
 B: a new plural – Rüboj  
 A/B/C & others: @@@] [124 (deu; tour; Lille) 72:36–73:12]

In Example (341), humour is evoked by drawing on knowledge from various languages. The French placename *La Chaux-de-Fonds*, the location of a well-known Esperanto centre, is pronounced in its Esperantised form by speaker A and deliberately misunderstood by speaker B to mean “good-bye” (cf. Italian *ciao*), with the aim of expressing some ironical distance from the place and a particular group of Esperanto speakers associated with it (see also Example (192)). In a similar way, in Example (342) the code-switch serves as an effective means to express sarcasm. In a debate on the language policy pursued by the Rotterdam-based Central Office of the UEA, a speaker makes use of Latin to emphasise his disapproval. To be fully appreciated, both examples rely on the interlocutors’ extralinguistic knowledge within the Esperanto community.

- (341) A: *Ĉu estas iuj interrilatoj kun Ĉaŭdefono? [...]*  
 B: *Kio estas Ĉaŭdefono?*  
 C: (helpful interruption) *Li parolas pri La Chaux-de-Fonds.*  
 B: *Ah, se vi celas La Chaux-de-Fonds [...] Mi pensis, ke vi volas diri « ĝis revido de fono » [...]*  
 [A: Are there any relationships to Ĉaŭdefono? (...)  
 B: What is Ĉaŭdefono?  
 C: (helpful interruption) He is talking about La Chaux-de-Fonds.  
 B: Ah, if you refer to La Chaux-de-Fonds (...) I thought that you wanted to say “bye bye from the background” (...)]  
 [(?-eng-?; disc ; Vienna) World Esperanto Congress, 31 July 1992]

- (342) *UEA diras [...] se vi ne estas almenaŭ tri- aŭ kvar-lingvulo, vi ne estas bona homo. Sed kiuj devas esti la lingvoj [...] Homo roterdamicus kia estus?*  
 [UEA says (...) if you do not speak at least three or four languages, you are not a good human being. But which languages should be learned (...) What would *Homo roterdamicus* look like?] [39 (ita; pres; La Chau-des-Fonds) 23:48–24:23; UEA, the Universal Esperanto Association, is headquartered in Rotterdam]

Concluding this section on the reasons why Esperanto speakers code-switch, it is worth mentioning that in some code-switching situations it is difficult to clearly identify one particular function. Several motivations can overlap. For example, in (336) and (342), it cannot be ruled out that speakers, in addition to their main desire to close a lexical gap and create humour through irony and ridicule, want to show off their knowledge of foreign languages, a function that has not been found salient in the corpus and has therefore not been described.

### 22.3.3 The extent of code-switching in Esperanto

To gain more insight into the general role of language alternation in the Esperanto speech community, we conducted a quantitative study, based on a part of our dataset that amounts to forty hours of spoken data obtained in a variety of communicative settings and a comparison with data obtained in analyses of code-switching in other lingua francas.<sup>142</sup> The analysis suggests that code-switching is not widespread in the Esperanto community. In our dataset of forty hours, eighty-one occurrences of code-switching were found. This is a low number compared to data from other analyses (see Table 14). Klimpfinger (2009, p. 353), investigating code-switching in English as a lingua franca, identified a total of 104 code-switches in eight speech events (twelve hours). A study by Reershemius and Lange (2014) used the German data of the *GeWiss* project (2009–2013) and found 305 potential language alternation phenomena in eighty hours of recorded speech.<sup>143</sup>

The relative infrequency of code-switching in Esperanto indicates some differences in language practices between Esperanto and other languages. Studies of code-switching in English as a lingua franca focus on how interlocutors use

142. A word of caution may be necessary here, as the data obtained from different code-switching studies are not directly comparable because of differences in design, participants and genres.

143. *GeWiss* is a research project on spoken academic language. It provides a corpus of audio recordings and transcriptions of academic communications (lectures and examinations) in German, Polish, Italian and English as an empirical foundation for comparative research. See <http://gewiss.uni-leipzig.de>.

**Table 14.** Number of code-switches in various datasets

	Language	Hours	Code-switches	Code-switches per hour
<i>GeWiss</i> (Reershemius & Lange, 2014)	German	80	305	3.8
Klimpfinger (2009)	ELF	12	104	8.67
This study (see also Fiedler, 2016)	Esperanto	40	81	2.0

particular expressions from their mother tongues with the intention of highlighting their national identity and signalling their culture (see Klimpfinger, 2009; Pözl, 2003). Pözl (2003) points out:

A very straightforward way of making their cultural identity (with focus on primary culture) salient in discourse is the use of lingua franca speakers' 'original voice', i.e. their L1. (p. 4)

One way to achieve this [= to signal their individual cultural identity – S.F./C.R.B.] is by the use of their L1 within ELF. This code option is profoundly linked to ELF users' basic need to identify with what they consider their language, and this is in most cases – as with the individual speakers in this data – their primary language. (p. 20)

Examples of occurrences of code-switching that can be explained by this specific pragmatic function have not been found in the data for Esperanto. Such behaviour would be considered counterproductive in speech events occurring in Esperanto, where interlocutors highlight their Esperanto identity above any other.

A second difference is the stigmatisation of loans from other languages, especially from English, as described in Chapter 22.2. Esperanto speakers are motivated to show that their language is a fully fledged means of communication that allows them to communicate without recourse to material in other languages. Against this backdrop, the relatively low level of code-switching sequences is unsurprising. The correlation between speakers' attitudes and code-switching that our findings suggest is consistent with a number of studies (Myers-Scotton, 2005). Above all, parallels can be drawn to small or endangered languages. For example, Jones (2005, p. 19) found that speakers who had a positive attitude towards their language – in her investigation, this was the obsolescent Jersey Norman French (Jérriais) – and use it every day were least likely to code-switch. Gardner-Chloros (2009, p. 104) mentions several cases where members of a Turkish-speaking community in Greece avoided code-switching "owing to the high level of awareness of the need to protect their language and culture from Greek influence".



## 22.4 Some concluding remarks on code-switching in Esperanto

Our analysis has revealed the influence of sociolinguistically relevant criteria on processes of language alternation in the planned language community. Language alternation depends on extralinguistic factors such as topic, setting and participants, and such variables as whether a speech event occurs entirely in Esperanto, which would be the default language choice among its speakers, or whether other languages are used for short or long stretches of speech in the particular language event.

As regards the forms and functions of language alternation, the study has shown both similarities and differences with investigations on code-switching in other languages. Insertional code-switching (code-mixing) dominates, with single words (above all nouns) being the most frequently code-switched items. Esperanto speakers employ code-switching to bridge lexical gaps by giving equivalents in their native languages and other lingua francas and asking for assistance. In this way, code-switching reflects the varying bilingual competences of individual speakers. In addition, code-switching is motivated by the desire for precision of linguistic expression, but also by courtesy: code-switching serves as a supportive strategy that facilitates comprehension, improves communicative efficiency and strengthens in-group solidarity.

Our quantitative study shows that code-switching is not a major characteristic of Esperanto communication. The number of code-switching sequences is considerably lower in our corpus than in those for other languages, and also in comparison to English when used as a lingua franca. The findings confirm the correlation between code-switching and social identity that has been found in studies on small or endangered languages. Speakers' attitudes towards their language have a bearing on the extent to which they code-switch.

## Written vs oral Esperanto

### 23.1 Introduction

The differences between written and spoken communication in Esperanto merit attention for several reasons. First, as already described in Chapter 7, Esperanto (or a planned language in general) differs from ordinary, i.e. ethnic, languages in the fact that it was designed as a written language and developed its oral mode only later as a result of its use in the speech community. It is worthwhile exploring to what extent these peculiarities of genesis and the predominance of the written medium influence the features of speech. Second, as Esperanto has recently been frequently used in computer-mediated genres (such as emails, Internet forums, or chats), it will be intriguing to analyse these genres in respect to features of oral and spoken communication. Third, although this book does not focus directly on a comparison with other *lingua francas*, we feel motivated to deal with the topic of written vs spoken language because the restriction of research on English as a *lingua franca* (ELF) to spoken communication is often criticised as a major flaw (see Gazzola & Grin, 2013, p. 96; Gnutzmann, 2007, p. 323). As texts produced by non-native speakers of English commonly undergo linguistic revision by native speakers before publication (Mauranen, 2012, p. 71), one might indeed ask whether there exists a written mode of ELF.

Using a dataset that comprises almost exclusively genres of spoken communication (see Chapter 5), we have so far described a number of characteristics typical of this use in the textual-pragmatic area (e.g. repairs and metacommunicative utterances), i.e. properties reflecting the conditions under which spoken language is produced and which can therefore be found in many languages. The focus of analysis will now be on the planned language itself, on lexical and morphosyntactic phenomena, with regard to which Esperanto writing and speech might differ. Before we focus on the characteristics of written and spoken Esperanto, however, we will glance at the research on spoken and written language in general.

## 23.2 Written vs spoken communication

For most people, the distinction between written and spoken language is self-evident. The two are also conceived as different systems, with written language as the “better, purer” form of language and thus suitable for expressing valuable content like poetry and fiction, and spoken language as a simplified variety for daily needs. The differences in their acquisition (for native speakers usually formal vs informal) certainly are of importance for these attitudes. The view of oral language as a “deficient” form of language was prevalent in early linguistics (as much as the problem was discussed at all), while later, with the beginning of modern general linguistics (Ferdinand de Saussure) spoken language was seen as the primary form of language to be explored, with writing only a secondary representation. Only after the Second World War did the relation between spoken and written communication become a topic of linguistic theory, as linguists tried to investigate the particularities of speech and writing without value judgments and prejudices.<sup>144</sup> By contrast, Rupp (1965), investigating the German language, presumed both to be autonomous systems that are independent of each other and cannot be compared. Steger (1967), however, formulated a trade-off approach, generally accepted today, according to which both systems share common linguistic resources, but make different use of them. In this respect, one can expect written and spoken communication to show both universal and language-specific differences, which will be discussed below.

As people are able to distinguish between spoken and written language intuitively, at first glance it should be quite easy to define them (most simply: spoken = audible, written = readable) and to work out their exclusive features. However, this task is in fact much more difficult than it may seem: a speech can be a written text that is read aloud, and spoken conversation can be recorded and transcribed more or less accurately. This aspect is taken into account by Koch and Oesterreicher (1985/2012), who distinguish between the medium and the conception of language (see also Figure 9):

On the one hand, as far as the medium is concerned; we can differentiate between the phonic and the graphic code as the two forms of realization of linguistic utterances. On the other hand, with regard to the communicative strategies or – in other words – to the conception of linguistic discourse, we can, ideally, differentiate between two general modes: written and spoken.

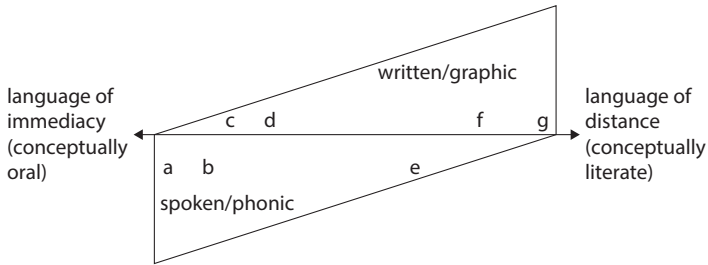
(Koch & Oesterreicher, 1985/2012, p. 443, original emphasis)<sup>145</sup>

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144. For a critical review and detailed discussion about the research literature on the differences between speech and writing, see Jahandarie (1999).

145. Koch and Oesterreicher’s 2012 text is a translation of their 1985 article.

The authors employ the terms “conceptual orality” and “conceptual literacy”,<sup>146</sup> pointing out that whereas “a strict dichotomy” exists “between the phonic and the graphic code”, “[t]he polarity of ‘spoken’ and ‘written’ conceptions stands for a continuum of degrees of conceptual possibilities” (Koch & Oesterreicher, 2012, p. 444). To describe this by means of examples: a scientific paper is conceptually and medially literal; a scientific talk conceptually literal, but medially oral; a spontaneous conversation is conceptually and medially oral, and an online chat is conceptually oral, but medially literal.



**Figure 9.** The model of ‘language of immediacy vs language of distance’ following Koch and Oesterreicher (1985, pp. 18, 23, 2012, pp. 444, 450) (Exemplary text types: *a* = private talk [face to face], *b* = private talk [telephone], *c* = informal chatroom talk, *d* = private letter, *e* = academic talk [monologue], *f* = academic paper, *g* = legislative text)

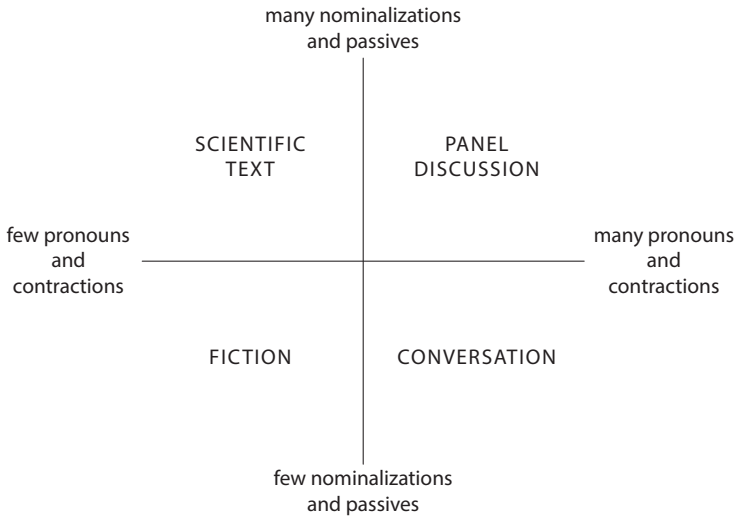
The fact that, in the past, studies on the differences of spoken and written language ignored essential factors apart from the medium used is also pointed out by Gibbs (1999, p. 180):

[...] most comparisons of spoken and written language analyse completely different genres. Researchers typically compare casual conversation with expository prose and attempt to generalise their findings to all aspects of spoken and written language.

Gibbs rightly postulates that in order to attain clear results one must compare texts (spoken and written) representing similar genres. In accordance with this approach, Biber (1988) compared twenty-three spoken and written language varieties (genres) from extensive corpora with regard to sixty-seven linguistic features (including tense and aspect markers, passives, types of subordination and coordination, and negations). His analysis showed that there is no single feature or dimension that sets all spoken texts apart from all written ones and which could serve as a yardstick to

<sup>146</sup>. “Literacy” is defined by the authors as follows: “[t]he term ‘literacy’, as it translates German ‘Schriftlichkeit’, is meant to primarily refer to the abstract quality or condition of being written” (Koch & Oesterreicher, 2012, p. 441).

detect whether a given text is (originally) oral or literal. In fact, within spoken and within written language the differences between genres can be greater than between the two modes. The following illustration from Biber (1988, p. 18) with a sample of four genres and four features may serve as an example:



**Figure 10.** Example of four different genres and their features (Biber, 1988, p. 18)

This does not mean, however, that we cannot distinguish between spoken and written language at all (which would be highly counterintuitive). It just means that the contrast between spoken and written is neither simple nor absolute. This contrast has the character of a gradient scale of genres whose ends are “typical spoken language” (such as face-to-face conversation) and “typical written language” (such as informational exposition), as Biber (1988, pp. 36–37) points out. This does not preclude some genres from possibly having certain “literate” characteristics, and indeed some genres of writing may incorporate “oral” features. Biber (1988, p. 37) describes stereotypical characteristics of the two modes as follows:

In terms of its situational characteristics, stereotypical speech is interactive, and dependent on shared space, time and background knowledge; stereotypical writing has the opposite characteristics [...] In terms of its linguistic characteristics, stereotypical speech is structurally simple, fragmented concrete, and dependent on exophoric (situation-dependent) reference; again, stereotypical writing has the opposite characteristics [...]

Jahandarie (1999) establishes sets of attributes for the two modes on the basis of linguistic evidence – including but not limited to prosodic vs punctuated,

contextualised vs autonomous, involved vs detached, redundant vs concise, other-paced vs self-paced, fuzzy vs precise – and concludes (p. 149):

Most of the linguistic differences between speech and writing may be traced to the interactiveness, evanescence, “on-the-fly” production and the use of prosody in speech that differ from the solitary, permanent, and planned nature of writing [...] even though it has proved impossible to find a precise demarcation that would separate all spoken from all written genres [...], there are very clear patterns of association between each modality and different linguistic structures that point to their relative independence.

Taking Jahandarie’s (1999) sets as a point of departure, Sindoni (2013) described “mode-specific features” for spoken and written genres of online interactions.

Biber’s (1988) study is based on the analysis of English alone. His cross-linguistic comparison of languages from completely different language families (Korean, Somali, and Tuvaluan) (Biber, 1995), however, corroborates his research in so far as he found that the three languages all mark a clear-cut distinction between “stereotypical speech” and “stereotypical writing”, which he demonstrates by means of spontaneous conversations and expository prose. These findings, and particularly the fact that the dissimilarities between speech and writing are universally conditioned by the differences of production and circumstances of realisation of spoken and written language, give cause to conclude that they can be generalised: in order to produce meaning, speech is persistently produced by a (human) voice, and writing uses a script that is made up of graphic symbols. This material difference is an unchangeable conditioning factor, a major consequence of which is the linearity and transience of spoken words in contrast to the permanence of written texts (Lehmann s.a.). Spoken language is commonly produced in real time, with no opportunity for editing. Phonetic, grammatical, or content-related mistakes cannot be undone, only corrected (by so-called repairs, see Chapter 19). Speakers are also prone to dysfluencies, fillers, hesitations, vague expressions, and items that Culpeper and Kytö (2010) call “pragmatic noise”, none of which are usually found in written language, which allows for advance planning and undergoes editorial processes. In other words: genres seen as typical spoken language, such as spontaneous conversation, and those seen as typical writing, for instance a novel, are especially distinct in terms of the planning time available to their producers. In their seminal work on orality vs literacy, Koch and Oesterreicher (1985/2012) emphasise this difference by naming the former “language of proximity” and the latter “language of distance” (see Figure 9), meaning that in typical oral communication the conceptualisation, production, and the sender and receiver (speaker and listener) are locally, temporally, and emotionally near to each other, while in conceptually written communication there may be all kinds of distance between these factors.

The planning factor clarifies why a scientific talk and a scientific paper, both usually thoroughly prepared (thus showing a high degree of planning), are more similar to each other than to a casual chat on the street or in an Internet chat room.<sup>147</sup> In the two latter cases the face-to-face communication and the pace of interactions leave no room for thinking about complex syntactic structures or an elaborate choice of words.

These findings also settle a question which arose with the advent of the World Wide Web and the spread of other Internet services, namely whether written communication on the Internet is a third kind of language, neither written nor spoken (see Crystal, 2001 for an early treatment, and see below for chat communication in Esperanto): the new forms of communication, e.g. blogs, chats, forums, (online) video calls, can also be described using features that characterise them as more or less “typical writing” or “typical speech”. As with the genres outside computer-mediated communication, they rely on sound and voice prosody or a shared graphic system of representation and can therefore be described by our anthropologically based categories (Sindoni, 2013; Sinner, 2014, p. 223).

As we have seen, writing, as the lasting medium, is suitable for preserving, distributing, and presenting complex content. At the same time, though, it also lacks some information present in spoken language, as speech makes use of prosodic features (such as intonation, rhythm, pitch, voice quality and pauses). Speakers also use gestures and facial expressions as well as metacommunicative elements, for example, to address the listener, or to comment on the content or structure of speaking (see Chapter 18), which usually cannot or can only partially be rendered by script. Working on a written text, authors do not see or know their future readers; they cannot adapt to feedback or refer to shared surroundings. Because of this, written texts either have to omit some information or be more explicit than their spoken counterparts.

In addition to these general differences, which are instantiations of universal principles, individual languages have lexemes, grammatical forms, or constructions that are more likely to appear in typical written or typical spoken texts, or are even restricted to one of the modes. Examples include: the passive voice, which occurs more often in written genres than in spoken conversation, as Biber et al. (1999, pp. 935–938) describe; the adverbial active preterite participle in Polish, which is confined to the written language (see Bartnicka & Satkiewicz, 1990, p. 111); and the contraction of the prepositions *an* ‘on’ or *bei* ‘at’ with the definite article *dem* (dative singular) to *am*, *beim*, as well as the omission of the verbal ending *-e* (1st person singular present tense) (*ich gehe* → *ich geh* ‘I go’) in spoken German. For German,

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147. According to Crystal (2001, p. 170) chat conversation “provides a domain in which we can see written language in its most primitive state”.

Lehmann (without year) also compiled a list of lexical items that are typically found in spoken language only (e.g. *dreckig* ‘dirty’, *zumachen* ‘to close’, *kriegen* ‘to get’, *schmeißen* ‘to throw’, *auf* and *zu* ‘open’ and ‘closed’). The following subchapter will address the question of whether such items also occur in spoken Esperanto.

### 23.3 Spoken and written Esperanto

As previous chapters have evidenced (see, above all, Chapter 18 and 19 on meta-communication and repairs), the features that are generally attributed to spoken texts are also manifest in Esperanto communication. They become evident, above all, by comparison with written texts on similar content, as we will illustrate by means of two examples (see also Table 9 in Chapter 18.3.4).

The first example is an excerpt from a transcribed conversation (see key to transcription symbols on p. xvii). In this talk during lunch at the beginning of a scientific symposium, some of the participants and the main organiser of the event (speaker “A”) discuss the programme and technical details of their upcoming lectures:

- (343) 1 A: *Estimataj (.) vi (2) ĉiuj estas (.) invitataj por la bankedo do vi*  
 2 *(2) ne zorgu (.)*                      ⊥*sed nepre*  
 3 B:    ⊥*dankon*  
 4 A: *venu, ĉu ne, ĉar (.) (mi) tiel aranĝis ke (.) vi jam estas*  
 5 *anoncitaj kiel (2) honoraj partoprenantoj (.) @(.)@*  
 6 C:    ⊥*dankon. @(2)@ (.) mi fieras*  
 7 D: (looking at the programme) *ho mi ne prezidas min mem tre bone*  
 8 *ĉar eh*  
 9 A: ⊥*ne mi ( )*  
 10 B: ⊥*@(3)@*  
 11 D: ⊥*ne ŝi faris tiel humure*  
 12 C: ⊥*do mi prezidas vin kaj devas demandi (vin ankoraŭ pli poste)*  
 13 D: *estas iu (???)*  
 14 B: *jes*  
 15 A ⊥*mhmm*  
 16 B: *vi parolos (.) unue kaj poste (.) mi parolos*  
 17 A: *ne (.)*                                      ⊥*mi parolos unue*  
 18 D:    ⊥*mi eĉ ne povas eldiri bone la nomon de*  
 19 C: *(estos la unua.)*  
 20 D: *mi @(anoncu lin)@ @(2)@*  
 21 C: *(.) kaj (.) (estos la dua.)*  
 22 A: *@(.)@*



- 23 B: *mi estos (2) tre (.) mallonga @(3 do)@*
- 24 A: *vi havas kvardek kvin minutojn*
- 25 B: *kvardek kvin (.)*                       $\perp$ *kvardek kvin (.) taŭgas jes*
- 26 D:     $\perp$ *kun la demandoj? kun la demandoj?*
- 27 A: *sed tie eventuale oni povas (.) povu fari iun demandon do vi ne*
- 28     *nepre devas havi kvardek*      $\perp$ *kvin (.) tio rilatas ankaŭ al vi (.)*
- 29 B:     $\perp$ *kvar-dek kvin taŭgas: jes*
- 30 A: *kvardek kvin sume. (.)*
- 31 B:  $\perp$ *jes*
- 32 C:  $\perp$ (*kvardek kvin*)
- 33 D: *MHM*
- 34 A: *jes. (.) ĉar (.) en=eh unu horo*
- 35 D: *ni havas*
- 36 A: *kaj-*
- 37 D: *nur duonhoron poste ĉi tie*
- 38 A: *jes. (.) nur la plenaj prelegoj: ĉefaj prelegoj havas=eh-*
- 39 D:  $\perp$ *do ili estas ĉefaj?*
- 40 A: *jes*
- 41 D: *mi ne vidas ilin: rigardu*
- 42 A: *jes, jes jes jes*
- 43 D: *tute ne aspektas ĉefa*
- [1 A: Dear colleagues (.) you (2) all are (.) invited to the banquet so
- 2     (2) don't worry (.)                       $\perp$ but really
- 3 B:     $\perp$ thanks
- 4 A: come, will you, because (.) (I)'ve arranged for (.) you to
- 5     already be announced (2) as guests      $\perp$ @(. )@
- 6     of honour (.)
- 6 C:     $\perp$ thanks. @(2)@ (.) I'm proud
- 7 D: (looking at the programme) Oh I don't have the chair myself,
- 8     very good because uh
- 9 A:  $\perp$ no I ( )
- 10 B:  $\perp$ @(3)@
- 11 D:  $\perp$ no she made it in such a humorous way
- 12 C:  $\perp$ so I am your chair and I have to ask (you still later)
- 13 D:  $\perp$ there's some ( )
- 14 B: yes
- 15 A: mhm
- 16 B: you'll speak (.) first and later (.) I'll speak
- 17 A: no (.)                                       $\perp$ I'll speak first
- 18 D:     $\perp$ I can't really even pronounce the name of
- 19 C: (will be the first)
- 20 D: could I @ (announce him)@ @(2)@

- 21 C: (.) and (.) (will be the second one.)  
 22 A: ⊥@(.)@  
 23 B: I'll be (2) very (.) brief @(3 so)@  
 24 A: you have forty-five minutes  
 25 B: forty-five(.) ⊥ forty-five (.) fits yes  
 26 D: ⊥with the questions? with the questions?  
 27 A: but there they are able (.) should  
       be able to ask a question so 28 you  
       really need to have  
 28 you do not really need to have forty ⊥five (.) this also  
 29 B: ⊥forty-five fits: yes  
 30 A: refers to you, (.) forty-five in sum. (.)  
 31 B: ⊥yes  
 32 C: ⊥(forty-five)  
 33 D: MHM  
 34 A: yes. (.) because (.) in=uh one hour  
 35 D: we have  
 36 A: and-  
 37 D: only half an hour afterwards here  
 38 A: yes. (.) only the full talks: keynote lectures have=uh-  
 39 D: so they are keynotes?  
 40 A: yes  
 41 D: I don't see them: look  
 42 A: yes, yes yes yes  
 43 D: doesn't look like a keynote at all]

[1 (hun-cat-deu-hun; infl; Poznań) 17:53–19:11]

The six features identified by Biber as typical of spoken English and probably universal for any language – interactive, shared knowledge, structurally simple, fragmented, concrete, and dependent on situation-dependent reference (see above) – are clearly evident in this short recording.

The four participants (two of whom are meeting for the first time) are involved in unplanned conversation and interact with each other asking questions and answering them and giving feedback to keep the conversation going (see the many short backchannels *jes* 'yes' on lines 14, 31, 40, and 42 and *mh* on lines 15 and 33), which shows that the focus is not only on conveying information but also on relationship. They make direct reference to each other (by means of the personal pronoun *vi* in lines 1, 4, 12, 24, 27, and 28, and imperatives, such as *ne zorgu* 'don't worry' and *venu* 'come' on lines 2 and 4). Also, the occurrence of the question-tag-like discourse marker *ĉu ne* is worth mentioning in this context (see also Chapter 18.3.3 and 19.3.1). Whereas at the beginning the conference organiser addresses all participants, in later phases there are also two-person discussions. On

the whole, the conversation comes across as a meeting in a friendly and cooperative atmosphere, as, for example, the lively (and self-ironic) reactions (on lines 2 and 6) and the laughter (marked by @, as on lines 5, 6, 10, 20, and 22) indicate. The participants seem to be enthusiastic about the upcoming symposium and they are aware that their attitude towards it and the relationship between them will contribute to its success.

The conversation in Example (343) represents face-to-face communication in real time. The participants interact in the here and now: they are embedded in the same spatiotemporal context. Therefore, they know how to interpret deictic elements such as *pli poste* ('later') on line 12, and they are able to correct false assumptions immediately, such as the different opinions on who the first speaker of the symposium will be (lines 16–21). Overlaps (e.g. on lines 3, 6, 10, 12, and 18) and repetitions (e.g. on lines 25 and 26) are frequent. What we do not know (since our analysis is based on a recording and not on a video), but can infer from the course of the conversation, is that the speakers rely on non-verbal language (e.g. gaze) when they address each other and, above all, on pointing gestures when they refer to the written programme lying on the table. This lack of shared context causes difficulties in understanding for a reader of the excerpt who did not participate in the conversation.

The mode-specific properties become particularly evident when we compare the excerpt with a written text on the same topic. Example (344) is the call for papers<sup>148</sup> for a comparable symposium: the 2014 edition of these periodically occurring symposia.

(344) (English translation below)

**Problemoj de internacia lingva komunikado kaj iliaj solvoj**

*Tria Interlingvistika Simpozio*

25–26. 09. 2014

La Interlingvistikaj Studoj en la Lingvistika Instituto <names of the faculty and university> organizas ĉi-jare sian trian internacian Interlingvistikan simpozion.

**Tempriskribo:** Internacia kaj interkultura komunikado estas ĉiutaga neceso en nia tutmondiĝinta epoko. Kiuj estas la scenaroj de efika komunikado certiganta ankaŭ la egalecon de la partneroj? Kiom estas la kostoj, investoj por ĝin atingi? Kiel ni povas konservi kaj transdoni niajn naciajn kulturajn valorojn kaj identecon en la multkultura mondo? Kiel planitaj / konstruitaj lingvoj povas kontribui al la natura komunikado inter kulturoj? Kiel esperanto peras inter kulturoj?

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148. A call for papers, a conventional genre in academic writing, is an announcement of an institution or organisation inviting prospective presenters to a conference. It describes the broad theme of the event, lists topics and formalities and explains how to submit abstracts. For a more detailed description of the genre, see, for example, Mohammadi et al. (2013).

Prelegoj pri la **sekvaj temoj** estas bonvenaj:

- naturaj lingvoj en internacia komunikado
- lingvopolitiko en plurkulturaj kaj -lingvaj landoj
- Esperanto:
  - Lingvistiko, modelo por analizi lingvajn kategoriojn kaj interlingvaj komparoj
  - kiel portanto de internaciaj valoroj kaj temoj
  - instruado, la lernfaciliga rolo por aliaj lingvoj
  - Esperanto-movado kiel movado por lingvaj rajtoj
- aliaj internaciaj helplingvoj
- lingvaj utopioj kaj artaj lingvoj.

Ĉiu prelego havos 30 minutojn, inkludante 10 minutojn por diskuto.

**Lingvoj** uzebblaj: Esperanto, angla, pola

**Limdato** por prelegproponoj (kun 150–300 vorta resumo): 30.06.2014

Konfirmo de akcepto por artikoloj kaj afiŝoj: 20.07.2014

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**Organiza Komitato:**

<name>

**Scienca Komitato:**

<names of members>

**Kontakto:**

<name of institution>

Aliĝilon kaj eventualajn demandojn sendu al la sekva adreso: ...

Ne estas konferenca aliĝkotizo

Bankedo (25.09.2014): 60 PLN

[Problems of international linguistic communication and their solutions

Third International Symposium

25–26 September 2014

Interlinguistic Studies at the Linguistics Institute <names of faculty and university> organises this year's third international interlinguistics symposium.

**Description of the theme:** International and intercultural communication is an everyday need in our globalising era. What are the scenarios of effective communication that also ensure equality to its partners? What are the costs, investments to obtain it? How can we preserve and transfer our national cultural values and identity in a multicultural world? How can planned / constructed languages contribute to natural communication between cultures? How can Esperanto act as an agent between cultures?

Lectures on the **following topics** are welcome:

- natural languages in international communication
- language policy in multicultural and multilingual countries

- Esperanto:
  - Linguistics, a model for analysing language categories and interlingual comparisons
  - as a carrier of international values and themes
  - teaching, its role in facilitating the learning of other languages
  - the Esperanto movement as a movement for language rights
- other international auxiliary languages
- linguistic utopias and art languages.

Each lecture will last 30 minutes, including 10 minutes for discussion.

**Languages** that can be used: Esperanto, English, Polish

**Deadline** for announcing lectures (with 150–300-word abstracts): 30 June 2014

Confirmation of acceptance for papers and posters: 20 July 2014

**Organising Committee:**

...

**Scientific Committee:**

...

**Contact**

...

There are no conference fees

Banquet (25 Sept 2014): 60 PLN]

This call for papers is very different from the conversation in (343), as it operates at a distance: participants are physically and temporarily separated and they cannot convey meaning, for example through non-verbal behaviour. The author of the text might not even know who the potential readers are. Therefore, its wording has probably been carefully planned and revised. Whereas only a small quantity of information is assigned to each sentence or phrase in the conversation (343) (Halliday, 1985 speaks of “low lexical density”), the author of the call for papers (344) provides the information in a compact and concise way. As a type of formal writing, it also follows certain conventional patterns of structuring (paragraphing) and accentuating (by graphic devices such as bullet points and bold letters). The fact that it is lasting and can (and probably will) be read several times, required its author to produce valid and accurate statements. This forms a stark contrast to the simple structures and fragmented speech in (343). A sentence, such as *mi estos tre mallonga* (‘I’ll be very brief [lit. ‘short’]’, see [343] line 23, which refers to the length of the presenter’s paper, but is rather vague in this wording) would certainly be revised in writing.

A special feature of spoken language that has so far been mentioned only in passing is the use of gestures. Gestures are crucial components of oral communication that not only provide insight into the conceptual planning of speech (Alibali et al., 2000), but can also convey semantic information to listeners (McNeill, 1992,

Hostetter, 2011). Example (345), an excerpt from a popular-science presentation on planets, provides us with the opportunity to study hand gestures and arm movements in conjunction with speech.

In Figures (11a) and (11b), the lecturer simulates the movement of an object in the audience's direction. The gesture is tightly intertwined with his oral explanation supplementing the following passage of his speech:

(345) *Do se vi havas objekton kiu moviĝas al vi eh ĝia lumo aspektas iomete pli blua, se ĝi iras for de vi, ĝia lumo aspektas iomete pli ruĝa.*

[So if you have an object that is moving towards you uh its light appears a bit bluer, if it goes away from you, its light appears a bit redder.]

