

## THE INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE ESPERANTO

*“...letters of encouragement and advice, everything prove me that my deep faith in humanity doesn't deceive me. The good genius of humanity wakes up again... long life to humanity, long life to brotherhood among people, that could live forever”*

*“Dua Libro de l' Lingvo Internacia”, L.L.Zamenhof (1859-1917)*

### ENGLISH, ESPERANTO AND LANGUAGES BABEL

First of all: I'm happy I learned English. Thanks to this language, I lived interesting and pleasant situations during my travelling. But this doesn't change what I'm going to say.

Who tells English is worldwide speaking, and it's the language of future, lies. If you travel to meet people and their culture outside package tours, you also know that English is not so spread as they said. Sincerely speaking, because of economics and politics, I'm not sorry. In Austria you could meet persons that reluctantly use English instead of German or a dialect. In Hungary a second language seems impossible. That's why in this nation you can choose as second language in university Esperanto? In Romania, instead, I met a lot of polyglots, who spoke Italian, English, Russian and other languages. Nothing in Bulgaria, where language is Bulgarian, of course (but they could understand Russian). In Turkey, only people who went outside the country for work (mostly in Germany), there aren't second languages speaking. In Moldova the second if not the first language is Russian. Other tongues are only exceptions. In Ukraine Russian is not only a second language, but opposes spreading (or restoration) of national Ukrainian language. So, getting a better communication, why don't support and spread a second language easy to learn, ethically correct (it hasn't support a nation or an ethnic group to be detrimental to others, such as English and everyone that use it –willy nilly- does), effective (it has to permit communication on every standard, chatting, working, studying, and without a high-cost of deep studies).

A dream, some could say. Not at all, I assure you: this language already exists and it's called Esperanto. The few mother tongues are children of Esperanto's speakers coming from different nations (I met some of them during my Travel), and they don't belong nor establish a single state nor political power. I communicate without big problems thanks to Esperanto about different subjects: culture, religion, history, but also more “frivolous” subjects. I used it in Italy, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Turkey, even with foreigners like me (French, Swiss, Germans, Cubans, Russians, Belorussians, Poles...).

Its spreading is only pushed by its speakers will to make it the international language, while is boycotted by political and economical power that has in its interest impeding expansion. But convert this dream in reality, needs strongly believe in this dream, study Esperanto (I can assure that a basic good level requires only eighty hours, more or less) and insist in using it. As some people (two million according to lately statistics) already do.

For a larger communication among persons, consequently for a real understanding and so for a better world! For who wants take a glance at Esperanto, I wrote here a short history, a basic dictionary and some internet sites with further informations.

### WHAT'S ESPERANTO?<sup>1</sup>

Esperanto is a planned language, created by L.L.Zamenhof<sup>2</sup>, born with the aim making easier international communication, without support any nation nor political power. This ideology is intrinsic in the name itself of the language, resulted from pen-name that Zamenhof used on its first publication: Doktoro Esperanto, Hoping Doctor. The use of Esperanto both wrote and spoke (during a century of life), makes it also a natural language of an international community, that use it everyday in varied sectors, professional (doctors, writers, scientists, musicians, researcher, etc.), or relational (correspondence, meetings, travelling, associations, etc.). Point of reference for who approaches to Esperanto is l'UEA<sup>3</sup>, that boasts over sixty national associations and individual members in about one hundred and twenty nations. There is a body for international language's observation and surveillance: the Academy of Esperanto. About natural develop of Esperanto, one can read its literature, divided into two sections. There's a original literature, composed by

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1 Following texts are allowed by Author to use from who'd likes spread Esperanto language, on condition that he/she quote the source as here: <Translated by Marino Curnis from: ©® “Il Sogno Calpestatò” di Marino Curnis, Edizioni Tèramata, 2008. [www.marinocurnis.com](http://www.marinocurnis.com) >.

2 See following “HISTORY IN BRIEF”.

3 Universala Esperanto-Asocio (Universal Esperanto Association).

original productions in Esperanto, and a not-original literature composed by translations of national literary productions. Same about music and theatre. Publications in international language are a lot. There are periodicals by associations or sectors, and magazines of different subjects. There are also radios and televisions that broadcast in Esperanto, and a wide use of it in the internet.

