

A GRAMMAR
OF
Xẽλõk

WITH DIACHRONIC PROGRESSION
FROM ZAMENHOFIAN ESPERANTO
TO THE MODERN LANGUAGE

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Contents

Contents	i
A Forward on Design Philosophy	ii
History & Timeline of the People	iii
1 Timeline of changes from Zamenhofian Esperanto to Xêλõk	1
0–100 AMC	1
100–200 AMC	5
200–300 AMC	6
300–400 AMC	7
400–500 AMC	9
500–600 AMC	9
600–700 AMC	9
700–800 AMC	9
800–900 AMC	9
900–1000 AMC	9

A Forward on Design Philosophy

History & Timeline of the People

Chapter 1

Timeline of changes from Zamenhofian Esperanto to Xěλōk

0–100 AMC

Sound Changes

/v/ becomes [w] when it would fit in the sonority hierarchy of a consonant cluster and [v] elsewhere

$$\begin{aligned}v &\rightarrow w / _C_V \\v &\rightarrow v / \textit{elsewhere}\end{aligned}$$

e.g., *'kvarto'* ['kvar.to] → ['kwar.to], *'evakui'* [e.va'ku.i] → [e.va'ku.i]

Stress moves to the last syllable of correlatives and finite forms of *'esti'*

e.g., *'tiel'* /'ti.el/ → /ti'el/, *'estas'* /'e.stas/ → /e'stas/, etc., but *'estu'* remains /'e.stu/

/i/ and /u/ → /j/ and /w/ before a stressed vowel

e.g., *'duono'* [du'o.no] → ['dwo.no], *'tiel'* [ti'el] → [tjel], etc.

Nasals assimilate in place of articulation to a following obstruent

$$\begin{aligned}N &\rightarrow m / _ \{p, b, f\} \\N &\rightarrow n / _ \{t, d, tʃ, dʒ, s, z, ʃ, ʒ\} \\N &\rightarrow \eta / _ \{k, g\}\end{aligned}$$

e.g., *'enblavi'* [en'blowi] → [em'blo.wi]

Obstruents assimilate in voicing to a following obstruent

e.g., ‘absolute’ [ab.so^hlu.te] → [ap.so^hlu.te]

Clusters of mixed sibilants assimilate to the last sibilant

e.g., ‘disĵeti’ [dis^hʒe.ti] → [diʒ^hʒe.ti]

Vowel hiatuses are broken up by epenthetic consonants

- If both consonants are the same, the epenthetic consonant is a glottal stop.

[a.a] → [aʔa] [e.e] → [eʔe] [i.i] → [iʔi] [o.o] → [oʔo] [u.u] → [uʔu]

- If the first non-low vowel is front, the epenthetic consonant is [j]

[i.e] → [ije] [i.a] → [ija] [i.o] → [ijo] [i.u] → [iju]
 [e.i] → [eji] [e.a] → [eja] [e.o] → [ejo] [e.u] → [eju]
 [a.i] → [aji] [a.e] → [aje]

- If the first non-low vowel is back, the epenthetic consonant is [w]

[o.i] → [owi] [o.e] → [owe] [o.a] → [owa] [o.u] → [owu]
 [u.i] → [uwi] [u.e] → [uwe] [u.a] → [uwa] [u.o] → [uwo]
 [a.o] → [awo] [a.u] → [awu]

Velar obstruents become palatal before front vowels

k g → c ʝ / _{i,e}

e.g., ‘kilogramo’ [ki.lo^hgra.mo] → [ci.lo^hgra.mo]

Vowels shift closer to glides when they precede them

Back vowels are fronted before /j/, and front vowels are rounded before /w/. Low vowels are raised to mid prior to either glide and are fronted before /j/ and backed and rounded before /w/.

u → y / _j
 o → ø / _j
 a → e / _j
 a → o / _w
 e → ø / _w

e.g., ‘kajto’ [‘kaj.to] → [‘kej.to], ‘abelujo’ [a.be^hlu.jo] → [a.be^hly.jo], ‘vojo’ [‘vo.jo] → [‘vø.jo], ‘ambaŭ’ [‘am.baw] → [‘am.bow], ‘eŭropa’ [ew^hro.pa] → [øw^hro.pa]

Morphosyntactic & Semantic Changes

Pronoun Usage

In contexts where it's unclear whether the referent is male or female, using a gendered 'li' or 'ŝi' is now dispreferred. The current preference is to use 'tiu'. However, like singular-they in English, this isn't generally done with explicitly gendered referents, but rather only with those whose gender is unknown or unspecified.

- (1) 'Se via studento scias, kiu ĝin faris, tiu devas paroli.'
 "If your student_i knows who did it, they_i should talk."

Note that, where appropriate, 'si' and its forms are still used.

- (2) 'Iu preterlasis sian pluvombreton!
 "Someone_i forgot their_i umbrella!"

Conditional Participles

The formerly-unofficial conditional participle *-unta* is now common and unremarkable. They are not generally used predicatively, as using the conditional verb form with other participles serves those purposes fine, but they are widely used attributively and nominalized.

