VARIATION IN ESPERANTO*

Bruce Arne Sherwood

Questions are often raised about the mutual intelligibility of Esperanto spoken by people with different first languages, and about the likelihood of Esperanto splitting into mutually unintelligible dialects if it were used on a wide scale. An attempt is made to describe and explain the present situation, and speculations about the future are also made. Important factors to be taken into account are the nature of the Esperanto speech community; the ways in which vocabulary growth is controlled, pronunciation norms; and phonological and morphological aspects.

1. Introduction

Two related questions are often raised about varieties of Esperanto. One is whether the language is at present mutually intelligible between speakers of different first languages (e.g., can Japanese and American speakers understand each other), while the other asks whether Esperanto would fall into mutually unintelligible dialects if it were ever used on a vast scale (as everyone's second language). To a first approximation. the present situation is one of good intelligibility among all speakers. independent of first language, and to a large extent there has emerged an agreed-upon norm, despite the geographical dispersion of Esperanto speakers. 1 will attempt to explain how this has come about. I will also discuss factors likely to influence future evolution of the language. It will be shown that some assumptions which are valid and useful for studying first languages are not necessarily helpful in understanding a language which is spoken mainly as an auxiliary second language.

2. Who speaks Esperanto?

Judging from the 36,000 dues-paying members of the World Esperanto Association and its national affiliates (Esperanto 1982), recognizing that many speakers do not belong to one of these organizations, and considering the currency exchange difficulties of the large numbers of Esperantists in the communist World, there must be at least several hundred thousand speakers of Esperanto as a second language. Some standard reference books give numbers as high as several million, but these estimates may be quite arbitrary. There is a problem in obtaining accurate figures, in that the low densities of speakers and their mainly second-language use of Esperanto make it unlikely that s normal language census would identify Esperanto speakers. The highest density of speakers (as a fraction of the total population) is found in East European countries, but West Europe contributes the largest fraction of movement leadership. There are significant Esperanto activities in Asia, in Japan, China, South Korea, and Vietnam. Numerically small but active groups of Esperanto speakers are found in the Americas, particularly in Brazil, Canada, and the

United States. There are few speakers in Africa or the Middle East, except for Iran and Israel.

While most people learn Esperanto as a second language, there also exist native speakers of the language, often as the result of marriages between young people of differing nationalities who meet through Esperanto activities and who continue to speak the common language at home. Of course the child eventually learns the local national languages (as does whichever spouse did not originally know it), thus becoming bilingual, but it is not uncommon for Esperanto to remain the language of the home. There are also cases of one parent deliberately addressing the child only in Esperanto while the other parent addresses the child in another language, in a conscious decision to make the child bilingual (Fischer 1981). A survey conducted by a newsletter for parents of native Esperanto speakers located 150 families where Esperanto was used extensively (Nemere 1968). Given the difficulties of carrying out such a survey, one might guess that there are between 1000 and 2000 native speakers. Additional evidence for such numbers comes from the observation that a few dozen international marriages among Esperanto speakers are reported in Esperanto periodicals each year, and this rate of family formation is about right to produce the estimated number of native speakers. Richard Wood (forthcoming) found in a poll at an Esperanto conference that one to two percent of the conference participants had learned Esperanto as their first language, which is in rough agreement with the estimate of one to two thousand native speakers among a total of a few hundred thousand speakers in all.

3. The Esperanto speech community

The most important reason for mutual intelligibility among the varieties of Esperanto is that the speakers do form a genuine speech community, as is well described by Wood (1979, forthcoming). This community is unusual in being geographically dispersed and culturally
diverse, yet sharing certain distinctive cultural values and a common literature. Why people learn Esperanto is a complex question, but since most learn it for purposes of international rather than local communication, the instrumental aspects of their use of the language make them strive for an international norm. This is reinforced by the integrative ties of a shared aspiration for a solution to the language problem.

Esperanto was born as a literary language in modern, literate times, which may have prevented drastic changes in syntax, morphology, and semantics from occurring in different countries, given the world-wide distribution of Esperanto books and periodicals. Yet there has been significant evolution, especially along the lines of increasingly exploiting certain latent autonomous properties of the language instead of merely imitating forms borrowed from European languages. For example, the agglutinative properties of Esperanto have been utilized more and more in ways that are quite un-European in nature. But the development of Esperanto in China and Japan has not in general been different from that in Hungary and France (more about this in a moment). The language has evolved within an international community which has been in constant contact, both written (books, periodicals, letters) and spoken (tourism, shortwave radio

broadcasts). The breakup into dialects of languages which evolved before literacy and/or before global communications has given rise to a set of assumptions about language evolution that may nor necessarily be useful in understanding the different nature of Esperanto evolution and the properties of a dispersed community of second-language speakers. As Wood points out, there are same striking parallels to the early stages of the development of Modern Hebrew, but the territorial nature of the growth of Hebrew is quite different from the non-territorial development of Esperanto.