[189 (ita; pres; Lisbon) 48:34–48]



Figure 11a. Gesture simulating movement (part 1)



Figure 11b. Gesture simulating movement (part 2)

Figures (11c) and (11d) show the gestures that accompany the lecturer's illustration of the Doppler effect by means of the example of a car moving past a person.

*(Continuation of Example (345)) Eble vi konas vi jam aŭdis policaŭton aŭ iu veturilo kiu pasas preter vi. Unue la sono de la de la veturilo sonas pli eh pli eh pli alta (left-hand stretch, Figure 11c) eh kaj la frekvenco sonas kiel mi diras la frekvenco estas pli alta eh pli malalta kaj post ĝi pasis (right-hand stretch, Figure 11d) la frekvenco estas pli alta.* [189 (ita; pres; Lisbon) 47:57–48:27]

[Perhaps you know you have already heard a police car or a vehicle that drives past you. First the sound of the of the vehicle sounds more uh more uh higher (left-hand stretch, Figure 11c) uh and the frequency sounds as I say the frequency is higher uh lower and after it drove past (right-hand stretch, Figure 11d) the frequency is higher.]



Figure 11c. Gesture illustrating a passing car (part 1)



Figure 11d. Gesture illustrating a passing car (part 2)

This example clearly shows that gesture and speech are synchronous, expressing meaning in tandem. When the speaker's flow of speech gets interrupted, as he is obviously searching for the right word (see Figure 11c), his left-arm movement continues and is partly repeated through this pause (for more than ten seconds), before it is followed by the stretch of his right arm (Figure 11d), so that semantic synchrony is preserved.

Finally, the gesture in Figure (11e) symbolises a protective shield against light. It accompanies the verb *kaŝi* ('to hide'), a contextual synonym of *bloki* ('to block') in the sentence before, used to illustrate the action of a coronagraph.

*(Continuation of Example (345)) Kaj oni ankaŭ povas bloki la lumon de la stelo per koronografoj. Do vi kaŝas (hand gesture) la lumon de la stelo kaj vi plibonigas vian distingkapablon.*

[And one can also block out the light of the star using a coronagraph. So, you hide (hand gesture) the light of the star and you improve your ability to distinguish.]

By contrast, the written version of this lecture (Rossi, 2018, p. 202) contains only one sentence describing the phenomenon: “Sciencistoj ankaŭ disvolvis koronografojn kiuj helpas bloki la lumon el la stelo por pli bone vidi tiun el la planedo.” [Scientists also developed coronagraphs which help to block out the light of the star in order to better see that of the planet.]



**Figure 11e.** Gesture representing a shield blocking out light

The three examples (documented in Figures 11a to 11e) illustrate how the presenter uses examples from the audience's personal experience in combination with gestures to make the content of his lecture easier to understand. Non-verbal behaviour is a characteristic of oral communication that serves the interaction between speaker and listener.



Gestures in Esperanto communication have not attracted much scholarly interest so far, neither the iconic ones complementing speech that we have focused on here nor metaphorical or symbolic ones, although due to their often culture-bound meanings they could potentially be a fascinating area of research in an international speech community. Our dataset does not include enough material to study the topic with the scrutiny that it deserves. We observed several instances of the thumbs-up gesture in meetings, which were instantly understood as affirmation, and very different modes of non-verbal behaviour in terms of greetings (including handshakes, hugs, kisses and even kisses on the hand) (see also Fiedler, 2002a).<sup>149</sup>

Let us now turn to the crucial question of whether there are linguistic items in Esperanto that do not occur in writing. Is it possible to compile a list of clear or potential characteristics for spoken language that includes lexemes and grammatical constructions similar to the examples given for German and Polish at the end of Chapter 23.1? Since, to the best of our knowledge, there is no empirical research on this topic (with the exception of a theoretical treatment by Benczik, 2005), we have to rely on our own investigations. These have led us to the conclusion that it is not possible to compile such a list.

A lexical phenomenon one could be tempted to ascribe to the difference between the two media is the use of poetic vocabulary, like *olda* ('old') and *mava* ('bad') instead of the usual *maljuna* and *malbona*. These words are used in order to have shorter and less monotone alternatives to compound words. Authors use them to cope with problems of rhyme and meter or to achieve special stylistic effects in poetry. An example can be found in the following poem by William Auld.<sup>150</sup>

<i>Mortanta Folio</i> <sup>151</sup>	<i>A Dying Leaf</i>
<i>Lante falanta</i>	<i>A slowly falling</i>
<i>flava foli'</i>	<i>yellow leaf</i>
<i>takte baraktas</i>	<i>struggles rhythmically</i>
<i>en agoni';</i>	<i>in death throes</i>
<i>kaj la emajla</i>	<i>and the enamel</i>
<i>flava mort-farb'</i>	<i>yellow paint of death</i>
<i>ŝminkos la ringan</i>	<i>paints the circular</i>
<i>pedon de l'arb'.</i>	<i>foot of the tree.</i>

149. An interesting detail worth mentioning is the Esperanto language course "Mazi in Gondolando", an adaptation of a BBC video course for which the visual material was not altered. The Esperanto imperative (e.g. *venu* 'come') is taught accompanied by the gesture of a bent index finger known in Western cultures, which might be confusing for some learners.

150. Published in Auld et al. (1952, p. 90).

151. William Auld (1924–2006), a Scottish poet and translator who wrote mainly in Esperanto was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1999, 2004 and 2006. See also Setz (2018, 2020).

The poetic neologism *lanta* ('slow') used right at the beginning (as an adverb, *lante*) has been chosen over the unmarked *malrapida* ('slow', lit. 'un-fast') here for stylistic reasons (first, because it is disyllabic, and, second, because it matches the other words with the vowel *a*, building atmosphere through assonance).<sup>152</sup> In addition, in technical language, we find neologisms as shorter forms (e.g., *kurtonda* 'shortwave' instead of \**mallongonda*). As the examples illustrate, a preference for those words is not however related to their use in either speech or writing, but to register (or functional style).

In our dataset we found a tendency of some Esperanto speakers, when faced with a lexical gap, to use a word from another language and simply add an Esperanto ending in the hope of being understood. The corpus includes *sparko* 'spark' [18 (es; edu; Poznań) 71:16] in relation to fire, where usually *fajrero* ('fire snippet') is used, and several occurrences of *akademia* (from English *academic*, in the sense of "scientific", without a relation to the *Academy*, e.g. in [238 (ita; disc; Lisbon) 37:00]). In written communication, the authors would of course have probably checked those uses in dictionaries. Also worth mentioning is the occurrence of metacommunicative utterances (see Chapter 18) that do not typically occur in writing, such as the question-tag-like *ĉu ne* on line 4 in (343) above.

Apart from these features, from the thorough inspection of our corpus and participation in many different speech events it seems to us that there are no clear examples of phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical phenomena that are confined to, or at least highly typical of, either written or spoken language. It might however be interesting to explore whether certain linguistic features that have typically been found to appear more frequently in either writing or speech in other languages are also recurrent in Esperanto. However, performing such an examination – and fulfilling Gibbs' legitimate condition, cited above, that one should not compare apples and oranges – is not easy on the basis of our dataset, which does not encompass exemplars of all written genres that lend themselves to a comparison to the spoken genres that we analysed. Therefore, the results of the following part of our study should be seen as preliminary. Ideally, they should be verified on the basis of a much more extensive corpus, which would have to be compiled specially with this specific research goal in mind.

Our analysis is based on the comparison of four pairs of spoken and written text collections representing both different and similar genres and authors:

1. (printed) scientific papers and scientific talks,
2. scientific online articles and Internet discussions on those articles,
3. autobiographical texts and narrations,
4. casual conversations (during meals) and panel discussions.

152. For a more detailed analysis, see Eichner (2012, pp. 145–148).

In pairs (1) to (3), the written and spoken texts are linked by identical topics; the fourth pair consists of small talk on the one hand and panel discussions on the other. Although in this last case the topic and setting are not shared, the speech events involved some of the same participants and are both examples of spontaneous expression of thoughts. As such, they could be a good test case for differences of genre within the spoken medium, while the first three collections permit study of the differences between the media without the need to take into account the personal preferences of different authors. In these texts or recordings, we have selected, analysed and quantified the following nine indicators of morphological and syntactic complexity in order to see as many differences as possible:

1. complex tenses (*esti* + active participle)
2. passives (*esti* + passive participle)
3. other uses of participles (as nouns or adverbs)<sup>153</sup>
4. hypostases (compounding derivations like *ĉiun tagon* → *ĉiutaga* ‘everyday’)
5. subjunctions (including indirect questions)
6. relative pronouns (including adverbial relatives like *kie* ‘where’)
7. the conjunction *kaj* (‘and’)
8. the conjunction *sed* (‘but’)
9. the conjunctive adverb *tamen* (‘however’).

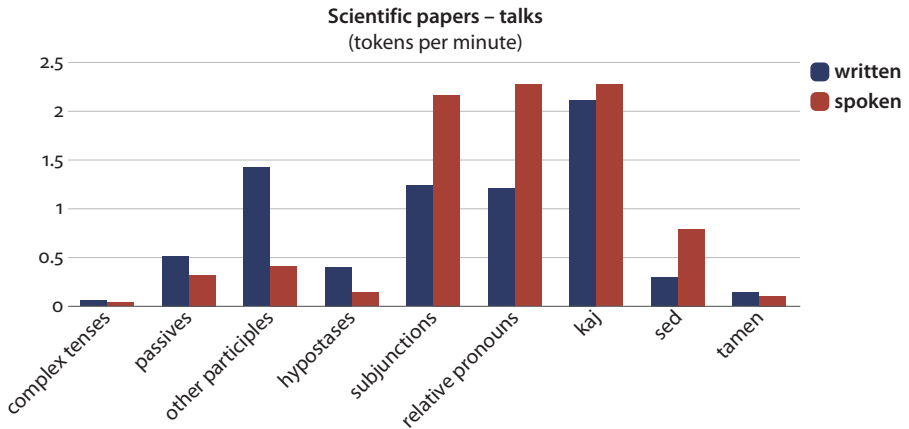
These indicators could a priori be conceived as typical of communication that allows for advance planning (or not, as the case may be), hence as indicators of typical written or spoken language. As the texts are of unequal sizes, we have converted the length of the written texts into “virtual” minutes, based on the assumption that an ordinary page of text takes some five or six minutes to read. This allows for the comparison of tokens (occurrences) per minute both for spoken and for written texts.<sup>154</sup>

The first pair consists of four publications from Vergara (2014) and (2015) (about 247 virtual minutes) and the following presentations from our dataset: 74 (ces; pres; Lille), 73/80–82 (heb; pres; Lille), 98 (ita; pres; Lille), and 200 (ita; pres; Barcelona) (about 244 minutes). For the nine indicators we obtain the following data:

---

153. The name of the language, *Esperanto*, which formally is a participle (“one who hopes”, see Chapter 8), of course, has not been considered. There are other cases of highly conventionalised morphologically complex expressions like *parolanto* ‘speaker’ or *tiumaniere* ‘so, in that way’, but as there is no clear-cut division between memorised words and words parsed on the fly, we counted all of them, although this means that the numbers of morphologically complex forms are higher than they would be if there were a way to count only those which were uttered/written spontaneously.

154. It would have been more exact to do a word count and compare the number of tokens to the number of words in a given text, but this would have been a disproportionately time-consuming task.



**Figure 12.** Comparison of scientific papers and talks

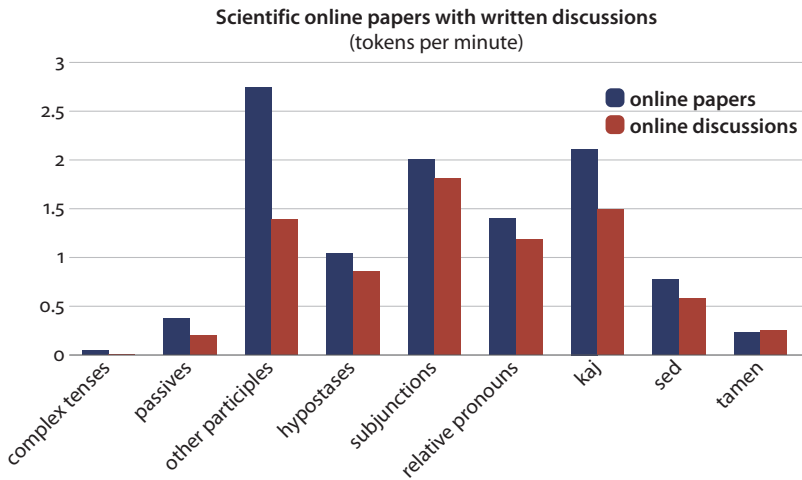
The analysis shows both similarities between the two text collections with regard to syntactic and lexical choices (e.g., the ratio of *kaj* to *tamen*, which is virtually the same) and differences, especially with regard to morphological complexity: the written version uses significantly more participles (both used within the paradigms of the verb and as free-standing words), where the spoken version uses analytical constructions, relative clauses, or other words.<sup>155</sup> Also, the number of hypostases is much lower in the talks than in the papers. See the following examples:

written *estis rerakontata* ↔ spoken *oni ofte rerakontis* (89: 24:30) ‘was often retold’  
 written *sekvonttage* (p. 7) ↔ spoken *la sekvon tagon* (89: 23:50) ‘the following day’

The higher number of subjunctives, relative pronouns, and conjunctions shows that the talks make use of more and thus shorter sentences, while the papers have longer sentences with fewer connectors. The ratio of *kaj* to *sed* is nearly 5:1 in the written, but 3:1 in the spoken texts, which can be seen as an indicator of more changes in topic and less coherence, leading to a need for contradictory statements, as would be expected given the shorter planning time available in a talk.

155. For instance, one scientist in the written version consistently used the participle noun *loĝantoj/loĝantaro* ‘population’ (lit. ‘dwelling ones / collective of dwelling ones’), while in the spoken version he mostly used simply *popolo* ‘people’ in the same context. The number for complex tenses outside the passive voice in the talks is higher than it really is, as most cases are contracted past conditionals in *-intus* ‘would have ...-ed’ (see Chapter 25.5.6), which, however, seem to be used as if they were simple tense forms. Real compound tenses like *mi estis farinta* ‘I had done’ are infrequent in all genres and virtually non-existent in spontaneous speech.

The second pair is made up of two scientific papers, which are Internet publications from the online journal *Lingva Kritiko* (<http://lingvakritiko.com/>), and their follow-up discussions about the topic dealt with in the papers in the comments section. The online discussion about the first paper includes twenty-three contributions by three participants (one of the authors of this book, a US linguist and a German linguist). The online discussion about the second paper included twelve contributions by five people (one of the authors of this book, two German linguists, a Dutch scholar, and a Lithuanian linguist). The text pairs are about 62 and 65 virtual minutes long respectively.



**Figure 13.** Comparison of online papers and online discussions

The high rate of participles outside the tenses in the paper stems from the ubiquitous term *parolanto* ('speaker', lit. 'speaking one') in one of the two papers, but apart from this, differences are quite small. This could mean that the comments also show a considerable amount of advance planning. The smaller absolute number of *kaj* and *sed* (their ratio is similar: 2.7:1 and 2.5:1 respectively) in the comments can be clarified by their smaller text length, which reduces the need for connectors used to build text cohesion. The slightly higher rate of *tamen* could be due to the fact that the arguing goes on in the comments.

The third pair represents a totally different genre. It consists of four autobiographical texts (3,005 words, about 28 virtual minutes) and longer excerpts from interviews with the four persons (nos. 44, 49, 53, and 64 in our dataset, about 58 minutes), in which they describe their lives. Given the shortness of the written texts, the comparison cannot be seen as fully reliable.

The indicators of morphological complexity again show a distinction with respect to planning (without considering the occurrences of complex tenses in the spoken version, as they are once more past conditionals: *-intus*). Of interest here

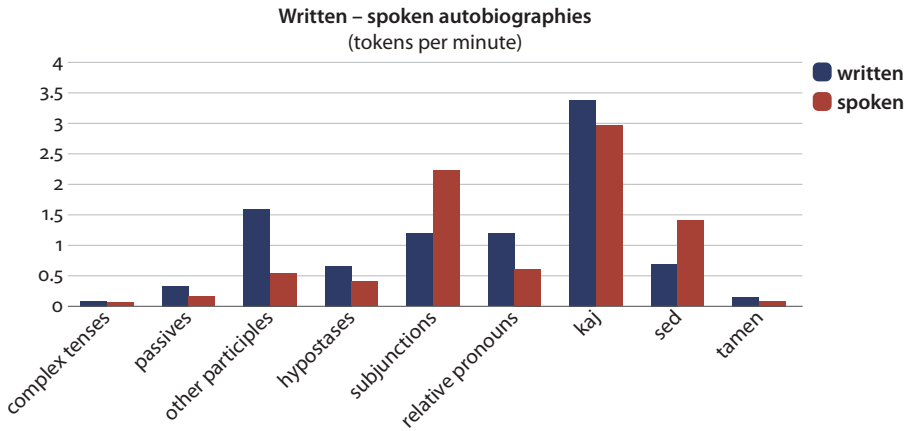


Figure 14. Comparison of autobiographical texts

is the partly lower rate of subordination and coordination in the spoken versions, which corresponds with the more frequent use of *sed* and (not visible here) discontinuities in the narration. The *kaj*:*sed* ratio in the written form is nearly 5:1, but in the spoken only slightly over 2:1. Seemingly, it was easier for the people to compose a coherent story with more planning time, while in the unprepared yet detailed narration they had to start new topics more often.

The last pair of texts consists of four recordings, two of casual talks taken together (excerpts from nos. 2 [deu-fra-hun-ppl; infl; Poznań] and 5 [cat-deu-fra-hun; infl; Poznań], together 26 minutes) and one of two panel discussions (excerpts from 11 [?-deu-eng-fra-hun-pol-slk; disc; Poznań] and 12 [?-deu-eng-hun-pol-slk; disc; Poznań], together 79 minutes).

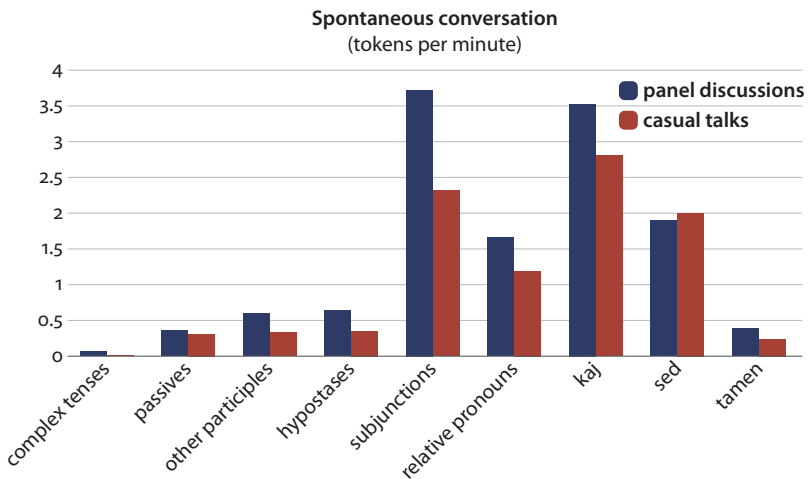
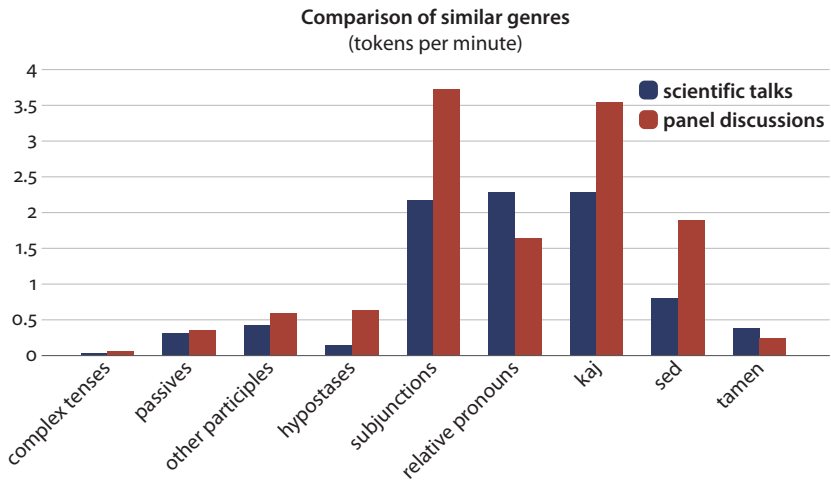


Figure 15. Comparison of spontaneous conversations

Biber's (1988, p. 18) finding cited above, according to which panel discussions share some features with scientific texts rather than with conversations, is confirmed here: the indicators of morphological complexity are generally higher in the panel discussion than in the conversations, as are the means of constructing complex sentences via subordination. In addition, although the *kaj:sed* ratio in the panel discussion is closer (approximately 1.9:1) than in pairs 1 to 4 presented above, it is even closer (1.4:1) in casual talk.

Nevertheless, if we directly compare scientific talks and panel discussions, besides the visible similarities, especially with regard to morphological complexity, there are also differences in text building via para- and hypotaxis:



**Figure 16.** Comparison of scientific talks and panel discussions

If we compare two genres that commonly count as typical examples of written and spoken language – scientific papers on the one hand and casual conversations on the other – we obtain the following results:

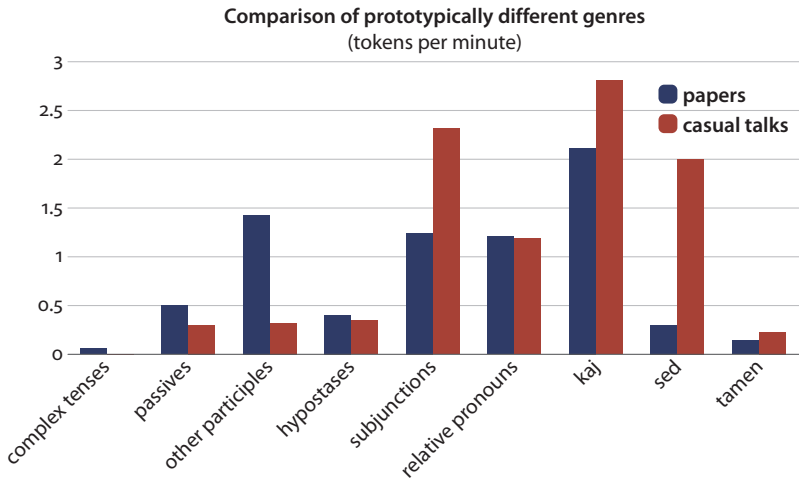


Figure 17. Comparison of scientific papers and casual conversations

As we can see, there is a clear tendency of spoken language to avoid morphologically complex forms and to prefer more analytic expression, with a generally higher rate of sentences per minute (see Figure 18). However, there are also findings that contradict some of our suppositions: while we speculated that written language would show longer syntactic units, in fact small talk has more subordinate clauses than scientific papers, showing roughly the same number of relative pronouns and many more subordinate conjunctions. Also, the rate of hypostases like *alivorte* ('in other words') is not noticeably lower in spoken language. In the latter case, however, we observed a wide range of preferences among individual speakers, ranging from virtual avoidance of hypostases to their regular use.

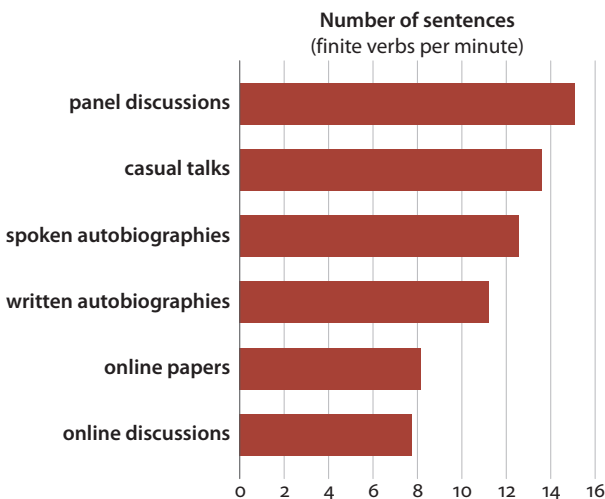


Figure 18. Comparison concerning the number of sentences



All in all, given the small basis available for comparison, it is hard to formulate clear tendencies with regard to either genres or indicators. It is obvious that it is not only setting, medium and genre that have an influence on the choice of forms, words and constructions, but also personal preferences – and, it seems, such influence is considerable. For instance, the paper by speaker no. 227 in our corpus has only one third of the number of passives as the paper by speaker no. 89 (0.33:0.98 tokens/minute), and still contains fewer than the spoken and spontaneous panel discussions (0.34), which also have more hypostases. The latter, on the other hand, are totally absent in the talk by speaker no. 89. To us it seems unlikely that the topic of the named texts had a measurable influence on the use of those grammatical means, meaning we are probably dealing here with the author's individual style. Tentatively, however, we can determine that the more spontaneously a text is built, the less likely it is that forms and function words of above-average complexity, such as compound tenses or subordinations, will occur. Although the ratio between *kaj* ('and') and *sed* ('but') can vary considerably (from 7.3:1 to 1.4:1) with no clear-cut division between the spoken and the written medium, in more spontaneous texts the ratio is usually much closer than in thoroughly planned ones. We are inclined to interpret the more frequent use of *sed* as a sign of lower degrees of planning, as this word, first, can be an indicator of ruptures in the narrative structures, when new topics have to be introduced, and, second, can be a filler (like *kaj*, often followed by a short pause). In the latter role it provides the speaker with an extra moment to plan the following sentence. Probably, for the latter reason, *tamen* ('however') is less frequently used in spoken conversation (and often only in conjunction with *sed*) as it does not need to be positioned at the beginning of a clause and so does not buy much time. The average length of clauses is also shorter in spoken genres, which increases the need for subordination and coordination, while on the other hand participles can be replaced by relative clauses.

When we consider all written and spoken texts together (see Figures 19 and 20), however, we see that there is no possibility of grouping the genres according to an increase or decrease in indicators. In other words, there is no single feature which would serve as an indicator of more or less typical spoken or written language and according to which the genres could be lined up in a range between the prototypical poles. Every genre has its own unique set of more or less prominent indicators – which is just what Biber (1988) found for English.

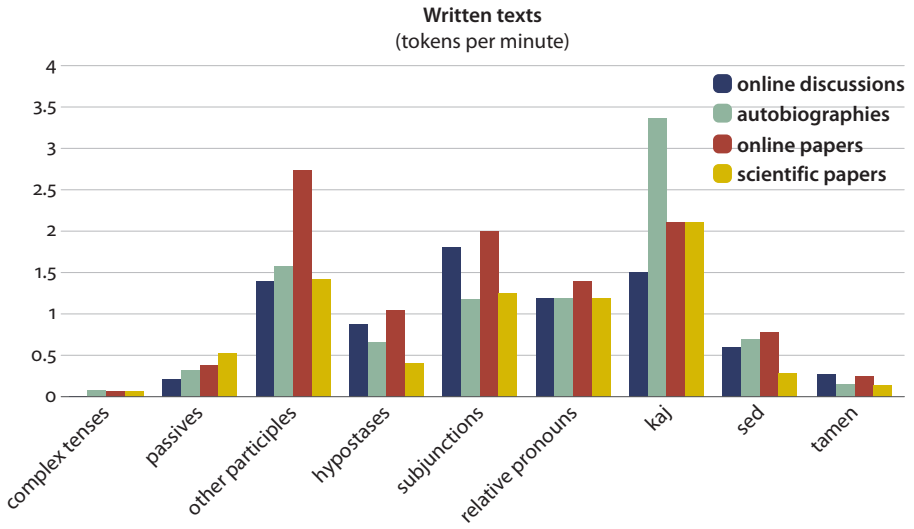


Figure 19. Comparison of written genres

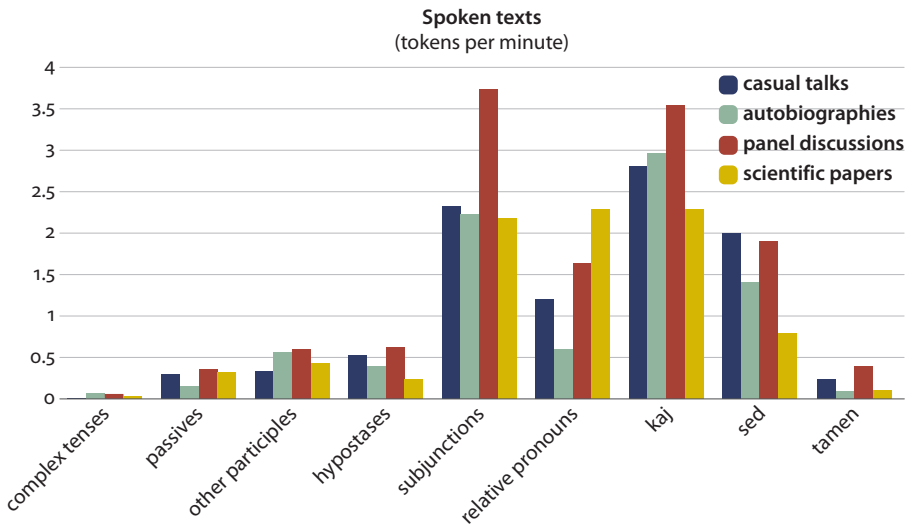


Figure 20. Comparison of spoken genres

### 23.4 Esperanto in computer-mediated communication

Advances in technology have allowed us to establish and maintain communication channels between people from geographically different places, and it is not surprising at all that speakers of Esperanto, a language created to facilitate international linguistic communication, have made use of these opportunities rapidly and extensively. Esperanto is highly active as a language of the Internet (it is among the languages used by Google Translate, had 270,000 Wikipedia articles as of January 2020, and online language courses are a major way to acquire the language; see also Chapter 9). Computer-mediated communication (CMC) (in forms such as text- and voice-based chats, forums, YouTube videos, podcasts, Internet radio, online journals and the opportunity of interaction that the four latter modes entail) has become a significant form of interaction in the Esperanto speech community. Against this background, it seems useful to take CMC into consideration in this investigation.

As already stated in Chapter 23.1, we agree with the majority of CMC researchers that the language of the Internet does not represent a new medium, “something fundamentally different from writing and speech” (Crystal, 2001, p. 272), but can be characterised by features of both speech and writing (see, for example, Baron, 1998; Bieswanger 2013; Esser, 2002, Sindoni, 2013; Yazigi, 2016). As Dürscheid and Frehner (2013) argue, Koch and Oesterreicher’s orality-literacy model also provides a useful starting point for describing CMC. Individual genres, such as email, are, however, influenced by a large number of factors, including, besides demographics, the situation (one-to-one vs one-to-many communication), context (formal vs informal) and the degree of (a)synchrony (Herring, 2007). Therefore, a business email might be quite different from a private email in the continuum of communicative immediacy and communicative distance (Dürscheid & Frehner, 2013).

Examples (346) and (347) are emails that refer to the symposium announced by the call for papers in Example (344), and they address the same organisational details as this call and the conversation in Example (343) do: types and lengths of presentations, participation in a dinner, and the willingness to chair a session. The email (346) was sent to all presenters and the one in (347) to one particular participant (who is one of the authors of this book).

(346) *Karaj Prelegontoj,*

*Ni ĝoje anoncas, ke via prelego estas akceptita por la Interlingvistika Simpozio, kiu okazos en la <name of university> kun partopreno de esperantistoj kaj ne-esperantistoj. Estos esperantaj, anglaj kaj polaj prelegoj.*

*Ni petas vin disponigi vian **resumon en esperanto** (nun eblas ankoraŭ iom modifi, pli longigi ĝis unu paĝo) kaj en la **angla**. Se vi havas problemon tion pretigi, signalu kaj ni angligos ĝin.*

*La anglalingvajn ni esperantigos (aŭ se vi proponis anglalingvan prelegon, tiam ni petas vin tion fari) kaj la polajn ni petas angligi. Ĉio poste troviĝos en nia retejo. Tiel alilingvanoj povos orientiĝi pri la programo.*

*Do bv. plenumi la peton ĝis la 5-a de aŭgusto kaj sendi viajn resumojn al la adreso ...*

*Samtempe bv. konfirmi vian partoptenon en la **bankedo**, kiu estos pagenda surloke. Ĝi estos okazo renkontiĝi kun la gestudentoj (diplomigantaj kaj novaj de la interlingvistikaj studoj, tiuj de la instruista trejngrupo) kaj kun instruistoj de la Interlingvistikaj Studoj.*

***Hotelojn** vi povas trovi [...]*

*Kun someraj salutoj*

*en la nomo de la organiza komitato*

*<name>*

[Dear presenters,

We are happy to announce that **your lecture has been accepted for the Interlinguistics Symposium**, which will take place at <name> university attended by Esperanto speakers and non-Esperantists. Lectures will be given in Esperanto, English and Polish.

We ask you to make your **abstract** available to us **in Esperanto** (it is now possible to modify and extend it up to one page) and **English**. If you have a problem preparing this, let us know and we will translate it into English.

We will translate the English abstracts into Esperanto (or, if you proposed a talk in English, then we ask you to do this) and we ask you to translate Polish (abstracts) into English. Everything will later be found on our website. In this way, English-speaking people will be able to get a rough idea of the programme. Please respond to our request by **August 5th** and send your abstracts to the address <name>.

At the same time, please confirm your participation in the **dinner**, which will have to be paid for there. It will give you the opportunity to get to know the students (those graduating and the new ones in the field, those in the teacher training group) as well as the teachers in the field.

