

CHAPTER TWO

PLANNED LANGUAGES AND LANGUAGE  
PLANNING: THE CONTRIBUTION  
OF INTERLINGUISTICS TO CROSS-CULTURAL  
COMMUNICATION

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A new science is developing, Interlinguistics—that branch of the science of language which deals with the structure and basic ideas of all languages with the view to the establishing of a norm for interlanguages, i.e. auxiliary languages destined for oral and written use between people who cannot make themselves understood by means of their mother tongues.

—Otto Jespersen (1931)

Since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century up to the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the quest for “a norm for interlanguages” was a hotly debated issue among linguistic scholars and amateurs. In fact, about 1,000 language projects were proposed in that period, especially in Europe: the strongest effort for cross-cultural connection ever made (Albani-Buonarroti 1994).

What can be inferred from it, in terms of language planning? Is there any relation or analogy between the issues encountered in natural language planning contexts (e.g. officialization, language revitalization, standardization) and interlanguage planning? Are there any general rules that can be deduced from the main historical developments of the above mentioned “quest”? Although Tauli (1968) considered interlinguistics as “the science of international language planning” (i.e. a branch of the science of language planning) very few linguists involved in language planning paid attention to interlinguistics until now.

In this analysis of planned international language, the role of language amateurs will not be underestimated. Their importance had already been recognized by Wilhelm Ostwald in an influencing book about the pursuit of the proper interlanguage<sup>1</sup>. Language amateurs often attack problems

more bravely than professionals, i.e. linguists. Moreover, it should be emphasised that, during the period considered, modern language studies were relatively new, and interlinguistics was hardly considered reliable. In fact, in 1866 the Société linguistique de Paris decided to reject interlinguistics as a whole<sup>2</sup>.

This paper intends to show how, while most issues encountered in planning interlanguages are similar to those met in natural language planning, some are very subject-specific. Furthermore, it wishes to point out some rules of planning an interlanguage that are of general relevance and interest in language planning as well as in cross-cultural communication.

In the first section, a consistent taxonomy of planned languages will be presented that will allow us to analyse these languages within the framework of a language policy and planning, such as the one proposed by Hornberger (2006, 27-35). In the second section, the efforts directed toward the codification of the language system, in particular graphisation and standardization of the lexicon (corpus planning), will be investigated.

In the third section, focus will be on the uses of the interlanguages (status planning) and on how users relate to them (acquisition planning). Specific attention will be paid to Esperanto, as its speakers are the widest speech community among interlinguistic communities.

Conclusions will include a research agenda devised for the empirical study of planned languages and will highlight the novelties of this research<sup>3</sup>.

### **A taxonomy of planned languages**

The term 'interlinguistics' was coined by Jules Meysmans in 1911 (Blanke 1985) and became widely known after Otto Jespersen's lecture at the Second International Conference of Linguistics in Geneva in 1931. In its broad sense, interlinguistics is mainly concerned with the study of every aspect of intercultural communication, including the roles, structures, ways of development and application of ethnic and planned languages intended as international means of communication (Schubert 1989). In a narrower sense, interlinguistics studies 'planned languages', originally a German term (Plansprachen) invented by Eugen Wüster in 1931 (Blanke 1985; Blanke 2006). A planned language can be described as a complete, self-enclosed system (a *langue* in Saussurian terms) which starts as written communication before being used in spoken communication<sup>4</sup>. This definition excludes the so-called a-priori languages, i.e. philosophical taxonomies of human knowledge proposed as 'perfect

languages' for semantics, or codes of written communication published mainly in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Yaguello 1991; Eco 1993). The formal languages used by logicians and computer scientists, such as first-order predicate calculus or computer languages as Algol, Pascal or Smalltalk are deemed as a-priori<sup>5</sup>.

Bausani (1974) made an effort to compare planned languages on the basis of their structures and functions. His observations lead to a consistent and original taxonomy of planned languages, organized along two main axes: publicity and purpose (cf. Figure 2-1).