A related point made to me by David Jordan (personal communication) is that contacts with others through Esperanto are, on a day-to-day basis, typically written (as is the case with other non-native languages we use in international communications) but from a wide diversity of cultures (unlike the situation with other second languages: e.g., communications in Italian or Russian typically involve Italy or the Soviet Union). This emphasis on the written word, with the internationalist character of the contacts, keeps Esperanto speakers aware of the needs for international intelligibility. This continually reinforces the understanding of the need for an international norm.

Nevertheless, the careful study by Golden (1980, 1981) shows that within the rich environment of the Hungarian Esperanto movement there are significant identifiable Hungarianisms. Golden expresses the belief that much more care should go into teaching materials used in Hungary, to help learners avoid nationally-based errors. His work yields a basic inventory of major interference errors.

4. Vocabulary

For almost the entire ninety-year lifetime of the language, there has been a public debate, often acrimonious, about control of growth of the lexicon. Roughly speaking, the disagreements result from a desire on the one hand to keep the number of roots small to benefit the new learners and on the other a need felt by writers, especially poets, to enrich the vocabulary for literary purposes. While the debate has typically been conducted along the dimension utilitarian/literary, the arguments are often reminiscent of the question of purism in many national languages, which in Esperanto usually takes the form of contrasting "homey" compounds created from the internal, autonomous resources of the language, such as *samtempa* 'same-time' , with Latin loan words such as *simultana* 'simultaneous'. The social dimension of the debate has often pitted the needs of the linguistically unsophisticated European worker against the capabilities of the Latin-trained European elite polyglot. Especially within the European Esperanto movement there has been a tradition of working-class involvement, and Esperanto publicity has often emphasized that the needs of workers for international communications require an easily learnable auxiliary language.

For Europeans, a compromise is possible by recognizing different styles in the language. However, it has sometimes been pointed out that an abundance of Latin loan-words causes special problems for non-European users of the language. The point has been made dramatically by Claude Piron (1977) in his essay provocatively titled "La okcidenta dialect" ("The occidental dialect"). Piron, a Swiss psychologist who has translated

Chinese for the World Health Organization, contrasts an Esperanto passage swarming with Chinese loan-words with the same passage using an abundance of Latin loan-words, together with a rewritten passage in what he refers to as "global" Esperanto, in order to drive home two points: 1) it is scandalous that some Esperantists use a Latinate lexicon which is incomprehensible to non-Europeans (and to Europeans not in a narrow elite). and 2) with a real feeling for the word-building capabilities latent in the language, it is possible to write and speak richly expressive Esperanto without having to resort to Latinisms. Piron points out the similarities of a "global" style of Esperanto to the ways in which rich metaphors are created through similar techniques in Chinese. Chin-Chuan Cheng (1982) has. demonstrated a tendency for the monthly El Popola Ĉinio, published in Beijing. to use compounds which are calques from Chinese. It is perhaps significant that I had not perceived these forms as unusual, not bowing the parent Chinese forms (and also being personally predisposed to use and approve of the "global" style urged by Piron).

While the issues Piron raises ace important, his observations do not really justify the identification of separate European and Asian dialects at present. It is noteworthy that these issues have typically been raised not by Asians themselves but by sensitive Europeans. Part of the reason for this may lie in the fact that almost all Japanese study English before they study Esperanto, and this may be the case with some Chinese Esperantists, too, with the result that their use of Esperanto may be colored by English (and the Latin vocabulary of English). A careful study should be made of the styles and lexicons of Esperanto literature from various countries to see what the present situation really is, but it may well be that Piron's exhortations should be directed at all speakers rather than exclusively at West Europeans. In any case, the continued strength of the Esperanto movement in Asia is likely to ensure that the needs of non- European speakers will not be neglected, and that Asians will contribute to the evolution of a global style.

Piron's essay has sparked consciousness-raising activities aimed at further internationalizing the language. This thrust is prompted not only by internal needs within the Esperanto community but also by the requirements of external publicity. One of the few truly well-founded criticisms of Esperanto is that it has a European rather than a global base, at least in the lexicon. Rather than emphasizing the international character of the European lexicon (given the spread of English and other European languages), Esperantists have typically responded to this criticism by trying to show that despite the European bias in the lexicon other properties of the language (agglutination in particular) make Esperanto not too European and therefore suitable for international communication. A style of Esperanto more like Chinese contributes to these interests.