**Hotels** can be found ...

With summer greetings

On behalf of the organising committee

<name>]

(347) *Kara <name>*,

*Dum la interlingvistika simpozio estos 41 prelegoj dum du tagoj en du sekcioj en 1,5 horaj blokoj. Ĵaŭde kaj vendrede matene estos po du ĉefaj prelegoj, ili havos ne 30, sed 45 minutojn je dispono.*

*Vi estos ĵaŭde matene kun via anglalingva prelego, tuj post la malfermo. Ni dissendos informojn al niaj kolegoj, ankaŭ anglistoj invitante ilin al la anglalingvaj prelegoj.*

*Tamen mi pensadas, ĉu ne estus pli bone, ke vi havu la prezentaĵon en esperanto. Kion vi pensas pri tio? Ĉeestos pli multaj esperantistoj, krom la prelegantoj partoprenos ankaŭ studentoj el la malnova k nova grupoj. Partoprenos 10–15 ne-esperantistoj, kiuj verŝajne komprenas iomgrade la anglan.*

*Vi ankoraŭ ne sendis vian koncizan biografion kaj liston de elektitaj publikaĵoj por la repaĝoj de IS. Bv tion rapide fari.*

*Agrablan somerumadon*

*<name>*

*Kun amaso da taskoj, veturonta al la Itala Kongreso, kie gvidos kurson*

[Dear <name>,

During the interlinguistics symposium there will be 41 papers across two days in two sections in 1.5-hour blocks. On Thursday and Friday morning there will be two major presentations; they will not have 30, but 45 minutes at their disposal.

You(rs) will be on Thursday morning with your English-language contribution, immediately after the opening. We will send information to our colleagues, and also anglicists, inviting them to listen to papers in English.

However, I was wondering whether it would not be better if you gave the presentation in Esperanto. What do you think? There will be more Esperantists present; in addition to those giving a talk, students from the old and new groups will also participate. There will be 10–15 non-Esperantists participating, who probably will understand English to a certain degree.

You have not yet sent your concise biography and the list of selected publications for the IS website. Please do this soon.

Have a pleasant summer

<name>

With loads of tasks, travelling to the Italian Congress, where I run a course]

The two emails are written texts. The very fact that we were able to find them in our mailbox reminds us of one of the features that distinguish writing from speech: it is permanent and durable, whereas speech is evanescent and usually not stored (Jahandarie, 1999). The author of Examples (346) and (347) provides the information in a compact and concise way. She also uses parentheses and complex syntax (e.g. the adverbial participle – ... *invitante ilin al ...* ‘inviting them to’ – [347] line 6) knowing that, if necessary, the text might be re-read. These elaborate constructions form a stark contrast to the simple structures and fragmented speech in Example (343). The emails also resemble the written text in Example (344) (the call for papers) in their layout features, especially paragraphing and the use of bold type for key information.

On the other hand, despite being pieces of writing, the two emails are much less detached and less impersonal than the call for papers in Example (344). Both Example (346) and Example (347) are involvement-oriented, containing many

personal references (see also Yates, 1996 on the email genre). In this respect, we can even find a difference between Example (346), the one-to-many text, and Example (347), the one-to-one text. It is worth mentioning that the latter was followed by a rather active exchange of messages at short intervals, which gave the discourse a quasi-synchronic character (Garcia & Jacobs, 1999) that almost equated it with conceptual orality (Dürscheid & Frehner, 2013, p. 48).

In addition, emails are characterised by micro-linguistic features that have been described as typical of computer-mediated communication in various languages (see Bieswanger, 2013). The Esperanto texts in Examples (346) and (347) confirm this resemblance in their use of abbreviations (*k* for *kaj* ‘and’ and *Bv* for *Bonvolu* ‘please’, lit. ‘be of good will’). To our knowledge, there has thus far been no research on linguistic features of CMC in Esperanto (with the exception of a preliminary study by Fiedler, 2003b). The remainder of this chapter will address the topic using, above all, the genre of chat as a basis.

The chat that we have chosen as an example for this small-scale analysis is a multi-participant text-based chat in a chatroom in the cloud-based allocation Telegram, which has become very popular among Esperanto speakers. Its main group “Esperantujo” has more than 1,550 members, including specialist groups on topics like music (290 members), literature (279 members), Esperanto studies (275 members) as well as bilingual groups for learners of the language (e.g., Esperanto-German with 148 members) and a group for people using Esperanto as a family language (seventy-six members) (see Chapter 10). We use the techniques of conversation analysis (CA), which was our method of analysis for spoken communication in previous chapters, in order to establish how chat communication differs from speech and writing. CA has been applied to the investigation of CMC by several researchers (e.g. Garcia & Jacobs, 1999; Markman, 2013; O’Neill & Martin, 2003). Our study also addresses the question of whether CMC in Esperanto includes linguistic features that could be attributed to the specific channel of communication and make the language different from the Esperanto that we have described thus far.

A brief look at (348) reveals a peculiarity of chats (and other forms of CMC, such as forums): the combination of verbal and visual elements. Participants use photographs (user avatars), emojis and stickers<sup>156</sup> to enhance their posts, and flag icons to indicate the languages in which they can communicate, and they can copy and paste articles from online sources (see post 1 in [348]). Chat participants can decide to conceal their offline identity by choosing a nickname and any picture instead of their own photograph.

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156. Stickers are cloud-based images that are partly animated. They are intended to provide more expressive emoji. When typing in an emoji, the user is offered to send the respective sticker instead.

Chat is real-time communication, with participants interacting online at the same time. They read messages and type in their responses, which are transmitted once complete (by pressing the “return” or “send” button). As they cannot control the positioning of their posts, there is no guarantee that their response to a post will appear directly after it. This disrupted turn adjacency (Herring, 2001) makes the chat turn-taking system different from what we find in oral talk, although the second parts of adjacency pairs can sometimes be delayed there too, especially in multi-party conversation. Understanding can be complicated when intervening posts concern a different topic or thread.

In Example (348), there are two ongoing threads. The first (Kimrio ‘Wales’) starts with J’s first post after he/she found out that S comes from Wales. The topic is then further discussed in the exchanges between J and S in posts 3, 8, 10, 11, and 13. In addition, in post 4, E (who joins the group by means of a blind greeting, *Saluton al ĉiuj* ‘Hi everyone’) contributes to the same thread by a question on Welsh and the exchange that follows in post 6. In post 10, N comments on it. The second thread is initiated by S in post 7, who uses the strategy of a question to introduce it. This topic instantiation is rather abrupt, without any discourse markers (such as ‘by the way’), as we would probably find them in face-to-face conversation. The thread is continued in posts 9, 12, and 14.

In post 12, J answers both threads in one turn. Despite this complication and the fact that there are only three posts (4 to 6) that are serially adjacent – which is obviously caused by the brevity of the posts (four words in S’s response in post 5 and the thumbs-up sign in E’s post 6) and the resulting fast transmission – the participants manage the situation fairly well. In most cases, they use the explicit technique of utterance repetition to direct their responses.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, as Example (348) demonstrates, individual threads are clearly contextually linked. They are understood as topically related messages because of the participants’ use of similar terms (e.g. *malami* ‘to hate’ and *ne ŝati* ‘to not like’ in posts 8 and 11, or *karbaj minejoj* ‘coal mines’ and *karbminado* ‘coal mining’ in posts 8 and 14). In the second thread, coherence is mainly based on the repetition of the term *fobio* (phobia) (see Halliday & Hasan, 1976 about repetition as a technique to produce lexical relationship).

CMC research has focused on the specificities by which language use online (“Netspeak” in Crystal’s 2001 terminology) differs from traditional speech and writing. The use of emoticons, performative action words (\*wave\*), abbreviations, syntactic reductions and non-standard punctuation and spellings have been identified as characteristics. However, numerous investigations of these characteristics,

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157. They press the reply button and click on the post that they wish to reply to. The first words of this post are then provided as a quotation. In other chats, the technique of naming was used to differentiate threads, with participants mentioning the intended recipient at the beginning of their post (<Pedro>).

in several languages, have shown that there is such a high degree of variation in their occurrences and frequencies, that it is an overgeneralisation to speak of *the* language of the Internet (see, for example, Androutsopoulos, 2003; Bieswanger, 2013; Dürscheid, 2004; Herring, 2007; Kimpeler et al., 2007).

Some of the features that have been considered to be typical of Internet genres in a number of languages can, in principle, be confirmed for CMC in Esperanto, although they are relatively infrequent: participant J makes use of an emoticon in post 11 – *oni ja ne ŝatas Thatcher ĉi tie ;-)* – in order to convey a humorous subtone through this part of his message;<sup>158</sup> *mdr* (= multe da ridoj ‘many laughs’, cf. *LOL* in English) is used with a similar function by participant N in post 10 as the only abbreviation.<sup>159</sup> The interjection *Ho* (‘Oh!’) by participant J in posts 1, 8, and 13 can be interpreted as an interactional signal that clearly marks the post as a response to a previous message. These means compensate for a lack of prosodic cues. We have not found non-standard spellings (described for several languages by Paolillo & Zelenkauskaitė, 2013, pp. 122–124) nor creative uses of the writing system (cf. *sooooo funny* for English, mentioned by Bieswanger, 2013, p. 474), although repetitions can be occasionally observed (e.g. HAHAHAAAA). Phonetic spellings are not to be expected anyway (because of the close relationship between pronunciation and orthography in Esperanto); neither are dialect insertions (due to the non-existence of Esperanto dialects). Altogether, the language used in the chat below, and in CMC in the planned language in general, is no different from ordinary Esperanto.

(348) (Post 1)



bearbeitet 13:02

Bild

Ho, vi loĝas en Kimrio. Do, ĉu la lingva konflikto en Kimrio influas vian deziron lerni Esperanto?

<http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/welsh-language-activists-kick-protest-6654441>

walesonline

**Welsh language activists kick off protest over Welsh Government policies**

Campaigners will unveil banners on bridges across Wales over the weekend, starting with Trefechan Bridge in Aberystwyth

[Oh, you live in Wales. So, does the language conflict in Wales influence your wish to learn Esperanto?]

158. Dresner and Herring (2010, p. 250) argue that emoticons “indicate the illocutionary force of the text to which they are attached”.








159. In addition to this abbreviation, we found *sal!* for *saluton!* in other chats and online forums (see Fiedler, 2003b).



(Post 2)

 **E**    (It, En, Fr, Eo) 13:30  
Saluton al ĉiuj  
[Hi everyone]

(Post 3)

 **S**   13:31  
 **J**     
Ho, vi loĝas en Kimrio. Do, ĉu la lingva konflikto en Kimrio in  
Ne, mi efektive ne estas kimro, mi estas angla enmigrinto, do la  
kimra ne estas mia nacia lingvo.

Mi konscias ke mi devus lerni la kimran, tamen. 13:32








Iam. 13:32

[*Oh, you live in Wales. So, does the language conflict in Wales*

No, in fact I'm not Welsh, I'm an English immigrant, so Welsh is not my mother tongue. [...]

[I'm aware that I should learn Welsh, however. Some time.]




(Post 4)

 **E**    (It, En, Fr, Eo) bearbeitet 13:33  
 **S**    
Ne, mi efektive ne estas kimro, mi estas angla enmigri...  
Ĉu vi kelkfoje aŭdas homojn kimran parolantan?

[*No, in fact I'm not Welsh, I'm an English immigr...*

Do you hear people speak Welsh from time to time?]

(Post 5)

 **S**   13:33  
Tre malofte, sed jes.  
[Very seldom, but yes.]


(Post 6)

 **E**    (It, En, Fr, Eo) 13:34  
 **S**    
Tre malofte, sed jes.  
 

[*Very seldom, but yes.*

{Thumbs up emoji}]

(Post 7)

 **S** [redacted] 🇬🇧🇨🇦🇮🇪 13:41

Ĉu iu ĉi tie havas fobion?

(Post 8)

 **J** [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪 13:42

**S** [redacted] 🇬🇧🇨🇦🇮🇪

Ne, mi efektive ne estas kimro, mi estas angla enmigrinto, do la Ho, mi komprenas. Mi unufoje estis en Kardifo. Mia amiko en Jorkŝire eksplikas al mi pri Kimrio, ke pluraj el ili malamas Anglion, pro la aĉetado de feriajn domojn, kaj ili bruligas tiujn domojn tiam, kiam la britanoj reiras al normala anglio! Ŝajne Kimrio similas Jorkŝiro, pro la karbaj minejoj, kaj ili ankaŭ malamis Margaret Thatcher

[No, in fact I'm not Welsh, I'm an English immigrant, so Oh, I understand. Once I was in Cardiff. My friend in Yorkshire explained to me about Wales that some of them hate England, because they buy holiday homes, and they burn down those homes when the Britons return to ordinary England! It seems Wales is similar to Yorkshire, because of the coal mines, and they hated Margaret Thatcher, too.]

(Post 9)

 **R** [redacted] bearbeitet 13:43

mi havas kelkajn fobiojn, ekzemple fobio de altoj

(Post 10)

 **N** [redacted] 13:44

**J** [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪

Ho, mi komprenas. Mi unufoje estis en Kardifo. Mia amiko en Jork Kluj ne malamis Thatcher? mdr

Nur londonaj bankistoj 13:44

[Oh, I understand. Once I was in Cardiff. My friend in York Who didn't hate Thatcher? LOL]  
[Only bankers from London]

(Post 11)

S [redacted] 🇬🇧🇮🇪 13:45  
J [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪🇩🇪  
Ho, mi komprenas. Mi unufoje estis en Kardifo. Mia amiko en Jork  
Jes, oni ja ne ŝatas Thatcher ĉi tie ;) Almenaŭ en Suda Kimrio oni  
ne -malamas- Anglojn, krom se ili ludas rugbeon kontraŭ Kimrio!

[Oh, I understand. Once I was in Cardiff. My friend in York  
Yes, they indeed don't like Thatcher here ;-) At least in southern Wales they  
don't hate Englishmen, unless they play rugby against Wales!]

(Posts 12 and 13)

J [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪🇩🇪 13:48  
MI havas ian kemian fobion. Mi pensas, ke kemiistoj volas venenigi  
min.

[I have some kind of chemicals phobia. I think that the chemists want to poison  
me.]

S [redacted] 🇬🇧🇮🇪 13:50  
Jes, oni ja ne ŝatas Thatcher ĉi tie ;) Almenaŭ en Suda Kimrio o  
Ho. Mi spektis unufoje ian dokumentfilmon pri senlaboreco en  
karbministaj urbetoj de Kimrio, post Thatcher fermis la mineojn kaj  
subkontraktis la karbminadon al malgrandaj infanoj en Bolivio aŭ  
aliloke.

[Yes, they indeed don't like Thatcher here ;-) At least in southern Wales t  
Oh. Once I watched some kind of documentary on unemployment in the coal  
miners' towns of Wales, after Thatcher closed the mines and awarded the coal  
mining to little children in Bolivia or somewhere else']

(Post 14)

S [redacted] 🇬🇧🇮🇪 13:50  
J [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪🇩🇪  
MI havas ian kemian fobion. Mi pensas, ke kemiistoj volas veneni  
Kio estigis tiun fobion!?

[I have some kind of chemicals phobia. I think that the chemists want to pois  
What caused this phobia?]

(Post 15)

J [redacted] 🇺🇸🇬🇧🇩🇪🇩🇪 13:50  
Ŝajne, ke estis la problemo en Yorkshire.

[It seems it is the problem in Yorkshire.]

The language that is used in the chat above (348) is not free from linguistic mistakes, however. The accusative ending *-n* is missing in the word *Esperanto* in post 1, for example, and in post 4 the rather challenging participle construction *homojn kimran parolantan* lacks the definite article before the name of the language (*la kimra* ‘Welsh’) and the congruency for plural between noun and adjective, and should run *homojn la kimran parolantajn / homojn parolantajn la kimran* (‘Welsh-speaking people’). These errors might be attributed to the fact that the participants did not revise their texts before sending them or that they are Esperanto users who do not have a complete command of the language. Linguistic mistakes are not typical of specifically computer-mediated communication in Esperanto, however. Neither can we observe that they are tolerated more willingly than in other forms of communication. On the contrary, the linguistic loyalty and the highly developed metacommunicative awareness described in previous chapters (especially in 20 and 22) are also noticeable in online communication, as the following examples show.

Example (349) is an instance of self-repair in an online comment on a radio programme.<sup>160</sup> The author mixes up *rekomendi* (‘recommend’) and *konsili* (‘advise’), probably as a result of mother tongue interference, and notices his mistake immediately after sending his comment. In Example (350), we find posts from an online discussion forum following an article on the General Data Protection Regulation published by the EU in 2016. Two out of the four posts commenting on the article are concerned with language use, the first correcting the indication of the date (which lacks the accusative ending) and the second criticising the use of the verb *kundividi* as a translation of “communicate to the public”, which he believes to be an inappropriate literal translation from German. In a similar vein, in Example (351), the use of a metaphorical expression, *maleolmordanto* (obviously a calque of the English *ankle-biter*), is discussed.

(349) *DinahMP4/5/19 14:07*

*Ege bona artikolo pri tre grava temo, dankon.*

*En la franca ekzistas libro iom malnova titolita “Maljuneco ne ekzistas”. Mi konsilas ĝin.*

*Kiel vi diras, estas timo pro alvenanta morto. Tiu temo estas gravega. Scii ke nur la korpo mortas, ke la animo plu vivas, tio tute ŝanĝas la vidon al la vivo kaj al maljuniĝado. Estas tre bedaŭrinde ke tiu temo tro ofte esta tabua.*

[A very good article about a very important topic, thanks.

In French, there is a book, a bit of an old one, with the title “Old age does not exist”. I advise it. As you say, there is fear because of approaching death. This topic is very important. To know that only the body dies, that the soul goes on

160. See <http://esperantaretradio.blogspot.com>.

living, this changes the look at life and at ageing completely. It's a pity that this topic is often considered a taboo.]

DinahMP4/5/19 14:09

*Mi rekomendas la libron, ne konsilas ĝin, stulta mi ....*

[I recommend the book, not advise it, stupid me....]

(350)



La 13-a de februaro > la 13-an? [the 13th of February → on the 13th?] 2019-03-12 16:45



*Esperantistoj protestu ne nur kontraŭ la proponata Artikolo, sed ankaŭ kontraŭ la fuŝa verbo “kundividi”!*

*(La anglalingva teksto de Artikolo 13 uzas la esprimon “communication to the public or making available to the public”: komunikado al la publiko aŭ disponigo al la publiko. Kvankam tio estas longa esprimo, mi tamen opinias, ke “kundividi” ne estas bona traduko. Mi ne kontrolis pri aliaj lingvoj. Eble en iu germana teksto estis “mitteilen”, laŭvorte “kundividi”? Aŭ eble oni imititis usonan esprimon, kiu siavice devenis de la germana?)*

[Esperanto speakers should not only protest against the proposed Article, but also against the erroneous verb “kundividi”!

(The English of Article 13 uses the expression “communication to the public or making available to the public”: communication to the public or making available to the public. Although this is a long expression, I nevertheless think that “kundividi” is not a good translation. I have not checked other languages. Perhaps there was “mitteilen” in some German text, literally “kundividi”? Or perhaps they were imitating a US expression which originally came from German?)]

(<https://www.liberafolio.org/2019/03/12/nova-direktivo-de-eu-pri-kopirajto/>)

(351) A: *Poento al la maleolmordanto <name> por tiu manovro en tiel simbola momento.*

[...]

B: *[...] r a [= rilate al ('referring to')] 'Maleolmordanto' kiu estas vorto pli amuza ol insulta, aparte pro tio ke vi samfraze konsideras <name> mem brilulo. Sed eble tiu esprimo ne estas tute internacia? Ĉu ĉinaj esperantistoj ezemple komprenas vian celon. Mi volas renkonti tiajn brilulojn.*

[A: A point for the ankle-biter <name> for this manoeuvre in such a symbolic moment.

...

- B: ... concerning ‘Maleolmordanto’ (ankle-biter), which is a word more amusing than offensive, especially because you consider <name> himself a brilliant person in the same sentence. But perhaps this expression is not totally international? Do Chinese Esperantists, for example, understand your aim? I would like to meet those bright people.]

[<http://www.liberafolio.org/2016/12/26/tejo-ekamikas-kun-la-civito/>]

It is noteworthy that none of the texts to which the three comments (Examples (349) to (351)) refer addresses linguistic themes. For Esperanto speakers, however, the language they use seems to be of permanent interest, and as such it is common for them to make the use of a specific word or expression the focus of discussion. This phenomenon, digression from a topic to deal with language use, has been found especially characteristic of Esperanto online discussion forums, where it is described as the *leĝo de Tonjo* (Toño’s Law).<sup>161</sup> As the introductory example of this book and the many excerpts in Chapter 19 on repair work show, the law does not have to be restricted to communication on the Internet.

### 23.5 Some concluding remarks on Esperanto in writing and speech

Although this chapter on written and spoken Esperanto has been based on a relatively small sample, the analyses certainly add to our understanding of writing and speech in the planned language. According to our findings so far, there are no signs indicating that there are differences between spoken and written Esperanto other than those phenomena that are conditioned universally by the differences in medium and genre. We have not been able to detect any specificities that could be used in either spoken or written Esperanto only. Also, the language used in computer-mediated communication complies with the standards of the language; and in the chats, blogs and forums that we analysed speakers made only limited use of novel graphic techniques (e.g. specific abbreviations, emoticons) that are characteristic of these genres in other languages. The extensive use of Esperanto by means of new communication technologies is occasionally taken as a starting point to stress the differences in language use between computer-literate and -illiterate – or simply between young and old – Esperanto speakers (e.g. Fians, 2020). In our mind, the existence of a few idiomatic or slang coinages in Esperanto (e.g. *mojosa*

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161. After a Spanish Esperanto speaker, Toño del Barrio, who coined the law in 2008: *Ju pli reta diskuto en Esperanto longas, la probableco ke ĝi deflankiĝos al diskuto pri gramatikaĵoj aŭ pri la uzata vortigo des pli (asimptote) proksimiĝas al 1* [The longer an Internet discussion lasts, the more the probability of it deviating towards a discussion about a grammatical item or a wording used approaches 1 (asymptotically)].

‘cool/fashionable’, *gufujo* ‘chill-out room’, from *gufo* ‘owl’ and *-ujo* ‘place’; see also Chapter 21 on phraseology) does not yet seem to justify such judgements. While we are aware of the need for more detailed studies in this field, our major conclusion from this examination is therefore that Esperanto is relatively homogeneous, independently of whether it is written or spoken.

This finding can be explained by the fact that in nearly all cases the language is – like other foreign languages, but here even more so – learned in its written form. As long as there is no clearly different spoken Esperanto, which additionally would have to be taught or informally learned, learners will always speak as they write.

Furthermore, although the amount of spoken Esperanto is ever growing, the language is still overwhelmingly used in its written form. More decisive here than the percentages is the discontinuity in speaking the language: outside Esperanto-speaking couples or families the language is spoken by average speakers only during congresses, events, or club meetings, once or a few times a year.<sup>162</sup> As this structural disadvantage is fading, at least in part, with the rise of modern telecommunications (such as Internet telephony), it will be very interesting to see whether these developments will have any impact on the spoken language.

Finally, due to their highly developed linguistic awareness and understanding of the need for an international norm (see Chapters 9 and 25) and their predilection for linguistic discussions, Esperanto speakers never stop reflecting on innovations, which hampers or at least retards their dissemination. With regard to the speech community as it exists now, it would be hardly imaginable to see phonological or morphological changes appear, let alone spread, in any genre or medium without open discussion and heavy opposition.

Having said this, we should note that a rather homogeneous use of Esperanto in speech and writing should not be equated with a lack of language change. As a living language, Esperanto develops according to its speakers’ needs. This aspect will be addressed in Chapter 25 – but, before that, in the next chapter, our focus will be on a special feature of oral communication – accents. With the exception of a humorous allusion to a speaker’s peculiar pronunciation in 20.4.1, accents in Esperanto have so far not received our attention. Surprisingly, there has not been an occasion to focus on them, as we have neither identified them as a special reason for repair work, nor were metacommunicative utterances or code-switches caused in particular by speakers’ distinctive forms of pronunciation. As a key factor in successful foreign language learning and use, accents as well as speakers’ attitudes towards accents should not, however, be ignored.

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162. Of the participants in Rašić’s (1994, p. 157) study, about 70% either did not travel at all or went to just one Esperanto meeting outside their country.

## Attitudes to accents

### 24.1 Introduction

It is a common experience of probably all adults who have learned a foreign language that however well they learn and apply its grammar and vocabulary, reaching sometimes a very high level of proficiency, they nevertheless fail to entirely abandon the accent that is more or less typical of their native language.<sup>163</sup> Even foreigners who have lived in a country for decades and are totally capable of expressing every thought in a nuanced manner are in many cases still recognisable as non-natives just because of the variations in the way they speak. Accent is, without doubt, the most persistent and easily recognisable sign of foreignness, and it is no wonder that many attitudes towards speakers of foreign languages are most prominently linked to their typical accents. Although this is true for any language, it has probably been studied most intensively for English, the language that is most frequently learned as an L2 today. Before dealing with accents in Esperanto, we will therefore give some attention to how this topic is currently discussed in ethnic languages, above all in English (24.2). We will then provide an overview of previous research on attitudes to accents in Esperanto (24.3). Then we will present findings from our own research, which is based on an Internet search and interviews with experienced Esperanto speakers (24.4). It focuses on speakers' opinions about the role of this phenomenon in Esperanto communication, but does not aim at an analysis of accents as we encountered them in our dataset.

### 24.2 Accents in ethnic languages

Studies concerned with non-native speakers' accents in English have shown that such accents are discriminated against by English native speakers (Jenkins, 2007, p. 83). Accents are not only associated with general stereotypes regarding their speakers' assumed ethnicity: foreign-accented speakers are also assumed to be

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163. For an overview of the development of accents during second language acquisition, see Beinhoff (2013, pp. 57–66). For the difficulties in acquiring a native-like accent in an L2, see, for example, Tarone (1988) and Moyer (2013).



less competent and less educated than speakers with a native accent (Beinhoff, 2013, p. 31; Fraser & Kelly, 2012). Language attitudes like these can cause problems especially for speakers of low-prestige native accents. Often speakers of certain languages do not face negative attitudes because of the individual strength of their accent, but because of the stereotypes that are associated with that accent. “Asians”, for example, are generally categorised as speaking with accents and therefore discriminated against when applying for jobs, while this is hardly the case with Scandinavians, as Jenkins (2007, pp. 81f.) points out (see also Kaur, 2014). Negative attitudes to certain accents are frequently justified with the argument that their speakers are difficult to understand, although studies have shown that this is a parameter independent from the phonetic traits of the accent (Fraser & Kelly, 2012; Riney et al., 2005). What a person understands often depends on the opinion that he or she has of the interlocutor and his/her accent (Jenkins, 2007, p. 88). This is why Derwing and Munro (1997) propose a distinction between “intelligibility” (defined as listeners’ actual understanding of L2 speech), “comprehensibility” (denoting listeners’ perceptions of understanding or attitudes towards intelligibility) and “accentedness” (referring to listeners’ judgements of the degree of deviation from the norm) (see also Munro et al., 2006 and Trofimovich & Isaacs, 2012).

Reflecting the fact that English is used as a lingua franca today and that in many settings the number of non-native speakers surpasses that of native speakers, research has been expanded to the attitudes that non-native speakers have towards other non-native speakers’ accents (Beinhoff, 2013; Derwing, 2003, Jenkins, 2007). We might expect these to be different from the judgement described above, as speakers who are aware of having a non-native accent as second-language learners themselves, often despite the long time and intensive efforts that they invested in learning English, might be expected to show solidarity with other foreign-accented speakers. Also, as Jenkins (2000) has shown by means of her “Lingua Franca Core”, there are features in native English pronunciation that are “non-core”, i.e. unnecessary for safeguarding intelligibility, so that non-native speakers might be rather relaxed in international contexts, where the majority of interlocutors speak English with linguistic features that are affected by transfer from their first languages.

In contrast to this assumption, research has shown many similarities between the attitudes of non-native and native speakers towards non-native accents in English, especially with regard to the status of accents (Beinhoff, 2013, pp. 31–35, 42–45; Jenkins, 2007, pp. 156–167.). Non-native speakers prefer a native variety (such as British or American English), when asked about their desired target norm for learning and teaching (Crowther et al., 2015; Erling, 2005; Li, 2009; Scales et al., 2006; Subtirelu, 2013; Timmis, 2002) and regard non-native speaker accents as stigmatised. This has been confirmed by a large number of studies and is not even queried by people who criticise accent-based ratings and advocate for a

communicatively based assessment of intelligibility (Jenkins, 2007, pp. 180–186). As Beinhoff (2013) concludes in her study on German and Greek speakers, L2 speakers do not consider their own accent of English to reflect their identity: “[T]hey do not show much solidarity with an English accent from their own L1” (Beinhoff, 2013, p. 125).

In summary, as regards the use of English, highly prestigious native speaker accents represent the norm of pronunciation, and non-native speaker accents are evaluated according to their proximity to such norms. As L1-like accents are hardly attainable by non-native speakers, the latter are often seen (or they see themselves) as deficient speakers – with strong differences depending on their respective L1. Against this backdrop, the endeavour to establish English-as-a-lingua-franca as an endonormative form of English used by its non-native speakers, as a form that is detached from native English, as described in Chapter 2, should be welcomed in that it is a step towards communicative fairness in international communication. Even so, the endeavour seems to be little more than wishful thinking, at least at the moment (see Fiedler, 2010a and Brosch, 2015b: 75–78 for a more detailed discussion).

Accents are not only at the centre of discussions about the use of English, however. They have recently attracted scholarly interest in the context of the so-called new speakers of minority languages. These speakers acquire the language in various ways: through the education system, through revitalisation projects outside the home or other traditional areas where the language is spoken (such as the Gaeltacht in the case of Irish), or as adult language learners (O’Rourke et al. 2015). They have become an important factor for the vitality of minority languages in counteracting the processes of continued language loss and language shift (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 2010). There are even examples, such as Manx, where a minority language owes its very existence to the existence of new speakers. Despite this potential contribution to language survival, as Ó Murchadha et al. (2018) point out, new speakers are often not accepted without reservation as legitimate minority language users. They are denied the authority, authenticity and ownership that are necessary to speak “legitimate language” (Bourdieu 1991) and are often perceived as the “other” compared to traditional speakers. Research on minority languages, especially in Europe, illustrates that the non-native-like accent that a new speaker tends to have poses a major obstacle to being accepted as a “real” speaker (see, for example, Costa [2015] on Occitan speakers, Ratajczak [2011] and Dołowy-Rybińska [2018] on Sorbian speakers, MacCaluim [2007] and McEwan-Fujita [2010] on Gaelic learners in Scotland, O’Rourke [2011] on Irish). “You’ll never pronounce it like we do” can be heard as a reaction when new speakers try to contact native speakers of minority languages, as illustrated by Sallabank & Marquis (2018, p. 80) in the case of new speakers of the highly endangered language Giernesiei. Despite occasional studies describing groups of new speakers who claim equal legitimacy

as speakers of a minority language without striving to sound like natives (see Nic Fhlannchadha & Hickey, 2016 for an example), everything tends to emphasise the key position of native speakers even in the area of marginalised languages that are fighting for survival. The lack of an authentic accent is the main reason for such ambivalence.

### 24.3 Previous research on accents in Esperanto

Esperanto came into being as a written language. Its norm, the *Fundamento de Esperanto* (see Chapter 8), is vague regarding pronunciation. The description of sound qualities leaves much room for variation. The phoneme /r/, for example, according to the examples given, can cover the different phonetic realisations of this sound in French, English or Russian. In his *Lingva Respondo* ('linguistic answer') no. 56,<sup>164</sup> "Pri elparolado en teorio kaj en praktiko" ('on pronunciation in theory and practice')<sup>165</sup> Zamenhof declares that inner-word sound changes (so-called sandhi phenomena), such as palatalisation before *j* or a change from [r] to [ɲ] before the sounds *g* and *k*, are "natural". In his opinion, one should neither fight (*batali*) them nor recommend (*rekomendi*) them as the only correct forms of pronunciation, since they do not cause any misunderstanding or practical inconveniences (*donas nenian malkompreniĝon aŭ praktikan maloportunaĵon*). To our knowledge, Zamenhof never commented on national accents.

What we can say on the basis of our dataset is that speakers show an inclination to sandhi under the influence of their mother tongue (Jansen, 2011; Koutny, 2015). Deviating from Esperanto's one-to-one relation between grapheme and phoneme, as it is taught in language courses, some speakers' pronunciation is characterised by regressive assimilation in words like *lingvo* or *ankaŭ* as shown in (352) and (353).

(352) *Kaj mi klopodas respondi al tiu demando lingve [lɪŋve] kaj etike.* [And I try to answer this linguistically and ethically.] [192 (spa; pres/disc; Lisbon) 67:45]

(353) *[...] ĝi celas doni ankaŭ [aŋkaŭ] la plej fruajn uzon [...]* [(...) it aims to give the earliest use as well (...)] [192 (por; pres/disc; Lisbon) 05:35]

164. *Lingvaj Respondoj* is a collection of texts in which Zamenhof clarified linguistic items and rules. They appeared in *La Esperantisto* (1889–1893), *La Revuo* (1906–1908), *Oficiala Gazeto Esperantista* (1911–1912) and other newspapers and were published as a brochure for the first time in 1910.

165. *Oficiala Gazeto Esperantista* 4, 1911, p. 222. See Zamenhof (1962/1911, pp. 11/12).

We also find examples of degemination, i.e. the simplification of a geminate (a double consonant that is pronounced as two distinct phonetic realities) into a single consonant, as described by Jansen (2011).

- (354) *Li tuj ekuzis la lingvon praktike, ekzemple dum petveturado tra Pollando*  
*[pɔ'lando]*  
 [He started to use the language immediately, for example, while hitchhiking  
 through Poland] [191 (deu; pres; Lisbon) 15:40]
- (355) [...] *metu la horaron, la programon sur la interreto* [Intə'reton] [...] [(...) put  
 the timetable, the programme on the Internet (...)]  
 [144 (eng; pres/disc; Lille) 56:01]

As described, these deviations do not cause unintelligibility, and they are widely accepted in the speech community, as also confirmed by the small number of repairs in the area (see Chapter 19). Jansen (2011) emphasises that the use of Esperanto has not led to processes such as the diphthongisation of colliding vowels that need separate realisation (e.g. *neutila* 'useless'), nasalisation and vowel deletions, which, as he writes, testifies to Zamenhof's "endeavour to create an easily speakable and understandable language for people with many different mother tongues" (Jansen, 2011, p. 57).