- (3) a. 'La mortunta knabino'
 "The girl who would/could have died"
 b. 'La regunto'
 "The would-be ruler"

Verbalization of predicate adjectives

Rather than using *esti* as a copula, adjectives are now generally used directly as stative verbs. Nominals continue to use *esti*, however, and *esti* can be included for emphasis for predicate adjectives.

- (4) 'La birdo estas blua' → 'La birdo bluas.'
 "The bird is blue."

Widespread adoption of 'far'

To avoid the ambiguity of the Zamenhofian Esperanto 'de', 'far' is adopted as a shortening of 'fare de', to indicate that something was done/made by someone rather than merely owned by or associated with them.

- (5) a. *‘La bindaĵo de la libro de Maria ruĝas.’*
“The cover of Maria’s book (a book which Maria owns but didn’t necessarily write) is red.”
- b. *‘La bindaĵo de la libro far Maria ruĝas.’*
“The cover of Maria’s book (a book which Maria wrote) is red.”

Widespread adoption of ‘cit’

To attribute a quote to someone, the preposition ‘cit’ is used (again, replacing Esperanto ‘de’).

- (6) *“Rompu, rompu la murojn inter la popoloj!” cit Zamenhof estas inspiranta citaĵo.*
““Break, break the walls between the peoples!” by Zamenhof is an inspiring quotation.”

Country names don’t end in -ujo

All country names ending in -ujo are replaced with alternatives ending in -io.

- (7) *‘Francujo’ → ‘Francio’*
“France”

Unrelatedly, a few country names change entirely due to reforming their names being a thing in 2010s Esperanto already:

- (8) *‘Finnlando’ → ‘Suomio’*
“Finland”

Free variation between presence and absence of linking -o- in compounds

Linking -o- isn’t completely lost, but it’s beginning to be less common than it is in ordinary Esperanto. Forms of the same word with and without linking -o- are common and generally occur in free variation.

Identical adjectival and nominal forms dispreferred

Words where the adjectival and nominal forms are identical and only distinguished by the difference between the final -o and -a are highly dispreferred—as are affixes being applied with both an -o or -a. The less ‘core’ part-of-speech for a given root is formed using another affix that suits it semantically. Popular options include ‘-ulo’ ‘person’, ‘-ano’ ‘member of’, ‘-eco’ ‘quality of, -ness’, ‘-ema’ ‘inclined toward’, etc. Sometimes compounding performs the same role—for instance, ‘roza’ vs. ‘roz(o)koloro’

Less-recognized/Ido-loaned suffixes more common

Laudatory ‘-el-’ *skribo* ‘writing’, *skribelo* ‘calligraphy’

-oz- ‘full of’ *monto* ‘mountain’, *montoza* ‘mountainous’

-end- ‘needing done’ *pagi* ‘to pay’, *pagenda* ‘needing paid’

‘ali-’ is an official correlative now

The forms ‘*alio*’, ‘*aliu*’, ‘*alia*’, ‘*aliam*’, ‘*alio*’ ‘*alio*’, etc. are now officially sanctioned rather than not being official. Because ‘*alie*’ already exists, the form for ‘another place’ is ‘*aliloke*’.

Pro-drop-ness begins: if ‘ĝi’ would be the subject, don’t bother

The inanimate 3rd person pronoun ‘*ĝi*’ is now pretty much universally dropped when it would be the subject of a sentence. I’m not actually sure to what extent this is done in vanilla Esperanto tbh.

100–200 AMC**Sound Changes****When glides occur as the lone onset of a syllable, they become fricatives**

Based on the maximum onset principle, this generally only occurs intervocalically or word-initially.

$$j \ w \rightarrow \text{ɟ} \ v \ / \ \$_V$$

e.g., ‘*ejakuli*’ [e.ja'ku.li] → [e.ɟa'ku.li] but ‘*ajna*’ [aj.na] → [ej.na] but ‘*antaŭa*’ [an'to.wa] → [an'to.va]

Glides disappear after vowels but provide compensatory lengthening

$$\begin{aligned} V^{+front}j &\rightarrow V: \\ V^{+round}w &\rightarrow V: \end{aligned}$$

Note that this change *only* occurs when the glide part of the same syllable as the vowel in question—if the glide is instead the lone onset of the following syllable, it is affected by the previous sound change instead.

e.g., ‘*kajto*’ [kej.to] → [ke:.to], ‘*tuj*’ [tyj] → [ty:], ‘*vojmontrilo*’ [vøj.mon'tri.lo] → [vø:.mon'tri.lo], ‘*ambaŭ*’ [am.bow] → [am.bo:], ‘*eŭropa*’ [øw'ro.pa] → [ø:'ro.pa]

Glottal stop and glottal fricative merge

$$/ʔ/ \rightarrow /h/$$

e.g., *'heroo'* [he'ro.ʔo] → [he'ro.ho]

