Ideas about an International Auxiliary Language

“For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, That they may all call on the name of the Lord, To serve him with one accord.” Zephaniah 3:9

1. Language is the key to implementing all of the Bahá’í principles!
2. A universal style of writing must also be developed. The written form must conform to the spoken form, and will definitely have to be computer-friendly.
3. Acceptance of the need for an IAL and the act of choosing one will be a sign of the maturity of humanity. The need must be recognized, a language must be chosen (politics!), it must be taught using an agreed-upon technology to all the people of the world, and the world’s literature must be translated into the chosen language. Planning and implementation will require compromise, negotiation, funding, and goal-setting over time; the guiding principle must be Justice. (define justice)
4. The process of implementation may take place over several generations in defined stages. Some people may be excused due to age, disability, economic considerations, etc. We may try one language, and then modify it over time, such as Basic English, Phonetic English, or English as a Second Language (ESL). We may use either an original or an invented language such as Esperanto. We cannot foresee future needs dictated by printing, media or computer technology, so the new language may not even exist at this time.
5. The implementation of the IAL must be a spiritual process accomplished in accordance with the implementation of all of the Bahá’í principles at the same time, or it will not work. Esperanto was considered for an IAL in the inter-war period by the League of Nations, but was not adopted. The ethical basis of the United Nations must reflect the spiritual principle of world unity for the UN to play a role in this process. The UN is currently comprised of nations which are pursuing their own interests, not pursuing justice or global harmony, which is why the UN has had many failures.
6. The IAL will probably be a process involving all of the nations, not an announcement by the UN (or by a future version of the UN) or by the Universal House of Justice. The East and the West may each develop their own IAL, and then try to merge them into one language for the whole world.
7. The impacts of technology, advanced spirituality, contact with other worlds, other dimension’s, etc., will have a profound affect on the IAL.
8. The IAL will probably not be tonal because the tones cannot be heard in the noisy modern world of technology and mechanical transportation.
9. Adoption of an IAL will preserve native and obscure languages. They will be studied for their unique qualities and will not need to be replaced, as their speakers will have both languages.
10. The world’s literatures and cultural concepts (*utu, machismo*) will have to be translated into the new language. World-wide taxation will be levied to fund the translations, on a local, regional and national level. (Politics!)

11. World peace will be advanced as more of the world’s people will be able to understand the root causes of conflicts, and will be able to contribute to Conflict Resolution.

12. Governing bodies will be used to monitor and safeguard the implementation, teaching and certification standards of the IAL. Issues of censorship, vulgarity, formality, gender, court language, acceptable usage, copyrights, computer usage, and writing must be addressed. An advanced level of spirituality must contend with the verbal expressions of a modern, vulgar world culture.

13. It may be significant that Shoghi Effendi spoke and wrote in British English, as opposed to American English or some other language.

14. It is significant that the original *Bahá'í* writings are in Persian (the “sweet language”) and Arabic (the “language of eloquence”). Persian is relatively easy to learn, while Arabic is very difficult. Persian is well-documented and well-established; Persian customs and cultural concepts are well understood. The BF cannot really be understood unless one understands and reads Persian; translations are always debatable, unless done by Shoghi Effendi or the UHJ.

15. The future impact of youth in the affairs of the world will be much greater than at present because youth, especially immigrant youth, will be able to learn the IAL much more easily than the middle-aged and elderly. Desirable mates will be those who speak the IAL!

16. The IAL will facilitate the *Bahá'í* process of Consultation, which will be used at all levels of society, starting with the family.

17. New methods of teaching, such as Phonics, integrated with technology, will be developed to learn the IAL. The same methods will not work with all peoples and cultures. A means must be found to compel people to learn the new language.

18. The new language must lessen the male-female communication gap. It must have the ability to express emotions and spiritual concepts. There must be more than one word for love!

19. The IAL must physically “fit” currency, computers, machines, maps, science, media, the world of finance, and medicine.

20. Protocols must be established for the proper use of names. The English name is Moslem; the Arabic name is Muslim. The English name is Persian, the Persian name is Farsi. German is English; Deutschland is German. Cambodia is English; Kampuchea is Khmer. Burma is English; Myanmar is Burmese. “Gender” applies to words, not to people.