In their chapters on pronunciation, reference works on Esperanto grammar (see Chapter 11) do not address the topic of accents in particular. Wennergren (2020, Chapter 2.1) points out that a language with only five vowels is characterised by high degrees of variation, as its speakers only have to make sure that the quality of one vowel (e.g. *e*) is not too near another one (e.g. *o*) to avoid misunderstanding. He criticises the rules that Kalocsay and Waringhien (1985) present for the allophonic variation of /e/ and /o/. Kalocsay and Waringhien (1985, p. 45) also provide examples of different ways of pronouncing Esperanto vowels by different groups of speakers (e.g. Slavs, Hungarians), which, however, do not seem to be based on empirical work. Thus we were unable to confirm Kalocsay and Waringhien's pronunciation rules in our recordings.

J. C. Wells's (1978) description of the linguistic system of Esperanto includes a section about "good and bad ways of pronunciation" (*bona kaj malbona prononcadoj*), in which he mentions a number of crucial criteria: practical, linguistic, geographical, and sociological. The first refers to intelligibility, i.e. the requirement that the pronunciation of speakers with very different mother tongues in Esperanto must facilitate international communication. According to the linguistic criterion, good Esperanto pronunciation reflects the phonological character of the language, thus the relationship between phoneme and grapheme. For example, /b/ and /v/ have to be clearly distinguished by all speakers. The geographical criterion suggests

that a speaker's pronunciation in Esperanto should not reveal where he/she is from. This is what Wells (1978, p. 26) calls an “international” pronunciation. To acquire it, he recommends that French speakers avoid stressing the last syllable of a word, as they do in their mother tongue, and that English speakers avoid diphthongising the phoneme /o/. Sherwood (1982, p. 189), commenting on Wells's criteria, adds:

This does not imply that mild national accents are not tolerated or even enjoyed, but it appears that speakers do recognize and prize an international or nonnational pronunciation style.

Finally, Wells's sociological criterion marks the speaker as a member of the Esperanto speech community, part of whose culture is that ways of pronouncing certain words have emerged as preferred, such as the articulation of the *r*-sound as an alveolar trill.

Experience shows that Esperanto speakers have developed a fairly homogeneous way of speaking. The rare sources of recorded communication from earlier days (see, for example, Minnaja [ed.], 2001) show that pronunciation has hardly changed over time. In their introduction to a textbook from the 1970s (Dahlenburg & Liebig, 1978, p. 9), the authors point out that the largely uniform pronunciation of Esperanto was a result of its increasing use at international meetings and on the radio. This stabilising factor has become even more relevant since then thanks to the dramatic growth in opportunities for oral communication in Esperanto made possible by technological advancement and increasing mobility (see Chapter 9). The exploration of how this normative pronunciation has emerged, and what it looks like in detail is still a research desideratum, however. Pereltsvaig's (2017, p. 169) assessment that “[t]he phonology of Esperanto is even less well studied than its morphology and syntax” (see also van Oostendorp [1999]) is also true for its practical realisation in language use and the specific matter of accents.<sup>166</sup>

Among the few scientific studies of accents in Esperanto, two are of special interest for our research. The first is Lloancy's (1995) exploration of speaker attitudes to various aspects of Esperanto's speech norms, based on sixteen semi-structured interviews conducted in 1992. The interviewees, who were mainly French and included one *denaskulo*, were asked whether they had ever wondered about how to pronounce Esperanto (pp. 23–29), whether they spoke Esperanto with an accent (pp. 30–38), which speakers typically had accents (pp. 39–47), and what they thought about these accents (pp. 48–60). The answers were analysed with regard to the variables geographical/regional background, age, gender, class, political beliefs, profession, and foreign languages spoken. It turned out that none of these variables

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166. A number of works should be added to those mentioned by Pereltsvaig (2017), however, e.g. the studies by Traunmüller (1997), de Jonge & Spronck (2005) and Dols Salas (2009, 2015).

influenced how people viewed accents, with the exception of their mother tongue and, according to some participants, age<sup>167</sup> (Lloancy 1995, pp. 60–61). Further findings included the fact that most participants confirmed that they spoke Esperanto with an accent due to the influence of their L1 and viewed this as something negative. However, twelve of the sixteen interviewees saw accents as something totally tolerable in Esperanto, as long as understanding was guaranteed, and some even said they enriched the language. The more critical statements of the other four participants were directed only at longstanding speakers who in their opinion could put more effort into speaking properly. Although these responses make it evident that for the interviewees there was a pronunciation norm – to speak without a national or regional accent – they did not explicitly formulate how that norm should sound.

This gap was closed by the second of the two studies: Bourkina's (2009) exploration of the norm of spoken Esperanto.<sup>168</sup> The author asked 131 Esperanto speakers, mostly from Europe, to listen to short sequences (of about thirty seconds) produced by twenty-five speakers of eighteen different mother tongues (some of them bilingual with Esperanto as an additional L1) and to comment on and rate their speech in an online questionnaire by means of a five-point Likert scale between *nekontentige* ('unsatisfactory') and *perfekte* ('perfect') and, if appropriate, to assign one of the following qualities: *klara* ('clear') – *komprenbla* ('comprehensible') – *imitinda* ('exemplary') – *bela* ('beautiful') – *vera Esperanto* ('real Esperanto'). Free text comments were also invited.

As with Lloancy's study, neither status nor profession exerted an influence on the participants' rating – but, differently from Lloancy's, neither did age. Not at all surprisingly, the speakers who were rated best were very active Esperanto speakers, mostly with long experience in the community. The ten people ranked highest all came from Europe, but had a total of nine different native languages as L1s: Croatian, Czech, English, Finnish, French, German, Polish (two speakers), Russian, and Swedish. Among the ten people with the lowest ratings, there were some speakers from outside Europe such as Japan, China, Brazil (nevertheless speaking a "European" language), and Korea, but also from Ireland and Lithuania, and also

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167. Eight of the sixteen interviewees stated that younger speakers had milder accents nowadays, chalking this up to the increase in direct international contacts, radio, music etc. since the 1970s. This seems a plausible guess for 1992. Because of the temporal difference and especially considering the communication revolution sparked by the Internet, it is perhaps not surprising that age played no role in Bourkina's study (2009).

168. Bourkina (2009) is an unpublished PhD thesis defended at Saint Petersburg State University in 2009. We thank the author for making her manuscript available to us (which we obtained as a word document, so there may be minor discrepancies in page counting). A preliminary summary of her work was published in German (Bourkina, 2005).

English, Russian and French were among their mother tongues. This means that at least for speakers of European languages, especially Slavs, the deciding factor in the achievement of good pronunciation is personal competence. The fact that the phoneme systems of Russian or Polish, for example, are very similar to that of Esperanto, makes correct pronunciation relatively easy for speakers, although they have to learn not to use the palatal phonemes they have in their native tongues. On the other hand, the greater structural differences between Esperanto and Asian languages can make it difficult for speakers of the latter to attain a good pronunciation as measured by Wells's criteria. In particular, the rather complex phonotactics of Esperanto, which was designed to embrace as much international (European) vocabulary as possible (see Chapter 11), can indeed be very hard for Chinese or Japanese speakers at the beginning.

Of special interest in terms of speaker attitudes are the attributions of qualities in Bourkina's (2009, p. 161, Table 9) study, as they reveal which features of a given accent have an influence on the rating. As a matter of fact, most speakers (with the notable exceptions of no. 21 from Ireland and no. 22 from Brazil) were attributed a comprehensibility of 80% or above, and even the pronunciation of some low-rated speakers, such as no. 20 from China, was characterised as "clear" by 67%, whereas the accents of the ten "worst" speakers scored low in the categories "exemplary", "beautiful", and "real Esperanto". Evidently, as argued concerning ELF, accentedness is independent from individual or general comprehensibility, to use Munro et al.'s (2006) terminology. As with Loancy, the participants in Bourkina's study seemed to have a clear idea of a normative pronunciation. This idea is narrower than the *Fundamento* would allow, with the result that, for example, uvular or retroflex instead of apical *r* were judged negatively in participants' comments.

Another interesting detail that became clear in the written comments concerned attempts by the listeners to guess the speakers' native languages. While this was easy with the accents of speakers who ranked last – which were occasionally negatively commented on as "Esperenglish", "Francesperanto" (Bourkina, 2005, p. 82) – respondents failed to identify the native languages of the "best" speakers. It seems reasonable that the relative recognisability of the L1 had an influence on the ratings, as can also be concluded from the statements found in Lloancy (1995): good pronunciation in Esperanto is first and foremost pronunciation that does not betray the speaker's mother tongue.

One last interesting finding from Bourkina's study is the mediocre results of the *denaskuloj*. Although Esperanto is one of their mother tongues, they did not appear among the speakers rated best or worst, but in midfield, and they were not recognised as L1 speakers. This can possibly be explained by the way they learn and use the language in the family environment, where intelligibility is more easily attained than in the international speech community of L2 speakers. How to use

Esperanto as a lingua franca is something they will have to learn later. However, this is an assumption that needs to be carefully examined in further studies, at both the theoretical and the empirical levels.

#### 24.4 The role of accents in Esperanto communication

As we have seen in this short survey, accents in Esperanto have so far attracted relatively little interest as a research topic. A similar picture emerges when we study language-related discussions in the speech community, for which, as we have illustrated over the course of this book, Esperanto speakers have a predilection: the theme *akĉento* ('accent') falls far short of other linguistic topics (e.g. the use of individual affixes, the presentation of proper names, the use of participles, or the adoption of new vocabulary). An Internet search resulted in only twenty-seven hits<sup>169</sup> in which the topic was raised, mainly forum posts and comments on videos. They are given in Appendix 1 (webpages). The dataset is further restricted by the fact that the contributions in which the largest number of actual evaluations of accents was found originate from a learning platform (W6–W10). From this situation we can assume that these Esperanto speakers do not have much experience of using the language with other Esperanto speakers (an assumption that is confirmed by the partly erroneous language that we found in these contributions) and that their attitudes might be based more on the ideals of a new learner than their real contacts with proficient speakers.

To gain more information on the role of accents in Esperanto communication, we included a question related to this topic in our interview study on Esperanto use that was conducted with thirty experienced speakers between April 2015 and April 2016 (see Appendix 1). The answers to the question of whether accents cause problems of understanding in Esperanto communication (“Ĉu akĉentoj estas por vi problemo de kompreno?”) can be broadly divided into two groups. The first group (seventeen participants) replied in a clearly negative way (*Ne* ‘No’), with the majority of them stating that accents are common in Esperanto and therefore a phenomenon to which they have become accustomed, or explaining that it was important to distinguish between accented speech and generally low language proficiency (see Examples (356) to (359)).

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169. From a much larger collection of hits (about 190), multiple entries, which were caused by the different language versions of the learners' platform lernu.net and by English Wikipedia articles that were automatically translated into Esperanto within the framework of the project Wikitrans, had to be omitted.



- (356) *Ne, ĝenerale ne ne, plejmulto da homoj havas akĉenton, sed mi ankaŭ scias, ke mi havas akĉenton kaj eble tio estas problemo por iuj homoj, sed por mi, ne, nur se ili estas tute komencanto.*

[No, generally not, no, the majority of people have an accent, but I also know that I have an accent and maybe it is a problem for some people, but for me, no, only if they are total beginner.] [183 (eng; int; Partizánske) 13:23–42]

- (357) *Mi rimarkis ĝenerale, do, mi estas sufiĉe fleksebla. Mit tre ŝatas fonetikon kaj mi parolis kun homoj kun tre multaj originaj lingvoj. Pro tio mi ne havas multajn problemojn.*

[I notice generally, well, I'm sufficiently flexible. I like phonetics and I have spoken to people with a great many mother tongues. Therefore, I haven't got many problems.] [43 (ita; int; -) 17:36–56]

- (358) *Ne, en Esperanto ne. Kie mi trovas problemon kun kompreno, tie estas pro tro baza scio de Esperanto.*

[No, not in Esperanto. Where I find a problem in understanding it is due to too basic a knowledge of Esperanto.] [67 (slv; int; -) 15:01]

- (359) *Ne, ne, eble, se homo havus ekstreme fortan prononcon, sed en tiu kazo evidente devus esti iu ne tre sperta, se la prononco estus tiel forta, ke ĝi vere malhelpus kompreni, tio devus esti nesperta parolanto. Mi ne dirus, ke estas problemo normale.*

[No, no, maybe if someone had extremely strong pronunciation, but in this case, that would obviously be an inexperienced speaker. I wouldn't say that it is normally a problem.] [45 (eng; int; -) 36:59–37:29]

The second group of participants (ten interviewees)<sup>170</sup> answered the question in the negative as well, but in a more nuanced way, mentioning that there were speakers with strong accents that can hamper understanding (see Examples (360) and (361)). Some of them gave examples of deviating forms of pronunciation that are characteristic of speakers with a specific mother-tongue background (see Examples (362) and (363)).

- (360) *Tre malofte. Povas okazi, ke homo vere havas fortan akĉenton, kiu klare devias de la norma prononco. Jes, povas esti miskomprenoj [...], sed tre malofte.*

[Very rarely. It can happen that someone has a really strong accent, which clearly deviates from the normative pronunciation. Yes, there might be misunderstanding (...), but very rarely.] [44 (deu/spa; int; -) 24:11–36]

170. The remaining three interviewees either did not answer the question or misunderstood it, mixing up “akĉento” (‘accent’) and “akcento” (‘word accent/stress’).

- (361) *Nur se la parolado rapidas kaj la akĉento estas tre speciala (ĉina, angla ...). Mi pensas, ke mia franca akcento povas starigi la samajn problemojn.*

[Only if the talk is fast and the accent is very special (Chinese, English ...). I think that my French accent can cause the same problems.]

[207 (fra; written int; -) lines 42–43]

- (362) *Foje, se mi aŭdas francon, por mi ne estas kompreneble kion ili diras. Ili ofte forgesas h-literon, ĉar por ili h estas sensona. Sed se ili diras tion, se ili diras frazon, de frazo mi tamen de frazo mi povas elteni iom da senco de tio, kion ili volas diri [...]*

[Sometimes, if I hear a French speaker, I can't understand what they are saying. They often forget (to pronounce) the letter *h*, as it is silent for them. But if they say this, if they say a sentence, from the sentence, I can make some sense of what they want to say from the sentence nevertheless ...]

[49 (pol; int; -) 32:21–49]

- (363) *Jes, jes, jes, kiam mi estis en Ostendo, mi aŭdis- prelegis iu el Ĉinio. Mi komprenas, ĉar mi komprenas la kuntekston, sed la akĉento estis tute malfacila, ekzemple ili ne diras „Esperanto“, ili diras „Esperando“, ĉu vi komprenas? Sed ne estas partikulara problemo por Esperanto, la problemo de akĉentoj ekzistas en ĉiuj lingvoj kompreneble. Ekzemple mi parolis pri Lingala [...] Se vi parolas kun usonanoj, la akĉento ne estas problemo. Mi povas distingi kiu estas franco, germano, tion oni povas rimarki, la akĉento ne estas la sama.*

[Yes, yes, yes, when I was in Ostende, I heard- someone from China gave a talk. I understood because I understood the context, but the accent was absolutely difficult, for example, they don't say “Esperanto”, they say “Esperando”, do you know what I mean? But it is not a particular problem for Esperanto, the problem with accents exists in all languages, of course. For instance, I spoke about Lingala (...) If you talk to people from the US, accent is no problem. I can distinguish who is French, German, I notice this, the accent is not the same.]

[116 (ish; int; Lille) 21:53–23:38]

From the statements that we found in our Internet search it is evident that speakers are aware of the existence of norms for pronunciation in Esperanto (see Examples (364) to (366)) and that the essence of these norms consists in avoiding peculiarities that make it easy to identify a speaker's L1, in other words, in the adoption of what Wells and Sherwood call an “international or nonnational pronunciation style” (see Examples (367) to (369)).

- (364) *Mia esperanta elparolo estas tre proksima al la normo.*

[My Esperanto pronunciation is very close to the standard.] (W8)

- (365) *vi provu elparoli korekte*

[you must try to pronounce correctly] (W6)

- (366) *La pola prononco tre similas la modelan esperantan prononcon.*  
[The Polish pronunciation is very similar to the model pronunciation of Esperanto.] (W8)
- (367) *vi devas forlasi vian naciajn akĉenton*  
[you have to give up your national accent] (W1)
- (368) *La plej granda malfacileco pri elparolo de la sonoj en Esperanto ja estas ke oni pro maldisciplino tre ofte elparolas la literon laŭ sia nacia lingvo. Mi devas esti tre atenta kiam mi elparolas la literon “z” ĉar mi emas diri “s” kio ja ne estas ĝuste.*  
[The greatest difficulty with pronouncing the sounds in Esperanto is indeed that due to lack of discipline one often pronounces the letter as in one’s native language. I have to be very careful when I pronounce the letter “z” because I tend to say “s”, which is indeed not correct.] (W23)
- (369) *Sed, mia opinio, prononci Esperanton laŭ naciaj akĉentoj estas tute erara praktiko. Ĉiuj esperantistoj devas klopodi respekti la prononcon indikitan en la Fundamento de Esperanto.*  
[But in my mind pronouncing Esperanto according to national accents is a totally wrong practice. All Esperantists should try to respect the pronunciation that is indicated in the *Fundamento de Esperanto*.] (W22)

These opinions confirm the results of Bourkina’s study presented above, according to which a speaker’s Esperanto pronunciation was rated best if, despite their efforts, his or her L1 could not be guessed by the listeners. On the other hand, as we have already learned from the interviews, many Esperanto speakers are used to a diversity of accents in Esperanto. They are willing to tolerate this variety as long as it does not hinder communication (see Examples (370) to (372)):

- (370) *Sed akĉento ne tro gravas, dum la prononco estas komprenebla.*  
[But accent doesn’t matter too much as long as the pronunciation is comprehensible.] (W6)
- (371) *Ĉiuj elparolas la vortojn kun iom da akĉento, tamen laŭ mi tio ne ĝenas kaj montras ke la sonsistemo en esperanto permesas iom da “neperfekteco” sen malfaciligi la komprenon. Mi tute ne volas klasifiki la akĉenton de iu el tiuj personoj kiel “forta”.*  
[Everyone pronounces words with some degree of accent, but in my opinion this doesn’t hamper and shows that the sound system in Esperanto allows some “shortcomings” without complicating understanding. I do not want to classify the accents of some of these people as “strong”.] (W23)
- (372) *Laŭ mia takso estas la diferenco inter ĝena kaj erariga prononco: prononci “ĉelo” anstataŭ “celo” estas erara, sed “dje” anstataŭ “de” estas nur ĝena; la nacia akĉento devas ne erarigi pri diversaj esperantaj vortoj.*

[In my estimation, there is a difference between disturbing and confusing pronunciation: to pronounce “ĉelo” instead of “celo” is a mistake, but “dje” instead of “de” is only annoying; a speaker’s national accent should not cause confusion about various Esperanto words.] (W22)

It is not uncommon for speakers to combine their plea for tolerance towards accents with references to the ideals of the Esperanto community (see Examples (373) to (377)):

- (373) *Estas estimindaj ĉiuj parolantaj manieroj.*  
[All manners of speaking should be held in high esteem.] (W6)
- (374) *Pro sia universaleco Esperanto kompreneble ne havas iun devigan akĉenton.*  
[Because of its universality Esperanto of course doesn’t have any compulsory accent.] (W7)
- (375) *Diri kiujn oni plej malbone komprenas estas iomete malĝentila, ĉu ne? Tio iusence signifus ke la priparolitaj esperantistoj ne estas tre bonaj [...] kaj kiuj tion diras???*  
[Saying which (accents) you understand worst is a bit impolite, isn’t it? This would in some way mean that those Esperantists are not very good (...) and who is saying that???] (W10)
- (376) *Ni estas samideanoj. Se ni komprenas, kial diru unu el ni estas pli bona ol alia??*  
[We are fellow thinkers/supporters of Esperanto. If we understand, why should we say one of us is better than another?] (W9)
- (377) *Mi ne devas honti pro mia germana akĉento, ĉar por ĉiu homo Esperanto estas fremdlingvo.*  
[I don’t have to feel ashamed because of my German accent, because Esperanto is a foreign language for everyone.] (W19)

Occasionally, participants bring their experience with accents in other foreign languages to bear, and compare this with the situation in Esperanto (see Examples (378) to (380)).

- (378) *Ĉu akĉentoj konsistigas al vi problemojn de kompreno? Ĝenerale ne. Povas okazi, ke iu havas fortan akcenton, akĉenton, sed malofte okazis, ke tio estis kaŭzo de miskompreno kaj flanke mi povas diri, ke angle tio estas multe pli ĝena afero. Okazis al mi, ke mi parolis kun ĉinoj aŭ bharatanoj en la angla kaj tio estas ege malfacile por mi kompreni.*

[Do you find accents can hamper your understanding?

Generally not. It might happen that someone has a strong accent, but it rarely happens that it leads to misunderstanding, and, by the way, I can say in English this is a much more disturbing thing. It has happened before that I spoke to people from China or India in English and this was very difficult for me to understand.]

[185 (ita; int; -) 21:15–58]

(379) *Ĉu akĉento estas por vi problemo de kompreno?*

*Eh, do en Esperanto tre malofte. Tio estas en la angla estas multe pli grava problemo, ĉar ekzemple en la firmao mi kelkfoje parolas kun homoj el Azio kaj ankaŭ el aliaj eŭropaj landoj, Italio, kaj tiuj estas foje vere malfacile kompreneblaj en la angla. En Esperanto tiu problemo multe malpliofte okazas.*

[Do you find accents can hamper your understanding?

Uh, well, in Esperanto very rarely. In English it is a much more serious problem, as, for example, in the company I sometimes speak with people from Asia and also from other European countries, Italy, and they are occasionally very difficult to understand in English. In Esperanto this problem occurs much more rarely.]

[63 (deu; int; -) 21:16–53]

(380) *Ĉu akĉento estas por vi problemo de kompreno?*

*En Esperanto ne, eble kiam mi estis en Ĉinio antaŭ multaj jaroj, kelkfoje estis malfacilo pri “r” kaj “l”. Sed ne, ne, mi malofte spertas tiun problemon. Kiam mi laboris eh en internacia firmao, tiam venis kelkfoje angloparolantoj el Irlando kaj tiam estis tre malfacile kompreni.*

[Do you find accents can hamper your understanding?

Not in Esperanto, perhaps when I was in China many years ago, there were sometimes problems due to “r” and “l”. But not, no, I seldom encounter this problem. When I worked uh in an international company, English speakers occasionally came from Ireland and then it was hard to understand them.]

[46 (swe; int; -) 17:22–18:04]

These findings support Solís’ (2012) study on the Esperanto speech community. Joel, one of the thirteen participants of her questionnaire study, says:

[I]t’s accepted that people are going to have an accent. [...] It’s not like you’re excluded [...] if you have an accent in English or whatever and you’re with all native speakers. They’re going to pick up on that and want to know where you’re from. With Esperanto, no one’s going to criticize the accent. (Solís, 2012, p. 70)

What is striking in Esperanto, especially against the backdrop of what we found as regards English and new speakers of minority languages, is the fact that non-native speaker accents in Esperanto are frequently seen as something to be appreciated. In a speech community that consists almost exclusively of non-native speakers (with a small group of natives who have at least one other native tongue), a variety of accents can be regarded as enriching.<sup>171</sup> This finding, already reported in Loancy’s

171. Marjorie Boulton (1994–2017), a British author and poet writing in both English and Esperanto who is held in high regard in the speech community, is an example of an eminent Esperanto speaker whose strong English accent was tolerated or even appreciated by many (see also Example (202) in Chapter 20.4.1).

(1995) study (see Chapter 24.3), is evidenced by our interviews, in which two participants state that they find accents in Esperanto charming (*havas iom da ĉarmo*) ([48 (swe; int; -) 22:50] and lovable (*aminda*) ([209 (ish; written int; -) line 42]). See also Examples (381) to (383) from the Internet search:

- (381) *Kaj persone mi taksas tiun akĉenton tre ĉarma. :* [And, personally, I find this accent very charming.] (W1, comment on a video)
- (382) *Mi ŝatas akĉenton de poloj. Kiam mi unue aŭdis prononcon de Esperanto en mia lernolibro, ĝi estis elparolita de pola virino; ĝi allogis min. Se la libro uzus alian modelon, Esperanto ne allogus min.*  
[I like the Polish accent. When I first heard the pronunciation of Esperanto in my textbook, it was pronounced by a Polish woman; it appealed to me. If the book had used another model, Esperanto would not have appealed to me] (W8)
- (383) *Kia bela akĉento!* [What a beautiful accent!] *I loved listening to your voice and your recitation of the poem really impressed me with how beautiful Esperanto sounds. I've been studying it mostly through books the last couple months and don't practise speaking it out loud. But it really does sound absolutely lovely! Thank you! (the trills in your Rs are wonderful, something I can't match...)*  
(W16, reaction to a US-American's recitation of a poem in a video)

From the opinions and answers obtained from our studies, one might conclude that, although they strive to speak in a way that does not allow inferences to be made about a speaker's mother tongue, Esperanto speakers are well aware of the existence of accents in Esperanto communication and that they are willing to tolerate them. When negative comments directed against individual groups of speakers and transfers from particular national languages are expressed, they are often combined with positive evaluations of other accents and the wording is usually moderate. It is therefore not surprising that the harshest expression that we found, "terura" ('terrible'), referred to the speaker's own accent (see Example (386)).

- (384) *La pola prononcado tre allogas min kaj miaopinie la slavaj lingvoj estas tiuj kiuj plej alproksimiĝas al la dezirata elparolo, libera de la fortaj akĉentoj kutime trovataj en la portugala, hispana, angla, germana kaj franca.*  
[The Polish pronunciation appeals to me very much and, in my opinion, the Slavic accents are those that come nearest to the desired pronunciation, free from the strong accents usually found in Portuguese, Spanish, English, German, and French.] (W7)
- (385) *Tro forta franca akĉento. Mi eĉ komence dubis, ĉu oni kantas vere en esperanto?* [Too strong a French accent. In the beginning I even doubted whether it was really being sung in Esperanto] [W12, a reaction to a song presented by the Esperanto singer JoMo on YouTube]

(386) *Ho dankegon ! Diru ke mi ne havas brazilan akĉenton estas granda komplimento. La brazila akĉento estas terura [...] Nia ĉefa problemo estas la litero A. Ni kutime prononcas naze [...]*

[Oh, thank you very much. To say that I don't have a Brazilian accent is a big compliment. The Brazilian accent is terrible (...) Our main problem is the letter A. We usually nasalise it.] (W21)<sup>172</sup>

The fact that accented speech is a frequent characteristic of Esperanto communication and that the majority of speakers tolerate (or, occasionally, even appreciate) this feature does not mean that accents are never the butt of jokes. Sources W13, W14, W15 and W27 (see Appendix 1 webpages) bear testimony to this. An example is a humorous contribution to the cultural programme of the Esperanto meeting *Somera Esperanto Studado 2018*, “La oficiala akĉento de Esperanto” (the official accent of Esperanto), in which a speaker imitates Hungarian, Czech, German, Danish and French Esperanto speakers in quick succession. The comical effect, however, does not seem to be evoked by the accents alone, although presented in exaggerated ways, but from the rapid change by one and the same speaker. Competent speakers like this one are not only able to “get rid of” their own national accent but also have a good enough grasp of the features of other accents to parody them well.

#### 24.5 Some concluding remarks on accents in Esperanto

In this chapter we have dealt with accent, which we define, in line with current research (e.g. Munro et al., 2006), as the degree to which a speaker's pronunciation sounds different from an expected production pattern. Accentedness and comprehensibility (how the listener rates difficulty in understanding) should be distinguished from intelligibility (the extent to which a speaker is actually understood). In Esperanto as in other languages, an utterance can be rated as strongly accented, but nevertheless understood perfectly well.

As studies have shown, Esperanto speakers are aware that pronunciation norms exist. In contrast to the situation in ethnic languages, Esperanto pronunciation is not rated according to its proximity to prestigious native speaker accents – in fact

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172. Interestingly, the same self-deprecation is found in Lloancy (1995, p. 53), where she writes about herself “Kiel ĉiuj Franclingvanoj, mi penadis (kaj plu -as...) ne havi la teruran, forigendan, malbelan... francan akĉenton, kun ĉiama timo, ke ĝi tamen revenis (-as, -os)” [Like all francophones I have been trying and go on trying to not have the terrible, ugly... French accent one has to get rid of, with the constant fear that it nevertheless has come (is coming, will come) back]. Considering her overall style of writing, it is hard to believe, however, that this harsh self-criticism is justified.

in Esperanto, *denaskuloj* are not recognisable by their accents – but based on an abstract norm. Be that as it may, this norm is nevertheless easier to attain for the speakers of some national languages (Slavs) than for others (Asians).

Esperanto pronunciation is considered to be good or “international” when it does not manifest features typically associated with a speaker’s L1. Nevertheless, most Esperanto speakers do have an accent that gives away their native language. Although the odd negative comment is heard and speakers with strong accents are occasionally mocked, the topic is relatively rarely a subject of discussion. Instead, accented speech is considered an ordinary feature in a second-language community and therefore generally accepted or seen as a gain for the speech community.





## Esperanto and language change

### 25.1 Introduction

Living languages are dynamic phenomena. They vary and change as they are used through time. Translations of the same source text, for example the Bible, from 1600, 1800, and 2000 differ considerably in the same target language. Language changes to serve people's needs. It is an adaptive system, as Larsen-Freeman (2011, p. 49) states, "because it changes to fit new circumstances, which are also themselves continually changing".

It is important to note that language change generally occurs without any conscious planning.<sup>173</sup> For this reason it is not predictable: it can only be observed afterwards, and not before it begins and mostly not even when it has already begun. Indeed, there are cases where initial indications of language change do not endure, subsequently either disappearing from use or staying confined to local dialects. For example, certain regular outcomes of the High German consonant shift (Low German *dag*, High German *Tag* 'day') like *Berg* > *Perg* 'mountain' are found only in the most southern dialects and proper names today (see Cercignani, 1979, pp. 26–48 for an overview). Croft (2000, p. 3) points out,

I am inclined towards the pessimistic view with respect to language change, which implies that even with perfect knowledge of the initial state, we would not be able to predict a language change.

Language change, however, can also be the result of deliberate efforts. Examples include the emergence of gender-sensitive lexical units or formulations and the results of terminology planning. However, not even language management measures necessarily lead to a predictable outcome in a speech community (Maradan, 2021, pp. 75–77).

In order for linguistic change to happen, of course, there has to be both a linguistic system fit for evolution and a speech community triggering changes. As Blanke (2010, p. 74) ascertains, the phenomenon of linguistic change is a clear indication that a given language can be seen as a living, natural language.

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173. In his seminal work on linguistic change, Keller (2003) uses the metaphor of the "invisible hand" acting to constantly change a language.

## 25.2 Factors influencing language change in Esperanto

As Esperanto is a living language, it undergoes language change. In the literature, however, misconceptions on this topic are frequent (Fiedler, 2015a). One group of authors deny that Esperanto is even capable of evolving. Jones and Singh (2005, p. 182), for example, describe the planned language as “unilateral (emerging from one mind instead of the myriad of interacting ones of a speech community) and importantly, ahistorical and acultural, which we speakers are not”.<sup>174</sup> Another group of scholars make predictions about how the linguistic structure of Esperanto might develop if it were to be adopted worldwide, stating that the language would lose its simplicity and regularity and “massively borrow from English, possibly more than other languages because of its smaller initial stock” (Van Parijs, 2011, p. 43).<sup>175</sup> With this in mind, it seems logical to investigate the phenomenon of language change in Esperanto.

Language change in Esperanto has barely been studied thus far. The few significant studies include Lo Jacomo’s (1981) and Philippe’s (1991) doctoral dissertations as well as a survey article by Blanke (2010) focusing on lexical changes. They describe Esperanto as a living language that has undergone (and continues to undergo) a number of changes. Philippe and Blanke illustrate this with a wide variety of examples, but they do not provide quantitative information about the extent of the phenomena they describe and, most regrettably, they do not indicate the sources of their examples. We see interesting overlaps particularly with Piron’s (1989a) study, in which the author presents authentic examples of semantic, lexical, morphological, and syntactic evolution of spoken and written Esperanto based on his observations during Esperanto meetings and congresses. We will return to some of the issues mentioned in these four studies in Chapter 25.4.

In this chapter, we take into account two closely related phenomena that are decisive for the character of Esperanto. These are, first, the special case of a language that is spoken overwhelmingly as an L2, and, second, the high linguistic awareness of its speakers. The first phenomenon implies a steady source of ethnolinguistic

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174. In more detail, the authors point out the following (p. 181):

*Assumptions of ‘perfection’ create other problematic issues for inventors and their languages, such as the fact that these creations seem to be expected to function fully in the real world but remain untouched by it. We noted such assumptions earlier in Schleyer’s and Zamenhof’s reluctance to let their creations undergo processes of both deliberate reform and subconscious ‘natural’ language change, and to attempt to prevent – or at the very least control – such processes through both prescriptive codes (such as Zamenhof’s Fundamento) and their authoritarian enforcers such as language academies.”*

See also Stewart (1962, 1968), according to whom planned languages (artificial languages) lack “historicity”.

175. For a detailed discussion of these arguments, see Brosch & Fiedler (2018).

influences on Esperanto, hence it can act as a driving force of linguistic change. The second phenomenon can be seen as a compensatory mechanism countering change and stabilising the linguistic norm. Basically, the factors impacting upon the evolution of Esperanto can be subdivided into two groups: factors accelerating language change and those slowing it down.

The following factors **facilitate language change**, as they have destabilising effects on the norm:

- **Influences of previously learned languages**  
Esperanto is never a speaker's only language but has to compete with their (usually stronger) other languages. As Esperanto speakers are more polyglot than average (see Chapter 4), this competition is even stronger. The use of Esperanto is therefore constantly influenced by the speaker's other language(s), especially his or her mother tongue.
- **Use as an L2**  
Esperanto is usually a speaker's weaker language, as it is most commonly not their native tongue, but is acquired after puberty. Experience shows that a considerable proportion of Esperanto learners do not strive for language perfection (see the description of *eterna komencanto* in Chapter 21.3), as intermediate or even minimal degrees of proficiency allow for considerable communication skills. Acquisition errors or imperfect learning can stimulate language change (Nettle, 1999; Trudgill, 1989).
- **Limited communication opportunities**  
The Esperanto speech community is relatively small, and its members are dispersed throughout more than 120 countries on all continents. These circumstances drastically restrict the opportunities to speak the language on a regular basis (see Chapter 24).
- **Linguistic creativity**  
The language's agglutinative character enables – or even encourages – its speakers to be creative, i.e. to understand and produce an infinite number of words and utterances. This includes ad hoc formations.<sup>176</sup> In addition, as shown in Chapter 20, Esperanto speakers often engage in “language play” (Crystal, 1998) based on a deliberate manipulation of language rules (see Philippe, 1991, pp. 86–87). Often the resulting innovative forms and uses find their way into everyday language use, initiating language change (see Fiedler, 1999).