LOWLANDS: Standalone obstruents are voiced intervocalically

$$p \ t \ c \ k \ \widehat{ts} \ \widehat{tʃ} \ f \ s \ ʃ \ h \rightarrow b \ d \ ɟ \ g \ \widehat{dz} \ \widehat{dʒ} \ v \ z \ ʒ \ fi \ / \ V_V$$

e.g., *'ŝipo'* [ʃi.po] → [ʃi.bo]

Intervocalic geminates become single occurrences of the consonant in question

$$C^1C^2 \rightarrow C^1 / C^1 = C^2$$

e.g., *'disŝuti'* [diʃ'u.di] → [diʃu.di]

LOWLANDS: Non-glottal fricatives are affricativized after nasal consonants

$$f \ s \ ʃ \ v \ z \ ʒ \rightarrow \widehat{pf} \ \widehat{ts} \ \widehat{tʃ} \ \widehat{bv} \ \widehat{dz} \ \widehat{dʒ} / N_$$

e.g., *'komforti'* [kom'for.ti] → [kom'p̄for.ti], *'bronza'* [b̄on.za] → [b̄on.d̄za]

Vowels are nasalized before nasal consonants, and nasal consonants are deleted when they precede obstruents

$$\begin{aligned} VN &\rightarrow \tilde{V} / _P \\ VN &\rightarrow \tilde{V}N / elsewhere \end{aligned}$$

e.g., *'ankaŭ'* [ʔn.ko:] → [ʔ̃.ko:]

Morphosyntactic & Semantic Changes

200–300 AMC

Sound Changes

Ablaut

If the last vowel in a word is rounded, the preceding vowel is rounded (regardless of intervening consonants).

e.g., *'kato'* [ka.to] → [k̄o.to], *'iros'* [i.ros] → [y.ros], *'ekzemplo'* [ek'sēm.plo] → [ek's̄m.plo]

If the last vowel in a word is front, the preceding vowel is fronted (regardless of intervening consonants).

e.g., *'havis'* [ˈha.vis] → [ˈhæ.vis], *'ofte'* [ˈof.te] → [ˈøf.te], *'seksumi'* [sekˈsũ.mi] → [sekˈsỹ.mi]

$$\begin{aligned} V^{-front} &\rightarrow V^{+front} / _ (C(C)) \$ (C(C(C))) V^{+front} \# \\ V^{-round} &\rightarrow V^{+round} / _ (C(C)) \$ (C(C(C))) V^{+round} \# \end{aligned}$$

$$/i/^{+round} = [y]$$

$$/e/^{+round} = [\emptyset]$$

$$/a/^{+round} = [\text{ɔ}]$$

$$/a/^{+front} = [\text{æ}]$$

$$/o/^{+front} = [\emptyset]$$

$$/u/^{+front} = [y]$$

HIGHLANDS: Word-initial syllables consisting of an obstruent or nasal, a vowel, and then a continuant in the syllable coda undergo metathesis of the schwa and continuant

$$\begin{aligned} C_1VC_2 &\rightarrow C_1C_2V / \# _ (C) \$ \\ C_1 &= \text{obstruent or nasal}, C_2 = \text{continuant} \end{aligned}$$

e.g. *'forkuri'* [forˈku.ri] → [froˈku.ri]

Morphosyntactic & Semantic Changes

300–400 AMC

Sound Changes

/r/ disappears in the coda and the preceding vowel, if short, undergoes compensatory lengthening

$$Vr \rightarrow V: / _ (C) \$$$

e.g., *'forkuri'* (Lowlands) [forˈku.ri] → [foˈku.ri]

l-vocalization occurs when l occurs in the coda of a syllable

$$l \rightarrow w / V _ (C) \$$$

e.g., *'bulbo'* [ˈbul.bo] → [ˈbuw.bo]

HIGHLANDS: Standalone obstruents are voiced intervocalically

$$p \ t \ c \ k \ \widehat{ts} \ \widehat{tʃ} \ f \ s \ ʃ \rightarrow b \ d \ ɟ \ g \ \widehat{dz} \ \widehat{dʒ} \ v \ z \ ʒ \ / \ V_V$$

e.g., ‘*ŝipo*’ [ʃy.po] → [ʃy.bo] (identical in Lowlands), ‘*disŝuti*’ [diʃy.ti] → [diʒy.di] (cf. Lowlands [diʃu.di]), ‘*ankaŭ*’ [ʔ̃.ko:] → [ʔ̃.go:] (cf. Lowlands [ʔ̃.ko:])

Unstressed short vowels become schwa

e.g., ‘*Esperanto*’ [e.speʔ̃r̥.to] → [e.spəʔ̃r̥.tə], ‘*tajfuno*’ [te:ʔ̃fu.no] → [te:ʔ̃fu.nə]

LOWLANDS: After a nasal vowel, voiced stops become nasal stops

$$b \ d \ ɟ \ g \rightarrow m \ n \ ɲ \ ŋ \ / \ \tilde{V}_$$

e.g., ‘*embrio*’ [əʔ̃bry.ɟə] → [əʔ̃mryɟə]

Morphosyntactic & Semantic Changes

400–500 AMC

Sound Changes

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500–600 AMC

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600–700 AMC

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