

On the structure of this book

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Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

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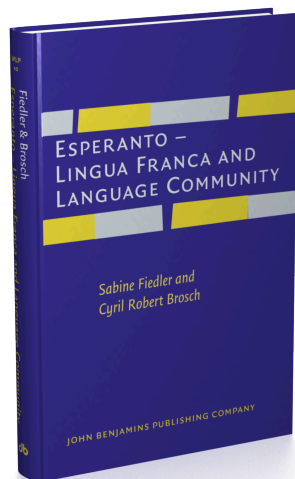
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Part I (Chapters 1 to 5) have offered a first impression of what Esperanto looks like and made a case for exploring communication carried out in Esperanto. We have given an overview of the research that has already been conducted in this generally 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.