The standard mono-lingual Esperanto dictionary (Waringhien 1970) has played a major role in the control of the lexicon, as did its predecessors (Grosjean-Maupin, Esselin, Grenkanp-Kornfeld, and Waringhien 1934 and 1954). As is the case with many emergent national languages, Esperanto books and periodicals often gloss new or lesser-know words. (Often there are also explanations of national events or customs not likely to be widely known.) It is noteworthy that usually only those roots not found in the standard dictionary are glossed, indicating some consensus that the dictionary defines acceptable

usage. Occasionally, however, one sees in these glosses explicit exception taken to the dictionary forms, which is an indication of some fluidity. There is an Academy of Esperanto, but it has historically played a very minor role in the development of the language. Even in lexical matters the Academy has limited itself to occasional listings of words which have been around for enough decades to seem "official". Major growth in the lexicon has occurred through decentralized individual suggestions and use.

5. Phonetic aspects

As might be expected, national accents are common among Esperanto speakers. In my experience the resulting problems of intelligibility are rarely as severe as the difficulties between American English and, say, some varieties of New Zealand English, and the problems are much less severe than the problem of understanding Japanese English. These are moreover individual rather than group problems, in the sense that most speakers achieve an adequate pronunciation, no matter what their first language, and failures can plausibly be blamed on the fact that most Esperanto Speakers have not had formal school course in the language, being either self-taught or having attended informal classes in a local club.

The major credit for general success lies in the sound system of Esperanto. There are only five vowels, a fairly easy set of consonants (but more on this later), not too many difficult consonant clusters, syllable-timed rhythm (without vowel reduction), regular penultimate stress, and most words end in vowels, which probably helps hearers segment sentences into words. About 70% of the words in normal text end in a vowel or a diphthong, with another 20% adding an additional -*n* or -*s*. The remaining 10% of the words end in a vowel plus other consonant. There are no word-final consonant clusters except in the word *post* 'after'. Stress not only is regular but seems not to play a very critical role. Intelligibility for such a sound system is more resistant to destruction by national accents than is, say, English as spoken by foreigners. For example, a slight error in vowel height in English can change "beat" to "bit", whereas such an error in Esperanto must be much larger before *timo* 'fear' is confused with *temo* 'theme'. Similarly, incorrect stress in English seriously affects intelligibility, due to the effects on vowel quality and rhythm.

In terms of normal linguistic description, it may seem strange to make value judgements about one language having a "better" sound system than another. Such a judgement is of course invalid for first languages, where the total linguistic system determines communication, not just the phonetics. But for a language intended for second-language use, it is important to have a simple sound system, since the purely acoustic part of the signal must carry a larger burden (due to cultural differences between the speakers) and because it is essential that adults be able to learn the sound system quickly and easily.

It might be said that Esperanto has more consonants, and hence more subtle distinctions among these consonants, then one would like in a language intended for use by speakers of many different first languages. I had occasion to observe this in an unusual way in a new linguistics course (Sherwood and Cheng, 1980). In an experimental test of new computer-based teaching techniques (J. Sherwood 1981. B. Sherwood 1981, 1982a,

Sherwood and Sherwood 1982), Esperanto speech synthesis (Sherwood 1978) was used for some audio stimuli. American students had difficulty making certain kinds of consonant distinctions due to imperfect synthesis, at least in the case of isolated words. The problems can be overcome with suitable teaching (and the extreme simplicity of other parts of the language leaves plenty of class time for working on consonants). But the voiced/unvoiced distinctions are difficult for the Chinese, the 1-r distinction is difficult for the Japanese, the initial ts sound is resisted by Americans, etc. There are also some consonant clusters which are difficult for many speakers.

It may be impossible to get by with significantly fewer consonants in a language which borrows new internationalized words from many sources, context will usually make up for problems, and the system in any case is simpler than many national languages, but one could still wish that there were fewer consonants. In Novial, perhaps the only language project designed by s modern professional linguist, Jespersen (1928) emphasized the usefulness of reducing contrasts among consonants, and he included among the fricatives only /f/, /v/, and /s/ , with no affricates. On the other hand, he found it necessary to include both voiced and voiceless stops, and both /l/ and /r/, as a result of incorporating a European-based lexicon. Papers by Sapir, Bloomfield, Boas, Gerig, and Krapp (1925), and by Troubetzkoy (1939) both advocated further reduction in the consonant repertoire, eliminating all voicing contrasts and the 1-r contrast (Sapir et. al. also proposed a three-vowel rather than a five-vowel system, and Troubetzkoy eliminated /v/). Similar suggestions have been made by White (1972). But these studies were not subjected to the crucial test Jespersen faced in actually constructing a language embodying these criteria. Moreover, Chin-Wu Kim (personal communication) has pointed out that their calculations of the number of possible polysyllabic words composed of CV syllables were simplistic: no language uses forms such as "tototo", and closely related forms such as kamata, katama, makata, mataka, etc., would severely strain the memory. For these reasons the number of available words was very much overestimated.