21. The Blessed Beauty (*Bahá'u'lláh*) did not say what the IAL would be.

22. Cultural concepts, political realities, usage, political correctness, religious concepts, costs, funding, translation, cultural identity, and many other factors must be considered. Not everyone will be happy with the results; sacrifices must be made. The process will be either political or spiritual!
English as an International Auxiliary Language (IAL)

English is the de-facto lingua franca!

1. English is the first truly global language, with over one billion speakers. Other world languages, such as Latin, Arabic, French, and Spanish were not global in scale. Mandarin Chinese has 1.1 billion speakers but is not global.

2. English has 500,000 words, 80% of which are foreign, plus another half-million technical and scientific terms, and it has the capacity to expand further. German has 185,000 words; French has less than 100,000. English easily incorporates words from other languages. It is also the most widespread second language.

3. The only language that has more speakers is Mandarin Chinese, which is tonal, and is not appropriate for a noisy world.
   
   Note: Port (4 letters) is Left (4 letters) Starboard is Right.

4. There are many types of English: Japlish, Russlich, British, American English, and Franglais. English speakers have established formal means of regulation and standardization, such as the BBC, CNN, CBS, VOA, NATO, UNESCO, multi-national corporations, Berlitz language schools, and the Committee on Spoken English. AP and Reuters have to translate between British and American English for their newscasts!

5. English is the IAL of the military, computers, commerce, medicine, boxing the Internet, the Olympics, the Miss Universe Contest, aviation, navigation, music, air traffic control, and the World Council of Churches. It was the first human language spoken on the moon.

6. English has a simple, flexible grammar, but has problems with spelling and usage. It is extremely adaptive to future trends, but changes so much that Old, Middle, Modern, and Future English may not be understood over time.

7. English has a huge, influential literature and cultural base due to the King James Bible, Shakespeare, American pop culture, British imperialism, etc. It is considered by some, however, to be the language of oppressors.

8. The probable future standard of weights and measures, Metric, is in English. Almost every major culture has made a contribution to the English vocabulary, making it very democratic.

9. English words do not have an arbitrary gender, nor does English have a two-tier structure (formal and familiar), or a court language. Men and women use the same words.
Around 1925 Lidia Zamenhof became a member of the Bahá’í Faith shortly after living with Esperantist Martha Root. Her Father, Dr. Ludwig L. Zamenhof (Samenhof) of Poland was the founder of La Internacia Lingvo, which became known as Esperanto (Hopeful). She went to the United States in late 1937 to teach the Bahá’í Faith and Esperanto. In December 1938 she returned to Poland because her visa expired, where she continued to teach and translated Bahá'u'lláh and the New Era. There were five Bahá’ís in Poland in August 1939. She lived for a time in the Warsaw Ghetto. Several of her Esperanto teaching contacts offered her a hiding place or aid in escaping from Poland, which she declined. She was arrested and eventually died at the Treblinka concentration camp in autumn 1942. Her brother and sister also died in the Holocaust.

Esperanto is the only artificial language that has native speakers, and has been featured in several movies (Incubus, 1965, with William Shatner). Minor planet 1462, discovered in 1938, is named Zamenhof.

‘Abdu’l-Bahá, who learned the basics of Esperanto from Dr. Esslemont, encouraged the Baha’is to “introduce it into the schools as an introduction to the oneness of humanity.” This language is an excellent first foreign language for children to learn; it enhances their ability to learn other foreign languages and opens their minds to diverse cultures.

75% of Esperanto’s vocabulary comes from Latin and Romance languages (especially French), about 20% from Germanic languages (German and English), and the rest comes mainly from Slavic languages (Russian and Polish) and Greek (mostly scientific terms). Asian language speakers are able to learn Esperanto as easily as they can learn any other language, including another Asian language. Esperanto is phonetic: every word is pronounced exactly as it is spelled. There are no silent letters. Grammar is logical and consistent, with only 16 rules. There is direct correspondence between the written and spoken forms. For each written character there is only one sound; all the characters are pronounced.