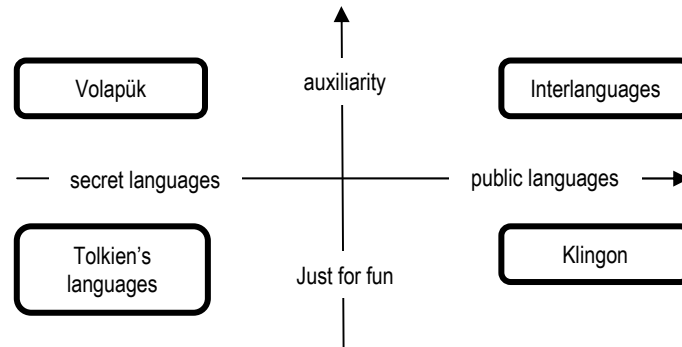


Figure 2-1. A taxonomy for planned languages

The publicity axis concerns the exposure of the language system. On the one hand, there are exoteric languages, i.e. languages whose form and meaning are explicitly secret, such as Balai-balaan, a language invented for religious purposes (Bausani 1974). On the other hand, there are public languages, i.e. languages whose grammar and vocabulary (sometimes even its phonetics<sup>6</sup>) are made widely available to the general public.

The purpose axis concerns the original functions (the purposes that the language author originally had in mind) compared with the actual ones (the functions that the single interlanguage community members pursue). On the one hand, there are planned languages that are invented just for fun (e.g. for literary or fictional purposes), such as Tolkien's languages (e.g. Klocko 2002) and Klingon (see Okrand 1992 and Gobbo 2005b for more details). On the other hand, if the language planner intends to establish a community of practice, its members will use it mostly as a means of cross-cultural communication, i.e. auxiliary in Jespersen's terms.

An interlanguage differs from a planned language in terms of its communication purposes and publicity. An interlanguage is developed for

international communication and is therefore meant for the public. Note that the terms 'interlanguage' and 'interlingua' have different meanings: (a) a language variety of L2 learners (i.e. with influences from L1 or overregularization traits); (b) a formal language in machine translation systems (Gobbo 2006); (c) 'Interlingua' is the original name of the planned language by Giuseppe Peano, better known as Latino Sine Flexione; (d) the name also refers to the planned language of the International Auxiliary Language Association (IALA), as published under the direction of Alexander Gode; (e) an international auxiliary language, i.e. a complete planned language system intended as an international means of communication (Jespersen 1931). If not noted otherwise, the term interlanguage in this last sense will be used from now on.

### Corpus planning and interlanguages

Corpus planning deals with both codification (language's form and linguistic aims) and elaboration (semi-linguistic aims) of a given language (Hornberger 2006). Interlinguistics is considered here as a special case of corpus planning, since the main function of interlanguages is cross-cultural communication. In fact, unlike natural languages, an interlanguage always starts off as a written medium at a given time and has an identifiable creator. The first step in the analysis of a planned language is to detect the very moment the language gets published. Crucial issues as standardization, graphisation and reform become in fact very different after the "primitive contract" is settled. If in the case of natural languages the subscription of the primitive contract is conventional, while in the case of planned languages it is explicit, as seen in 1908-9 already by Ferdinand de Saussure, in his famous second course of general linguistics (Simone 1970, 42; my translation, from Italian):

The primitive contract gets confused with everyday's language life. A system of signs as a language is received passively by the next generations. In any case the system of signs have the property to be transmitted by laws of their own, independent from the ones that settled the original contract (even if there is an explicit agreement, as in the case of Esperanto). The moment the contract is accepted, no one is the owner anymore. A language is like a goose brooded by a hen. After that moment, a language enters its semiological life, and it is impossible to get back.<sup>7</sup>

From the above text segment, we can infer a general rule about language evolution, nl. the *primitive contract rule*, which involves the fact that a human language, either a natural or a planned one, cannot be re-

planned (i.e. touched in the language core—phonetics, morphology, syntax) once the “primitive contract” is settled, even by its author, as it created its own mystique of appartenance and permanence while entering its “semiological life”. As a consequence, a 'language project' (Blanke 1985) is an interlanguage before its publication (Figure 2-2).

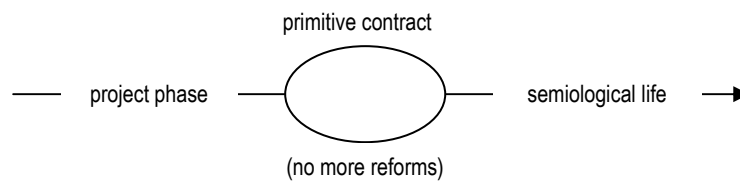


Figure 2-2. The two moments in the life of an interlanguage

In dealing with the distinctive features of planned languages, it should be noted that there are two crucial moments in language planning: before publication and after publication of a planned language. If anyone (even the interlanguage original author) intends to reform the language, i.e. to change some structural properties, after its publication, either a language shift to an existing interlanguage or a speech community split can occur. In this last case, a publication of a new language project usually derived from the original one. This is further illustrated by two case studies in the following subsections. We will first briefly discuss the language shift from Volapük to Esperanto. Afterwards, we turn to Ido, the planned language which was largely based on Esperanto. In both cases, the original speech community will be engaged in the defence of its interlanguage<sup>8</sup>.

