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### Newsletter of the Esperantic Studies Foundation

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## Establishing A World Where Universal Interactivity Is The Norm An Introduction To Utilika Foundation

Utilika Foundation (<http://utilika.org>) is a non-profit research center whose mission and research agenda is to help make the notion of universal interactivity a reality. Universal Interactivity stems from a seemingly age-old aspiration to devise a means for people in diverse language groups to communicate with one another seamlessly and efficiently. The founders of Utilika Foundation embrace this ideal, but do so in a distinctly modern way. On their foundation website, they sketch out the following portrait of universal interactivity:

Imagine that any two or more persons on Earth, across all boundaries, might converse, work, and play together at will, and that intelligent machines might understand and creatively organize to serve aspirations expressed by human beings. These were once absurd ideas, but are now becoming serious plans. We aim to contribute to the planning by helping to advance the philosophy, science, and technology of communication and collaboration among diverse human and artificial agents.

Dr. Jonathan Pool is the founder of Utilika Foundation.

He is also a current Advisory Board member to the Esperantic Studies Foundation. He suggests that the notion of universal interactivity is no longer a distant science fiction fantasy. Research institutions, technologies and

“Imagine that any two or more persons on Earth, across all boundaries, might converse, work, and play together at will, and that intelligent machines might understand and creatively organize to serve aspirations expressed by human beings. These were once absurd ideas, but are now becoming serious plans.”

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## New Language Policy Website Seeks To Raise Awareness Of Language Problems And Inequities In The European Union

### Nitobe Centre For Language Democracy

The Nitobe Centre for Language Equality ([www.nitobe.info](http://www.nitobe.info)) seeks to raise the level and intensity of public and political debate over language policy in a unifying Europe, with a view to developing a common, constructive, realistic language policy framework that would balance the protection and celebration of linguistic diversity with the need for effective, high-quality communication amongst all the citizens of the EU.

The Centre was inspired by a conference series (the Nitobe Symposium) organized in the years 1996-2005 by the Centre for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems. These conferences brought together activists, academics, bureaucrats and politicians to examine the linguistic dimensions of European integration and globalization. The fourth Symposium (July 30 - August 1, 2005, in Vilnius, Lithuania) drew particular attention to the need for broader and more informed discussion of issues of language and communication in all of the member states of the EU.

The Nitobe Centre combines multilingual web technology with a European-wide network of volunteers to facilitate sharing of ideas, information, and initiatives on a wide range of issues relating to language diversity and communication. As far as possible, given limited resources, the Centre tries to provide a model of effective interlingual collaboration. Contributions in all European languages, official or not, are encouraged, and are made available to users of other languages through translation. Many international activities are planned and coordinated through the neutral language Esperanto.

The Centre as a whole does not support or advance any particular policy measure, but it is committed to open and informed discussion, exploration, and advocacy of alternatives to present practice on the part of its members.

Initial funding for the development of the Centre was provided by the Esperantic Studies Foundation, a private research foundation based in the United States.

The Nitobe Centre website was launched in April, 2006.



## Esperantic Studies Foundation Annual Report 2005

The past year marked the first full year of operations by the Esperantic Studies Foundation (ESF) under a new mission and operating plan. The Foundation was able to initiate a variety of projects and provide funding support to others that were deemed to meet the Foundation's strategic priorities. Established in 2004, these priorities focus on (1) improving the visibility and prestige of Esperanto as a research topic and teaching subject, (2) focusing attention and academic resources on the study of interlingual communication, (3) establishing an intellectual community of teachers and researchers in higher education committed to the above goals, and (4) improving and expanding the operational capacity of the foundation itself.

Operating within this framework, ESF was able to achieve tangible progress towards many of its goals during the year. The Foundation provided support to a number of innovative teaching and language learning initiatives, both web-based and face-to-face. A \$10,000 research grant was awarded to a post-doctoral researcher at Columbia University. An electronic community of teachers and researchers in Europe and North America was established, and the Foundation supported the development of a significant new language policy initiative in the European Union.

