

# Esperanto

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# Motivation

- ▶ Warsaw, Poland, late 1800s
- ▶ Dr. Ludwiz Zamenhof, ophthalmologist

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- ▶ Self: French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, English...

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Summary: I hope most that Europeans could speak to each other by learning only one new language.

# Enough!

- ▶ 1887, *Dr. Esperanto's International Language*
- ▶ 1889, republished in English with the help of Richard H. Geoghegan

# Introduction

*The reader will doubtless take up this little work with an incredulous smile, supposing that he is about to peruse the impracticable schemes of some good citizen of Utopia. I would, therefore, in the first place, beg of him to lay aside all prejudice, and treat seriously and critically the question brought before him.*



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- ▶ “The Chinese wall dividing literatures would disappear, and the works of other nations would be as readily intelligible to us as those of our own authors”
- ▶ In a foreign land, “Not being understood we keep aloof, and the first notion that occurs to our minds is, not to find out whether the others are of our own political opinions, or whence their ancestors came from thousands of years ago, but to dislike the strange sound of their language”

# Prior art

- ▶ “I shall not here enter upon an analysis of the various attempts already made to give the public a universal language”
- ▶ They all suck.

# A new approach

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Dr. Esperanto's three prongs:

1. Very simple grammar
2. Let an Esperanto speak to anyone in the world
3. Make people *care*

# Or your money back

Zamenof: “My whole grammar can be learned perfectly in one hour.”



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  - ▶ frat'in'o
- ▶ il (suffix): an instrument for a purpose
  - ▶ tran'i
  - ▶ tran'il'o

## 2. Unambiguous bases and grammar

- ▶ Every written form appears exactly once in the lexicon.
- ▶ Word-for-word translation should *just work*.

## 2. Ruthless efficiency

They don't know Esperanto? Just attach a decoding guide.

### 3. Convinced?

*[You] must come to the conclusion that the study of the international language is practically useful, and completely remunerates the learner for the small amount of trouble he has to expend on it.*

# Grammar

- ▶ Subject Verb Object

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- ▶ That's all we have time for today...



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- ▶ Radio stations, magazines, newspapers, Wikipedia editions...
- ▶ Native speakers

# Native speakers?

Quoth Wikipedia:

- ▶ “Esperanto is not the mainstream language in any geographic region, outside of temporary gatherings (such as conventions like the World Congress of Esperanto) and isolated offices (such as the World Esperanto Association’s central office in Rotterdam).”

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- ▶ “The most famous native speaker of Esperanto is businessman George Soros, son of Tivadar Soros, publisher and writer in Esperanto.”

subject pronouns

English [Subject] Pronoun	Esperanto
I	Mi
You	Vi
He	Li
She	Si
We	Ni
They	Ili

forms and endings

Form	Ending
Nouns	-o
Plural	-j
Nouns: Nominative case	-n
Adjective	-a



erb conjugation

Verb Form	Ending
Past	-is
Present	-as
Future	-os
Imperative	-u

rticles

- ▶ Indefinite article: Missing!
- ▶ Definite article: “la”

ample sentences

- ▶ Mi amas la esperanto!
- ▶ Ne trinku la koka-kolo!

hat's it! "A week ago I didnt even understand enough to ask annoying questions." – Mark Pilgrim