### **The language shift Volapük-Esperanto**

The inextricable paradox of Volapük was the main cause of the language shift in favour of Esperanto. In fact, Volapük activists tried to reform the language after publication, i.e. to make a structural language planning change, although this was not successful, partly because of Schlyer's inflexibility (Blanke 2006). As a result, there had been a shift towards the use of Esperanto, which some German volapükists (who became esperantists afterwards), in particular the members of the Nürnberg club, helped to develop (Forster 1982).

### **Ido, the Ausbausprache of Esperanto**

In 1900, at the *Exposition Universelle* in Paris<sup>9</sup>, Louis Couturat, a mathematician and philosopher, launched a call for studies so as to find out the more suitable form of the “auxiliary international language”. Couturat wanted to create an autonomous normative language system with respect to Esperanto, despite retaining most of the properties of the latter. A text in Ido is deliberately intelligible for an Esperanto reader, so that Esperantists could pass to the new project with great facility. Ido should be considered as an *Ausbau sprache* of Esperanto, as an Idist and an Esperantist may converse one another very readily, even if the respective communities of practice are quite separate. In fact, most devotees engaged in defence of Esperanto: the publication of the new interlanguage was significantly called the “Ido schism” (Forster 1982)<sup>10</sup>. What follows is a text fragment in Ido:

La ideo pri mondo-literaturo, quan Herder e Goethe konceptis esence del vidpunto dil arto, ganis nun del vidpunto dil cienco mem plu granda importo. Nam del kozi, quin la homaro posedas komune, nula es tam vere universala ed internaciona kam la cienco. Or, omna komunikado e propagado dil cienco uzas la moyeno dil linguo, do la internacioneso dil cienco postulas nerezistebla la internacioneso dil linguo. Se ni konsideras, ke cadie sat multa ciencala verki, speciale lernolibri, tradukesas aden dekedu o plu multa stranjera lingui, ni komprenas, qua enorma quanteso de laboro povus sparesar, se libri omnaloke sur la terглоbo povus komprenesar tam generale, kam exemple muzikal noti o logaritmal tabeli.

This text fragment is a translation of the following English sample, taken from IALA's Comparative Texts (Comparative Studies, series A, part VI, division 1)<sup>11</sup>.

The idea of a world literature, which Herder and Goethe conceived essentially from the point of view of art, has now gained even greater importance from the point of view of science. For, of the things that mankind possesses in common, nothing is so truly universal and international as science. Now all communication and propagation of science uses the means supplied by language, and so the internationality of science irresistibly demands the internationality of language. If we consider that today numerous scientific works, particularly textbooks, are translated into twelve or more foreign languages, then we understand what an immense quantity of labour could be saved, if everywhere on the globe books could be as generally understood as, for example, musical notes or tables of logarithms.

Ido borrowed the part-of-speech tagging and the agglutinative strategy for derivation from Esperanto, even though the Ido derivation system is hard and complex compared to Esperanto's, as stated by the following example: *martelo* is 'hammer' in Esperanto and *marteli* is 'to hammer' as in English (or Italian: *martell-o*, *martell-are*). Conversely, Ido must verbalize the noun root with a bound morpheme: *martel-ag-ar*, 'hammer+NOUN-TO-VERB+INF', as in French (*marteau*, *marteler*). Any Slavic and mostly Germanic influences were cut off by Couturat.

### **Codification and the *mélange*/promotion dilemma**

What are the criteria in planning an interlanguage's form? As shown by the 'primitive contract rule', a language author should decide the language core (i.e. phonetics, morphology, syntax, lexicon) in the project phase, before publication. It is a general rule that decisions about planning are always taken by a single person, even in the case of Ido or IALA's Interlingua (see below), where committees were formed. It is quite obvious that the language's form will depend on the linguistic repertoire of its author. More precisely, the human languages known by the language author play the same role as substrata in the case of natural languages. These are called *source languages* of an interlanguage.