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176. For example, our dataset includes coinages such as *Ne enkestigu vian scion* (from *en-* ‘in(to)’, *kest-* ‘chest/box’, *-ig* ‘make’ and *-u* ‘imperative’, lit. ‘Don’t put your knowledge into a chest’) spoken by a Cuban teacher at the end of his class, and *postvienaĵo* (from *post* ‘after’, *Vieno* ‘Vienna’ and *aĵ-* ‘thing’) as an email reference line referring to something that should be discussed after a meeting in Vienna.

– **Literature and literary influences**

Language change can also be stimulated by writers who feel that they need a more extensive and nuanced vocabulary. In the 1980s, a group of Czech poets – known as La Praga Skolo (“The Prague School [of writers]”) – caused heated debate about Esperanto’s linguistic development with their idea that, in order to live up to its artistic ambitions by expanding the lexicon, the literary language should differ considerably from ordinary language use. Karel Pič (1920–1995), although distancing himself from the literary circle, shocked his readers with his linguistic experiments and lists of newly coined words (so-called *pičismoj*) in the appendices of his works. Eli Urbanová (1922–2012), despite making only moderate use of neologisms in her own works, related the ideas of the school around Josef Rumler (1922–1999) to the Prague linguistic circle’s theories of standard language and functional styles (quoted from Sutton’s translation):

Emanating from his experiences of the necessity of synonymity as a condition for the existence of any style, the general theory on the various styles in language was adapted and applied by Rumler concretely to Esperanto. This division of the vocabulary (lexicon) into individually functioning styles (communal, specialist and literary) makes it possible for us in Prague to orient ourselves in the choice of pertinent words. (Sutton, 2008, p. 455)

Minnaja and Silfer (2015, p. 451) point out that hardly any of the neologisms introduced by the Prague writers or by Pič at the time have survived, and that despite heated debates “the commonly used language is the literary Esperanto of the 1950s, lexicographically codified by Waringhien in the *Plena Ilustrita Vortaro* (Waringhien, 1970)” (Minnaja & Silfer, 2015, p. 256).<sup>177</sup>

These factors show their influences especially with regard to lexicon and stylistics. Our more detailed description of the influence of writers reveals that language innovations are not necessarily permanent. This is mainly due to the second group of impact factors that **hamper language change** in Esperanto or even “undo” innovations introduced by individual speakers or parts of the speech community:

– **Language awareness**

As already explained, Esperanto speakers are very conscious users of the language. Unlike the situation in their mother tongues, they are constantly aware of the planned language’s linguistic norms. Because of their highly developed metalinguistic competence, they resist simply implementing innovations without proper consideration. The relatively low rates of code-switching described in Chapter 22 and the manifold language-related discussions in Esperanto communication (see Chapter 23.2) are indicative of this conservatism.

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177. [...] la ordinare uzata lingvo estas la literatura Esperanto de la 1950aj, leksikografie kodita de Waringhien per *Plena Ilustrita Vortaro* (1970).

– **Language loyalty**

Esperanto speakers feel a sense of loyalty to their language in its original state: for ideological reasons, they do not want it to change. Works by Zamenhof and other pioneers enjoy an outstanding reputation among them, and, as described in Chapter 10, for large groups in the speech community the planned language is not only a means of communication, but a cultural asset that must be preserved exactly as it is. Also, most speakers, being familiar with the history of the language including the Ido schism, know that continual change and reforms can be detrimental to the development of a planned language.

– **Dominantly written usage**

Despite its growing use in spoken communication, Esperanto is still more commonly used in writing. Written language tends to be more conservative than spoken language (Fromkin et al., 2007, p. 521; Hernández-Campoy & Schilling, 2012, p. 68; Tsunoda, 2004, p. 188). In Chapter 23 we saw how the oral use of Esperanto follows the codified written standards of the language more strictly than in ethnic languages.

– **Esperanto Academy**

The *Akademio de Esperanto*, which was founded in 1908 (see Chapter 8), aims “(1) to conserve and protect the language according to its norms and to control its development; (2) to explore all linguistic questions concerning Esperanto; (3) to review publications from the linguistic point of view; and (4) to defend Esperanto against all competitors” (*Jarlibro de UEA* 2018, p. 72). Its forty-four members, mainly linguists and writers, work in different fields (grammar, the general dictionary, language for special purposes, phonology, and literature) and represent different countries and mother tongues. The Academy has a mainly stabilising effect on the evolution of the language. It intervenes in cases of non-standard language use and makes recommendations on consistent applications of language rules (for examples, see Chapter 25.5)

– **Use in practice**

Esperanto is a planned language initiated to facilitate communication between people of different mother tongues from all over the world. To achieve this objective the language must be learnable, expressive and unambiguous. First and foremost, Esperanto speakers want to be understood, which would be seriously hampered were they to use an innovative, uncommon variety of the language. Every time Esperanto is used in practice (e.g. in journals, on the radio, in Internet forums, and at congresses), its use constitutes a test case of successful communication, the results of which in turn have balancing effects.

Such a classification into factors facilitating language change and those hampering it is not without its drawbacks, as there are also factors that can have both types of influence. Zamenhof’s dual role as linguistic creator and as arbiter of usage is one

of those. An additional factor is the evolution of the speech community itself. This community is, on the one hand, the precondition for the use and further development of the language (and thus for language change), and, on the other, the sum of its speakers – with their identities and attitudes (which act as a conservative force). We will therefore pay special attention to these two aspects in the following sections.

### 25.3 Zamenhof’s ideas on language change

When Zamenhof published his *Lingvo Internacia* in 1887, Esperanto was not a fully fledged language, but a grammatical outline with a few sample texts and a vocabulary list of only about 900 elements. Zamenhof was convinced that the language must develop through collective use.<sup>178</sup> The language was already capable of serving as a means of (written) communication for the pioneer users, but at the same time it left much room for growth, change, and stabilisation in its grammar, pragmatics, and lexicon as they were deployed by the use of its slowly growing speech community (Schubert, 2010; Tonkin, 2017). However, Zamenhof was also aware that the young and immature language needed to be protected from arbitrary and chaotic changes that might culminate in the emergence of geographical or diachronic varieties. He expressed his concern about the unity of the language in the preface to *Fundamento de Esperanto*, which was established as the immutable part of the basis of Esperanto in 1905 by the first World Esperanto Congress with the *Declaration of Boulogne* (see Chapter 8).

The evolutionary model that Zamenhof outlined for Esperanto in this preface, if fully put into practice and followed by the speakers, would in fact allow for slow and controlled development of the language. It comprises three types of elements (Zamenhof 1991/1905, pp. 33, 37):

Elements from the *Fundamento*, either by explicit appearance (e.g. in the dictionary) or by implicit inclusion (e.g. internationalisms like *buso* ‘bus’), are by definition linguistically correct, stylistically acceptable, and unchangeable. They are “official”.

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178. See the following two statements by Zamenhof: “Ĉar la tuta esenco de lingvo estas bazita antaŭ ĉio sur *interkonsento*, tial komuna ĝisnuna uzado devas ludi en lingvo pli gravan rolon, ol seke teoria logikeco; [...]” [As the very essence of a language is above all based on *convention*, the common use up to now has to play a bigger role in a language than dry theoretical logic; (...)] (Zamenhof 1962/1911, *Lingva respondo* 47); “La lingvo internacia devas vivi, kreski kaj progresi laŭ la samaj leĝoj, laŭ kiaj estis ellaborataj ĉiuj vivaj lingvoj.” [The international language has to live, grow, and progress according to the same laws by which all living languages are elaborated] (Zamenhof, 1888/89, pp. 7–8).

New words for concepts that cannot be expressed by roots from the *Fundamento* can be used at will, but are not obligatory. If they become incontestably accepted, a “central authoritative body” (*aŭtoritata centra institucio*), a role which nowadays the Esperanto Academy (*Akademio de Esperanto*) serves, can add them to the dictionary in the *Fundamento* (officialise them), making them part of the immutable base. The same goes for new rules, such as details of word formation or the use of certain participles.

New words for concepts that are synonyms of an official root should not be used. However, when it becomes clear that an official element is “too inconvenient” (*tro neoportuna*) – which is best seen when a non-standard form is used instead of it in spite of the official ban – the Esperanto Academy is entitled to officialise an alternative or at least declare it tolerated. The old form still does not lose its official character (as it is immutable), but the competing new form can now be used and may render the older form archaic.<sup>179</sup>

As Zamenhof emphasised, the third case, the officialisation or toleration of new forms for existing official elements, should be an exception reserved for cases of indubitable need for a correction of the basic rules. Indeed, the Esperanto Academy usually waits a few decades, observing the actual use of a form, before it officialises it. And the cases of new forms being sanctioned instead of official forms are still rare.<sup>180</sup>

In theory, this evolutionary model would mean a conscious renunciation of a certain array of possible changes, with regard to the basic linguistic system (the morphology) and core vocabulary, which already function well and seem not to need any modification.<sup>181</sup> In this way, only “necessary” changes that enhance the expressiveness of the language and do not disturb or devalue its system would be accepted. Nevertheless, it has become clear that there is not only an invisible hand in

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179. Examples include *inflamo* (‘inflammation’) instead of *brulumo* (from *brul-* ‘burn’), which became part of the Esperanto lexicon by means of the *Kvara Oficiala Aldono* (‘Fourth Official Addition’).

180. A notable exception is the wide toleration or officialisation of forms with *k* instead of *Fundamento* forms with the rare phoneme *ĥ* (e.g. *kemio* beside *ĥemio* ‘chemistry’). See Chapter 25.4.

181. This of course does not mean that we think that the basics of Esperanto were some kind of ideal or without alternatives. In fact, there is not a single element in the language about which there was, is, or could be no discussion as to whether it could be expressed in another way. What we want to state is that there may be different opinions whether, for example, the direct object should be expressed by a morphological case like *-n* in Esperanto, by a preposition, or by word order as in English, but that from a linguistic point of view there is no way to claim that one of them is objectively “better” or more complete than the other solutions, meaning there is no communicative necessity triggering the change in question.



language change (see footnote 173). There are also no taboo places that are shielded from changes. As a consequence, some of the changes that have since occurred in Esperanto, including uses that are very popular among speakers, contradict the explicit norms of the *Fundamento*. Examples will be shown in Chapter 25.5.

Of course, Zamenhof was not so naïve as to believe that merely prohibiting certain changes would prevent them from happening sooner or later. In a letter published in his *Lingvaj Respondoj* (see footnote 164 in Chapter 24.3) (Zamenhof, 1962/1911, pp. 114/115 [Lingva Respondo no. 144]) he expressed his hope that the mechanisms provided by the adoption of the *Fundamento* would slow down and channel linguistic changes and prevent the language from disintegrating into dialects:

*La sola celo, kiun la Fundamento havas, estas nur: gardi la lingvon kontraŭ anarĥio, kontraŭ reformoj arbitraj kaj personaj, kontraŭ danĝera rompado, kontraŭ forĵetado de malnovaj formoj, antaŭ ol la novaj estos sufiĉe elprovitaj kaj tute definitive kaj sendispute akceptitaj. [...] lingvo, kiu devas trarabati al si la vojon ne per ia potenca dekreto, sed per laborado de amasoj, povas disvolviĝi nur per tre singarda vojo de natura evolucio, sed ĝi tuj mortus, se oni volus ĝin disvolvi per kontraŭnaturo kaj danĝeriga vojo de revolucio (original emphasis).*

[The only aim the *Fundamento* has is to keep the language safe from *anarchy*, from *arbitrary* and *individual* reforms, from dangerous ruptures, from dumping old forms before the new forms are sufficiently *tested* and definitively and beyond doubt *accepted*. (...) A language that has to break its way through not by some kind of powerful decree, but by the work of the masses, can evolve only by means of a very careful path of natural evolution. But it would die instantly if you chose to develop it by the unnatural and highly dangerous path of revolution.]<sup>182</sup>

Altogether, there is no denying the fact that Esperanto has gone its way quite successfully from a mere project to a language in active use. Its making, as Gledhill (2014, p. 325) puts it, “was a ‘co-production’, in which the language scheme became a living language through a process of interactive language creation”. The instructions of the *Fundamento* may seem paradoxical – in order for a change to be approved, it has to be tested by use, but at the same time unapproved changes should not be used – but this strategy has obviously proven successful. It is an alternative approach to established linguistic norms, which a language without native speakers particularly needs if it is to retain its stability.

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182. For an interpretation of the *Fundamento* from the point of view of linguistic norms, see especially Velger (1994).

## 25.4 The role of speakers in language change

As, of course, the speakers of the language are the most important element in language change (Blythe & Croft, 2009; Keller, 2003), we should at this juncture recall the competences and attitudes of a typical Esperanto speaker. In Chapter 4 we described Esperanto speakers as interested in languages and mostly polyglot, linguistically loyal and equipped with high degrees of metalinguistic knowledge. This evaluation is confirmed by sociolinguistic studies of the speech community (e.g. Kimura, 2012; Solís, 2012; Stria, 2017). In his questionnaire, Rašić (1994) asked the participants about their views on some of the most frequently discussed language issues in Esperanto, such as the Eurocentric character of the vocabulary, or diacritics. Unsurprisingly, opinions differed considerably, but the most important result was the low percentage of people who did not have an opinion on these questions at all (between 3.85 and 10.26%).<sup>183</sup> Esperanto speakers are highly interested in linguistic matters and they play an active part in the development of their language.

Discussions on correct language use, on the observance of the basic rules, are of the utmost importance to speakers, who understand that this is the precondition of Esperanto's successful development. Debates on linguistic issues have therefore accompanied the language throughout its history, although the places where they occur have changed, of course. The correspondence between Zamenhof and the early language supporters, along with the collection and publication of his answers (Zamenhof's *Lingvaj Respondoj*) are very early forms of these discussions. In addition to Esperanto journals that have always served as places for linguistic discussions and language guidance (see Chapter 25.5 for examples from 1889 and 1905), language is now debated above all in Internet forums and social networks. An examination of one hundred random questions on the important advice website [esperanto.stackexchange.com](http://esperanto.stackexchange.com), providing high-quality answers in English or Esperanto, showed that fifty-one of them concerned the basic rules (e.g. questions of word usage, semantic nuances, correct grammatical constructions). There were twenty-three translation requests (of individual words not found in dictionaries), while nineteen concerned other topics (technical questions on typing the Esperanto diacritics, where to find specific literature, etc.). Only seven questions aim at the "metalevel" (e.g. questions of etymology, reforms, why certain problems were solved in this and not another way). From this we can conclude that Esperanto speakers are not interested in changing or "improving" the language, but accept it as is and want to speak it correctly.

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183. We owe the idea of interpreting Rašić's results in this way to Maradan (2021, p. 139).

At the same time, speakers are aware that Esperanto needs further elaboration if it is to be used in various domains, especially in science and technology. Speakers' activities in terminology networks focus on compiling specialist terminology lists and dictionaries. They are an important factor for Esperanto's development, especially in the area of lexis (Maradan, 2021).<sup>184</sup>

The Esperanto Academy (*Akademio de Esperanto*) has been mentioned several times in this chapter. We considered it a factor of language change that has balancing effects, and we have seen that Zamenhof attached great importance to it in his preface of the *Fundamento*. Chapter 25.5 will present some examples of its activities, such as officialising new lexical items. In contrast to this, in previous chapters, several linguistic examples suggested that speakers opine that the Academy does not face up to its responsibilities in guiding the development of the language. See, for example, the mocking allusions in (142), (214) and (221). Sherwood (1982, p. 187) states:

There is an Academy of Esperanto, but it has historically played a very minor role in the development of the language. Even in lexical matters the Academy has limited itself to occasional listings of words that have been around for enough decades to seem “official”. Major growth in the lexicon has occurred through decentralized individual suggestions and use.

Maradan (2021, p. 141), although agreeing that the Academy “failed to respond to all of Esperanto speakers' needs, often losing its leading role as the lexicon in favour of other resources”, points out that “the *Akademio* should not be neglected today”, as in her investigation she finds speakers for whom “it remains an absolute lexical reference”, “a prestigious source that must be obeyed without question”.

The fact that Esperanto speakers are aware of the importance of the norms does not mean that they follow Zamenhof's approach outlined above or are aware of it at all. It seems that the fact that Esperanto has not changed much since 1887 or 1905 is not due to its users' faithfully following the path presented in the foreword to the *Fundamento*, but their reluctance to accept many and profound changes at all (see also Philippe, 1991, pp. 90/91). In our experience, when they encounter a linguistic problem, both beginners and advanced speakers alike usually rely on: grammars (especially Wennergren, 2020) and dictionaries (especially Duc Goninaz, 2002 and [www.reta-vortaro.com](http://www.reta-vortaro.com)), which they regard as authoritative; on the opinion of good speakers; and on the frequencies of different alternatives in the text corpus [tekstaro.com](http://tekstaro.com) (see also Maradan, 2021). This approach does not differ much from the way people seek advice in other languages, but of course it does not take into account

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184. For a survey of past and present terminology work in Esperanto, see W. Blanke (2008) and (2013).

the special circumstances of a planned language that has no (authoritative) native speakers and at the same time a worldwide user base – which is the very reason why Zamenhof pleaded for a novel approach to linguistic norms.

## 25.5 Examples of language change in Esperanto

A study of language change addresses the variation of a language over time. Although this book does not pursue a diachronic approach, it seems necessary to address past forms of Esperanto usage here in order to prove that Esperanto has become a living language, which – following Blanke’s approach – includes language change. What follows in the remainder of this chapter is a presentation of examples along the levels of the language system, taking the present language use as we found it in our dataset as a point of departure. We will not be able to provide an in-depth study of language change in Esperanto, but will instead confine ourselves to presenting a number of examples and also take account of previous work on this subject by other authors (see Chapter 25.1).

### 25.5.1 Phonological changes

As already mentioned, Esperanto began as a written language. To a certain extent, the very existence of spoken Esperanto can therefore be considered a result of its evolution. When we listen to historical audio recordings, such as Zamenhof’s speech at the first World Esperanto Congress in 1905<sup>185</sup> or Ivo Lapenna’s speech from 1954,<sup>186</sup> we are astonished by how stable the pronunciation of Esperanto is, as we find no differences with today’s Esperanto. Given the small number of these audio recordings and their restriction to the formal language used on official occasions, it is nevertheless not possible to conduct a detailed comparison.

A morphophonological change that is particularly apparent when we read an Esperanto text from the early days, is the frequent use of the contracted form of the definite article, *l*, before a word beginning with a vowel and with some prepositions ending in vowels. The *Fundamento* prescribes in rule 16 that “[t]he *a* of the article, and final *o* of substantives, may be sometimes dropped euphoniae gratia, e.g. *de l’mondò* for *de la mondò*; *ŝiller’* for *ŝillerò*; in such cases an apostrophe should be substituted for the discarded vowel” (p. 61). A glance at an Esperanto journal from 1905 reveals that speakers made considerable use of apostrophes to form the definite article:

185. See <https://youtu.be/VT3Z0hVfW44?t=177>.

186. See Minnaja (ed.) (2001).

*Pli ol sesdek esperantistoj respondis je l' alvoko de l' komitatoj. Antaŭ la dekunua horo gaja tintado de tintiloj anoncas l' alvenon de l' Provins'a grupo komforte lokita en veturilego. En nubo de polvo kaj en blindiga brileco de tro kompleza suno, la graciaj sinjorinoj kaj la plaĉaj fraŭlinoj, tute griz-pudritaj, desaltas malpeze sur la teron. Atendante la ceterajn grupojn, la ĝoja bando sin dissemas tra la herbejoj inter la lekantoj kaj la ranunkoloj. Vera festo de l' naturo kaj de l' printempo.*

(*Esperanto* 2/1905, p. 1)<sup>187</sup>

In the early days, speakers were obviously insecure about the use of *l'*. We find an article in the journal *La Esperantisto* (Nuremberg) (3/1889, 20th Dec, p. 24 “Respondoj al la amiko”) [‘Answers to friends’]) in which Zamenhof gives recommendations about its use, answering a reader’s letter:

*Ĉu vi jam komencis la presadon de Via lernolibro? Se vi ne scias, kiam Vi devas uzi la formon „la” kaj „l’”, uzu ĉiam pli bone la formon „la”. La formon „l’” mi uzas ordinaro nur post prepozicioj, kiuj finiĝas per vokalo (ekzemple „de”, „tra” k.c.); en ĉiaj aliaj okazoj mi uzas ordinaro la plenan formon „la”, ĉar alie la senco povus fariĝi ne klara, en la sono ne agrabla. Z-f.*

[Have you already started printing your textbook? If you don’t know when you have to use the forms “la” and “l’”, it is always better to use the form “la”. I commonly use the form “l’” only after prepositions which end in a vowel (e.g. *de*, *tra* and others); in all other cases, I commonly use the full form “la”, as otherwise the sense could be unclear, in the sound not pleasant. Z-f]

The frequent use of *l'* was typical of the first decades of Esperanto only (see Figure 21). In the journal *Esperanto* (published by the Universal Esperanto Association) we find eighty-one occurrences per 10,000 words in 1905, compared to just thirty-nine occurrences per 10,000 words in the same journal in 1921. In the 2015 edition of the journal, the use of *l'* is mainly restricted to book titles (e.g. *Perlo de l' Oriento* ‘Pearl of the Orient’, *Kanto de l' Korvo* ‘Song of the Crow’).

Another change has been observed concerning *ĥ*, which is the rarest letter in the Esperanto alphabet (Quasthoff et al., 2014, p. 19). Words from the *Fundamento* which contain this letter are often spelled with the letter *k* instead (e.g. *kemio* instead of *ĥemio* ‘chemistry’, *arkaika* instead of *arĥaika* ‘archaic’, etc.). The word *tekniko* is among the most frequent 10,000 words, in frequency class 11, according to Quasthoff et al. (2014), whereas *teĥniko* is used far less frequently (frequency class 14). These forms were officialised by the *Akademio de Esperanto*. This change,

187. [(From a report on an Esperanto meeting) ‘More than sixty Esperantists responded to the call of the committee. Before 11 o’clock, a happy jingling of bells announces the arrival of the group from Provins comfortably located in a huge vehicle. In a cloud of dust and the dazzling brilliance of the too kind sun, the graceful ladies and pleasant unmarried women, completely covered in grey powder, jump lightly to the ground. Waiting for the other groups, the happy group scatters through the meadows among marguerites and buttercups. A real feast of nature and spring.’]

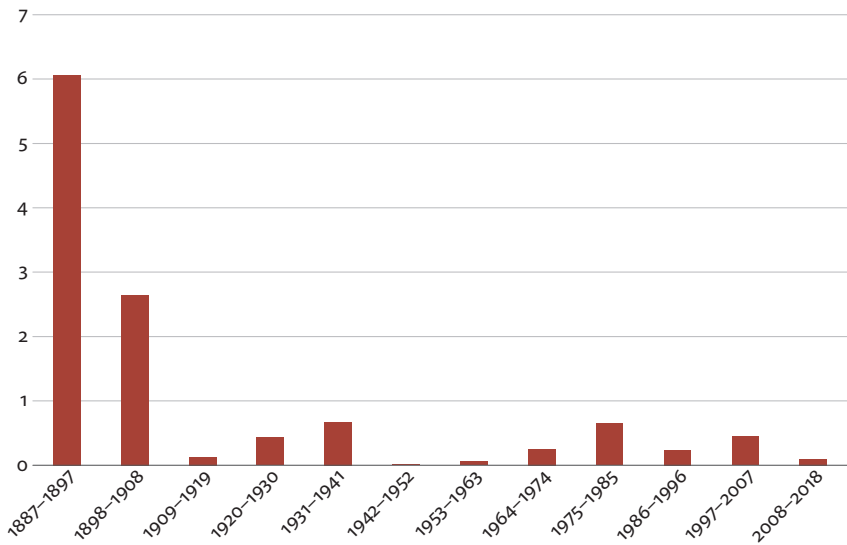


Figure 21. The use of *l* in the texts of *Tekstaro* in various decades

however, is not complete (and may even have passed its apogee), as there are still no official alternatives to *ĥolero* ‘cholera’ (as there is a word *kolero*, which means ‘anger’) and *ĥoro* ‘choir’ (*koro* means ‘heart’). Of course, the speech community does employ synonyms (*kolerao* and *koruso*), but these are generally regarded as non-standard as they have not been officialised by the Academy.<sup>188</sup> Many speakers are not actually aware of this limitation, as the forms are quite common.

### 25.5.2 Orthographic changes

The introduction and use of the popular *x*-convention as an alternative to the Esperanto diacritics (see footnote 45 in Chapter 11) can be considered a change in the area of spelling. Frequency studies show that Zamenhof’s alternative writing system (the *h*-convention) is preferred by Esperanto speakers. As a rule, *h* spellings (e.g. *ghin* and *chu* instead of *ĝin* and *ĉu*) belong to a higher frequency class than *x* spellings (*gxin* and *cxu*) (for a detailed description, see Quasthoff et al., 2014, pp. 10f.).

From a normative point of view, the *x*-convention is sub-standard, as the section on the alphabet in the *Fundamento* prescribes the *h*-convention for cases in which the accented letters cannot be used. The *x*-convention, however, can be accepted as a (superior) technical surrogate for purposes of printed publication.

188. See the question to and answer by the *Akademio de Esperanto*: [http://akademio.info/akademio/index.php?title=Respondoj\\_de\\_la\\_Lingva\\_Konsultejo#Pri\\_27k.27\\_kaj\\_27.C4.A5.27](http://akademio.info/akademio/index.php?title=Respondoj_de_la_Lingva_Konsultejo#Pri_27k.27_kaj_27.C4.A5.27).

### 25.5.3 Lexical changes

The Esperanto lexicon has undergone enormous expansion. As Tonkin (2015, p. 196) has stated, “the vast majority of the vocabulary has been created by the speakers of the language rather than its originator”. The lexical expansion of Esperanto can be documented by comparing Esperanto dictionaries (see Table 15).

**Table 15.** Size of selected Esperanto dictionaries

Year of publication	Name of publication	Number of roots/entries
1887	<i>Unua Libro</i>	< 1,000 roots
1894	<i>Universala Vortaro</i>	approx. 2,600 roots
1934	<i>Plena Vortaro</i> (Grossjean-Maupin et al., second edition)	6,900 roots + 5,000 compounds
1970	<i>Plena Ilustrita Vortaro</i> (Waringhien)	approx. 15,250 roots (about 45,000 entries including compounds and derivations)
2002	<i>La Nova Plena Ilustrita Vortaro</i>	approx. 17,000 roots (about 47,000 entries)

The language has to keep pace with the changing world. Scientific and technological innovations as well as social developments are reflected in Esperanto as in all other languages. Expressions such as *saĝtelefono* (‘smartphone’), *sendrata reto/vifio* (‘wifi’) and *kronviruso/koronviruso* (‘coronavirus’) bear witness to these developments. Also, historical developments among the Esperanto speech community have led to lexical expansion, as shown by *kabei*,<sup>189</sup> *raŭmisto* (see Chapter 8) and the phraseological expressions presented in Chapter 21. Many new expressions have their origin in specialist fields (medicine, computer sciences, politics) and enter general language use to differing degrees. As mentioned in Chapter 23, there are also neologisms coined on the basis of new roots (e.g. *olda* [‘old’], *primavero* [‘spring’]), whose use is however mainly limited to instances of poetic licence.

The two principal means of lexical expansion were described in Chapter 11. The very fact that the *Fundamento* includes these possibilities is indicative of Zamenhof’s vision and conviction that Esperanto would continue to evolve. The lexical development is both a result of the speakers’ productive application of Esperanto’s affix system (see, for example, the long list of word formations with the root *amik-* in Chapter 11 and the creative employment of word formation principles for humorous purposes in Chapter 20) and borrowing. As for the latter strategy, at present, languages are especially influenced by English (Furiassi et al., 2012). The

189. “To disappear from the Esperanto movement” – from Kabe (pseudonym of Kazimierz Bein), an early Esperanto stylist who became discouraged with the Esperanto movement and abruptly abandoned it.

English language is nowadays an important donor language for Esperanto as well, as examples such as *podkasto* and *blogo* illustrate. As regards those direct borrowings from other languages, we should consider two things. First, Esperanto itself is an a posteriori language with a mixed vocabulary (see Chapter 7) and, secondly, it is an autonomous system (with, for example, word category markers and high degrees of agreement between spelling and pronunciation). Imports from other languages have to undergo various form adaptations to be used in Esperanto, so that words such as *podkasto* and *blogo* are not felt as foreign. They are in agreement with Esperanto's word formation principles and do not differ very much from words such as *birdo* ('bird') or *kisi* ('to kiss'), which are of English origin as well, but part of Esperanto's basic vocabulary included in the *Fundamento*. As a consequence, they do not pose pronunciation or spelling problems for speakers, as is often the case with Anglicisms entering ethnic languages.

Nevertheless, as shown in Chapter 22, speakers of Esperanto are more hesitant to borrow from English than speakers of other languages (see also Fiedler, 2018a). A closer look at IT terminology, a domain that is closely associated with fast lexical innovation, can be revealing in this context. Table 16 shows that a large stock of very frequent terms from this domain has been formed endogenously in Esperanto, which makes them immediately comprehensible, even for the average Esperanto speaker. Other languages, e.g. German, include many direct loans from English. These show only minor assimilations, such as in spelling (capitalisation of nouns) and phonology (cf. *mail* in English [meɪl] and German [meɪl]). In addition, pseudo-English terms (false Anglicisms) (e.g. *Handy* and *Beamer* in German) are created because of the image improvement that English vocabulary brings about in other national languages.

**Table 16.** IT terminology in English, German and Esperanto (see Nevelsteen, 2012)

English	German	Esperanto
<i>provider</i>	<i>Provider</i>	<i>provizanto</i> (from <i>proviz-</i> 'provide' and <i>-ant</i> active participle)
<i>software</i>	<i>Software</i>	<i>programaro</i> (from <i>program-</i> 'program' and <i>-ar</i> 'set')
<i>email</i>	<i>E-Mail</i>	<i>retpoŝto/retmesaĝo</i> (from <i>ret-</i> 'net' and <i>poŝt-</i> 'mail' / <i>mesaĝ-</i> 'message')
<i>cell phone / mobile phone</i>	<i>Handy</i>	<i>poŝtelefono</i> (from <i>poŝ-</i> 'pocket' and <i>telefon-</i> 'telephone')
<i>browser</i>	<i>Browser</i>	<i>retumilo/foliumilo/TTT-legilo</i> (from <i>ret-</i> 'net', <i>-um</i> [suffix with no fixed meaning], <i>foli-</i> 'sheet', <i>-il</i> 'instrument', <i>TutTeraTeksajo</i> 'World Wide Web', <i>leg-</i> 'read')
<i>chat room</i>	<i>Chatroom</i>	<i>retbabilejo</i> (from <i>ret-</i> 'net', <i>babil-</i> 'chat' and <i>-ej</i> 'place')
<i>mailing list</i>	<i>Mailingliste</i>	<i>dissendolisto</i> ( <i>dis-</i> [prefix denoting dispersal], <i>send-</i> 'send' and <i>list-</i> 'list')
<i>server</i>	<i>Server</i>	<i>servilo</i> (from <i>serv-</i> 'serve' and <i>-il</i> 'instrument')
<i>video projector</i>	<i>Beamer</i>	<i>projekciilo</i> (from <i>projekci-</i> 'project [an image]' and <i>-il</i> 'instrument')



Lexical change also includes the loss of words, as shown with some phraseological units in Chapter 21, and the substitution of old units with new ones. It can be interesting to track the pace of changes that individual words pass through, as far as the limited size and composition of Esperanto corpora enable us to do so.<sup>190</sup> The word *vagonaro* ('train', lit. 'a collection/set of wagons') is an example of an expression that seems to be passing out of current use. It has been replaced by *trajno*. It was widely used by Zamenhof and other Esperanto pioneers.<sup>191</sup> The collection of Esperanto journals for the period 1892 to 1902 includes fourteen occurrences (in two different journals with a total of 1,474 pages), while there are no hits for the word *trajno* during that period. The innovation was made the topic of linguistic discussion in an article in *Esperanto* (No. 11, 1918) that proposed the use of *trajno*:

*Lingvaj Studoj*

Vortaro

16 Trajno (*vagonaro*)

*En la ĉefaj lingvoj ekzistas mallonga esprimo por tio, kion Esp. nomas vagonaro (A. train, F. train, G. Zug, H. tren, I. treno.). Ĉu ne konvenus rilate al tio imiti la naciajn lingvojn kaj elekti por tiu ofte uzata vorto malpli pezan esprimon ol nia vagonaro? En nia lingvo ekzistas la radiko tren-i kun la senco posttiri; laŭ la derivreguloj de Esp., treno estas rezulto de l' ago tren' kaj sekve ne povas esti uzata por "vagonaro". Se oni aliparte elektus kiel patrovorton treno, la verbo treni ne plu povus esti logike uzata kun sia ĝisnuna senco. (Ekz. ĉevaloj trenas ĉaron, robo havas trenajon, tute sen bezono de "vagonaro"). Sendependa radiko estas do preferinda, ĉar pli logika. Proponinda estas trajno, kiu memorigas al la angla kaj franca ortografioj. El trajno la jenaj vortoj estus devenigeblaj: trajnejo, trajnisto, trajnestro, trajnego, entrajniĝi, eltrajniĝi, trajnveturi, k.a. kiuj estas pli koncizaj ol la vortoj devenigeblaj el vagonaro.*

[Language Studies

Vocabulary

16 Trajno (*vagonaro*)

In the major languages there is a short expression for what Esperanto denotes *vagonaro* (English *train*, French *train*, German *Zug*, Spanish *tren*, Italian *treno*). Wouldn't it be appropriate with regard to this to imitate the national languages and choose for this frequently used word a less heavy expression than our *vagonaro*? In our language a root *tren-i* exists meaning 'tow/draw'; according to Esperanto's

190. For the following analysis we used two sources: the Esperanto corpus *Tekstaro* ([www.Tekstaro.com](http://www.Tekstaro.com)) and the collection of Esperanto journals until 1940 provided by the Austrian State Library (see Chapter 21). The latter source does not provide information on the number of words.