A reformer might like to simplify the overly-rich consonant system of Esperanto. In this, as in other areas of "imperfection", such attempts have historically been blocked by a special social contract among Esperanto speakers not to change the basic structure of the language. This "untouchability" of the core was established at the first international Esperanto conference in 1905, to give the language the stability many other projects involving constructed languages never achieved, end it is thought to have been critically important in permitting the emergence of a community of speakers and of a significant literature (Drezen 1931; Janton 1973; Golden 1977). This did not prevent further evolution of the language, because the core contained enough unexploited potentialities to accommodate new structures, but it did have the effect of drawing the boundaries of the Esperanto community in such a way as to exclude would-be reformers and their "deviant" creations.

Corresponding to "untouchability", there is a myth in the Esperanto movement, originally articulated by Zamenhof, the creator of Esperanto, that if a truly representative international organization should decide that Esperanto would be used among the nations, that organization would be entitled to empower a panel of experts to make a one-time

reform of the language. Given recent experience with national language planning activities, belief in such a procedure seems naive. Reform would have to be carried out over a long period of time, in small steps rather than all at once, if at all, unless the changes were completely trivial. This would be necessary both because of the question of authority (how is it decided that a particular organization is entitled to authorize changes?) and because all changes, even seemingly small ones, can have complex ramifications throughout the *system* of the language .

Is there such s thing as "good" Esperanto pronunciation? John Wells (1979) has given a convincing argument that there has evolved a communal consensus on this -- that there is a norm for "good" pronunciation. He points out that one often hears Esperanto speakers say "She/he has a good/bad pronunciation", and he suggests that the basis for such statements may be found in several related criteria: practical, linguistic, geographical, and sociological. The practical requirement of intelligibility between speakers of different first languages is paramount. Good pronunciation also reflects the phonological character of Esperanto, distinguishing among all the phonemes, minimizing allophony, and conserving the strict relation between pronunciation and orthography (for example, a tendency for Spanish or Japanese speakers to fail to distinguish between /b/ and /v/ not only would cause practical problems of communication but also goes against the linguistic structure of Esperanto). Good pronunciation is geographically neutral, not manifesting regional or national peculiarities and making it difficult to identify the speaker's nationality (for example, French speakers should fight against a tendency to stress final rather than penultimate syllables). This does not imply that mild national accents are not tolerated or even enjoyed, but it appears that speakers do recognize and prize an international or nonnational pronunciation style. The sociological criterion reflects the fact that, due to the development of a community of speakers, certain communal attitudes have emerged, including attitudes toward certain kinds of pronunciation, which may be the only way to explain a general recognition that a tapped or trilled /r/ is preferred to other varieties. Wells summarizes by pointing out that while these norms are not absolutely uniform and certainly not observed by all speakers, it is an important sociolinguistic fact that norms for pronunciation do exist. He also points out that it is particularly easy for a Serbo-Croatian speaker to attain the norm, because of the coincidental similarity of the sound system to that of Esperanto, but that it is possible for others to approach the norm, with good teaching and effort.

This point of view is further illuminated by historical aspects of Esperanto pronunciation. Kalocsay (1931) stated that Ludwig Zamenhof. the creator of Esperanto, did not lengthen stressed vowels, while most speakers did and do. The only existing recording of Zamenhof was made in Barcelona in 1909. The poor quality of the recording makes analysis difficult . However, Richard Wood and I listened to the recording together, and we both feel that Zamenhof's pronunciation is just like good present-day pronunciation, without much allophonic variation in vowel quality, and with a lengthening of stressed vowels (Wood 1980). Wood's well-known expertise in shortwave listening qualifies him to analyze this noisy recording! In text-to-speech synthesis (Sherwood 1978, 1981, 1982a, Sherwood and Sherwood 1982) I find experimentally that making stressed vowels 50% longer than unstressed vowels yields natural-sounding Esperanto rhythm.