What is the role of the mother tongues in planning an interlanguage? The comparison of major interlanguages, i.e. interlanguages that proved a language vitality and succeeded to establish a community of practice, showed that the more the language author plans next to the language core, the more important mother tongues become. This is particularly evident in phonetics. Bausani (1974; 1970) noticed that the phonetic space of an interlanguage cannot differ too much from the phonetic spaces of the mother tongues. It is worth noting that this phenomenon is valid for every planned language and it happens regardless of the purposes of the language itself, as it is mostly unconscious, even if the author is a linguistic professional. In this paper Bausani's observation is generalized and called the "Bausani effect", as it is not limited to phonetics, but it is generally valid in other language layers, e.g. syntax and lexicon.

As the effort in planning an interlanguage is a cross-cultural one, the language author faces a dilemma. In fact, he needs to choose the best structural features among his repertoire in order to plan an interlanguage which should be recognized as somehow familiar to the potential learners. The promotion of some features instead of others is deeply influenced by the Bausani effect. It is impossible to promote all features (it will coincide with an existing natural language) and at the same time it is impossible to

avoid a degree of *mélange* (see Latino Sine Flexione below). This rule is called the *mélange/promotion dilemma*. In the following case studies of Esperanto, Novial and Latino Sine Flexione, it is shown how the different language authors have tried to resolve this dilemma, and where the Bausani effect takes place.

### **The delicate equilibrium of Esperanto**

Zamenhof, the Esperanto author, tried to make sure that the linguistic *mélange* simplified the grammar of Esperanto, i.e. rules should be general and without exception. In this sense, Zamenhof chose a planning way similar to Schleyer's Volapük. Volapük has 28 phonemes, with eight vowels taken from German, and a *phonematic writing system*, i.e. every phoneme is written by one and only one grapheme, for simplicity's sake in learning. Esperanto has also 28 phonemes and a phonematic writing system, but only 5 vowels as in Croat or Czech.

Both Volapük and Esperanto are clearly SVO languages. However, Volapük and Esperanto greatly differ. In particular, the Volapük morphology is very rich, e.g. every plural ends in *-s*, as in English, and there are four cases within a single declination, as in German, a proof of the Bausani effect. Moreover, a single verb root may have up to 505,440 different forms thanks to a lot of affixes.

Esperanto, on the other hand, has an agglutinative morphology and almost no allomorphs, but the lexical assimilation rules do not hide their origins so strongly as in Schleyer's creation: a single verb root may have up to 6 basic forms (infinitive, present, past, future, conditional, imperative). Zamenhof made sure that some word roots would be recognized by speakers of Romance, Germanic and Slavic languages, so that nobody would perceive Esperanto as completely foreign at first sight. This is due to Zamenhof's perception of Esperanto as a kind of universal Yiddish: every speaker of a European language should find something familiar in it. That is why it has the consonants of Yiddish (Litvak, the so-called 'Lithuanian variety') and five vowels, as in mostly Sephardic languages. As he was a native speaker of Yiddish, the Bausani effect is clear<sup>12</sup>.

### **Novial and the failure of finding an Einbau**

Otto Jespersen became proficient in Ido and appreciated the work by De Wahl (1930). After careful studies, he proposed his own interlanguage project, called Novial (1928), an attempt to collect the best features of the



major interlanguages of his time, i.e. Occidental, Ido and Esperanto. What follows is a translation in Novial of the previously mentioned English text fragment (cf. section ‘Ido, the Ausbausprache of Esperanto’):

Li idee pri monde-literature, kel Herder e Goethe koncepted esentialim fro li vidpunctu del arte, ha nun ganat mem multim plu grand importanteso fro li vidpunctu del scientie. Den ek li coses kel li homaro posese comunim, nuli es tam verim general e international kam li scientie. Or omni comunico e mediatione del scientie usa li moyene del lingue, dunke li internacionaleso del scientie demanda nonresistablim li internacionaleso del lingue. Si nus considera ke disdi pluri sciential verkes, particularim lernolibres, es traductet en dekdu e plu multi stranjeri lingues, tand nus comprenda qui imensi quanteso de laboro povud bli sparat, si libres povud omnilik sur li globe bli comprendat tam generalim kam exemplim musical notes o tabeles de logaritmes.