191. In the journal *Esperanto* (6 August 1905, original emphasis), in a report on the first World Esperanto Congress we read, for example, "ĉe la dua ekskurso en Wimereux per speciala vagonaro" [on the second [day] excursion in Wimeraux by a special train].

rules of derivation, *treno* is the result of the action *tren-* and, hence cannot be used for *vagonaro*. If one chose *treno* as the starting point / basic word on the other hand, the verb *treni* could not be used logically in its present sense any more (e.g. *horses draw a cart, a dress has a train*, completely without need of *vagonaro*). An independent root is therefore to be preferred as it is more logical. It is worth recommending *trajno*, which recalls the English and French spellings. From *trajno*, the following words might be formed: *trajnejo* (train depot), *trajnist* (conductor), *trajnestro* (train manager), *trajnego* (long train), *entrajniĝi* (get on a train), *eltrajniĝi* (get off a train), etc., which are more concise than the words which can be formed from *vagonaro*.]

In the period 1937 to 1940, there are 107 hits for *vagonaro* and forty-nine hits for *trajno* (in nine different journals with 1,740 pages). The corpus *Tekstaro* (version consulted in June 2019), which includes two modern Esperanto journals, *Monato* (1997–2003, 2012–2018) and *La Ondo de Esperanto* (2001–2004) as well as the Esperanto version of *Le Monde diplomatique* (2002–2019) (forming a sub-corpus of 5,459,620 words), suggests that the lexical change has advanced further, leading to the extensive adoption of the new linguistic form: we find 259 occurrences of *trajno* and forty of *vagonaro*.

This example parallels what we know about language change in ethnic languages. First, we can distinguish between innovation, i.e. the creation of a novel form, and propagation of that form as two components of the process of linguistic change (Croft, 2000). The diffusion of *trajno* (and, similarly, of *rezulto* – see Figure 22 below) through the speech community has been a gradual process that has taken time. Secondly, as we see in the forty remaining occurrences of *vagonaro* in the corpus used, the process may never be complete – the old form may never be fully replaced.<sup>192</sup> Thirdly, as is often the case with synonymous expressions that compete with each other over time, one of the alternative forms is eventually used for a more specific sense. Thus railway terminology now defines *vagonaro* as “*tutaĵo de vagonoj de trajno*” (totality of wagons of a train [not including the locomotive]) (Hoffmann, 2000, p. 8).

Other words have changed their forms, such as *proleto* (formerly *proletario*) (Blanke, 2010, p. 66) or *rezulto* (*rezultato* in Esperanto’s early days). Figure 22 shows the change of the word *rezultato* into *rezulto*.<sup>193</sup> While in 1900 *rezultato* is the only form found in Esperanto journals, it still predominates in 1910 and 1920. Its use

192. A close look at the uses of *vagonaro* included in *Tekstaro* reveals the influence of individual speakers on Esperanto: more than half of the forty occurrences can be traced back to the frequent use of the word in two short stories by the same author published in the monthly *Monato*.

193. See footnote 190.

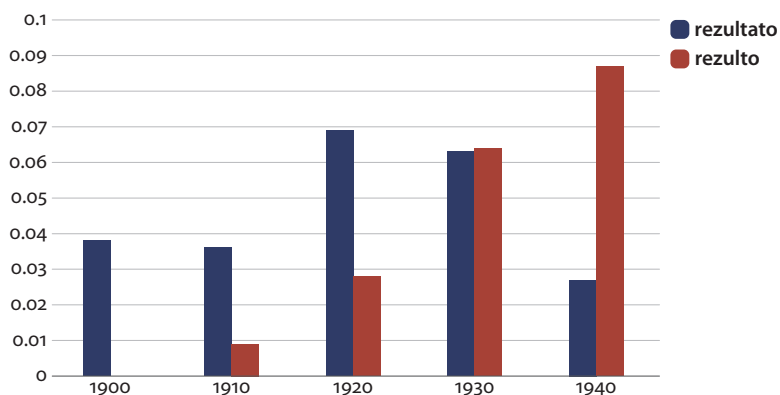


Figure 22. The use of *rezultato* and *rezulto* in Esperanto journals (1900–1940) (occurrences per printed page)

starts decreasing and competing with *rezulto* after 1920. Occasionally, both forms occur in the same journal, as in *Esperanto* (No. 1, 1921), which includes seven uses of *rezultato* and eight of *rezulto*. While the uses of the two forms almost levelled out in 1930, *rezulto* clearly predominates in 1940. The corpus *Tekstaro* provides 131 hits for *rezultato* (all of them before the year 1958) and 708 hits for *rezulto*.

The new words (*rezulto*, *proleto*, *meteologio*, etc.) are shorter than those they replace (*rezultato*, *proletario*, *meteorologio*, etc.), which confirms the importance of the factor of economy. Blanke (2010) emphasises phonetic aspects (facilitation of articulation) as a motivation for these changes.

As changes in language and vocabulary document societal changes, it is hardly surprising that especially in recent decades speakers have criticised one of Esperanto's flaws: its violation of gender-neutrality. The third person singular pronouns *li* 'he' and *ŝi* 'she' compulsorily distinguish the gender of (adult) persons, but *li* is also used to refer to persons of unknown sex or gender. A small but frequent set of roots mostly for parental and nobility terms (e.g. *patr*' 'father', *reĝ*' 'king', *knab*' 'boy') are inherently male (with the female forms *patrino* 'mother', *reĝino* 'queen', *knabino* 'girl' etc.). This situation has been criticised for two reasons: from a symbolic point of view, it is unacceptable for many people today to see the man as the unmarked base, from which marked expressions for women are derived or where women are not included at all. From a communicative point of view, it is also disadvantageous that there is on the one hand no easy way to avoid the expression of gender when roots indicating sex are used (e.g. for the formulation of general rules like "every child must be accompanied by a parent"), and on the other hand the forms without female *-in* are notoriously ambiguous: *najbarino* is a female neighbour, but does *najbaro* mean any neighbour or only a male one?

To avoid sexist pronouns, speakers apply various combinations of *li* and *ŝi* (e.g. *ŝi/li*, *ŝi aŭ li*, *li aŭ ŝi*, *li/ŝi*), which is also evident in our dataset:

- (387) [...] *kiam mi aŭskultas ion en Esperanto, kaj la parolanto havas fortan akĉenton, estas malfacile kompreni lin aŭ ŝin komence* [...] [(...) when I listen to something in Esperanto and the speaker has a strong accent, it's difficult to understand him or her at the beginning (...)] [210 (eng; written int; -) 91–93]
- (388) *Helpu la najbaron aŭ la najbarinon, se ŝi aŭ li havas problemon* [Help your (male/female) neighbour if she or he has a problem] [130 (fra; tour; Lille-Arras) 1:07]

Double forms like this (or *patro aŭ patrino* ‘father or mother = a parent’), however, do not solve another problem that has recently become urgent: non-binary people, who do not identify with either of the two traditional sex-based genders (see Richards et al., 2017). A linguistic system based on a binary distinction and expressing only these two genders makes it hard to speak about or refer to non-binary people. In response, in recent years there have been several proposals for reforms that would enable Esperanto to refer to all genders or to no gender at all. A male suffix *-iĉ* (symmetrical to *-in*, for non-binaries recently *-ip*, has come into limited use), and a new pronoun *ri* – either as gender-neutral or especially for non-binary persons – has become popular especially among young and progressive speakers in the very recent past.<sup>194</sup> Also, new gender-neutral words like *parento* and *gepatro* ‘parent’ have recently been registered. Our dataset, however, hardly contains any of these innovative elements, with the exception of metalinguistic uses in discussions about sexist language use.

- (389) [...] *ĉar vi ne povas tute ekscii eĉ de ies aspekto kian ĝenron ri havas* [because you can't tell at all even from somebody's appearance what **their** gender is] [11 (eng; disc; Poznań) 11:55]
- (390) *Tio estas kvazaŭ la problemo kun patro kaj patrino. Kial estu la bazaj formoj tiu iĉo kaj ino?* [This is, as it were, the problem with *patro* and *patrino*. Why should the basic forms be *iĉo* and *ino*?] [12 (eng; disc; Poznań) 20:19]

The coming decades will show whether these innovations become part of the language. For more detailed information, see Brosch (2015a), Fiedler (2015c), Cramer (2014, 2021), and Cramer et al. (2019).

194. Male suffixes, new pronouns (*ri* dates from 1981), and gender-neutral roots had been proposed before from time to time without further echo. What makes a difference and could be the beginning of real and profound language change is the fact that now these proposals are in actual use, although they must still be seen as experimental and non-standard.

#### 25.5.4 Semantic changes

As described in previous chapters, Esperanto has a rich affix system that allows its speakers to be flexible and productive in coining new words, resulting in a word stock of lexical items that are both expressive and transparent. As Esperanto is a living language, its vocabulary cannot escape lexicalisation. Koutny (2015) shows how the word *vortaro* (from *vort-* [‘word’], *-ar* [‘group, set’] and *-o* [noun]) is not a noun meaning simply “group of words”, but is associated with the specific concept of ‘dictionary’. By contrast, a similar formation – *libraro* (from *libro* [‘book’], *-ar* [‘group, set’] and *-o* [noun]) – has not been lexicalised, but can be understood as either book collection, library or bookshop, as the author found in a survey. See also Chapter 11, where we used *lernejo* [‘school’] and *homaro* [‘mankind’] as examples of lexicalised word formations. That lexicalisation bears a relationship with frequency can be seen from the fact that lexicalised word formations are among the most frequent words in Esperanto (*lernejo* and *homaro* are in the top ten per cent of word frequency – see Quasthoff et al., 2014).

Semantic change has also brought more frequent instances of polysemy. In Zamenhof’s initial word list one lexeme was attributed to one meaning, but today, as a result of Esperanto’s growing use in various domains, lexemes are used with several related meanings. Blanke (2010, p. 71) illustrates this by comparing entries in a 1910 dictionary (Kabe, 1910) with those in the present standard dictionary (Duc Goninaz et al., 2002).

However, there are also examples of polysemous words in Esperanto whose meaning has narrowed to one specific use. Examples are *humoro*, which originally referred (1) to a person’s mood or temperament and (2) to wit. Its use is now restricted to the first meaning, whereas *humuro* expresses the second sense. Analogously, *proceso* was used for both general ideas (‘process’, ‘sequence of phenomena’ or ‘course’) and legal contexts (‘trial’) in the 1930s (Grosjean-Maupin, 1934, p. 386). Its use is now limited to the latter meaning, whereas *procezo* is used in the former. The word *procedo* (from *procedi* ‘proceed’) is used to designate a method or way of achieving a goal.

As for individual lexical items, Piron (1989a) describes how the verb *ami* has experienced a shift in its semantic field. It was originally used for expressing both romantic feelings and simple ideas or tastes such as *Mi amas kanti* (‘I like to sing’), as do *aimer* in French and *любить* in Russian, which are used to express both ‘to love’ and ‘to like’. This apparently double meaning was hard to accept for speakers of non-Russian and non-French origin, who restricted the use of *ami* to the semantic field of ‘to love’ and used *ŝati* for the concept ‘to like’, as is the case in Esperanto today. The verb *ŝati* originally meant to ‘appreciate’: the *Fundamento* offers as translations *estimer* (French), *esteem* (English), *viel halten, großen Wert legen* (German),

дорожить (Russian), and *cenić, oleniać, szacować* (Polish) (Zamenhof, 1991/1905, p. 214). Its change in meaning to cover the concept ‘to like’ made it necessary to create a new word, *apreci/aprezi*, to cover the original meaning of the verb *ŝati* (Wood, 1979).

Lindstedt (2016) mentions the verb *klopodi* as a similar example of semantic change. Its original meaning ‘to worry about sth.’ (Zamenhof, 1991/1905, p. 178) has shifted towards ‘to try/endeavour’. In this way, Lindstedt (2016, p. 255) argues, the words *ŝati* and *klopodi* have “freed themselves from the chains of their original etymons” (*liberiĝis de la katenoj de siaj originaj etimoj*: the German *schätzen* and Yiddish *shatsn* and the Polish *kłopotac się* and Russian *хлопотать* respectively), so that their use with a following infinitive, as in Examples (391) to (394) in our dataset, represents normal modern Esperanto.

- (391) *Parolante pri [...] iniciatoj, mi ŝatus aldoni ankaŭ alian temon kiu ne estis ankoraŭ menciita [...]*  
 [Talking about (...) initiatives, I would like to add another topic, too, that has not yet been mentioned (...)] [144 (ita; pres/disc; Lille) 43:40]
- (392) *Mi ŝatas diri, ke ne nur estas OPINIOJ ĉu estas seksismo en Esperanto aŭ NE [...]* [I like to say that there are not only opinions whether there is sexism in Esperanto or NOT (...)] [11 (deu; disc; Poznań) 48:47]
- (393) *Sed, miaopinie, prononci Esperanton laŭ naciaj akĉentoj estas tute erara praktiko. Ĉiuj esperantistoj devus klopodi respekti la prononcon indikitan en la Fundamento de Esperanto. [...]*  
 [But in my opinion, it’s an utterly wrong practice to pronounce Esperanto according to national accents. All Esperanto speakers should try hard to respect the pronunciation indicated in the *Fundamento de Esperanto*. (...)] (W22)
- (394) *Kion oni povas kaj devas fari estas klopodi prononci kiel eble plej malrapide kaj precipe kiel eble plej klare.*  
 [What one can do and has to do is try hard to pronounce as slowly and especially as clearly as possible.] (W23)

Another interesting example is the pair *okazo* (‘case, occasion’) and *kazo* (‘case’), which reflects the distinction between *случай* and *надеж* in Russian (Piron, 1989a, p. 130; Lindstedt, 2009, p. 129), with the result that in the early years *kazo* was used only in the sense of ‘declension case’, whereas *okazo* was used for most other meanings.<sup>195</sup> Because in Western languages, such as French and English, terms like *cas* and *case* are used in a much wider sense, the meaning of *kazo* in Esperanto has changed accordingly, which is why uses such as those in (211) and (359) are

195. See, for example, Zamenhof’s “en ĉiaj aliaj okazoj” in Chapter 25.5.1.

accepted by many speakers today. This development has recently occupied the *Akademio de Esperanto*,<sup>196</sup> although it has thus far failed to reach an agreement that might lead to recommendations for the speech community.

Our pilot study in Chapter 21.6 on the evolution of Esperanto phraseology showed that internal language changes are not restricted to simple and complex words. There are also phraseological units that are no longer common today, and new expressions are coined. Thus, within such a relatively short period of existence of about 130 years, it is indeed possible to observe significant semantic change, as our analysis of *fosi sian sulkon* illustrated.

### 25.5.5 Morphological changes

Piron (1989a) also describes several changes in the area of morphology, such as speakers' inclination to use non-verbal morphemes verbally (e.g. *la lago bluas* 'the lake is blue', lit. 'it blues') and affixes and prepositions autonomously as words, as in the following examples from our dataset:<sup>197</sup>

- (395) *Pardonu. Ĉio enordas. Ĉio bonas.*  
[Sorry. Everything is OK. Everything is fine.] [149 (hun; pres; Lille) 10:50]
- (396) *Resume, internacie organizita eksperimento kaj ties rezultoj bonas en tiuj ŝtatoj.*  
[In sum, internationally organised experiments and their results are good in these states.] [198 (hun; pres; Lisbon) 31:45]
- (397) *Fakte, ĉu ne, tiu esplorado havas la du direktojn: ene elen kaj ele enen, kvankam estas interfluo, ni povas diri.* [In fact, actually, this research has the two directions: from inside to outside and from outside to inside, although there are interminglings, one might say.] [143 (eng; pres/disc; Lille) 84: 37–52]

When we take the Esperanto corpus *Tekstaro* as a basis, we find first uses of forms like *bonas* in the middle of the 1980s, although some Esperanto pioneers made use of them much earlier (see, for example, A. Grabowski's translation of *Pan Tadeusz* in 1918).

In a similar vein, there are isolated first uses of *ene* and *enen* in Szathmári's *Satiraj rakontoj* (1950–1969) and Valano's *Ĉu*-novels (see footnote 124), while they are frequent in present-day Esperanto journals (*Monato*, *La Ondo de Esperanto*, *Le*

196. See the documentation of their debates on it at: <https://lingvakritiko.com/2014/10/23/okazo-kaj-kazo/> and <https://lingvakritiko.com/2016/01/14/la-kazo-de-kazo/>. See also Pokrovskij (2014) and Cramer (2016).

197. See the love letter in (165) (Chapter 20), in which this principle was deliberately overused for humorous purposes.

*Monde Diplomatique en Esperanto*) (in total almost 800 occurrences), supporting our general observation that forms such as *pere de* and *ene de* (instead of *per* and *en*) are examples of language change in Esperanto.

### 25.5.6 Grammatical changes

We will exemplify this type of language change using the complex verb form *-intus*, as in the following examples from our dataset (see also Example (187)).

(398) *Krome li rakontis: Mi povintus (limigi) min al la nura uzo de Esperanto, sed mi volis ankaŭ engaĝiĝi por la ideo.*

[Furthermore, he said: I would have been able to limit myself to using Esperanto only, but I wanted to commit myself to the idea too.]

[191 (deu; pres; Lisbon) 16:53]

(399) *[...] oni povas kontribui. Oni povintus ekzemple raporti pri la vizito de la Papo ĉi tie. Bona afero.*

[...] it is possible to contribute. For example, you could have reported on the Pope's visit to this place. A good thing.] [178 (deu; pres; Havana) 44:01]

As described in Chapter 11, Esperanto grammar includes compound tenses, e.g. *mi estis leginta* ('I had read'). Some speakers like to contract the periphrastic constructions (*mi legintis*). Verb forms ending in *-us* used to express irreal situations (e.g. *mi legus* 'I would read') do not have temporal value. Nevertheless, many speakers associate them with the present time and choose to use *-intus* when they refer to an irreal situation in the past (see Wennergren, 2020, Chapter 28.4.3). In recent decades, *-intus* constructions have become popular, and *Tekstaro* includes the first uses in the 1950s. The most frequent verbs seem to be *estintus* ('would have been'), *mortintus* ('would have died') (frequency class 14) and *povintus* ('would have been able') (frequency class 15) (see Quasthoff et al., 2014).

## 25.6 Some concluding remarks on language change in Esperanto

This short study on language change in Esperanto is preliminary. Nevertheless, the examples of structural change presented suffice to demonstrate that assumptions of "the sanguine resistance to change" as "one of the most flawed and 'flaw-retaining' principles of the language invention movement" (Jones & Singh, 2005, p. 182) do not stand up to scientific scrutiny. At the very least, they cannot be attributed to Esperanto. The language evolves because it has been adopted by its speakers, who adapt its system according to their needs. One might even argue that language



change is part of Esperanto's foundations: rules 11 and 15 of the *Fundamento* describe the methods of lexical expansion, and the rich inventory of affixes and regulations about their autonomous use as words invite speakers to be productive and creative. Language change is encouraged by the fact that Zamenhof initiated the language in the form of a grammatical framework, without regulating every single detail – and also the fact that he never did consider it a “perfect” language (see Chapter 8).

It was already predicted by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916 that the planned language would change. The language was already in active use by then, and the phenomenon of planned (or artificial) languages at the centre of linguistic discussions. De Saussure would have been well aware of Esperanto, as his brother René was an eminent esperantologist (see Chapter 3) (Anderson & L. de Saussure, 2018). De Saussure (1966/1916, p. 75) wrote:

Mutability is so inescapable that it even holds true for artificial languages. Whoever creates a language controls it only so long as it is not in circulation; from the moment when it fulfils its mission and becomes the property of everyone, control is lost. Take Esperanto as an example; if it succeeds, will it escape the inexorable law? Once launched, it is quite likely that Esperanto will enter upon a fully semiological life; it will be transmitted according to laws which have nothing in common with those of its logical creation, and there will be no turning backwards. A man proposing a fixed language that posterity would have to accept for what it is would be like a hen hatching a duck's egg: the language created by him would be borne along, willy-nilly, by the current that engulfs all languages.

As we know today, after more than 130 years of Esperanto language use, de Saussure was right, in principle, prognosticating that even a consciously created language would undergo processes of language change; but the changes are not as drastic as his comparison of “a hen hatching a duck's egg” implies. The language has become the property of a large group of people, but control has not been lost. Esperanto is spoken by a speech community that safeguards its development on the basis of stable but augmentable rules, which is why there are no apparent systematic differences between texts from, say, 1890, 1950, and 2010. Neither has Esperanto split into dialects as occasionally predicted (see Brugmann & Leskien, 1907, pp. 23–26 for an early example of this opinion). The instances of language change that we have described can therefore be regarded as signs of Esperanto's successful use.

The examples shown in this chapter, especially the changes in vocabulary (which is the field where language change manifests itself most visibly and speedily: Aitchison, 2012, p. 12; Munske, 2015, p. 20), and including the semantic changes that individual words have undergone, have shown that language change in Esperanto is closely related to the impact that ethnic languages, i.e. the speakers'

mother tongues, exercise on the planned language itself. This topic has been the subject of very little research (for some exceptions, see Fiedler, 1999, pp. 335–338; Golden, 1994; Korjenkov, 1994/95). Its investigation is difficult because of Esperanto’s a posteriori character. As Esperanto was “born” from ethnic languages and remained under their influence from the very beginning, we cannot draw a line between its original and its acquired characteristics. All we can do is describe the changes that started to occur after 1905 (first World Esperanto Congress, enactment of Zamenhof’s *Fundamento* as an immutable linguistic norm). Research is further complicated by the fact that currently many Esperanto-related activities take place online and with ever-shrinking traditional organisations, which makes it hard to assess the geographical distribution of speakers. An in-depth investigation of the influences of other languages on Esperanto is a desideratum and especially worthwhile against the backdrop of Esperanto’s increasing use in Asia and Africa.



## Esperanto as a corporate language

### A case study of an educational NGO

#### 26.1 Introduction

The use of Esperanto in a professional context is restricted to several international Esperanto organisations, for example the Universal Esperanto Association UEA. The international staff at its headquarters in Rotterdam naturally use Esperanto as their corporate language. In addition, there are several independent Esperanto publishers, travel agencies and other small companies that offer their services in various languages including Esperanto (for a survey see Chrdele, 2013), but, in these cases, the scope of communication is insufficiently broad and differentiated for an ethnographic study. The institution that serves as a basis for this study is an obvious exception. We attach great importance to including the use of Esperanto for professional purposes in our investigation in this book. The workplace setting can, on the one hand, serve the purpose of summarising and, to a certain extent, testing the results we have gained so far about the characteristics of how the planned language is used; on the other hand, there are a number of new insights to be expected in a situation in which the use of Esperanto is not solely a recreational activity.

#### 26.2 Participants and methods

The basis for this study is E@I, which stands for Education@Internet, an international youth non-profit organisation dating back to 1999 and registered as an NGO in 2005 in Slovakia. It aims to support intercultural learning and the use of languages and Internet technologies by means of educational projects. While some of the projects run by the organisation are aimed at the use and dissemination of Esperanto (such as the organisation of Esperanto conferences and seminars, and online collections of songs and recipes in the planned language, e.g. [kantaro.ikso.net](http://kantaro.ikso.net), [apetito.ikso.net](http://apetito.ikso.net)), others focus on multilingualism, such as webpages that present European languages in twenty-one different languages ([lingvo.info](http://lingvo.info)) or multilingual websites for additional-language teaching ([deutsch.info](http://deutsch.info), [slovake.info](http://slovake.info)). Finally, there are projects unrelated to language, such as [cyberhelp.eu](http://cyberhelp.eu), which provides help

for victims of online bullying. Most of these projects are supported financially by the European Commission.

The organisation's international staff includes employees with various mother tongues, a group of interns mostly on Erasmus+ scholarships, and volunteers working for the European Voluntary Service. Between 2010 and 2013, fourteen interns from six countries worked with the organisation; in 2016, there were eleven volunteers from ten countries. While some of the volunteers working with E@I knew Esperanto prior to their stays, others began learning the planned language only after deciding to work for the European Voluntary Service. Volunteers usually stay for six or twelve months and are charged with tasks involving graphic design, programming, and translation, in addition to organisational work.

E@I could thus be characterised as small, dynamic, modern, and highly international. Employees do not stay for many years, they have a foreign language as their working language, and they live in a provincial town in a foreign country. Accordingly, intense communication and cooperation are presumably indispensable for the organisation's day-to-day operations. This study draws on the same methods that we applied for studying the use of Esperanto within the speech community (see Chapter 5): our main research methods were participant observation (with note-taking and audio recording) and semi-structured interviews. Most of the data were collected in June 2016 during an ordinary workday at E@I's office.<sup>198</sup> Our dataset amounts to 360 minutes and includes material from nine participants. The communication data were analysed using the methodology of conversation analysis (see Chapter 5). The semi-structured interviews were conducted with four volunteers (see Table 17). All interviewees were between twenty and thirty years old and worked at E@I at the time of the interview:

Table 17. Participants in the interview study

Interviewee's name (pseudonym)	Native country	Duration of stay at the time of the interview	Length of the interview
Pierre	France	>2 years	16:34
Aengus	Ireland	>6 months	18:29
Alessandro	Italy	>6 months	26:42
Tom	UK	>5 months	48:22

198. In order to enlarge our small dataset prior to our stay at the NGO's office we asked a staff member to record some conversations. These recordings (mainly conversations during lunch breaks) were added to the dataset.

Supplementary data were retrieved from a blog post by Aengus,<sup>199</sup> who described his work and even conducted short video interviews with fellow volunteers, who recount some of their (generally positive) experiences at the NGO.

### 26.3 Communication in an NGO in Esperanto

Despite the small number of interviewees and the limited scope of the recordings, our analysis has yielded interesting findings regarding Esperanto speakers' language use, in particular their behaviour in different communicative situations and their language choices. The findings suggest that Esperanto, as the corporate language of the NGO, is by far the most widely used language in everyday work there. As a rule, work-related interactions take place in Esperanto, as can be seen in the following randomly chosen example, a discussion between a volunteer (A, a native speaker of Italian) and one of the directors (B, a native speaker of Slovak) about the layout and illustration of texts:

(400) A: *Mi ne daŭrigis, ĉar se vi ne ŝatus (ĝin) (???) la ideon, mi malŝparis eble unu horon.*

B: *Estas nur kvar mil vortoj, ĉu ne, daŭrigu.*

[...]

B: *Fakte, ĝuste (mi volas diri) ke lasu iom da spaco same kiel tie ĉe tiu (???) teksto ĉar mi volas iun priskribon bla bla bla kaj super tio, ne ankoraŭ. (4). Estas bele, (4) estas iom tro da legomoj, (2) (???) aspektas kiel vegana vortaro.*

[A: I didn't continue, because if you didn't like the idea, I would waste maybe an hour.

B: It's only 4,000 words, isn't it? Go on.

(...)

B: In fact, right now I wanted to say that you should leave some space there in the same way as with this (???) text, because I want a description bla bla bla above this, not yet. (4) It's beautiful (4) there are a few too many vegetables (2) (???) looks like a vegan dictionary.]

[184 (ita-slk; oth; Partizánske) 85:50–86:39]

The interviewees confirmed the predominance of the planned language at E@I. All volunteers reported using Esperanto in the office, for both internal and external communication (Pierre: 6:10; Alessandro: 11:50). Some of the volunteers lived together in housing provided by E@I, and according to their interviews, they also used Esperanto outside the office with their flatmates (Aengus: 7:40; Alessandro:

199. See <https://teokajlibroj.wordpress.com/2016/06/02/mia-vivo-kiel-esperanto-volontulo/>.

12:20; Tom: 21:00) – remarkably, even in the case of Aengus and Tom, who share the same mother tongue.

According to the participants' statements, they were content with the effectiveness of communication in Esperanto and it did not cause them any major problems (Pierre: 14:25; Aengus: 14:45; Alessandro: 23:25). When asked about specific problems they might have in language production or reception, they answered that sometimes terms for new concepts had not yet been coined or stabilised (Pierre: 9:50, 14:35), but that in the case of individual words it was always possible to paraphrase (Alessandro: 19:20). As an example, Alessandro provided the use of *mezurilo por temperaturo* ('measuring instrument for temperature') instead of *termometro* ('thermometer').

Tom, who had started learning the language at the beginning of his stay less than five months before the interview, reported that when he didn't know a word, he relied heavily on Esperanto's word formation mechanisms, coining words on the fly like *flavkreskaĵeto* ('little yellow plant') for an unknown vegetable (Tom: 31:40) or *movaerilo* ('move-air-instrument') for a hand fan [187 (eng; int; Partizánske) 1:41:30].

Despite the lingua franca format that has been chosen for the organisation, there are also situations in which participants resort to other languages. The language of communication can be renegotiated in accordance with the communicative situation and, above all, the participants' language repertoires. In (401), after a very short exchange of greetings in Esperanto by speakers B (a native speaker of Polish) and C (a native speaker of Slovak), speaker A signals by answering in Slovak that he would rather resort to his mother tongue, and the whole conversation then continues in this language:

- (401) A: *Saluton*  
 B: *(Saluton)*  
 C: *(Saluton) sinjoro. Nu, kiel la vojaĝo?*  
 A: *Strašná*  
 C: *@(.).@*  
 A: *Samý traktor, samý nákladiak [...]*  
 [A: Hello  
 B: (Hello)  
 C: (Hello), Sir. Well, how was the journey?  
 A: Terrible.  
 C: *@(.).@*  
 A: Many tractors and lorries.] [184 (slk-pol; oth; Partizánske) 51:04]

In the following excerpt, the Slovak speaker interrupts his Esperanto telephone conversation for reasons of accuracy and quotes from a document in the German original:

- (402) *Antaŭ pluraj monatoj faris <name> tiun re-kalkuladon kaj ankaŭ kontrolon, kaj evidentiĝis, ke fakte mankis du tiuj unuaj pagoj de ambaŭ tiuj projektoj kaj poste ni kontrolis kaj fakte por tiu unua projekto, ĉu ne, estis finverkita aŭ subskribita (???) kontrakto – ja ja ja (2) ŝajne (2) kaj nun mi demandis kaj do estis tio tio- ĉu ne no- (???) diris „mi ŝovas tion al tiu kvazaŭ pli-malpli juristo“ aŭ kiel nomiĝas; sed tio jam estis vere longe ĉar ni daŭre komunikis jam antaŭ unu monato precize, 23-an de majo, ke por la projekto ili eĉ akceptis, ke „für das Projekt <Name> ist es tatsächlich so, dass sich hierin ein Fehler in den Vertrag eingeschlichen hat. Ich sende Ihnen einen aktualisierten Vertrag bla bla bla“ ĉar do en tiu versio kiun mi antaŭe sendis fakte estis iu eraro pri tiuj financoj fakte (???) – ne ankaŭ ne, ĉar eĉ estis- estis eĉ eraro en ĝi kaj tiun mi nun kaptis [...]*

[Several months ago <name> made this calculation again and also double-checked it, and it turned out that in fact two of these first payments in both these projects were missing and later we checked and actually for this first project, you know, a contract was drawn up and signed (???) – yes yes yes (2) probably (2) and now I asked and there was this you know (???) said “I’m giving it to this as it were kind of lawyer” or what it is called; but this was already a long time ago, because we were already constantly communicating one month ago exactly on May 23rd, that for the project they even accepted that “für das Projekt <Name> ist es tatsächlich so, dass sich hierin ein Fehler in den Vertrag eingeschlichen hat. Ich sende Ihnen einen aktualisierten Vertrag bla bla bla”, as even in this version which I sent before there was in fact a mistake about the finances (???) – no, neither, because even in this one there was a mistake and I found this now ...] [184 (slk; oth; Partizánske) 27:22–28:57]

Further, multilingual speech situations arise when the language resources of individual participants of the team are mobilised to solve particular tasks. In the following, one of the employees (A, a native speaker of Polish) is compiling an information leaflet and needs a suitable headline. She asks her colleagues B (a native speaker of Slovak) and C (a native speaker of English) for equivalents in their languages:

- (403) A: *Kiam oni demandas angle – Ĉu vi scias, ke ...? aŭ Ĉu vi sciis...?*  
 B: *Ĉu vi scias...? Dependas, kion vi- En tiu ĉi kazo-* (mix of voices)  
 B: *En tiu ĉi kazo bone – Ĉu vi scias, ke...?*  
 A: *Scias.*  
 B: *En la angla oni diras Did you know...? ĉu ne. Ĉu vi sciis...?*



- C: *Ne, ne ĉiu...*
- B: *Ĉu vere, Do you know...?*
- C: (Do you know *same estas*) *bone.*
- B: *Sed en tiu ĉi kazo ankaŭ Did you know...?*
- A: *Fakte ĉi tie estas Did you know...? kaj en Esperanto estas Ĉu vi scias...?(1)*  
*En la pola (2) Czy wiesz...?*
- B: *Fakte slovake ankaŭ oni uzas ambaŭ formojn. Bone oni (???) diras Vedeli ste, že...? sed ankaŭ Viete, že ...? Do-*
- C: [???] *Ĉu estas titolo en ĉap- eh ĉapitro*
- B: *Io tia, jes. Mhm. Ĉar mi uzis ankaŭ por iu retpaĝo, mi nun ne memoras, eble eĉ 'lingvo.info' aŭ ĉe 'monda' aŭ ie.*
- A: *Do, ĝi ne estas pli bona, se estas Ĉu vi sciis, ke...?*
- B: *Sed kiam? (1)*
- A: *Nu. (1)*
- B: *Ah, lasu tiel. (???) Povas resti.*
- [A: How do you ask in English – *Did you know that?* or *Do you know?*
- B: *Do you know?* Depends on what you – in this case’
- (...) (mix of voices)
- B: In this case (it is) good – *Do you know that?*
- A: Do
- B: In English you say *Did you know*, don’t you? Did you know (in Esperanto)
- C: No, not everyone.
- B: Really, *Do you know?*
- C: (*Do you know* is also) good.
- B: But also in this case? *Did you know.*
- A: In fact, here it is *Did you know?* And in Esperanto it is *Ĉu vi scias...? (1)*  
in Polish (2) *Czy wiesz...?*
- B: Actually in Slovak one uses both forms. Well one (???) says *Vedeli ste, že...?*  
But also *Viete, že ...?* so-
- C: (???) Is it a headline in a chap uh chapter?
- B: Something like that, yes. Mhm. Since I also used it for a website, I don’t  
remember now, perhaps even in ‘lingvo.info’ or in ‘monda’ or somewhere.
- A: Well, it isn’t better, if it is *Ĉu vi sciis, ke...?*
- B: But when? (1)
- A: Nu. (1)
- B: Ah, leave it as it is. (???) It can stay.]