Some older treatments of Esperanto (McQuown. 1936; Kalocsay and Waringhien, reprinted 1980) spoke of "rules" t h a t one should follow in producing "good" allophonic variation (these had to do in particular with the status of vowels in open and closed syllables). But now the norm which has emerged characterizes the vowel system as requiring little allophonic variation among the five vowels, as in Greek or Japanese. As Wells puts it , one should be tolerant of allophones, but one certainly should not *require* specific variation, since any particular rule will be unnatural for many speakers. The simplest rule, and the one which is most universal, is to not vary, and this is the standard which has in fact emerged. Another illuminating anecdote mentioned by Wood (forthcoming) is that when planning the 1907 international Esperanto congress in Cambridge, British Esperantists argued over whether they should be speaking Esperanto with English pronunciation, some feeling that this was the only proper way to pronounce the language. In the long run a different philosophy won out, that Esperanto should be spoken in an international form appropriate to the nature of the language. The fact that such a question could even come up is astounding for speakers now, when it is assumed that an international norm is what everyone should aim at (although with allowance for national accents as long as intelligibility is maintained).

Wood (forthcoming) reports on the speech of a handful of native speakers he has known. He found a range of accents, presumably derived from the national accents of the non-native parents or of the chi1d's playmates It would be fruitful to compare the variation among Esperanto native speakers with that found among native speakers of modern Hebrew during its early development. David Gold (personal communication) reports his observations of native Hebrew speakers of various ages, all of Yiddish background. He says that the pronunciation of those born before about 1930 is so strongly influenced by the Yiddish linguistic background of parents or grandparents that a naive observer might not take these people to be native speakers of Hebrew. Those born a f t e r 1930 but before about 1955 clearly betray their Yiddish backgrounds but may pass for natives when judged by naive observers. Gold summarizes these observations by saying that just as in Esperanto, an indigenous norm is emerging. It is now possible to speak Hebrew without revealing one's linguistic , communal, geographical, or other background. This possibility was absent in early Modern Hebrew.

6. Phonology and morphology

Another factor contributing to a unified pronunciation norm is the drastic simplicity of the phonology and morphology. Esperanto phonology is rather rudimentary. The underlying phonetic representations of the morphemes in the lexicon map directly without complex phonological derivations into the surface phonetic forms (and graphemes too, for that matter, since written Esperanto is practically a transcription of the spoken form, or, given the powerful influence of the written language among literate, dispersed, second-language speakers, perhaps it is accurate to say t h a t the spoken form is a realization of the written form). It is true that many speakers follow some natural assimilation rules (e.g., with nasals) , but these phenomena are marginal in the overall scheme of things. Within a morpheme many natural rule shared by many languages are

already accounted for in the lexical forms, which come from national languages. Juncture is often heard in agglutinative compounds to avoid assimilation (and to mark the presence of a morpheme boundary). In many languages, assimilation across word or morpheme boundaries does not occur in formal speaking styles, and as a mainly second language Esperanto is usually spoken in a relatively formal style, though it is said that Esperanto youth get-togethers have given rise to informal and rather special kinds of speech.

The morphology is also extremely simple. Almost any morpheme can take a "grammatical ending" to form a noun, adjective, adverb, verb, or participle: *helpo* 'help' (noun); *helpa* 'helpful'; *helpe* 'helpfully; *help/is/as/os/us/u/i* -- past, present, future, conditional, imperative, infinitive verbs; past, present and future passive and active participle endings are *it/at/ot* and *int/ant/ont* -- *helpita helpanto* 'a helped helper'. Adjectives and nouns agree in number (plural -*j*) and case (accusative -*n*): *helpaj(n) helpoj(n)* 'helpful helps'. Terms of endearment are formed by deforming the root and adding -*ĉjo* (masculine) or -*njo* (feminine): *Petro-Peĉjo, Maria-Manjo, paĉjo* 'dad', *panjo* 'mom'. Except for -*io* in country names (*itala* 'Italian', *Italio* 'Italy') and some suffixes used in technical vocabulary, especially chemistry, these grammatical endings and suffixes are the only bound morphemes in the language.

To be more precise, morphemes divide into two classes: content morphemes which must have a "grammatical ending" (such as *help*-), and function morphemes which take such endings but need not (prepositions, numerals, some "primitive" adverbs, etc.: *tri* 'three', *tria* 'third', and *trie* 'thirdly'). Since the content morphemes need only a "grammatical ending", it is simplest to consider them as free morphemes, unlike the small number of truly bound morphemes listed above. All morphemes are strictly invariant in form except in endearment terms. About the only thing remaining far this vestigial morphology to do is to specify the allowed segmental sequences within syllables, although there also appear to be some phonotactic restrictions on the allowable forms of compound words, both *banoĉambro* and *banĉambro* 'bathroom' are heard, but *partopreni* 'to take part' is never *partpreni*. It should be mentioned that the highly productive short Esperanto morphemes traditionally called "affixes" are in f a c t themselves free morphemes, too: *kato* 'cat' , *katido* 'kitten ', *hundo* 'dog', *hundido* 'puppy', *ido* 'offspring'.