Novial is more regular in structure than Occidental thanks to the affixes borrowed from Esperanto and Ido, e.g. *bo-* from Esperanto (bomatro, 'mother-in-law') and *des-* from Ido (desimportant, 'unimportant'). Novial is immediately readable by people educated in European-based cultures, in particular English. Jespersen greatly admired the English language and so he borrowed a lot of its structures. Nevertheless, Novial takes some features from German too, and from Scandinavian languages as well. Unfortunately, there are no studies of the Danish influences in Novial, Jespersen's mother tongue. After Jespersen's death (1943), no one used Novial until the web era. In fact, in 1998 a Novial reform was published, but without great success.

### **Latino Sine Flexione and the etymological fallacy**

Latino Sine Flexione was published in 1903 by Giuseppe Peano, a mathematician, who intended his interlanguage to be used mainly as the written medium of science. At that time, every man of culture knew classical Latin, so scholars should learn the interlanguage very quickly, only with a Latin vocabulary and some general rules of simplification. What follows is a translation of the text fragment (cf. previous section) in Latino Sine Flexione:

Idea de literatura mundiale, que Herder et Goethe habe intellecto praecipue ex puncto de visu de arte, habe hodie adquisito, ex puncto de visu de scientia, sensu etiam majore. Nam, de commune possessiones de genere humano, nihil es tam generale et internationale quam scientia. Sed omne communicatione et propagatione de scientia ute auxilio de lingua, et ita

internationalitate de scientia postula in modo irresistibile internationalitate de lingua. Si nos considera, que hodie plure opere scientifico, in particulare tractatus, es translato in duodecim vel plus lingua extero, tunc nos cognosce quale immane mole de labore pote es praeservato, si libros, ubicumque in terra, pote es aequaliter intellecto in generale, sicut per exemplo notas musicale aut tabulas de logarithmos.

The derivation rules of nouns and adjectives take as the basic root the genitive forms, giving to the interlanguage an Italian flavour. Moreover, Peano introduced articles in the form *illo*, *illa*, which were absent in classical Latin (Bausani's effect). This was also noticed by Louis Couturat, who in a letter to his colleague pointed out the “idiotisme italien” into his interlanguage (Luciano and Roero 2005, 64). Without a defined grammar, users soon started introducing structures, usually from their mother tongues. But idiotisms were not the only problem of Latino Sine Flexione. Another great problem was the etymological fallacy, i.e. the misconception based on the idea that the actual meaning of the world is recognizable by its etymology. In fact, Latino Sine Flexione has a great degree of allomorpha due to Latin itself.

This case study shows two general rules of interlanguage planning. First of all, the language author should not underestimate the role of grammar: if the limits of language variation are not clear before publication, every user will be free to insert structural features, e.g. tense markers, compound rules according to their mother tongues (Bausani's effect). Furthermore, Peano's Interlingua demonstrates that it is impossible to choose the right linguistic features from one source language only, in this case Latin. If so, the only viable choice is to try to do a language reclamation act as in the cases of Welsh or Hebrew. Theoretically Latin can be revitalized with its structural properties intact, even if some problems in such an effort will arise (see Gobbo 2005a).

### **Elaboration and the autonomy/integration dilemma**

The elaboration of an interlanguage is a very difficult task, as the language author faces a compelling dilemma: autonomy or integration? The historical developments of interlanguages show that there is a radical shift in interlanguage planning theory and practice: during the 19<sup>th</sup> century authors preferred autonomy, after the year 1905 they preferred integration. In fact, both Schleyer and Zamenhof tried to focus on *linguistic productivity*. Their interlanguages have phonematic writing systems, along *Lautbild*<sup>13</sup>, as the creation of new words should be simple and regular, and after a brief learning of some morphosyntactic rules and few basic roots a

user should actually use the language. For instance, in Esperanto you only have one marker for quality, the suffix *-eco*, as in *juneco*, 'youth', and *beleco*, 'beauty'.

Nevertheless, these compounds may appear strange for speakers of Western languages, and Esperanto was regularly accused of having “volapükisms” in its lexicon, as coinages are often unique, while later interlanguage preferred semantic or phonetic calques from source language. This led to a radical shift in interlanguage planning theory and practice during the 20<sup>th</sup> century (De Wahl 1930).