#### HISTORY IN BRIEF<sup>4</sup>



*“This place of my birth and childhood impressed the first course to every following aspiration of mine. People of Bialystok is composed by four elements: Russians, Poles, Germans, Jews. Everyone of this groups speaks a different language and has not friendly relationships with others. In this kind of city, more than elsewhere, a sensitive nature feels the heavy unhappiness of linguistic difference and become convinced that variety of languages is the only cause or at least the main, that divides human family in opposed factions. I was educated to idealism; they taught me that all the men are brothers and in the same time on the road and inside the courtyard, everything step by step makes me perceive that there aren’t men, but only Russians, Poles, Germans, Jews, etc. This always torments my childhood nature, even if many people smile on this pain about the world by a children. Because at that time seemed to me that “grown-ups” were omnipotent, I told me that I’ll eliminate for sure this bad when I’ll grow-up”*

*“Letter to Borovko 1895”, L. L. Zamenhof (1859-1917)*

Esperanto was formally in 1887, when its creator Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof (1859-1917), published a first booklet entitled “Internacia Lingvo”<sup>5</sup> using the name of Doktoro Esperanto. Zamenhof based Esperanto grammar on his own multilingual experience (he spoke Russian, Polish, he studied German and French, Latin and Greek. From his father he learned Hebrew. He basically knew English, Italian and Spanish). His interest in languages matter wasn’t only linguistic, but ideological, based on his unhappy childhood experience (his hometown was theatre of dissension among the various ethnic groups with different languages). That’s why the “doping doctor” tried realizing a simple language easy to learn and effective to use. The result was the International Language, renamed from its speakers Esperanto language (in 1889 the first Esperanto’s magazine published in Nuremberg was titled “La Esperantisto” – the Esperanto speaker, “the one who hopes... professionally”). Eighteen years later, the “Fundamento”<sup>6</sup> decreed basic rules of Esperanto. In 1905 at Boulogne-Sur-Mere, in France took place the first Universal Congress (Universala Kongreso), with the presence of about seven hundreds of participants from twenty nations. Was there inaugurated the annual tradition of congresses, suspended however during the two World Wars (1914/1920; 1940/1947). In 2006 happened in Florence the 91st UK.

#### GRAMMAR<sup>7</sup>

##### A) THE ALPHABET:

**A a**, a as in "last"  
**B b**, b as in "be"  
**C c**, ts as in "wits"  
**Ĉ ĉ**, ch as in "church"  
**D d**, d as in "do"  
**E e**, a as in "make"  
**F f**, f as in "fly"  
**G g**, g as in "gun"  
**Ĝ ĝ**, j as in "join"  
**H h**, h as in "half"  
**H h**, strongly aspirated h, "ch" in "loch" (scotch)  
**I i**, i as in "marine"

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4 See footnote 1.

5 Esperanto: international language.

6 Esperanto: basis.

7 Such in the “Fundamento” published on line by Akademio de Esperanto.

**J j**, y as in "yoke"

**Ĵ ĵ**, z as in "azure"

**K k**, k as in "key"

**L l**, l as in "line"

**M m**, m as in "make"

**N n**, n as in "now"

**O o**, o as in "not"

**P p**, p as in "pair"

**R r**, r as in "rare"

**S s**, s as in "see"

**Ŝ ŝ**, sh as in "show"

**T t**, t as in "tea"

**U u**, u as in "bull"

**Ŭ ŭ**, u as in "mount"(used in diphthongs)

**V v**, v as in "very"

**Z z**, z as in "zeal"

**Remark.** If it be found impracticable to print works with the diacritical signs (^, ^), the letter h may be substituted for the sign (^), and the sign (^), may be altogether omitted.<sup>8</sup>

## 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'j'n, „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 nego, „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), nau (9), dek (10), cent (100), mil (1000). The tens and hundreds are formed by simple junction of the numerals, e. g. 533 = kvin'cent tri'dek 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. tri'obl'a, „threefold”. Fractionals add on, as du'on'o, „a half”; kvar'on'o, „a quarter”. Collective numerals add op, as kvar'op'e, „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”; si, „she”; gi, „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:

- The present tense ends in as, e. g. mi far'as, „I do”.
- The past tense ends in is, e. g. li far'is, „he did”.
- The future tense ends in os, e. g. ili far'os, „they will do”.
- The subjunctive mood ends in us, e. g. si far'us, „she may do”.
- The imperative mood ends in u, e. g. ni far'u, „let us do”.
- The infinitive mood ends in i, e. g. fari, „to do”. There are two forms of the participle in the international

<sup>8</sup> At the present is preferred by a lot of Esperantists who used the internet substitute diacritical signs with “x” letter, because not in the alphabet, while “h” could give some problem. This is a habit, not a rule.