Priorities for 2006 include the further expansion of ESF's research activities, including at least one conference where Advisory Board members, Interlingual Research Grant holders, and other interested parties can meet to review the state of interlingual research and identify potential new initiatives and collaborations. The Nitobe Centre for Language Democracy will enter into full operation,

providing a base for innovative language policy research collaboration in the European Union and elsewhere. ESF will continue to support the development of its major web-based educational projects, and will also begin a redesign of its own website to better communicate its goals, achievements, and current activities. The North American Summer Esperanto Institute (NASK) will be given new direction and focus, possibly linked to a change in venue. Institutional partners will be sought for many of these activities. The Foundation will also be developing a long-term fundraising and investment plan to enable the future expansion of its work.

The Esperantic Studies Foundation has set an ambitious agenda for itself in 2006 and we look forward to maintaining the focus and momentum established in 2005.

### PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES EDUCATION

**lernu!** ([www.lernu.net](http://www.lernu.net))

The free, web-based, language-learning environment "lernu!" continued to receive support in 2005. ESF funds were used to develop new multimedia learning content as well as upgrade the website architecture to accommodate consistent year-to-year increases in website traffic. Site traffic has been growing at such a pace that the site's bandwidth limitations were exceeded at several points throughout the year.

**edukado.net** ([www.edukado.net](http://www.edukado.net))

The teaching support site "edukado" received support in 2005 to help with the continued expansion of its teaching materials as well as the development

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## Universal Interactivity: Utilika Foundation con't

human activities are converging in such a way as to make universal interactivity perhaps only a matter of time. For example, hundreds of technology standards have emerged in recent years for various aspects of interaction such as communication protocols, device interoperability, software interfaces, user interfaces, query encoding, text formats, knowledge representation, algorithm representation, and agent coordination. These developments are helping to overcome many obstacles to human and human-machine cooperation.

While significant progress is being made in this field, there are equally significant obstacles that still need to be overcome. Many of the obstacles to this notion of universal interactivity also defy purely

technological solutions. Dr. Pool has summarized some of the challenges that present themselves on the Foundation's website.

"Human and artificial agents are diverse, not merely different. Diverse preferences, interests, commitments, claims, beliefs, norms, legitimacies, customs, knowledge, presuppositions, concepts, intelligences, and languages make it difficult to define interactivity as a set of objectives. Thus, those who design systems for universal interactivity are designing systems that will process cooperation, negotiation, competition, and conflict."

For this reason, Utilika Foundation has included in its Mission a need to explore the science and philosophy

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## Interlinguistic Events

**Feb 08 - 10, 2006**

### Multilingualism & Applied Comparative Linguistics

Where: Brussels, Belgium  
Organized by: Erasmushogeschool  
Brussel & Vrije Universiteit.  
More information can be found at:  
<http://www.macl.be/>

**May 19 - 21, 2006**

### Language, Culture & Technologies

Where: Kaunas, Lithuania.  
Organized by: Kaunas University  
of Technology. Conference details:  
[www.ktu.lt/en/conf2006.html](http://www.ktu.lt/en/conf2006.html)

**July 29 - Aug 05, 2006**

### 91st Universal Esperanto Congress

Where: Florence, Italy.  
Organized by: Universal Esperanto  
Association. For more information  
see: [www.ukflorenco2006.it/](http://www.ukflorenco2006.it/)

**Aug 24 - 26, 2006**

### Multilingualism Across Europe: Findings, Needs, Best Practices

Where: Bolzano, Italy.  
Organized by: EURAC  
More information can be found at:  
[http://www.eurac.edu/Org/LanguageLaw/Multilingualism/Projects/tag06\\_Lprofil.htm](http://www.eurac.edu/Org/LanguageLaw/Multilingualism/Projects/tag06_Lprofil.htm)

## Research Grants Available

The Esperantic Studies Foundation offers Interlingual Research Grants of up to \$10,000 to support publishable research on issues it considers to be relevant to its mission. ESF is particularly interested in supporting projects which: (a) study or apply Esperanto within a broader disciplinary or educational context; (b) improve our understanding of language barriers and inequalities, and of ways to overcome them that are both effective and just.

This program is particularly designed to benefit postdoctoral researchers and junior faculty who are in the process of establishing a research program, although anyone may apply.

For more information about the Research Grant Program, please go to [www.esperantic.org/interlingualresearchhome.htm](http://www.esperantic.org/interlingualresearchhome.htm)



## Utilika Foundation con't

of universal interactivity in addition to technological considerations. In fact, one of the Foundation's chief research interests, at present, is to develop solutions for obstacles to human-human, human-machine, and machine-mediated human communication and collaboration arising from the diversity and limitations of languages. More specifically, the Foundation seeks to explore strategies that adapt natural languages to achieve ambiguity-controlled and automatically tractable meaning representation and communication in the Semantic Web and other human-machine multi-agent systems.