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new interlanguages were formed only on the basis of Romance and Germanic languages, with a special attention to French and English, playing the role of superstrata. The focus changed from linguistic productivity to *immediate readability* by people educated on a Western-based culture and language basis, i.e. integration in a strictly Western sense. An immediate consequence of this change is the graphisation strategy. In fact, the writing strategies of new interlanguages are borrowed from English or French, which have a great respect for etymology, i.e. according to *Schriftbild*, but at the same time they lose phonemic correspondence. This is shown in Occidental and Interlingua.

### Occidental between autonomy and integration

In 1922, Edgard de Wahl published his own interlanguage called Occidental, a compromise between linguistic productivity and immediate readability. What follows is the translation of the English fragment in Occidental:

Li idé pri mund-literature, quel Herder e Goethe hat conceptet esentialmen ex li vidpunctu del arte, ha nu ganat ancor mult plu grand importantie ex li vidpunctu del scientie. Nam de omni comun posedages del homanità niun es tam vermen general e international, quam scientie. Ma omni communication e transmediation del scientie usa li medie del lingue. Do li internationalità del scientie ínresistibilmen postula li internationalità del lingue. Si noi considera, que hodie pluri sciential ovres, specialmen libres de aprension, trova se traductet in decudu o plu foren lingues, tande noi comprende quel immens quantità de labor on vell economisar, si on vell posser comprender libres partú sur li glob sam generalmen quam por exemples notes e tabelles de logaritmes.

Occidental is deeply influenced by French, in particular in the fields of graphisation and word order: *li lingue international, un bon idé*. Much of the work of de Wahl was about morphology, in particular derivation. He tried not to conceal the origins of stems as in Esperanto and Ido, keeping

at the same time a regular derivation. The result is less satisfying than the premises: not only the transformations from verb roots to nouns have six exceptions (e.g. *mov-er, mot-*, 'to move', 'motion') but also some derivation rules are accountable only in terms of French substratum (Bausani's effect). For instance from *yun-al*, 'young' you have *yun-esse*, 'youth' but from *bell-al* you have *bell-ità* and not *\*bell-esse*. This is immediately reasonable for French people (*jeunesse, beauté*) but not for example for Italians (*giovin-ezza, bell-ezza*). Furthermore, in Occidental there are a lot of allomorphs, e.g. there are four allomorphs to express quality or abstract, e.g. *liber-tà, propri-età, elegant-ie, polit-esse*. For a comparison, in Esperanto and in Ido you have only one suffix: *juneco, beleco* and *yuneso, beleso* respectively. After de Wahl's death (1949) most supporters passed to IALA's Interlingua (interlanguage shift), while the rest changed the name into Interlingue. However, in the last years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a small revival of Occidental/Interlingue started, thanks to the internet (Gobbo 2005b).

### Interlingua and the quest of prototypical

Interlingua was published by Gode in 1951. As we have seen in the case of Occidental, every interlanguage planned from Romance-base vocabulary can not avoid a certain degree of allomorpha, and Interlingua is no exception. As a specimen of Interlingua, the critique by Martinet published in *Panorama* (62, 1998) goes as follows:

Io non voleva partir del latino ma trovar le parolas que le gente comprenderea al lectura directemente sin haber apprendite le lingua o forsan con un minimo de apprentissage. Un sorta de parve libretto esserea sufficiente. Lo que on pote reprochar a Gode es haber automaticamente limitate le internationalitate al linguas romanic<sup>14</sup>.

Gode did not limit himself to Latin as Peano, but he considered some Romance languages (Italian, French, Spanish/Portuguese) and English as source languages, and German and Russian as control languages. Consider for instance the rule for assimilation: if a word root is graphically similar in four of the source languages, or in three source languages and in two control languages as well, it should enter Interlingua. If graphisation of a word differs too much among source languages, the Latin form is chosen. For instance, 'eye' in Interlingua is *oculo*, from Latin, after the following comparison in the source languages: in French it is *oeil*, in Italian *occhio*, in Spanish *ojo*, in Portuguese *olho*. Latin provides most words as well.