As a consequence of the invariance of its morphemes, Esperanto is rigorously agglutinative in its word-building. When various universal measures are applied (morphemes per word, etc.). Esperanto scores closest to languages like Turkish (Brozović 1976). Yet its agglutination goes beyond that of Turkish, since the Esperanto "affixes" are actually free morphemes (nor is there phonetic variation of affixes due to vowel harmony as there is in Turkish). Since there are hardly any bound morphemes, some aspects of the language are reminiscent of Chinese (although unlike Chinese, Esperanto morphemes are often polysyllabic). It seems to me that the characteristically productive agglutination of morphemes in Esperanto contributes to the lack of derivational rules in the rudimentary phonology, since almost any sounds may stand next to any other sounds as a result of agglutination, and about the only fully universal rules (of assimilation, etc.) valid for the speakers of many languages are simply to butt the sounds up against each other with little or no allophonic variation (one might say the *phonology* is

"agglutinative"). This tendency is yet further reinforced by the power of the written language in a modern literate world to impose spelling pronunciations. On the power of the printed word in literate societies, see Levitt (1978) and Bentur (1978). The situations described by these authors are generalized in the case of Esperanto as a result of the minimal phonological and morphological rules, of the strictly phonetic character of the written form, and of the mainly second-language and written use of Esperanto.

7. Possible futures

What if Esperanto were used everywhere as the normal means of communication between people of different first languages? Here the reader must either suspend disbelief in the development of this kind of bilingualism, for the sake of following the argument, or reflect carefully on such situations as the following. The European Community is committed by treaty to absolutely equal treatment of all its national languages. It has just added Greek, making a total of seven official languages, and it will soon add Spanish and Portuguese, with the likelihood of adding Turkish around 1990. The competing goals of equity and efficiency may drive the community to adopt a politically neutral second language.

It is often claimed that under widespread use Esperanto would break up into mutually incomprehensible dialects. This may be an invalid conclusion, since it is based on the many languages developed before there existed rich modes of global communication. A language breaks up into dialects when there is isolation, and under present conditions of mass literacy; global electronic communication, and mass global travel, isolation is increasingly uncommon. Moreover, if Esperanto were learned in school and used mainly for inter-national and inter-cultural rather than local communications, its patterns of usage would tend to block the normal processes of dialect differentiation. The specific properties of Esperanto which have contributed to unity at present (five-vowel system, phonetic orthography. etc.) would reinforce these tendencies.

A closely related question is what kind of evolution of the (unified) language would be likely. Given the difficulties with the consonants, one might predict a neutralization of some distinctions which might nevertheless remain in the written language (e.g.. *posta/poŝta* 'later'/'postal'). The popular authority of writing would tend to combat this otherwise natural tendency, although Gold (personal communication) points out that observers in many languages have noted that the average person tends to misuse or omit diacritics, so that the written distinction might be endangered, too.

There might be changes in certain morphemes whose phonetic structure differs from that permitted in many languages, such as *gvido* (which might change to *gwido)* and in the morphemes beginning with *eks-* and the unnatural *ekz-*, both of which collide with the productive prefixes *eks-* 'ex-' and *ek-* 'start', though these prefixes typically are followed by junctures not present in the morphemes. It might be that spelling pronunciations would not shield these from change. Given the many errors speakers exhibit in the accusative marking of direct objects (Sherwood 1982b). and the pronounced tendency in the spoken

language to use solely SVO order in main clauses, it is probable that the accusative would become optional *de jure* well as *de facto* in spoken and perhaps written SVO sentences.

Because standard Esperantist publicity consistently claims that Esperanto is intended solely as a second, not a first language, to solve problems of international communication and to shelter the national and regional languages from the linguistic imperialism of the big languages, the existence of native speakers in something of an embarrassment for some Esperantists. The eminent Hungarian linguist and Esperantist Géza Bárczi (1966) publicly condemned the "fanaticism" of parents who bring up their children speaking Esperanto. He stated flatly that such behavior is not acceptable. This view misses the point that as soon as people began communicating in Esperanto, some of these people married each other, and it was natural for them to continue speaking Esperanto. It was impossible to avoid the emergence of native speakers. On the other hand, many linguists place great weight on the existence of native speakers, without whom Esperanto would not be a "real" language, an attitude based on assumptions about the role of first languages which are nor necessarily relevant for an auxiliary language. This attitude does however have validity to the extent that a lack of native speakers of Esperanto would be strong evidence against the claim that communication occurs and that a community exists, since these factors have indeed led inevitably to the birth of children who learn Esperanto as their first language.