[187 (pol-slk-eng; oth; Partizánske) 122:35–123:43]

At a conference, after presenting the NGO, the head of the company was asked about its language regime (“En kiuj lingvoj vi interkompreniĝas ĉefe?” – ‘In which languages do you mainly communicate?’). His answer ran:

*Estas amuze, jes, ĉar pluraj projektoj, pluraj lingvoj eh kvin lingvoj en unu tago en la oficejo, en kvin lingvoj, ĉar ĉiu (projekto) havas eĉ sian laborlingvon, do en kelkaj- kaj estas ankaŭ kun malsamaj partneroj, ekzemple kun ĉeĥoj ni parolas do mi slovake ili ĉeĥe, dum kunsido ni uzas la anglan, poste kun la ĉefprogramisto Esperanton, do eĉ dum unu kunsido ni povas du tri kvar lingvojn uzi eh dum ekzemple deutsch.info estis la germana, ĉe lingvo.info estis angla kaj Esperanto (...)*

[It's funny, because several projects, several languages uh five languages in one day at the office, in five languages, as each (project) has its own working language, thus in some- and is also with different partners, for example, with the Czechs we speak, that is, I speak Slovak and they Czech, while during meetings we use English, later, with the chief programmer, Esperanto, so even during one meeting we might use two three four languages eh, for example, at deutsch.info, it was German, at lingvo.info it was English and Esperanto (...)] [201 (slk; pres; ?) 0:48]

One of the volunteers, when asked (later in an Internet chat) about his impression of the language choices during an ordinary working day at E@I, estimated that Esperanto was spoken 90% of the time and Slovak 10% of the time. He reported that language use in written communication was different and difficult to specify, as it depended on the project they were working on: “kiam mi devas skribi al iu, estas eble 50% Esperante, 30% angle, 20% slovake sed foje eĉ iomete france aŭ ruse“ [when I have to write to someone, it is perhaps 50% in Esperanto, 30% in English, 20% in Slovak, but occasionally even a bit in French or Russian].

This is in line with our findings from the recordings made in situ. A quantification of the language use in our small dataset of 360 minutes in total, with nine participants natively speaking Slovak (3), French (1), Italian (1), Polish (1), English (2) and German (1), yielded the following results:

- Silence/laughter: 84:50 min
- Esperanto: 216:30 min (=78.4% of talking, not counting silence)
- Slovak: 53:40 min (=19.4%)
- English: 16:00 min (=5.8%)
- German: 0:20 min (=0.1%).

There was, however, a difference between language use for work purposes and in personal communication during lunch breaks:

**Table 18.** Use of languages during working hours and breaks

	Work	Breaks
Silence/laughter	83:30	1:20
Esperanto	138:40 (72.3%)	77:50 (82.9%)
Slovak	51:50 (26.8%)	1:50 (1.9%)
English	1:10 (0.6%)	14:50 (14.7%)
German	0:20 (0.2%)	-

The reason for these differences is clear. Esperanto is the language common to all E@I staff members, while Slovak is important for communicating with local participants. Hence these two languages predominate in the professional communication. During lunch breaks, however, only Esperanto speakers were present, dramatically diminishing the need for any other language, although interaction between the two English native speakers led to a modest use of English. This indicates that the numbers would probably change significantly depending on the linguistic composition of the small team.

As English is in extensive use as a lingua franca in the workplace these days, it has been studied intensively in this capacity (see the overview by Gunnarsson, 2014; see also Ehrenreich, 2011). Although our study does not focus on contrasting the use of Esperanto with the use of English as a lingua franca, an obvious similarity between the two studies is that, regardless of the lingua franca format chosen for an organisation, there are situations in which participants resort to other languages. That is, lingua franca communication does not preclude linguistic diversity (for English see, above all, Lüdi et al., 2010, 2016; Mondada, 2004). A major difference is that when English is adopted as a corporate language by a multinational company or organisation, it is used both as a lingua franca and as a native language, which can result in clashes, a decline in cooperation, and even an avoidance of communication due to uneven proficiency and language attitudes, as reported by a number of researchers (e.g., Beyene et al., 2009; Ehrenreich, 2011; Lønsmann, 2017; Tange & Lauring, 2009). The use of English as a corporate language is often restricted to business meetings, while different language choices are preferred in coffee breaks or scheduled social activities, as frequently reported in these studies. This can obviously not be confirmed in our study: Esperanto was used in all activities and even more often during breaks.

From the presentation of the staff working at E@I, we know that the participants of this study come from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they speak Esperanto with different levels of proficiency, and they are characterised by high degrees of communicative awareness and a motivation to make their exchanges successful. We might therefore expect them to employ strategies for preventing and resolving non-understanding. These include the use of metacommunication and repair techniques, which were described as significant features of Esperanto communication in Chapters 18 and 19. As for metacommunication, we find frequent occurrences of the question-tag-like discourse marker *ĉu ne* serving as an indicator of shared knowledge and consensual truths (e.g. Example (415) line 3 and Example (416) line 4) and markers of figurative expressions (e.g. *ni diru* in Example (415) and *en la itala oni dirus* in Example (416) below).

As for repairs, our dataset of interactions at E@I confirms the previous findings by providing examples of all four constellations (i.e. self-initiated self-repair,

self-initiated other-repair, other-initiated self-repair, and other-initiated other-repair). In Examples (404) and (405) below, volunteers correct their speech after realising that they have made a grammatical mistake. In the first example, the verb *ŝoki* ('to shock') is transitive already and does not have to be rendered transitive with the suffix *-ig*; accordingly, the speaker corrects the verb to *ŝoki* instead of *ŝokigi*. Note the pauses signalling hesitation or uncertainty. In contrast, in the second example below, the same suffix is first missing (*pacus*) and then added, giving *pacigus*.

(404) A: *Mi memoras tion, ke mi (.) ŝokigis homojn, kaj homoj ankaŭ (.) ŝokis min.*  
 [A: I remember that I (.) shockified people, and people also (.) shocked me.]

[203 (?; infl; Partizánske) 6:40]

(405) A: *Ni batalas por paco. [...]*

B: *Ni batalas, ĉar nia dio estas pli bona ol via dio.*

A: *Ĝuste.*

B: *Kaj li- li **pacus** ĉion pli bone. (1) Pacigus*

[A: We fight for peace. (...)]

B: We fight, because our god is better than your god.

A: Right.

B: And he- he would peace everything better. (1) Pacify]

[187 (?-eng; oth; Partizánske) 0:28]

Word search can also be observed. As we know, it can be signalled or initiated in different ways. In Example (406), speaker A is not sure about the name of a particular berry and offers two candidate expressions, *frago* ('strawberry') and *frambo* ('raspberry').

(406) A: *Kiom normale fakte kostas ĉe vi fragoj? Ĉu estas fragoj aŭ framboj?*  
 (several): *Fragoj*

B: *Eh, fragoj, kilogramo, tre tre dependas [...]*

[A: How much do strawberries actually cost where you come from?  
 Is it fragoj or framboj?

(several): *Fragoj*

B: *Er, strawberries, a kilogram, it varies a lot (...)]*

[187 (pol-deu; oth; Partizánske) 113:48]

In the following, the speaker starts to form the expression for 'stove' using an element from his native tongue – a technique that is often successful in Esperanto because of the international character of its vocabulary – when another speaker notices his lexical gap and gives the correct term *fajrujo* ('stove'):

- (407) A: *Fakte ŝi sidas en la kuirejo, eh malvarme, kaj li kreas grandan eh:*  
 B: @Fajron@  
 A: *Fajron. En la: eh Mi ne scias kiel diri: stove? Kiel oni diras? Por la eh*  
 B: *Fajrujo*  
 [A: In fact she is sitting in the kitchen, uh cold, and he creates a big uh:  
 B: @Fire@  
 A: Fire. In the: uh I don't know how to say it: *stove?* How do you say? For the uh  
 B: Fireplace] [203 (eng-?; infl; Partizánske) 20:50–21:06]

The same technique is initially applied for *maria-* in Example (408), before the speaker remembers the Esperanto root (*edz-* ‘husband’) and produces his own expression (*edziĝejo* ‘marrying place’), which is then corrected:

- (408) A: *Mi pensas ke, kiam mi estis ĉe la (.) m- maria- (.) la edziĝejo?*  
 B: *Geedziĝfesto.*  
 A: *Ge- Geedz- Geedziĝfesto de mia kuzino, mi ĉiam salutis virojn per mano.*  
 [A: I think that when I was at the (.) m- maria- (.) the marriage place?  
 B: Wedding.  
 A: We- Wed- Wedding of my cousin, I would always greet men with a hand-shake.] [203 (eng-?; infl; Partizánske) 18:15]

Code-switches can often be found in repairs, as can be seen in the following explicit questions about vocabulary.

- (409) A: *Kio estas listo de eh: (1) kiel diri (2) eh traits?*  
 B: *Kio?*  
 C: *Markoj*  
 A: *Markoj de normalaj homoj*  
 D: @ (1) @  
 E: *Ah la ecoj*  
 [A: What is a list of er: (1) how to say (2) uh *traits?*  
 B: What?  
 C: Marks  
 A: Marks of normal people  
 D: @ (1) @  
 E: Ah, the traits] [203 (eng-?-?-?-?); infl; Partizánske) 23:54–24:08]
- (410) A: *Tio estas ŝerca novaĵoj pri eh Brexit. La titolo estas La tuta British Empire estas eh devenis e- devenis (???) (.) Ĉiu lando en la for- antaŭa Empe- Em- Empire ↑*  
 B: *Imperio*  
 A: *Imperio. (...)*

[A: This is humorous news about uh Brexit. The title is The whole British Empire is uh comes from co – comes (???) Every country in the for- former Empi- Em- Empire?

B: Imperio

A: Imperio. (...)] [184 (eng-fra; oth; Partizánske) 71:10]

The context of communication in the workplace clearly illustrates that repairs of this type can be considered a sign of cooperation and solidarity. The speakers are eager to support one another in their endeavour to learn the language and to communicate successfully.

Instances of other-initiated self-repair seldom involve errors. Interactants raise queries after mishearing something, which can be caused by background noise or unclear pronunciation, as in Example (411):

(411) A: *Ĉu vi veturas al ĝardeno aŭ hejmen?*

B: *Al la kabano, ĉar mi havas multegon por fari.*

A: *Ah, kaj kiel via floro, ĉu travivis?*

B: *Ha?*

A: *Ĉu floro travivis? Tiu akva floro?*

B: *Tiu akvofloro travivis, jes, tre bone.*

A: *No, sed faru iun foton [...]*

[A: Are you going to the garden or home?

B: To the hut, because I have much to do.

A: Ah, and how is the flower, has it survived?

B: Huh?

A: Has the flower survived? The water lily?

B: The water lily, yes, very well.

A: Well, then you should take a photo...]

[187 (pol-slk; oth; Partizánske) 12:24–42]

The most interesting type of repair is other-initiated other-repair, as this is considered to be rare (see Chapter 19). We found several occurrences of other-initiated other-repairs in our dataset, with the other-repair in most cases performed in a direct way without any restraint or modulation, as can be seen in Examples (412) and (413):

(412) A: *Li diris hodiaŭ: Ni gajnis sen eh unu pafo [...] Vere nekredoble. [...] Sed mi ja kredus, ke li vere pensas (?) tiel, ĉar li estas tiom maldekstre, ke [...]*

B: *Dekstre*

[A: He said today: We won without one shot (...) Really incredible(...) But I would think that he really thinks (?) like that, because he is so leftist, that (...)]

B: Rightist] [187 (eng-slk; oth; Partizánske) 143:10–144:07]

(413) [...]

A: *Pardonu, mi interrompis vin.*B: *Ne gravas. Mi- mi daŭris.*C: *Daŭrigis.*

[(...)]

A: Sorry, I've interrupted you:

B: Doesn't matter. I- I endured

C: Continued. [...] [204 (?-eng-?; infl; Partizánske) 45:28–46:01]

The use of metaphors and phraseological units is also characteristic of the communication at the NGO, as Examples (414) and (415) illustrate.

(414) A: [...] *Mi deziras bonan kaj veran semajnfinojn, jes.*B: *Ankaŭ al vi, <name>. Dankon pro via vizito.*A: *Vizito? Tio estas vizito?*B: *Ni ĉiuj havas tiom da L (???)*A: L *Mi laboras kiel azeno tie ĉi @ kaj (vi diras) vizito @*

[...]

[A: (...) I wish you a nice and real weekend, yes.

B: The same to you, &lt;name&gt;. Thanks for your visit.

A: Visit? This is a visit?

B: We all have so much L [(???)

A: L I work like a mule here @ and (you say) visit @]

[187 (pol-slk; oth; Partizánske) 11:30]

(415) [...] *estas la demando, ĉu tiu krizo kiu laŭ mi ne ne haltiĝis aŭ ne (3) ĉesis, sed nun nur havas iun transirperiodon kaj ĝi iĝos multe pli grava aŭ multe pli terura ol estis tiu antaŭpreparo 2008-a 2009-a. Ni diru, ke estas laŭ mi nur tiuj **tondroj antaŭ la ŝtormo** aŭ antaŭ la grandega ŝtormo. Do la demando estas, ĉu estas reale ekonomia krizo aŭ morala.*

[(...) the question is whether this crisis, which I would say didn't stop or didn't (3) cease but only has a transition period, and it will be much more serious or much more terrible than this preparation in 2008 2009 was. One might say that, in my opinion, it is only the thunder before the storm or before the huge storm (cf. English *the calm before the storm*). So the question is whether it is really an economic crisis or a moral one.] [196 (slk; pres; ?), 51:15–44]

As described in Chapter 21, speakers like to use set expressions from their native languages to be expressive, either as ad hoc translations (see Example (416)) or – if they consider them to be sufficiently well-known – as directly borrowed (see Example (417)). Both examples come from casual conversations during breaks:

- (416) A: *Kaj ĉu la aliaj volontuloj, ĉu ili estas amikaj aŭ-*  
 B: *Sufiĉe amikemaj, fakte, eble nur tiu unu belgino*  
 A: *Kiu?*  
 B: *Tiu unu belgino – vi konis – (???) iometa almenaŭ en la komenco iom-*  
 A: *Stranga.*  
 B: *En la itala oni dirus simpatia kiel kolbaso en la pugo.*  
 All: *@@@@ Kio?*  
 C: *Ĉu tio estas virina aŭ vira proverbo? @*  
 [A: And the other interns, are they friendly or-?  
 B: Quite friendly, in fact, maybe just this one girl from Belgium  
 A: Who?  
 B: This one girl from Belgium – you knew – (???) a bit, at least at the beginning  
 a bit-  
 A: Strange.  
 B: In Italian we would say as nice as a sausage in the arse  
 All: @@@@ What?  
 C: Is it a men's or women's proverb  
 [204 (eng-ita-slk; infl; Partizánske) 9:59–10:36]
- (417) A: *mhm, bona viando*  
 B: *Sed your grandfather would turn in his grave now.*  
 C: *Kio? Kiu?*  
 B: *Lia avo ne ŝatis <name> (2) eh la malĝentileco de <name>*  
 C: *Ah, ne ne, ĉar ne estas la lasta peco.*  
 [A: mhm good meat  
 B: But your grandfather would turn in his grave now.  
 C: What? Who?  
 B: His grandfather didn't like <name> (2) uh the impoliteness of <name>  
 C: ah, no no, because it's not the last piece.  
 [204 (eng-eng-pol; infl; Partizánske) 16:20–16:45]

The majority of phraseological units in this dataset, however, are original Esperanto phrases, particularly quotes derived from works by Zamenhof, as we will see below.

Humour and wordplay were another feature we identified as ubiquitous in Esperanto communication (see Chapter 20). Our investigation of the conversations at E@I supports this. Linguistic humour permeates interactions in our dataset, both in work-related and in casual talks during breaks. One type includes puns that are based on the deliberate misinterpretation of pseudo-homonyms. An example is the word *bombono* ('candy/bonbon') that is interpreted by an interactant as *bomb-on-o* (bomb + suffix *-on-* 'fraction' + N marker, i.e. part of a bomb) in Example (184)



(?; oth; Partizánske) 1:26:47]. In Example (418), a speaker expresses his disapproval of the Esperantised form *Nitro* ‘Nitra’ (a Slovak city where the Esperanto World Congress was to take place later that summer) by toying with its interpretation as *ni tro* (‘we too much’):

- (418) A: *Nitra aŭ Nitro (1) Mi estas scivola.*  
 [...]
   
A: *Tio ne plaĉas al mi. (.) Nu bone (.) Nitro.*
  
B: *Ni tro drinkas.*
  
A: *Ni tro (.) @ (1) @*
  
[A: Nitra or Nitro (1) I’m curious.
   
[...]
   
[A: I don’t like this (.) Well, OK (.) Nitro
   
B: We drink too much
   
A: We too much (.) @ (1) @] [182 (slk-slk; oth; Partizánske) 22:20]

Similarly, discussions of linguistic problems often include a jocular note:

- (419) A: *Do, ne murdisto, murd-anto, aŭ?*
  
B: *Murdanto.*
  
C: *Sed -isto povas esti ankaŭ por homo, kiu ofte faras la aferon.*
  
D: *Esperantisto.*
  
C: *Jes, aŭ biciklisto.*
  
A: *Jes, iu kredo, aŭ-*
  
E: *Sed fakte homoj pagas min por Esperanti.*
  
A: *@ (.) @*
  
B: *Do se vi nur iun akcidente mortigas surstrate vi estas murdanto, ne murdisto. Se vi tion faras intence kaj ofte, (vi iĝas murdisto).*
  
[...]
   
[A: So, not *murdisto* [professional killer], *murd-anto* [killer], or?
   
B: *murdanto* [killer]
   
C: But *-isto* can be also for a person, who often does the thing
   
D: *Esperantisto* [Esperanto speaker]
   
C: Yes, or *biciklisto* [cyclist]
   
A: Yes, some belief, or-
   
E: But in fact people pay me for doing Esperanto.
   
A: *@ (.) @*
  
B: So, if you just kill someone on the street by accident, you’re a *murdanto*, not a *murdisto*. If you do this intentionally and often, you become a *murdisto* (...)] [204 (eng-slk-fra-?-?; infl; Partizánske) 25:50–26:20]

Comic effect can also be achieved by means of intertextuality, in particular by allusions to classic works by Zamenhof. In Example (420), a speaker mocks a coughing person by citing and twisting a line from Zamenhof's poem *Ho, mia kor'* ('Oh, my heart'), which is met with general laughter. In Example (421) – a humorous discussion about forcing people to learn Esperanto – we find an ironical allusion to *pacaj batalantoj* ('peaceful fighters'), a phrase used in Zamenhof's poem *La Espero* ('The Hope') (see footnote 104):

(420) A: *vi tusas senĉese.*

B: *Ho mia kor' Ho mia pulm' la himno devus esti*

[A: you are coughing without interruption

B: 'Oh my heart! Oh my lung' that's what the text of the hymn should be

[204 (eng-ita; infl; Partizánske) 31:30]

(421) *Ni povas devigi. Ni mortigos nur virojn, kaj virinoj estas devige- devas lerni Esperanton. [...] Oni povis konvertigadi homojn al kristanismo, al Islamo; ni devos konvertigadi al Esperanto. La "pacaj batalantoj", ĉu ne?*

[We can force. We'll kill only men, and women are forced- need to learn Esperanto. (...) They could convert time and again to Christianity, to Islam; we'll need to convert everybody to Esperanto. The "peaceful fighters", aren't we?]

[187 (slk; oth; Partizánske) 0:03–25]

The E@I team's multilingual character is occasionally the source of humour. Interactants deviate from the chosen corporate language to deliberately tease one another by using each other's native languages instead of Esperanto. In the following conversation about football over lunch, held partly in English and partly in Esperanto, participant A (a native speaker of Slovak) who had been speaking Esperanto, encouraging the others to have some cake for dessert, suddenly addresses one of the English-speaking volunteers, mocking him with an emphatic code-switch and an ostentatious use of some sentences in his best schoolboy English:

(422) A: *Ni trovu la lingvon. <name>, help us. Save the world. Eat the cake.*

B-E: @@@

A: *Ĉu iu volas?*

C: *Mi volus, sed mi ne plu havas spacon.*

D: *Ni povus lasi ĝin kiel vespermanĝo.*

[A: We should find the language. <name>, help us. Save the world. Eat the cake.

B-E: @@@

A: Does anyone want to?

D: I would like to, but I haven't got any space.

C: We could leave it as dinner.] [204 (slk-?-eng; infl; Partizánske) 40:17]

In the following exchange, a code-switch is followed by a series of allusions and creative wordplay referring to Brexit, which had been announced that same day:

- (423) A: *Fakte mi eĉ povus kompreni iomete (???) Esperante.*  
 (mix of voices)  
 B: *Maybe we should switch into another language.*  
 [...]
   
 A: *You use la ne-eŭropan lingvo.*  
 All: @@@  
 A: *La angla.*  
 C: *Ĝuste @ Exter-EU-language.*  
 A: *Ĝi estas de iu stranga il- eh eh*  
 C: *island, ajlando @(.)@ insulo*  
 A: *insulo*  
 [...]
   
 D.: *@Ĉu ni voĉdonu? Momenton, ni voĉdonas.@ Kiel en Brit- en Britio*  
 (mix of voices)  
 C: *Estas <name>exit aŭ kio*  
 All: @(.)@  
 D.: *Momenton, referendumo*  
 [A: In fact, I could even understand something (???) in Esperanto.  
 (mix of voices)  
 B: *Maybe we should switch into another language.*  
 (...)
   
 C: *You use the non-European language.*  
 All: @@@  
 A: *English*  
 C: *Exactly @ an exter-EU-language*  
 A: *it is from a strange il- eh eh*  
 C: *island, ilando @(.)@island*  
 A: *island*  
 (...)
   
 D: *@Should we vote? Just a moment @ we vote, like in Brit- in Britain*  
 (mix of voices)  
 C: *it is a <name>exit or what?*  
 All: @(.)@  
 D: *Just a moment, a referendum]*

[187 (?-slk-eng-?; oth; Partizánske) 126:31-127:15]

These examples confirm what we said in Chapter 20: communication is much more than just a transfer of information. People want to be expressive, creative and occasionally humorous in their language use, and it does not make a difference that their

interaction takes place in a planned language: Esperanto serves these purposes too. Our dataset has shown that this is also true in a workplace setting. Furthermore, it endorses our previous insight that a large part of the humorous communication in Esperanto is based on language and culture. That is, it depends above all on linguistic elements and on speakers' background knowledge of Esperanto and its speech community.

#### 26.4 Some concluding remarks on Esperanto as a corporate language

Our findings suggest that Esperanto can function successfully as a *lingua franca* in international companies and organisations. It is possible to acquire the language within a relatively short space of time if the intention is to use it for professional purposes. In the NGO it served both as a means of communication for professional tasks and as a medium for casual conversations during breaks, enabling people to communicate on an equal footing.

A number of findings from our previous investigation were confirmed by this study, in particular those about the use of phraseology, including both internationally known and Esperanto-specific units, frequent occurrences of different types of repair mechanisms, and the predilection for language-based humour among Esperanto speakers. Of particular interest was the result that Esperanto as a corporate language leaves room for other languages. When Esperanto is used in the workplace, this is not for the sake of the language, rather it is a tool to accomplish tasks and to realise projects, and it is the tasks and projects and the people involved in them that decide which language they use. This is why, in addition to the planned language, the local language of Slovak, English, and other languages were regularly used. Participants used their linguistic resources flexibly and resorted to their mother tongues or other *lingua francas* to ensure mutual comprehension.

We are, of course, aware of the limited scope of this investigation. Research on Esperanto as a language in professional settings is still in its infancy. Further studies are needed to determine whether the behaviour described can be regarded as typical of Esperanto communication in the workplace beyond the NGO under investigation here.

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PART V

## **Conclusion**



## The main characteristics of Esperanto communication

The purpose of this book has been to describe the planned language Esperanto as a language in use. With this aim in mind, we compiled a comprehensive dataset of naturally occurring communication including speech events such as spontaneous everyday conversations, panel and working group discussions, lectures, official speeches, and excursions. In addition, we conducted interviews with Esperanto speakers to learn about their specific use of the language, which helped us to interpret interactions adequately. On this basis it has been possible to determine the main features of Esperanto communication, which will be summarised in this first concluding chapter in the order they were discussed in Part IV of this book. We will then bring together insights and ideas from across the preceding chapters from two specific perspectives: the speech community and its culture (Chapter 28); and the issue of language ownership (Chapter 29).

We found that Esperanto interactions are rich in metacommunication and repair work. **Metacommunication** is extensively used with the aim of structuring speech, improving audiences' reception, checking understanding and maintaining a successful relationship with other participants. Another highly relevant strategy for ensuring understanding is **repair work**. We have found both self- and other-repair, which show that correct language use and understanding are of crucial importance for Esperanto speakers. The so-called let-it-pass principle, often described as a characteristic of English as a lingua franca, is not typical of talk in Esperanto. Speakers' abundant use of metacommunication and repair strategies illustrates their well-developed metalinguistic consciousness and awareness of shared rules as a basis for successful communication.

Our study shows that **humour** is pervasive in Esperanto communication. Not only do cabaret and literary genres such as satire have a long tradition, but play on words, teasing and heckling are also an integral element in casual talk, at meetings, in debates and forums. They are also a characteristic feature of interaction in Esperanto in the workplace, with a high degree of language-based humour.

That Esperanto has the potential for rich and expressive forms of communication was also seen in our study of phraseology and metaphors. Esperanto speakers make extensive use of **phraseological units**, including internationally known



phrases and proverbs and culture-specific expressions that mirror the life of the speech community. Phraseology is applied with a large variety of pragmatic functions. Recurrent forms of speech events (e.g. meetings and congresses) have resulted in the emergence of conventionalised language used for negotiating meaning (e.g. *ni diru, por tiel diri*) and floor taking (e.g. *Mia kongresnumero estas ...*). The **metaphors** used in Esperanto are mainly based on subjects that relate to speakers' realm of experience such as nature, the human body and technology.

Our investigation of **code-switching** showed that Esperanto speakers are disinclined to incorporate other-language material into their language use. In the same way as in word formation, where endogenous types (i.e. coinages based on Esperanto morphemes) are preferred to exogenous ones (i.e. borrowings from other languages), code-switching is not a primary characteristic of Esperanto communication. Quantitatively, it is used to a lesser degree than in other languages and, qualitatively, in a relatively small variety of functions. These functions include the insertion of words and phrases for bridging lexical gaps, to enhance lexical precision, for reasons of politeness and to evoke humour. The relative infrequency of code-switching in our dataset indicates two differences between Esperanto and other languages: studies of code-switching in English as a lingua franca focus on interlocutors' use of expressions from their mother tongues that are motivated by the wish to highlight their national identity and signal their culture, which is a function not found in our data. Another difference is the observation that speakers today often insert English words and phrases into their speech for reasons of prestige and "coolness". This kind of code-switching is stigmatised in Esperanto, despite speakers' extensive knowledge of foreign languages. These differences can be explained as part of Esperanto speakers' identification with "their" planned language and its speech community, which finds its expression in high degrees of language loyalty.

Our study of **written vs spoken** Esperanto was motivated, first, by the unusual fact that Esperanto (and planned languages in general) emerged in its written form before being spoken, in contrast to the situation with ethnic languages, and, second, by the fact that the Internet has had a major impact on Esperanto and that speakers are increasingly pursuing their mutual interests through social media. Our exploration has shown that Esperanto communication is largely similar across speech and writing, and the language used in computer-mediated communication also complies with these same norms of language: novel graphic techniques (e.g. specific abbreviations, emoticons) characteristic of blogs, chats and forums are used only to a limited extent.

Our discussion of attitudes to the **accents** that prevail in the speech community was motivated by awareness that it is very hard to acquire native-like pronunciation of a foreign language after puberty, and that it is learners' pronunciation in particular that decides their acceptance as speakers in the community. Our research has

shown that accented speech is considered an ordinary and expected feature in the second-language speech community of Esperanto. Esperanto speakers strive for “international” pronunciation, i.e. a way of speaking that does not reveal a speaker’s L1. In contrast to the situation with ethnic languages, native speakers (*denaskuloj*) are not immediately recognisable by their accents, and, in general, particular accents are not associated with prestige. This finding is especially noteworthy against the background of studies of English as a lingua franca, which describe hierarchies of non-preferred accents among non-native speakers of various L1s, and recent explorations of the acceptance of “new speakers” of minority languages.

Living languages change as their speakers’ needs change. Our preliminary study of **language change** has verified that this principle holds for Esperanto by describing instances of change across several levels of the language system. At the same time, we have seen that language change in Esperanto is slow, something that can be attributed to a balance of those impact factors that, on the one hand, speed up the evolution of the language and language change and, on the other, slow it down. The greatest influence on the evolution of Esperanto is exercised by its speakers. They feel the need for new lexis and coin new words, which will then be accepted or refused by other speakers. Their decisions are made on the basis of their language knowledge and their attitudes to Esperanto as a planned language, where observing the rules is a key factor in its further development. Evidence of language change is of the utmost importance for Esperanto, as it can be considered proof that Esperanto really does function as a fully fledged language.

Our description of language choice and practices in an NGO using **Esperanto as a corporate language** generally supported the validity of our findings about the main characteristics of Esperanto communication. It provided evidence that as a planned language Esperanto is also a valid option as a lingua franca outside the private sphere, its predominant domain to date. Esperanto makes workplace communication with an international staff possible by providing a common language while using the potential of their mother tongues and other lingua francas. Workers applied multilingual practices in accordance with particular communicative tasks and settings, and showed that adopting Esperanto as a corporate language did not necessarily lead to a devaluation of other languages.



## The speakers of Esperanto and their culture

We started this book with a conversation between people having lunch together at a restaurant and described it as a typical example of Esperanto interaction, as, among other things, it contained allusions to Esperanto culture and showed that the participants' shared knowledge of this culture made the conversation successful. The chapters that followed included a large number of similar excerpts from Esperanto encounters that were, in one way or another, related to people, events and concepts rooted in the communicative history of Esperanto and likely to be known to Esperanto speakers. Such phenomena are generally referred to as the culture of a speech community. The fact that planned languages can have a distinctive culture of their own is often disputed, however – which is the reason why it seems appropriate to deal with this topic in more detail here in our book's conclusion.

From an anthropological perspective, culture encompasses – in addition to art and literature – ideas, attitudes, beliefs and values, conventions and patterns of behaviour, ways of living together, as well as conceptions embodied in and transmitted by symbols (Geertz, 1973; Goodenough, 1970; Reagan, 2009). It is on the basis of these factors that members of a community develop a sense of belonging and participation: in other words, an identity of their own. Such an identity as an Esperanto speaker is, of course, only one among others (e.g. speakers' national, social, gender or professional identities). Identities are not only plural and multi-layered, but change over time: it is increasingly accepted that they are continually constructed rather than pre-existent (Dervin & Risager, 2015) and that they emerge in communication contexts (Fassett & Warren, 2007). The characteristics of communication described in this book mirror Esperanto speakers' attitudes. They use metacommunication in order to secure understanding and facilitate interactions (see Chapter 18). Speakers' inclination to insist on linguistic correctness points to their awareness of the key role of a stable linguistic norm (see Chapter 19), and the tendency not to code-switch but to prefer endogenous means of word formation over direct borrowing show speakers' motivation to prove that their language is a fully fledged means of communication allowing them to be expressive without relying on other-language material (see Chapter 22).

Our study confirms for Esperanto what we have known for a long time of ethnic languages: language and culture are inextricably linked, and some knowledge of a language's cultural context is necessary to communicate successfully. References to

Esperanto artefacts and life in the community are ubiquitous in the speech events we have analysed, independent of genre. The existence of an Esperanto-specific phraseology (Chapter 21) and the fact that humour is largely based on culture-bound phenomena (such as Esperanto's literature, traditional events, and institutions) illustrate this. Most of the language's phraseology is international, however, originating as it does from common sources and the speakers' multicultural backgrounds; and the metaphors dominantly used refer to general human experience (see Chapter 21). In this way, it is evident that Esperanto culture is a combination of the culturally specific and the universal. Esperanto is an "intercultural language" (Schubert, 2004) uniting speakers of very different linguo-cultural backgrounds in their endeavour to communicate beyond language borders and to learn about other cultures. The acceptance of foreign accents (see Chapter 24) and the large variety of source languages in literary translation (see Chapter 9) are also indicative of the international character of Esperanto's culture.

At several points in this book, we have referred to the heterogeneous character of the Esperanto speech community. It is indeed difficult to overstate this fact. The differences between Esperanto speakers concern not only people's language proficiency, but also their ideological positions, in the sense of whether they prefer to identify with Esperanto as a movement, or as a self-sufficient linguistic minority which has managed to produce a culture of its own that is internationally valuable (see Chapter 8) and has possibly changed attitudes towards multilingualism (see Chapter 3 and Example (327) in Chapter 22.2). In addition, since culture is a collective phenomenon and no single member of such a community possesses complete cultural knowledge of the group, individual speakers might differ regarding the extent to which they have acquired the culture of Esperanto. According to our experience, however, and from what can be inferred from the character of the communication presented in this book, the average Esperanto speaker is familiar with the life and history of the speech community. There is much need for sociological research in this area.