- language, the changeable or adjectival, and the unchangeable or adverbial.
- The present participle active ends in ant, e. g. far'ant'a, „he who is doing”; far'ant'e, „doing”.
  - The past participle active ends in int, e. g. far'int'a, „he who has done”; far'int'e, „having done”.
  - The future participle active ends in ont, e. g. far'ont'a, „he who will do”; far'ont'e, „about to do”.
  - The present participle passive ends in at, e. g. far'at'e, „being done”.
  - The past participle passive ends in it, e. g. far'it'a, „that which has been done”; far'it'e, „having been done”.
  - 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. si est'as am'at'a de ciu'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'sip'o, „steamboat” is composed of the roots vapor, „steam”, and sip, „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'o'n, „home”; London'o'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, goj'i je tio, „to rejoice over it”; rid'i je tio, „to laugh at it”; enu'o je la patr'uj'o, „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 words, derivatives are better formed (from the primary word) according to the rules of the international grammar, e. g. teatr'o, „theatre”, but teatr'a, „theatrical”, (not teatricul'a), etc.
16. The a of the article, and final o of substantives, may be sometimes dropped euphoniae gratia, e.g. de l' mond'o for de la mond'o; Siller' for Siller'o; in such cases an apostrophe should be substituted for the discarded vowel.

### LITTLE USEFUL DICTIONARY<sup>9</sup>

#### GREETINGS

Good day: Bonan tagon

Good morning: Bonan matenon

Good evening: Bonan vesperon

Good night: Bonan nokton

Hi/Hallo: Saluton

See you: Gxis la revido

#### BASIC EXPRESSIONS

Yes: Jes

Not: Ne

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<sup>9</sup> See notefoot 1.

Maybe-Perhaps: Eble  
Ok: Bone  
Please: Bonvolu  
Thank you: Dankon  
Welcome: Nedankinde  
How are you? Kiel vi fartas?  
I'm fine: Bone.

#### MAKE ONESELF UNDERSTOOD

I'm italian: Mi estas italano.  
Do you speak Italian, Esperanto, English? Cxu vi parolas itale, esperante, angle?  
What's your name? Kiel vi nomigxas?  
My name is... Mi nomigxas ...  
I understand: Mi komprenas.  
I don't understand. Mi ne komprenas.  
Could you write it? Cxu vi povas gxin skribi?  
To eat: Mangxi  
To drink: Trinki  
To sleep: Dormi  
Food: Nutrajxo/Mangxajxo  
Water: Akvo  
Bed: Lito

#### QUESTIONS

Who? Kiu?  
What? Kio?  
Where? Kie?  
From where? De kie?  
How? Kiel?  
When? Kiam?  
Why? Because... Kial? Cxar...

#### “DIRECTIONS”

Where is? Kie estas?  
Shop (open-close): Vendejo (malfermita-fermita)  
Restaurant: Restoracio  
Hotel: Hotelo  
Post Office: Posxtoficejo  
Street/Road: Strato  
Toilette (men-women): Necesejo (viroj-virinoj)  
Here: Cxi tie  
There: Tie  
Straight: Rekte  
Right: Dekstre  
Left: Maldekstre

#### NUMBERS AND SHOPPING

How much? Kiom kostas?

0 Nulo  
1 Unu  
2 Du  
3 Tri  
4 Kvar  
5 Kvin  
6 Ses  
7 Sep  
8 Ok  
9 Naux

10 Dek  
20 Dudek  
30 Tridek  
40 Kvardek  
50 Kvindek  
60 Sesdek  
70 Sepdek  
80 Okdek  
90 Nauxdek  
100 Cent  
1000 Mil

#### WEEK

Monday: Lundo  
Tuesday: Mardo  
Wednesday: Merkredo  
Thursday: Jxaudò  
Friday: Vendredo  
Saturday: Sabato  
Sunday: Dimanexo

#### MONTHS

January: Januaro  
February: Februaro  
March: Marto  
April: Aprilo  
May: Majo  
June: Junio  
July: Julio  
August: Aauxgusto  
September: Septembro  
October: Oktobro  
November: Novembro  
December: Decembro

### IN CONCLUSION

A basic Esperanto could be learnt by self-taugh (especially if using materials available for this)<sup>10</sup>. By the way, to get a more serious knowledge, it's suggested contact associations of Esperanto speakers to know everything about lessons, courses or teachers existing in your place.

#### USEFUL WEB-SITES

Courses and material sto learn from various languages:

<http://www.kurso.com.br>

<http://www.esperanto.it/html/insegnamento.htm>

<http://ikurso.net>

<http://lernu.net>

Live courses around the world:

<http://www.EsperantoLand.org/kursoj/>

Congresses:

<http://uea.org/kongresoj>

Multilingual pdating about Esperanto:

<http://www.esperanto.net>

<http://www.tejo.org>

<http://www.lingvo.info>

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10 See “USEFUL WEB-SITES” following

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Manifesto of Prague:

<http://www.lingvo.org/xx/2/3>

The Basis in Esperanto (Untouchable):

<http://akademio-de-esperanto.org/fundamento>

Associations and further informations:

<http://uea.org/esperanto/landoj>

<http://esperanto.it>

<http://www.uea.org>

<http://esperanto.net>

Free hosting service for travellers:

<http://pasportaservo.org>

Listen to Esperanto:

<http://www.radioarkivo.org>