In these contexts the question naturally arises whether widespread use of Esperanto would ultimately obliterate all other languages. leading to e monolingual world. This is a taboo subject within the Esperanto movement, given the second-language orientation of Esperanto publicity. The opposing tendencies would seem to be on the one hand the fact that minority languages and dialects have so far proven to be much more resilient to the pressures of national languages then had been expected, on the other the fact that mass culture tends toward standardization. It is sobering to hear that a television program is not viable if it appeals "only" to a few million people. Given such orientations and economies, it seems likely that television and movie producers, novelists, and publishers would tend to use a second language known all over the world rather than any first language known "only" to a few hundred million people. Also, a minority language may resist successfully when the majority language belongs to a different, possibly disliked social group, whereas a neutral, second language belonging to no one would not present the same barriers to acceptance (this conjecture was pointed out to me by Mikuláš Nevan, the father of a native Esperanto speaker). But David Jordan points out that in the process of coming into widespread use, especially if assisted by political forces, Esperanto would likely acquire resistance and enemies by association with those groups favoring its use, thus raising barriers to acceptance. In the thirties, Hitler crushed the German Esperanto movement for being "communist", and Stalin simultaneously obliterated the Soviet Esperanto movement for being "cosmopolitan", which gives some perspective on the relevant political considerations. (It may be more accurate to say that Hitler and Stalin shared the same rationale: both movements were "internationalist" and may also have been perceived as "Jewish".)

While there are obviously advantages to a monolingual world, a multilingual world also offers important benefits. The mutual unintelligibility of languages provides a useful "customs barrier" t o protect national and ethnic experimentation in diversity. Could these custom barriers still function if everyone learned the same auxiliary language? Yar Slavutych of the University of Alberta (personal communication) reports that in non-Russian areas of the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe it already happens occasionally that a university professor will ask the class whether everyone speaks the local language and, if there is even one Russian student who does not, the professor may lecture in Russian to be accommodating, on the basis that all the other students are presumed to know Russian as a second language. If it could be assumed that everyone hew Esperanto well, any gathering of people of mixed native languages would likely use Esperanto out of a sense of fair play.

The existence of a common second language would in itself greatly promote the kinds of international exchanges which would produce more and more linguistically mixed gatherings, in all sorts of settings (university, business, government, tourism, etc.). No matter how strong a theoretical commitment to maintenance of the native language and to the reservation of Esperanto for inter-language situations, one might find oneself speaking Esperanto many times every day even in one's own home town. It might require great linguistic sophistication on the part of the general populace to recognize both the cultural benefits of preserving the native language and the clear and present danger of its loss. One possibility is that those national tongues which are high literary languages not generally spoken in family life might be displaced (e.g., German and Italian for at least some speakers), while the local ethnic languages would be encouraged. There could be a stable diglossia involving the language of the home (often not a national language) and the auxiliary language.

It is important not to misconstrue the nature of the danger. In the absence of the kind of language planning on an international scale which could lead to the wide-spread use of Esperanto, the world may drift in its urgent need for better international communication into an unplanned solution. In particular, English might continue to spread and eventually become the universally-known auxiliary language, with the same attendant dangers in the long run, but with great inequity in the short run, due to the fact that it is many times more difficult to learn than Esperanto and because it gives enormous advantages to its native speakers. But some scholars believe t h a t English has passed its peak (Starr 1978). and the world may simply be headed for chaotic multilingualism and a different set of difficulties and dangers.

NOTES

deeper association with the Department of Linguistics. This paper was presented at the 1980 Symposium on Native-Language Influence on Esperanto, held in Urbana.

REFERENCES

BÁRCZI, Géza. 1966. Világnyelvvé válhatik-e az eszperanto? Magyar Nemzet, March 27. Reprinted with Esperanto translation (Ĉu Esperanto fariĝos mondlingvo?) in Soós, Eva and Ehmann, Beata, ed., Esperantologiaj Kajeroj 3, University of Budapest (Eötvös Loránd), 1977, 265-272. This volume is a memorial to Bárczi.

BENTUR, Esther. 1978. Orthography and the formulation of phonological rules. Studies in The Linguistics Sciences 8:l.l-25.

BROZOVIĆ, Dalibor. 1976. Pri pozicio de Esperanto en lingva tipologio. In Zlatko Tišljar, ed., Internacia Lingvistika Simpozio, pp. 33-84. Zagreb: Internacia Kultura Servo.

CHENG, Chin-Chuan. 1982. The Esperanto of El Popola Ĉinio. Studies in the Linguistic Sciences (this volume).

DREZEN, E. 1931. Historio de la Mondolingvo. Reprinted 1967, Osaka: Pirato.

ESPERANTO. 1982. See table on p. 39 of the February issue of this official organ of the World Esperanto Association (Rotterdam).

