

Lingua Francas

I. Esperanto

- ☐ Begin with radio clip “What Ever Happened to Esperanto”
http://www.cofc.edu/linguist/archives/2005/02/whatever_happen.html
- ☐ show website for Esperanto
http://www.esperanto.net/info/index_en.html

A. Who invented it?

Late 1800s by Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof

- assimilated Jew-keen experience of oppression
- disturbed by rise of nation-states and divisive nationalism
- saw merit in a language that would facilitate communication among scientists around the world

B. Long history of enthusiastic support

Tolstoy (claimed to have mastered it in 4 hours)

Bertrand Russel

Vaclav Havel

Umberto Eco

Fidel Castro

C. Long history of oppression

Stalin

Mao

Hitler

☐ [Horvitz:2]

D. Who speaks it?

- 2 million people speak it
- 30,000 works of literature (one poet nominated for a Nobel prize)
- 100s of magazines
- websites
- some children raised speaking it as mother tongue
- More popular in Europe among young people (lots of meetings)

E. Why speak it?

★ Is not meant to be anyone's primary tongue—is an *auxiliary language*

- Ease of mastery: For an English speaker, Esperanto is supposed to be 5 X as easy to learn as Spanish or French, 10 X as Russian, 20 X as Arabic or Chinese
 - Each letter has one sound
 - Each word is stressed in same place—penultimate syllable
 - one article (no change for gender, number, definite, indefinite)

- prepositions one word long (unlike “according to” or “in spite of”)
- limited vocabulary but 30-odd prefixes and suffixes
 - Ex: While an English student must memorize the words cow, bull, calf, herd, beef, cattle, veal, and bovine, the Esperanto student learns the root *bo* and adds affixes
- Equality and respect rather than domination; politically neutral
 - Is a linguistic handshake—both parties must reach out
- protects against linguistic genocide—can safeguard minority languages since bilingualism is so easy
- Cheap—for international fora like the UN or EU
 - UN recognizes 6 languages (English, French, Chinese, Russian, Spanish, Arabic). Every word must be interpreted, transcribed and printed in all six languages. Practice costs hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

F. Critics

- English is already serving the purpose of a global lingua franca
- Limited vocabulary: only 9,000 words (compare with English—500,000 head words, though average speaker only uses ...)
- Can you do the same complex things that you can with a natural language?
 - *As we’ve learned, language does a lot more than simply communicate information. We do complex things, in complex ways, with language (but as a second language does it need to have this depth of expressiveness?)

II. English

Make distinction between English as first and foreign language:

- * For first language, Chinese prevails (3 X as many Chinese as English speakers)
 - Websites: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethnologue_list_of_most_spoken_languages
 - <http://www.andaman.org/BOOK/reprints/weber/rep-weber.htm>
 - <http://www2.ignatius.edu/faculty/turner/languages.htm>
- * For foreign language,
 - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_language

Projection of The English Company (David Gaddol): that Hindi will take over as second native English speakers have low birth rates

importance of bilingualism: 2/3 of world’s children grow up bilingual

difficulty of ascertaining how many English speakers (1 billion? 1.5 billion?)
—how does one measure proficiency?

Restricted forms of English

Special English (another name = “Globish”)
used by VoA—basic vocab of 1,500 words (compare with Oxford English Dictionary of 750,000 words, or average vocabulary of 80,000 words)

Seaspeak, Airspeak

Arenas where English dominates:

Science publications

Internet (in early years, 80% of sites)

business

Backlashes against English

Endangered languages

France [■ Murphy:14]