

Some concluding remarks on Esperanto outside its speech community

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Pages 91–92 of

Esperanto – Lingua Franca and Language Community

Sabine Fiedler and Cyril Robert Brosch

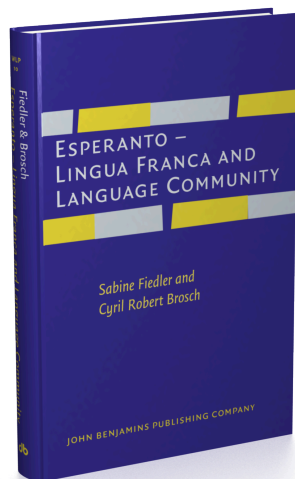
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Part III of this book has been intended as an excursus. It started with a short survey of books and films that make use of Esperanto as a language spoken by people in an imaginary world, by a group of foreigners or the enemy to make them more authentic and credible without having to be specific about their ethnicity. It is one of several links that unite two fundamentally different types of constructed languages: planned languages like Esperanto created for the practical purpose of easing communication between people of different mother tongues, and invented languages like Klingon or Dothraki, created for artistic reasons (see Fiedler, 2019b, for a more detailed discussion).

In the final chapters in this section we shed some light on the symbolic use of Esperanto, first, through the studies by Gubbins and Blanke, on metaphorical uses of the name of the language and, second, on the use of Esperanto words as names for products, projects and institutions. A comparison of these two reveals a significant difference. Whereas in the newspaper articles they analysed, Gubbins and Blanke found approximately equal numbers of positive and negative connotations, in all of the cases in which we were able to identify a motivation for choosing an Esperanto name, that motivation was positive – hardly surprisingly, since people who take a dim view of the language will probably not make use of its lexical material. Furthermore, the reasons for using Esperanto words, as we have seen, are manifold and different from those for using the metaphor, although a commitment to the ideals of Esperanto often turned out to play an astonishingly central role for people using Esperanto names. Finally, we have to consider that Esperanto elements cannot be identified as such by the majority of people, so that misconceptions or prejudice are of minor importance. Nevertheless, it does not seem incorrect to see in this trend a certain appreciation of the language which should not be ignored, especially as it concerns the use of Esperanto by younger people in new media.