Bausani's effect (Gode's L1 is American English) is evident in graphisation. For instance, let us compare the different graphisation strategies of English, Interlingua and Italian by some affixes derived from Greek very similar in orthography but different in meaning: *phil-*, from *philein*, 'to love', *phyl-* from *phulon*, 'tribe', and *-phyllo*, from *phullon*, 'leaf'. 'Philosophy' in Interlingua is *philosophia*, while 'phylogenesis' is *phylogenesis*, and 'chlorophyl' is *chlorophylla*. However, under the influence of Blair, Interlingua has an alternative alphabet which takes Italian as the model, and the results are quite similar, e.g. *filosofia*, *filogenesis*, *clorofilla* (Blair-Gode 1951). Nevertheless, this graphisation is hardly used by supporters, at least in their publications in the web.

The influence of English also involves other levels. As a result, the meaning of a lot of words in Interlingua is the English one, and consequently there are a lot of so-called false friends with Romance languages. Finally, in respect of morphology and syntax, Interlingua is clearly a Western Romance language (e.g. it has the plural *-s*) although it borrowed some strategies from English and German too. Nevertheless, supporters prefer to present Interlingua in the official site as *le latino moderne*<sup>15</sup>.

### **Status and acquisition planning of interlanguages**

In general, the failure of planned interlanguages compared to the ethnic interlanguage of the present era (English as a global language) is due to quasi-extralinguistic factors, in particular in status and acquisition. Even though, in absolute terms, Esperanto is a linguistic minority (the most realistic estimate about the actual speakers of Esperanto is 50,000-100,000 people), Esperanto is clearly the winner of the "interlanguage war" that took place in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is verifiable by the frequency and popularity of international congresses, or by the number of Wikipedia pages written by interlanguage enthusiasts in their favourite planned language. The Esperanto community is at least 10 times bigger than Ido's and Interlingua's, the only planned interlanguages which have maintained some vitality since their publication until today. Moreover, estimates show that about 60% of interlinguistics literature is written in planned languages—among them, 95% in Esperanto (Blanke 2004). Finally, a key factor of the Esperanto success is the language policy of Zamenhof: absolute freedom of use and at the same time absolute closeness to structural reforms, at least since 1905.

As it is possible to date precisely the moment where the language vitality starts in the case of interlanguages, they can be considered as a

laboratory, a test case of hypotheses about the evolution of natural languages, in particular about the relation between language and culture. Is it possible for a language to create its own culture *ex nihilo*? The history of interlanguages, and Esperanto in particular, shows that an interlanguage can create a culture, if language vitality and vigour can be achieved. Moreover, also the reverse is true: it is impossible for a living language not to have a culture even if it was planned with purely auxiliary purposes, i.e. without taking care of language identity aspects. Otherwise the Esperanto speech community could not have survived two world wars, in spite of the persecutions by Nazis and Stalinists.

### **A research agenda for empirical Esperantic studies**

Unfortunately, there are few empirically-based studies, except perhaps on the subfield of Esperanto as a family language<sup>16</sup>. For example, empirical observations show that overregularization phenomena are very rare in Esperanto, although not totally absent (Corsetti 2004). Even though Esperanto is attested as a first language in a family context, it is important to note that there is no monolingual speaker of more than three years old and Esperanto is never the strongest language in plurilingual families. This is due to the lack of a *Sprachraum*, i.e. a proper language space where it is also learned at school. Versteegh (1993) compares Esperanto to the situation of Hebrew at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, while Lindstedt (2006) writes that they are both test cases of first language acquisition with restricted input, if we take Hebrew in a historical perspective, i.e. before the foundation of the first kindergarten. In reviewing the successful experiences in language revitalization, Tsunoda (2005) underlines that Modern Hebrew, Welsh and Strait Salish showed evident structural changes in phonology, grammar and lexicon while they were acquired as a first language by children. Nothing similar has ever happened to Esperanto or any other interlanguage.

### **Conclusions**

Two phenomena occurring in interlinguistics and generally valid also in language planning were pointed out in this paper and were verified following the historical developments of the discipline itself.

Firstly, it was stated that planned languages are designed by a single person (even though a committee may be settled) and, after publication, they can not be planned again (see de Saussure's "primitive contract rule").

Secondly, it was shown how the linguistic repertoires act as substrata and how the author's mother tongue(s), in particular, deeply influence the structure of every layer of the interlanguage: from phonetics and graphisation up to word order and lexicon (see Bausani's effect).

Thirdly, since the analytical models of language planning were applied here to interlanguages, it was demonstrated that such attempts as the *Einbau* efforts (i.e. merging existing interlanguages in a new one) are doomed, and what can happen is either a language shift (Volapük-Esperanto, Occidental-Interlingua) or a speech community split through the launch of an *Ausbau* language (Esperanto-Ido).

