

AN INQUIRY INTO THE NEEDS, POSSIBILITIES,  
PROBLEMS, AND PROBABILITY OF ONE  
INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE

AN ABSTRACT  
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Language diversity has caused many complex problems for human civilization. Today with approximately 3,000 languages and countless dialects in existence there is a concern with the problems of international communication, and belief in the necessity of creating one universal language, a language spoken and understood by everyone. For centuries, men have attempted to develop a universal language. Advocates of one universal language urge the consideration of one of the following: an existing language, ancient or modern, such as Latin, French, or English; the combination of two or more existing languages, either in zonal distribution or existing side by side, like the Greek and Latin of antiquity; the choice of a modified national language such as Basic English; blends of two or more existing languages; fully constructed languages in which existing languages are freely utilized to supply, or at least to suggest, both vocabulary and grammatical structure.

The need for one international language for world communication goes back to the episode of the Tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis. As the various groups parted company, each speaking its own tongue, they gave rise to different ethnic units. That the need for

communication among these people existed even in early days is shown by the hieroglyphic drawings that show ambassadors from foreign lands arriving at the court of the Pharaohs accompanied by interpreters.

Although many constructed languages have been formulated, few have gone beyond the project stage. The best known constructed language is Esperanto. The only people who are carrying on concerted and serious activities on behalf of a world language are the Esperantists.

The main difficulty lies in the method of choosing one language, national or constructed, that will serve as an international language. Once this hurdle is surmounted the educational resources of the modern world will insure the success of the project.

The real argument on behalf of an international language is that in the modern world it is a communication tool that we can no longer do without. In a world where every man is swiftly coming to be every other man's next door neighbor, the inability to communicate is certain to become a more and more serious handicap. An international language is no longer a luxury that can be put off until someone else decides to do something about it. If we are wise, we shall anticipate the acute need of the future, and provide for it.