FISCHER, Rudolf. 1981. Dulingva edukado per Esperanto kaj la gepatra lingvo. Eŭropa Dokumentaro 30:18-20.

GOLDEN, Bernard. 1977. Political factors in the international language movement. Eco-Logos 23:86.13-16.

GOLDEN, Bernard.,l980. An analysis of some characteristics of Hungarian Esperanto. Presented at the 1980 Symposium on Native-Language Influences on Esperanto, held in Urbana.

GOLDEN, Bernard. 1981. Kelkaj trajtoj pri la "hungara dialekto" de Esperanto. Planlingvistiko 1:0.11-15.

GROSJEAN-MAUPIN, E., Esselin, A., Grenkamp-Kornfeld, S., and Waringhien, G. 1934. Plena Vortaro de Esperanto. Reprinted with technical supplement in 1954. Paris: Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda.

JANTON, Pierre. 1973. L'espéranto. ("Que sais-je" series.) Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.

JESPERSEN, Otto. 1928. An International Language. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 61-82.

KALOCSAY, K. 1931. Lingvo Stilo Formo. Budapest. 116-121. Reprinted in Blanke, Detlev, ed.: Esperanto, Lingvo, Movado, Instruado. Berlin: Zentraler Arbeitskreis Esperanto, 1977, 90-92.

KALOCSAY, K., and Waringhien, G. 1980. Plena Analiza Gramatiko de Esperanto. 4th, updated edition. Rotterdam: Universal. Esperanto-Asocio.

LEVITT, Jesse. 1978. The influence of orthography on phonology: a comparative study (English, French, Spanish, Italian, German). Linguistics 208:43-67.

MCQUOWN, N. A. 1936. A Comparative Study of Esperanto from the Standpoint of Modern German. University of Illinois master's thesis.

NEMERE. Stefano. 1968. 2-a renkontiĝo de Esperantistaj familioj. Gepatra Bulteno 8:(0ct.-Dec.)12-13.

PIRON, Claude. 1977. La okcidenta dialekto. Esperanto no. 7-8 (July-August), 125-126.

SAPIR, E., Bloomfield. L., Boas, F., Gerig, J. L., and Krapp, G. P. 1925. Memorandum on the Problem of an International Auxiliary Language. Romanic Review 16:244-256.

SHERWOOD, B. A. 1978. Fast text-to-speech algorithms for Esperanto, Spanish, Italian, Russian, and English. International Journal of Man-Machine Studies 10:669-692.

SHERWOOD, B. A. 1981. Speech synthesis applied to language teaching. Studies in Language Learning 3:1.171-181.

SHERWOOD, B. A. 1982a. Spertoj pri sintezo de Esperanta parolado. In Helmar Frank, Yashouardhan, and Frank-Böhringer, ed.: Lingvo-Kibernetiko, pp. 63-74. Tübingen: Gunter Narr Verlag.

SHERWOOD, B. A. 1982b. Statistical analysis of conversational Esperanto, with discussion of the accusative. Studies in the Linguistic Sciences (this volume).

SHERWOOD, B. A. and Cheng, Chin-Chuan. 1980. A linguistics course on international communication and constructed languages. Studies in the Linguistic Sciences 10:1.189-201. ERIC Clearinghouse document ED 182995.

SHERWOOD, J. 1981. PLAT0 Esperanto materials. Studies in Language Learning 3:1.123-128.

SHERWOOD, J.. and Sherwood, B. 1982. Computer voices and ears furnish novel teaching options. Speech Technology 1:3.46-51.

STARR, S. F. 1978. English Dethroned. Change Magazine, May, 26-31.

WARINGHIEN, G. 1970. Plena Ilustrita Vortaro de Esperanto. Paris: Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda.

WELLS, John. 1979. Lingvistikaj aspektoj de Esperanto. Rotterdam: Centro por Esploro kaj Dokumentado de la Monda Lingvo-Problemo. 22-26.

WHITE, R. G. 1972. Towards the construction of a Lingua Humana. Current Anthropology 13, 113-123.

WOOD, Richard E. 1979. A voluntary non-ethnic and non-territorial speech community. In William Francis Mackey and Jacob Ornstein, eds.. Sociolinguistic Studies in Language Contact - Methods and Cases, pp. 433-450. The Hague, Paris, and New York: Mouton Publishers.

WOOD, Richard E. 1980. The development of Esperanto pronunciation. Presented at the 1980 Symposium on Native-Language Influence on Esperanto, held in Urbana.

WOOD, Richard E. (forthcoming). A sociolinguistic approach to an unconventional language community. In Robert N. St. Clair and Moshe Nahir, eds., The Politics of Linguistic Accommodation. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.