Is Esperanto a neutral language? The political paradoxes of the Esperanto Movement

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*Abstract*

Since the launch of Esperanto in 1887 by Ludwik Lejzer Zamenhof, people who show interest in the language have been committed to language politics, in particular on the international level. In fact, Esperanto has been often proposed as a *neŭtrala lingvo*, i.e. a neutral language in the sense that it presents an equitable solution to problems of international communication. How is this reconciled with the politics of multilingualism practiced by the Esperanto speakers themselves, who are without exceptions at least bilingual and quite often multilingual? Moreover, one common ideological stand claimed by the majority of Esperantists is that Esperanto is politically neutral. This paper aims to describe the main political positions by esperantists in 130 years of language life and how Esperanto is positioned now in our era of glocalization, where English is spread globally as no other language in history, and at the same time there isa reconceptualization of local identities, often linked with movements in support of minority languages.