Lastly, it was made evident that interlanguages—in particular Esperanto—are means to cross-cultural communication as they proved that language and culture are intertwined. Therefore even auxiliary languages act as identity markers.

### Notes

1. Blanke (1985; 2006) analysed this book, published in Leipzig, 1910 under the title *Die Forderung des Tages*.
2. Statuts, Art. 2: “La Société n'admet aucune communication concernant, soit l'origine du langage~ soit la création d'une langue universelle.” The reference was an a-priori system such as Solresol (see Yaguello 1991, 46–47). As work languages in MACL include French and German, I will not translate quotations in these languages. Vice versa for texts originally in interlanguages.
3. I wish to acknowledge Jeroen Darquennes who gave me very interesting feedback, and the anonymous reviewers who helped me to clarify my ideas and improve the organization of this paper. I should also thank Detlev Blanke for his bibliographic support and general advice.
4. Terms as 'artificial language' or lingua franca are intentionally avoided here, since they are used in too many different contexts, and they are often sources of confusion.
5. From the point of view of theoretical linguistics, planned languages are fully human languages, being non-natural without necessarily being unnatural, since they are acquired or acquirable as a normal part of the process of maturation and socialization (Lyons 2006). Consequently, they will be scrutinized by linguistic level, from language core to language use, that is to say phonetics, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics.
6. The comparison between the interlanguages published during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the new ones published thereafter via web sites showed that the most important and original solutions to interlanguage planning problems were proposed in the Golden Age period of interlanguages (Gobbo 2005a), that is from Schleyer's Volapük (1879) to IALA's Interlingua (1951).
7. This passage is excerpted from a critical edition of the course. The text was collected by Robert Godel using students' notebooks. Neither interlinguistics nor

language planning appreciated the explicit reference to Esperanto, even if René de Saussure, mathematician and Ferdinand's brother, was involved in the early Esperanto movement (Künzli 2001).

8. As already pointed out, once used, an interlanguage creates its own mystique of appartenance as any other human language.

9. Note that in the same year, in Paris, David Hilbert outlined the famous 23 mathematical problems at the International Congress of Mathematicians.

10. Since 1907, a speech community split occurred, instead of a language shift. A previous attempt to reform Esperanto occurred in 1894 when a ballot about reforming Esperanto was taken, based on a proposal by Zamenhof himself: 157 votes against reforms, 107 votes for (Dietterle 1983, 198). Many commentators argue that Zamenhof deliberately wanted reformists to lose. In a letter to his friend Javal written in 1906, Zamenhof wrote (my translation, from Esperanto): "Regarding your opinion about the so-called volapükisms I don't agree with you at all. You know, that in 1894 I tried by myself to cut off every constructed word, but afterwards I convinced myself this would have been a big mistake... I ask to you never take suggestions from linguists, confront yourself only with people who have a feeling for philology and a lot of practice in Esperanto... who sincerely love the language and want to see in it something eternal, living, powerful (Kanzi 1980)."

11. I wish to thank James Chandler, an Ido expert, who included this text in his web site.

12. Zamenhof himself was an Ashkenazi influenced by the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) and freemasonry, and Esperanto was the first step of a greater project of reform of religions on a common, neutral non-ethnic base, in order to unify humankind as a single family (Gishron 1986, Holzhaus 1969, Maimon 1978). In 1905 Zamenhof decided to let the language free for every use, i.e. its political and religious ideas did not influence directly Esperanto language vitality (Dietterle 1983). For a comparison, note that Schleyer said that Volapük was given to him by God, so it was untouchable.

13. Lautbild = phonematic writing, i.e. the principle is "one grapheme, one phoneme". In these languages you never have more-than-one grapheme for one phoneme in their writing system strategy.

14. My translation: "I did not want to start from Latin but to find words that people understand immediately without having learned the language or maybe with a bit of study. A kind of small handbook might be enough. What you might reproach to Gode is to have automatically limited internationality to Romance languages."

15. See <http://www.interlingua.com> for updates.

16. For example there is only one corpus-based description of the language (Gledhill 2000), where there are some cues about evolution. For example, Zamenhof and the pioneers wrote *lingvo internacia*, 'international language', based on the French model, while in contemporary Esperanto people write *internacia lingvo*, based on the English one.



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