There is one aspect, however, which unites all Esperanto speakers and constitutes a major part of their identity. This is their practical experience of successful communication by means of the planned language, to which the final section of this book is devoted.

## Language “ownership”

Our study has shown that Esperanto functions successfully as a lingua franca among those who have made the conscious decision to use it. Although it is perhaps not as easy to learn as some people believe or claim it to be (see especially Chapter 19 on repair work), the more than 400 examples of authentic language use in this book have clearly demonstrated that Esperanto allows its speakers to be productive and expressive, creative and humorous, to degrees that are rare in the use of a foreign language. Esperanto speakers are self-confident and independent practitioners, obeying linguistic norms, but they do so without ever needing to ask themselves, “What would a native speaker say?”

This advantage is mainly psychological in nature, as Edward Sapir argued as early as 1931:

The attitude of independence toward a constructed language which all national speakers must adopt is really a great advantage, because it tends to make man see himself as the master of language instead of its obedient servant. [...] A further psychological advantage of a constructed language has been often referred to by those who have had experience with such languages as Esperanto. This is the removal of fear in the public use of a language other than one’s native tongue. The use of the wrong gender in French or any minor violence to English idiom is construed as a sin of etiquette, and everyone knows how paralyzing on freedom of expression is the fear of committing the slightest breach of etiquette. [...] Expression in a constructed language has no such fears as these to reckon with.

(Sapir, 1931, pp. 119f.)

This aspect of using a foreign language as an adaptable resource has been discussed in the context of English as a lingua franca under the headline of “language ownership” (see, for example, Widdowson’s 1994 article “The ownership of English”; see also Norton, 1997). It is perhaps debatable whether this term, normally associated with the possession and control of material goods, fits a discussion of linguistic communication and especially lingua franca communication. We adopt it here as it is useful for illustrating one of the basic differences between English as a lingua franca and Esperanto. According to Widdowson (1994, p. 384), ownership of a language means “that the language has been learned, not just as a set of fixed conventions to conform to, but as an adaptable resource for making meaning” and that “[y]ou are proficient in a language to the extent that you possess it, make it your

own, bend it to your will, assert yourself through it rather than simply submit to the dictates of its form”. With the growing use of English, this kind of ownership, Widdowson argues, can also be claimed by non-native speakers: “How English develops in the world is no business whatever of native speakers in England, the United States, or anywhere else. They have no say in the matter, no right to intervene or pass judgement. They are irrelevant” (p. 385). While we find such an extreme claim implausible, the idea of the changing position of the English language learner and user from “defective communicator” to self-confident member of the speech community (Seidlhofer, 2004, p. 213) is an enticing goal that deserves support. “Non-native users of English should be acknowledged as legitimate, not merely second-class users of the language,” as Haberland (2011, p. 948) states. Reality often looks different, as both research and practical experience tell us. In Chapter 21.8, we mentioned Prodromou’s test with the idiomatic phrase *bump into sth.* and its different acceptance depending on whether people believed it to have been used by a native or non-native speaker of English. English as a lingua franca cannot be seen as fully detached from ordinary English, and learners of the language continue to be judged by the norm-providing first-language users, especially in written communication, with the result that ELF often looks like a re-labelling of ordinary English only (see Gazzola & Grin’s 2013 criticism from a linguo-political and economic position, Gnutzmann’s 2007 discussion from a didactic point of view and de Schutter’s 2018 argumentation from a philosophical perspective). As a consequence, there can be no question of non-native speakers “bending the language to their own will” to use Widdowson’s 1994 wording; on the contrary, as recent studies have shown, for example in science, non-native users apply techniques such as “language re-use” (i.e. copying fragments of previously published texts) in their desire to meet linguistic requirements (Flowerdew, 2007, see also Gnutzmann & Rabe, 2014a). Drawing on Bourdieu’s (1991) concept of legitimacy, we can conclude that Esperanto speakers feel like legitimate speakers of the language.

We dwelled on ELF here because the position of Esperanto speakers becomes evident by comparison. The speakers of the planned language whose communication we analysed for this study used and use it creatively. They exploited and exploit its structures to the full, as we have seen, to express themselves, for humorous purposes (see Chapter 20) as well as for criticism (see Chapter 20.4.1, [203]), and in a form that has to be linguistically correct but is independent of native-speaker models. This makes it possible to put communication on an equal footing by means of a lingua franca, and it might be the reason why many speakers refuse the term “foreign language” as a designation for Esperanto (see Chapter 21.8 footnote 137).

## Final remarks

We started this book by showing that a lack of knowledge of the reality of Esperanto communication easily leads to misconceptions. With our description of Esperanto as a functioning lingua franca, we have tried to provide a solid basis for readers who wish to obtain their own true picture of what Esperanto communication looks like and how it develops.

Our findings lead us to the conclusion that in studies that deal with solutions to problems of international communication, the scenario “use of a lingua franca” should not be discussed as one general option. Everything depends on the type of lingua franca. The fact that in the case of English the lingua franca is also used by native speakers and is therefore not a genuine lingua franca (but asymmetric, in Ammon’s 2012 terminology), makes a distinction necessary, as described in Chapter 2. This book has therefore also helped to further illuminate the phenomenon of lingua francas in general.

Our research has been based on an extensive dataset of naturally occurring communication in a wide variety of speech events that are characteristic of the Esperanto speech community. As with any dataset, it is only a limited selection of communication, and we acknowledge the need for additional research, particularly with a fully transcribed corpus to verify the results of our investigations. Further research should also consider the different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of speakers, and how these influence the language’s use and development. Despite its limitations, the dataset has proven useful as a basis to show convincingly that Esperanto is a sociolinguistic reality, a language in use that enables people to communicate in equitable, self-confident and creative ways. Research on the planned language and its speakers may still be in its infancy, but our findings have provided abundant evidence of the fact that Esperanto could also be a real contender as a lingua franca beyond the spheres described here.





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## APPENDIX 1

# Recordings and other sources

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
1	Group meal	Poznań, restaurant	2014-09-24	Informal/ small talk	0:33
2	Coffee break	Poznań, university	2014-09-24	Informal/ small talk	0:11
3	Presentation by Polish speaker on Esperanto Radio	Poznań, university	2014-09-24	Presentation	0:16
4	Symposium – opening	Poznań, university	2014-09-25	Ceremony	0:09
5	After-dinner talk	Poznań, university	2014-09-25	Informal/ small talk	1:48
6	Symposium – presentation by Catalan speaker and by Hungarian speaker on linguistics	Poznań, university	2014-09-26	Presentation	0:25
7	Symposium – presentation by French speaker on grammar	Poznań, university	2014-09-26	Presentation	0:04
8	Symposium – presentation by Hungarian speaker on multilingual education	Poznań, university	2014-09-26	Presentation	0:12
9	Symposium – presentation by Hungarian speaker on student exchange and by Portuguese speaker on language education	Poznań, university	2014-09-26	Presentation	0:30
10	Symposium – presentation by Portuguese speaker on language education	Poznań, university	2014-09-24	Presentation	0:09
11	Discussion on sexism	Poznań, Arkones	2014-09-27	Discussion	0:53
12	Informal discussion on LGBT themes	Poznań, Arkones	2014-09-27	Discussion	1:14
13	Concert ( <i>Kajto</i> )	Poznań, Arkones	2014-09-27	Touristic/ cultural event	0:43
14	US-American speaker: Morphology and syntax (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-02	Education	2:26
15	US-American speaker: Morphology and syntax (2)	Poznań, university	2015-02-02	Education	1:30
16	Hungarian speaker: Communication (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-02	Education	1:32



No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
17	Hungarian speaker: Communication (2)	Poznań, university	2015-02-02	Education	1:24
18	Hungarian speaker: Communication (3)	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	1:51
19	Hungarian speaker: Communication (4)	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	1:29
20	Hungarian speaker: Communication (5)	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	0:47
21	Group dinner	Poznań, restaurant	2015-02-03	Informal/ small talk	0:29
22	US-American speaker: Morphology and syntax (3)	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	1:31
23	US-American speaker: Morphology and syntax (4)	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	1:15
24	Polish speaker: Literature	Poznań, university	2015-02-03	Education	0:30
25	Group breakfast (1)	Poznań, hall of residence	2015-02-04	Informal/ small talk	0:39
26	Literature exams (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-04	Exam	3:57
27	Literature exams (2)	Poznań, university	2015-02-04	Exam	0:24
28	Group evening (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-04	Touristic/ cultural event	0:30
29	Group evening (2)	Poznań, university	2015-02-04	Touristic/ cultural event	2:15
30	Polish speaker A: Literature (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-05	Education	4:21
31	Hungarian speaker: Esperanto grammar	Poznań, university	2015-02-05	Education	3:21
32	Group breakfast (2)	Poznań, hall of residence	2015-02-06	Informal/ small talk	0:40
33	Polish speaker B: Esperanto literature	Poznań, university	2015-02-06	Education	2:45
34	German speaker: Esperanto grammar (1)	Poznań, university	2015-02-06	Education	2:32
35	German speaker: Esperanto grammar (2)	Poznań, university	2015-02-06	Education	2:44
36	Group breakfast (3)	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-02-28	Informal/ small talk	0:59
37	After-dinner talk	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-02-28	Informal/ small talk	1:07
38	Presentation by Swedish speaker on (Proto-)Esperanto	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-02-28	Presentation	1:09
39	Presentation by Italian speaker on language policy	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-02-28	Presentation	1:28
40	Presentation by Italian speaker on poetry	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-02-28	Presentation	1:33

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
41	Presentation Serbian speaker on online journals	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-03-02	Presentation	0:13
42	Presentation by Hungarian speaker on Bahasa Indonesia	KCE La Chaux-de-Fonds	2015-03-02	Presentation	1:42
43	Interview with Italian woman, approx. 50 yrs old	(-)	2015-04-16	Interview	0:28
44	Interview with Argentinian man, approx. 30 yrs old	(-)	2015-04-16	Interview	0:41
45	Interview with British woman, approx. 65 yrs old	(-)	2015-04-23	Interview	0:46
46	Interview with Swedish man, approx. 40 yrs old	(-)	2015-04-16	Interview	0:26
47	Interview with Dutch man, approx. 75 yrs old	(-)	2015-04-30	Interview	0:31
48	Interview with Swedish man, approx. 65 yrs old	(-)	2015-05-08	Interview	0:39
49	Interview with Polish woman, approx. 70 yrs old	Herzberg, restaurant <i>Domenico</i>	2015-05-25	Interview	0:38
50	Introduction to <i>Junaj Voĉoj</i>	Herzberg, restaurant <i>Domenico</i>	2015-05-25	Touristic/ cultural event	0:02
51	Song in Esperanto by <i>Junaj Voĉoj</i>	Herzberg, restaurant <i>Domenico</i>	2015-05-25	Touristic/ cultural event	0:04
52	Cuban singer	Herzberg, restaurant <i>Domenico</i>	2015-05-25	Touristic/ cultural event	0:07
53	Interview with Polish man, approx. 80 yrs old	Herzberg, restaurant <i>Domenico</i>	2015-05-25	Interview	0:40
54	Welcome speech	Herzberg-Sieber, <i>Hotel zum Pass</i>	2015-05-25	Other	0:02
55	Introduction to Tibetan music	Herzberg-Sieber, <i>Hotel zum Pass</i>	2015-05-25	Touristic/ cultural event	0:04
56	Discussion of Tibetan music	Herzberg-Sieber, Hotel zum Pass	2015-05-25	Discussion	0:09
57	Reception by the Mayor	Herzberg, city hall	2015-05-26	Ceremony	0:27
58	Project planning	Herzberg, Esperanto-Centro	2015-05-26	Discussion	2:14
59	Interview with Korean woman, approx. 55 yrs old	Herzberg, volunteers' room	2015-05-26	Interview	1:00
60	Evening event with presentation on Korea	Herzberg, Esperanto-Centro	2015-05-26	Interview	1:35
61	Interview with Hungarian woman, approx. 50 yrs old and German man, approx. 65 yrs old	Herzberg, Esperanto-Centro	2015-05-26	Interview	0:49
62	Interview with German man, approx. 60 yrs old (1)	(-)	2015-06-15	Interview	0:33

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
63	Interview with German man, approx. 40 yrs old	(–)	2015–06–18	Interview	0:32
64	Interview with Hungarian woman, approx. 60 yrs old (1)	(–)	2015–06–23	Interview	1:17
65	Interview with Hungarian woman, approx. 60 yrs old (2)	(–)	2015–07–08	Interview	0:28
66	Interview with German man, approx. 60 yrs old (2)	(–)	2015–07–13	Interview	0:22
67	Interview with Slovenian woman, approx. 45 yrs old	(–)	2015–07–15	Interview	0:22
68	Registration	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–25	Other	0:01
69	Ceremonial opening	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Ceremony	2:26
70	Congress topic 1	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Discussion	0:41
71	Meeting of the Esperanto Academy (closed session)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Discussion	1:03
72	UEA board response	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Discussion	1:16
73	IKU 2/AIS 1 – presentation by Hebrew speaker on Einstein	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Presentation	1:02
74	IKU – opening, presentation by Czech speaker on Alain de Lille	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Presentation	1:09
75	Presentation by French speaker on France	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Presentation	1:04
76	Information on twin towns	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Presentation	1:14
77	National Evening (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Touristic/ cultural event	0:22
78	National Evening (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Touristic/ cultural event	1:13
79	Panel discussion with Zamenhof family	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–26	Other	0:18
80	IKU – presentation by Hebrew speaker on Einstein (1)	Lille, MRES	2015–07–26	Presentation	0:58
81	IKU – presentation by Hebrew speaker on Einstein (2)	Lille, MRES	2015–07–26	Presentation	0:03
82	IKU – presentation by Hebrew speaker on Einstein (3)	Lille, MRES	2015–07–26	Presentation	0:09
83	Esperanto Buddhists	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Discussion	1:01
84	Education Monday – <i>Kajto</i>	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:37
85	Education Monday – presentation by US-American speaker on marketing	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	1:25
86	Education Monday – presentation by US-American speaker on public speaking (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:25

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
87	Education Monday – presentation by US-American speaker on public speaking (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:25
88	Education Monday – presentation by US-American speaker on public speaking (3)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:21
89	Education Monday – presentation by US-American speaker on public speaking (4)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:09
90	Education Monday – presentation by Flemish speaker on begging pardon (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:25
91	Education Monday – presentation by Flemish speaker on begging pardon (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:23
92	Education Monday – presentation by Flemish speaker on begging pardon (3)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:04
93	Education Monday – presentation by Flemish speaker on begging pardon (4)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:12
94	Education Monday – presentation by Flemish speaker on begging pardon (5)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	1:06
95	Education Monday – Translating (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:26
96	Education Monday – Translating (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:45
97	Education Monday – presentation by Slovak speaker on ten years of E@I	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation/ discussion	1:20
98	IKU/AIS – presentation by Italian speaker on computer science	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Presentation	0:58
99	Committee Panel: clarification (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Discussion	1:57
100	Committee Panel: clarification (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Discussion	1:59
101	Theatre play “Feličas čiuj”	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–27	Touristic/ cultural event	1:29
102	Guided city tour	Lille, Old Town	2015–07–28	Touristic/ cultural event	0:57
103	Education Day, first part	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	2:55
104	Education Day – presentation by US-American speaker on John Dewey	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:17

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
105	Education Day – presentation by Ukrainian speaker on Esperanto-centre	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:17
106	Education Day – presentation by US-American speaker on efficient learning	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:22
107	Education Day – presentation by Chinese speaker on intercultural communication (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:17
108	Education Day – presentation by Chinese speaker on intercultural communication (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:04
109	Education Day – presentation by US-American speaker on intercultural studies	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:19
110	Education Day – presentation by Hungarian speaker on modern technology	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:36
111	Education Day – presentation by Slovak speaker on direct teaching methods	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation	0:17
112	Education Day – discussion	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Discussion	0:11
113	Congress topic 3	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Presentation, Discussion	2:06
114	Esperanto Academy (public session)	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Discussion	1:29
115	Committee Panel: qualification	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Discussion	1:27
116	interview with Congolese man, approx. 45 yrs old	Lille Grand Palais	2015–07–28	Interview	0:31
117	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (1)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:13
118	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (2)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	1:52
119	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (3)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:46
120	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (4)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:25
121	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (5)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:29
122	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (6)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:22
123	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (7)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015–07–29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:06

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
124	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (8)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	1:20
125	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (9)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:20
126	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (10)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:33
127	Excursion to Boulogne-sur-Mer (11)	Boulogne-sur-Mer	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:29
128	Discussion on intercultural communication	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-29	Discussion	0:39
129	Concert	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:17
130	WWI excursion (1)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:06
131	WWI excursion (2)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:21
132	WWI excursion (3)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:23
133	WWI excursion – Canadian monument (1)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:10
134	WWI excursion – Canadian monument (2)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:11
135	WWI excursion (4)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:01
136	WWI excursion (5)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:16
137	WWI excursion (6)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:20
138	WWI excursion (7)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:03
139	WWI excursion (8)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:03
140	WWI excursion (9)	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:24
141	WWI excursion – goodbye on the bus	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:06
142	WWI excursion – singing on the bus	Lille – Arras	2015-07-29	Touristic/ cultural event	0:02
143	Esperantology Conference (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	1:40
144	Committee Panel: community	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	1:37

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
145	Esperantology Conference (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	1:40
146	Esperantology Conference (3)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	1:05
147	Esperantology Conference (4)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	0:02
148	Esperantology Conference (5)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation, discussion	0:31
149	Science Café	Lille, MRES	2015-07-30	Presentation	1:49
150	Congress Topic (final part)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Discussion	0:42
151	CED (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Discussion	0:27
152	CED (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Discussion	0:02
153	Reception in the townhall (1)	Lille, townhall	2015-07-30	Ceremony	0:28
154	Reception in the townhall (2)	Lille, townhall	2015-07-30	Ceremony	0:27
155	Theatre play “Ĉagrenegoj”	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Touristic/ cultural event	0:54
156	IKU – presentation by German speaker on Hittite	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-30	Presentation	0:42
157	UEA committee	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	3:12
158	CED meeting (closed session)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	1:07
159	Interview with Japanese man, approx. 50 yrs. old	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Interview	0:22
160	Discussion on postponement of congress topic 6	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	0:05
161	Montevideo 60	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	1:02
162	Strategy Panel	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	1:18
163	Strategy Panel	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Discussion	1:23
164	Auction	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Other	1:33
165	Oratory competition	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Presentation	0:21
166	International artistic evening	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Touristic/ cultural event	2:16
167	Interview with Chinese man, approx. 55 yrs old	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Interview	0:23
168	Interview with Indian man, approx. 50 yrs old	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Interview	0:25
169	Closing ceremony (1)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Ceremony	1:58
170	Closing ceremony (2)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Ceremony	0:18
171	Closing ceremony (3)	Lille Grand Palais	2015-07-31	Ceremony	0:37
172	AMO seminar – presentation by US-American speaker on advertising	Havana	2015-11-19	Presentation	1:25

No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
173	AMO seminar – presentation by Cuban speaker on conflict resolution	Havana	2015–11–19	Presentation	1:10
174	Opening of Cuban Esperanto congress	Havana	2015–11–20	Ceremony	0:38
175	Presentation by Cuban speaker on language and culture	Havana	2015–11–20	Presentation	0:41
176	Presentation by Cuban speaker	Havana	2015–11–20	Presentation	0:56
177	Artistic evening	Havana	2015–11–20	Touristic/ cultural event	1:19
178	Presentation by German speaker on translation	Havana	2015–11–19	Presentation	1:45
179	Presentation by German speaker on research project	Berlin, cultural centre	2016–02–08	Presentation	1:50
180	Presentation by German speaker on Hittite	Berlin, cultural centre	2016–05–23	Presentation	1:50
181	Interview with French man, approx. 25 yrs old	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Interview	1:17
182	Office work (1)	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Other	0:32
183	Interview with Irish man, approx. 25 yrs old	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Interview	0:18
184	Office work (2)	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Other	1:34
185	Interview with Italian man, approx. 30 yrs old	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Interview	0:27
186	Interview with British man, approx. 20 yrs old	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Interview	0:48
187	Office work (3)	Partizánske	2016–06–24	Other	2:27
188	Presentation by Hungarian speaker on interlinguistics	Poznań, university	2017–09–21	Presentation	0:21
189	IKU presentations (e.g. talk by Italian speaker on success and perspectives in planet science)	Lisbon	2018–08–03	Presentation	2:14
190	50th anniversary of Esperantic Studies Foundation	Lisbon	2018–08–03	Ceremony / discussion	0:46
191	Esperantology Conference (1)	Lisbon	2018–08–03	Presentation, discussion	0:41
192	Esperantology Conference (2)	Lisbon	2018–08–03	Presentation, discussion	1:30
193	Closing ceremony of World Esperanto Congress 2018	Lisbon	2018–08–04	Ceremony	0:58
194	Nitobe seminar (1)	Lisbon	2018–08–04	Presentation	0:51



No.	Name	Location	Date	Genre	Length
195	Nitobe seminar (2)	Lisbon	2018-08-04	Presentation	2:29
196	Nitobe seminar (3)	Lisbon	2018-08-04	Presentation	1:51
197	Nitobe seminar (4)	Lisbon	2018-08-04	Presentation, discussion	1:32
198	Nitobe seminar (5)	Lisbon	2018-08-04	Presentation	2:34

#### Sources made available to us

199	Presentation by Italian speaker on ocean robotics (video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ2Lhr-S_q4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ2Lhr-S_q4</a> )	Hanoi	2012-07-01	Presentation	0:49
200	Presentation by Italian speaker on linguistic justice (video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBmnyEPGcMU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SBmnyEPGcMU</a> )	Barcelona	2014-07-27	Presentation	0:52
201	Presentation by Slovak speaker on E@I (1)	?	?	Presentation	0:55
202	Presentation by Slovak speaker on social change	Nitra	2015-08-?	Presentation, discussion	1:13
203	Group dinner (1)	Partizánske	2016-04-?	Informal/ small talk	0:35
204	Group dinner (2)	Partizánske	2016-06-?	Informal/ small talk	0:52
205	Presentation on TEJO (video: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yWBAD-Y1I0&amp;t=321s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6yWBAD-Y1I0&amp;t=321s</a> )	Rotterdam	2017-12-14	Presentation	0:16

#### Written interviews

206	Interview with British man, approx. 70 yrs old	(-)	2015-06-16	Interview	(-)
207	Interview with French man, approx. 70 yrs old	(-)	2015-06-18	Interview	(-)
208	Interview with German man, approx. 35 yrs old	(-)	2015-07-04	Interview	(-)
209	Interview with Nigerian man, approx. 50 yrs old	(-)	2016-05-13	Interview	(-)
210	Interview with woman from the USA, approx. 20 yrs old	(-)	2017-07-07	Interview	(-)

**Webpages:**

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- W1 <http://esperanto.livejournal.com/174394.html>
  - W2 <http://www.reocities.com/athens/forum/6115/filmoj.htm>
  - W3 <http://iej.esperanto.it/nsir/arkivo.php?numero=58&lingvo=it>
  - W4 <http://www.kunar.eu/taglibro/2005/10/22/mi-amas-svedion/>
  - W5 <http://soc.culture.esperanto.narkive.com/MtbtxqBw/esperanto-x-the-guardian>
  - W6 <http://de.lernu.net/komunikado/forumo/temo.php?t=15560>
  - W7 <http://de.lernu.net/komunikado/forumo/temo.php?t=16218>
  - W8 <http://de.lernu.net/komunikado/forumo/temo.php?t=10980>
  - W9 <http://de.lernu.net/komunikado/forumo/temo.php?t=3748>
  - W10 <http://de.lernu.net/komunikado/forumo/temo.php?t=2270>
  - W11 <https://twitter.com/enricbaltasar/status/190413576022925312>
  - W12 [http://vk.com/video-16417090\\_159439181](http://vk.com/video-16417090_159439181)
  - W13 <https://www.flickr.com/photos/irishpolyglot/3172990862/>
  - W14 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiOdOSTtaA0>
  - W15 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oQqwdRynUrY>
  - W16 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPb-yM1IPXk>
  - W17 <http://dominiko.livejournal.com/27702.html>
  - W18 <http://www.elingvo.eu/eo/medioj/kial-mi-usonano-esperanton/>
  - W19 <http://esperanto-karlsruhe.de/Eo/Gruppe.html>
  - W20 <http://www.horizontalfilm.de/la-surplanedigo-die-landung/>
  - W21 <http://soc.culture.esperanto.narkive.com/jFHA7S6L/bonvole-kritiku-mian-prononcon>
  - W22 <http://soc.culture.esperanto.narkive.com/32jL914q/u-ak-ento-a-erara-prononco>
  - W23 <http://soc.culture.esperanto.narkive.com/zrbVzCR0/filmetoj-donki-oto-la-tlegi-ta-en-esperanto>
  - W24 <http://traevoli.livejournal.com/21619.html?thread=36723>
  - W25 [http://esperantomovado.blogspot.de/2011\\_09\\_01\\_archive.html](http://esperantomovado.blogspot.de/2011_09_01_archive.html)
  - W26 [https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prononco\\_de\\_Esperanto](https://eo.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prononco_de_Esperanto)
  - W27 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gGtXqtBPU7o>
- 

**Other written sources used as a basis for analysis:**

Esperanto journals (*Belga Esperantisto*, *El Popola Ĉinio*, *Esperanto*, *Fonto*, *Germana Esperantisto*, *Germana Esperanto-Revuo*, *Iltis-Forumo*, *Kontakto*, *La Gazeto*, *La Lingua Auxiliare*, *La Revuo Orienta*, *Libera Folio*, *Lingvo Internacia*, *Marto*, *Monato*)



# The sixteen rules of the Fundamental Grammar of Esperanto<sup>200</sup>

## GRAMMAR

### A. THE ALPHABET

<b>Aa,</b> a as in “last”	<b>Bb,</b> b as in “be”	<b>Cc,</b> ts as in “wits”	<b>Ĉĉ,</b> ch as in “church”	<b>Dd,</b> d as in “do”	<b>Ee,</b> a as in “make”	<b>Ff,</b> f as in “fly”
<b>Gg,</b> g as in “gun”	<b>Ĝĝ,</b> j as in “join”	<b>Hh,</b> h as in “half”	<b>Ĥĥ,</b> strongly aspirated h, “ch” in “loch” (scotch)	<b>Ii,</b> i as in “marine”	<b>Jj,</b> y as in “yoke”	<b>Ĵĵ,</b> z as in “azure”
<b>Kk,</b> k as in “key”	<b>Ll,</b> l as in “line”	<b>Mm,</b> m as in “make”	<b>Nn,</b> n as in “now”	<b>Oo,</b> o as in “not”	<b>Pp,</b> p as in “pair”	<b>Rr,</b> r as in “rare”
<b>Ss,</b> s as in “see”	<b>Ŝŝ,</b> sh as in “show”	<b>Tt,</b> t as in “tea”	<b>Uu,</b> u as in “bull”	<b>Ŭŭ,</b> u as in “mount” (used in diphthongs)	<b>Vv,</b> v as in “very”	<b>Zz,</b> z as in “zeal”

**Remark.** – If it be found impracticable (sic) to print works with the diacritical signs (^, ^), the letter *h* may be substituted for the sign (^), and the sign (^), may be altogether omitted.

### B. PARTS OF SPEECH

1. There is no indefinite, and only one definite, article, *la*, for all genders, numbers, and cases.
2. Substantives are formed by adding *o* to the root. For the plural, the letter *j* must be added to the singular. There are two cases: the nominative and the objective (accusative). The root with the added *o* is the nominative, the objective adds an *n* after the *o*. Other cases are formed by prepositions; thus, the possessive (genitive) by *de*, “of”; the dative by *al*, “to”, the instrumental

(ablative) by *kun*, “with”, or other preposition as the sense demands. E. g. root *patr*, “father”; *la patr'o*, “the father”; *la patr'o'n*, “the father” (objective), *de la patr'o*, “of the father”; *al la patr'o*, “to the father”; *kun la patr'o*, “with the father”; *la patr'o'j*, “the fathers”; *la patr'o'jn*, “the fathers” (obj.), *por la patr'o'j*, “for the fathers”.

3. Adjectives are formed by adding *a* to the root. The numbers and cases are the same as in substantives. The comparative degree is formed by prefixing *pli* (more); the superlative by *plej* (most). The word “than” is rendered by *ol*, e. g. *pli blanka ol neĝo*, “whiter than snow”.
4. The cardinal numerals do not change their forms for the different cases. They are: *unu* (1), *du* (2), *tri* (3), *kvar* (4), *kvin* (5), *ses* (6), *sep* (7), *ok* (8), *naŭ* (9), *dek* (10), *cent* (100), *mil* (1000). The tens and hundreds are formed by simple junction of the numerals, e. g. 533 = *kvincent tridek tri*. Ordinals are formed by adding the adjectival *a* to the cardinals, e. g. *unu'a*, “first”; *du'a*, “second”, etc. Multiplicatives (as “threefold”, “fourfold”, etc.) add *obl*, e. g. *triobl'a*, “threefold”. Fractionals add *on*, as *du'ono*, “a half”; *kvar'ono*, “a quarter”. Collective numerals add *op*, as *kvar'ope*, “four together”. Distributive prefix *po*, e. g., *po kvin*, “five apiece”. Adverbials take *e*, e. g., *unu'e*, “firstly”, etc.
5. The personal pronouns are: *mi*, “I”; *vi*, “thou”, “you”; *li*, “he”; *ŝi*, “she”; *ĝi*, “it”; *si*, “self”; *ni*, “we”; *ili*, “they”; *oni*, “one”, “people”, (French “on”). Possessive pronouns are formed by suffixing to the required personal, the adjectival termination. The declension of the pronouns is identical with that of substantives. E. g. *mi*, “I”; *mi'n*, “me” (obj.); *mi'a*, “my”, “mine”.
6. The verb does not change its form for numbers or persons, e. g. *mi far'as*, “I do”; *la patr'o far'as*, “the father does”; *ili far'as*, “they do”.

### Forms of the Verb

- a. The present tense ends in *as*, e. g. *mi far'as*, “I do”.
- b. The past tense ends in *is*, e. g. *li far'is*, “he did”.
- c. The future tense ends in *os*, e. g. *ili far'os*, “they will do”.
- d. The subjunctive mood ends in *us*, e. g. *ŝi far'us*, “she may do”.
- e. The imperative mood ends in *u*, e. g. *ni far'u*, “let us do”.
- f. The infinitive mood ends in *i*, e. g. *fari*, “to do”.

There are two forms of the participle in the international language, the changeable or adjectival, and the unchangeable or adverbial.

- g. The present participle active ends in *ant*, e. g. *far'ant'a*, “he who is doing”; *far'ant'e*, “doing”.
- h. The past participle active ends in *int*, e. g. *far'int'a*, “he who has done”; *far'int'e*, “having done”.
- i. The future participle active ends in *ont*, e. g. *far'ont'a*, “he who will do”; *far'ont'e*, “about to do”.
- j. The present participle passive ends in *at*, e. g. *far'at'e*, “being done”.
- k. The past participle passive ends in *it*, e. g. *far'it'a*, “that which has been done”; *far'it'e*, “having been done”.
- l. The future participle passive ends in *ot*, e. g. *far'ot'a*, “that which will be done”; *far'ot'e*, “about to be done”.

All forms of the passive are rendered by the respective forms of the verb *est* (to be) and the participle passive of the required verb; the preposition used is *de*, “by”. E. g. *ŝi est'as am'at'a de ĉiu'j*, “she is loved by every one”.

7. Adverbs are formed by adding *e* to the root. The degrees of comparison are the same as in adjectives, e. g., *mi'a frat'o kant'as pli bon'e ol mi*, “my brother sings better than I”.
8. All prepositions govern the nominative case.

## C. GENERAL RULES

9. Every word is to be read exactly as written, there are no silent letters.
10. The accent falls on the last syllable but one, (penultimate).
11. Compound words are formed by the simple junction of roots, (the principal word standing last), which are written as a single word, but, in elementary works, separated by a small line ('). Grammatical terminations are considered as independent words. E. g. *vapor*'*ŝip*ò, "steamboat" is composed of the roots *vapor*, "steam", and *ŝip*, "a boat", with the substantival termination *o*.
12. If there be one negative in a clause, a second is not admissible.
13. In phrases answering the question "where?" (meaning direction), the words take the termination of the objective case; e. g. *kie*'*n vi ir'as?* "where are you going?"; *dom*ò'*n*, "home"; *London*ò'*n*, "to London", etc.
14. Every preposition in the international language has a definite fixed meaning. If it be necessary to employ some preposition, and it is not quite evident from the sense which it should be, the word *je* is used, which has no definite meaning; for example, *ĝoj*'*i je tio*, "to rejoice over it"; *rid*'*i je tio*, "to laugh at it"; *enu*ò *je la patr'uj*ò, "a longing for one's fatherland". In every language different prepositions, sanctioned by usage, are employed in these dubious cases, in the international language, one word, *je*, suffices for all. Instead of *je*, the objective without a preposition may be used, when no confusion is to be feared.
15. The so-called "foreign" words, i. e. words which the greater number of languages have derived from the same source, undergo no change in the international language, beyond conforming to its system of orthography. – Such is the rule with regard to primary wrds, derivatives are better formed (from the primary word) according to the rules of the international grammar, e. g. *teatr*ò, "theatre", but *teatr'a*, "theatrical", (not *teatrical'a*), etc.
16. The *a* of the article, and final *o* of substantives, may be sometimes dropped euphoniae gratia, e. g. *de l' mond*ò for *de la mond*ò; *Ŝiller'* for *Ŝiller*ò; in such cases an apostrophe should be substituted for the discarded vowel.



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This book addresses a fascinating topic – a constructed language that has turned from a project into a fully-fledged language used by some of its speakers on a daily basis. Based on extensive fieldwork, this book provides rare and profound insights into the use of Esperanto in a large number of communicative areas. It studies the speakers' use of code-switching, phraseology and metaphors, techniques they employ to enhance understanding, such as metacommunication and repair

strategies, as well as their predilection for humour. The study also contributes to a comparison between the communication in Esperanto and in the language that is now predominantly used as a lingua franca – English – and allows conclusions to be drawn on the question of what a lingua franca is all about.

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