Utilika Foundation was only recently established in 2004; however, it is already actively pursuing its research agenda and has taken a significant step by helping to establish The Turing Center (<http://turing.cs.washington.edu/>) at the University of Washington in Seattle, Washington. The Turing Center is a multidisciplinary research center that is focused on investigating problems at the crossroads of natural language processing, machine learning, Web search, and the Semantic Web. It receives funding support from a variety of sources including Utilika Foundation, the National Science Foundation, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), the Office of Naval Research as well as Google.

Additional information about Utilika Foundation, its mission and research interests, as well as The Turing Centre, can be obtained from its website (<http://utilika.org>).

## Esperantic Studies Foundation Annual Report con't

of a web-based interface that now enables subject matter experts to easily edit and upload content from anywhere in the world.

**NASK** ([www.esperanto.org/nask](http://www.esperanto.org/nask))

The 36th annual North American Summer Esperanto Institute was held in July at the School for International Training (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. ESF has been supporting this unique 3-week immersion program since 1998. NASK is a core educational priority for the foundation and we look forward to its continued success in the years to come.

### Esperanto Teaching Standards

A small group of experts was convened by Board member Dr. Timothy Reagan in June, 2005, to develop standards for the teaching of Esperanto in accordance with the framework established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The resulting document represents the most complete framework and rationale for teaching Esperanto developed in North America. It has been submitted for ratification by the standards committee of ACTFL.

### Berkeley Student Program

Last year marked ESF's seventh year of support for the Berkeley Student Esperanto Program. Each semester, beginner, intermediate and/or advanced Esperanto language courses are offered to students at the UC Berkeley campus. Classes in 2005 were led by Berkeley student Joshua Brandt-Young. ESF support provides funds for teaching materials as well as a modest scholarship for the teachers.

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## New Releases Books

### Literacy & Language Diversity In The United States. (2nd Ed.)

Author: Wiley, Terrence G.  
Published: Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co., Inc. 2005.  
Languages: English.  
ISBN: 1-887744-88-6

Based on current national data, the book examines language diversity in the United States; outlines what we know about the development of English literacy, native language literacy, and literacy in two languages; and explores how to make informed national policy decisions. Literacy and Language Diversity in the United States is written for linguists, scholars, policy makers, educators, and students in teacher preparation programs.

## Film

### In Languages We Live - Voices Of The World

Directed by Janus Billeskov Jansen.  
Final Cut Productions,  
Copenhagen, 2005.

A documentary about the world's linguistic diversity. Through a number of personal stories the film asks: What is the significance of this loss to those who speak these languages as well as for the rest of us? Why do some languages become world languages, while others are in the process of dying out? How are our language and identity connected? What does it feel like to be the last person to speak a language? How do you document a language? How does language develop? How does one translate linguistic and cultural meaning from one language to another?

## Articles

### A Visit To Esperantoland.

Author: Okrent, A. (Winter 2006)  
Published: The American Scholar,  
75(1): 93 - 108.

An articulate, perceptive, and entertaining account of the author's first experiences with learning and using Esperanto in the United States.

## Journal Feature:

### Language Problems & Language Planning



ISSN: 0272-2690

## Language Problems & Language Planning

*Language Problems and Language Planning* is published in cooperation with the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems. This international multi-lingual journal publishes articles primarily on political, sociological, and economic aspects of language and language use. The journal also features sections on Interlinguistics and publication reviews.

### Featured Articles in Issue 30(1)

- Shifts in linguistic identities in a global world. *Paulin Djité*
- Translation research and interpreting research: Traditions, gaps and synergies. *Clare Sullivan*
- Een Wereldtaal. De geschiedenis van het Esperanto. *Wim Jansen*

For more information see: [www.benjamins.nl](http://www.benjamins.nl)



## Esperantic Studies Foundation Annual Report 2005 con't

### Pasporto & Katedro Teaching Projects

Pasporto al la Tuta Mondo was originally a 16 lesson Esperanto video course in VHS format. Last year, ESF provided funds to help with the creation of an updated DVD version of the course. Pasporto can now be purchased from the Esperanto-USA website ([www.esperanto-usa.org](http://www.esperanto-usa.org)) as a 4-DVD set. The Katedro project was developed to provide Esperanto teachers with videotaped examples of leading-edge teaching techniques and materials. Actual Esperanto language classes in North America and Europe provide much of the source material. The Katedro teacher training program is due to be completed in 2007.

### INTERLINGUAL RESEARCH

#### Nitobe Symposium

ESF sponsored the 4th Nitobe Symposium in Vilnius, Lithuania in July 2005. This Symposium, profiled in Issue 17 of Esperantic Studies, explores the linguistic dimensions of European integration and globalization.

#### Nitobe Centre For Language Democracy

The Nitobe Centre was established by ESF following last year's Nitobe Symposium. The Centre is profiled on page one of this newsletter and is due to commence operations in early April 2006.

#### Interlingual Research Grant Awards

In 2005, ESF awarded a \$10,000 research grant to Dr. Thomas Cooper for an investigation of the role of translation in the (re)creation of a transnational literary consciousness in the linguistically diverse region of Central Europe. Dr. Cooper's research will commence in the spring 2006 and will be featured in a future issue of *Esperantic Studies*.

### Interlinguistics Certificate Program

ESF continued to provide scholarship support in 2005 for students enrolled in the Interlinguistics certificate program at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland. Awardees come from Russia, Germany, Lithuania, France and Iran.

### Interlingual Research Network

In order to provide a forum for researchers on interlingual communication, Esperanto studies, and related topics, ESF has established an electronic mailing list, [esf-researchcommunity@sfu.ca](mailto:esf-researchcommunity@sfu.ca), hosted by Simon Fraser University (Burnaby, BC, Canada). To join the list, write to [admin@esperantic.org](mailto:admin@esperantic.org).

### OPERATIONS

#### Expansion of the ESF Board

The past year was also marked by the departure of one director and the addition of two new board members. Dr. Timothy Reagan resigned as an active director following his appointment as Dean of Humanities at the University of Witwatersrand in South Africa. However, he continues to remain an active member of ESF's Advisory Board. Later in the year, ESF directors elected Dr. Bonnie Fonseca-Greber and Mr. Wallace Du Temple to the Board. Dr. Fonseca-Greber is a professor of foreign language education at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Mr. Du Temple is a long-time Esperantist, educator and former municipal councilor near Victoria, British Columbia, who brings considerable experience in fundraising and non-profit management to the ESF Board. ESF also elected Dr. Probal Dasgupta, a well-known linguist, translator, and cultural critic at the University of Hyderabad, India, to its Advisory Board.

## Interlingual Links

### Around the Globe

Esperantic Studies Foundation  
[www.esperantic.org](http://www.esperantic.org)

Lernu.net  
[www.lernu.net](http://www.lernu.net)

Free, online, multimedia language learning technology

International Association For Language Learning Technology  
<http://iallt.org/>

Modern Language Association  
[www.mla.org/](http://www.mla.org/)

Roseticon Project  
[www.melekh.net/roseticon/](http://www.melekh.net/roseticon/)

A proposal to develop an intermediary, iconographic-based world language

Nitobe Centre For Language Democracy  
[www.nitobe.info](http://www.nitobe.info)

International Auxiliary Languages  
[www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5037/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5037/index.html)

We are interested in receiving information about interesting websites, new books, articles, courses or other media pertaining to Esperanto & Interlinguistics. Send us your latest discoveries.

All contributions and reactions to the newsletter are welcome at [newsletter@esperantic.com](mailto:newsletter@esperantic.com)

Previous editions of Esperantic Studies are now available online at [www.esperantic.org](http://www.esperantic.org)

To request additional free print copies, write to [admin@esperantic.org](mailto:admin@esperantic.org)



North American Summer Esperanto Institute / Nord-Amerika Somera Kursaro  
3 Week Immersion Program: July 3 – July 21, 2006  
School for International Training (SIT), Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

3 College Credits are available  
Course fees: \$1015 USD  
Scholarships are available.

Housing (inc. 3 meals per/day):  
\$700 Dbl. / \$820 Single  
Contact: Ellen Eddy ([eddyellen@aol.com](mailto:eddyellen@aol.com))

[www.esperanto.org/nask/](http://www.esperanto.org/nask/)

[www.sit.edu/esperanto](http://www.sit.edu/esperanto)