

# Comparative characteristics of English and Esperanto

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Esperanto</i>
<b>Alphabet</b>	non-phonetic (46 phonemes, 20 vowels)	phonetic with 28 letters
<b>Pronunciation</b>	chaotic, elusive, impossible to standardise	each letter is pronounced and always represents the same sound
<b>Stress</b>	indefinable, determined by usage; no standard can be established	always on the penultimate syllable
<b>Irregular verbs</b>	283	none
<b>Conjugation : - root</b>	variable	invariable
<b>Identification of the grammatical function</b>	confused, many grammatical relations are unexpressed	clear and immediate
<b>Syntax</b>	rigid, fixed word order	very subtle
<b>Word derivation *</b>	limited possibilities : 5%	vast possibilities : 17%
<b>Index of agglutination *</b>	0,3	1
<b>Idioms</b>	innumerable	virtually non-existent
<b>Homonyms</b>	very numerous	virtually non-existent
<b>Polysemy **</b>	very common (1)	rare
<b>Vocabulary necessary to understand an ordinary text ***</b>	for 80%-90% : 2000 words for 99% : 7000 words (2)	500 words + 50 grammatical elements 2000 words
<b>Time needed to reach a standard equivalent to A-level ****</b>	1500 hours for a French speaker	150 hours for a French speaker

## Sources :

- \* "Lingvistikaj aspektoj de Esperanto", Dr John C. Wells; professor of English language phonetics at University College London.
- \*\* Edward Thorndike, a famous American teacher and educationalist.
- \*\*\* "Fortoj de l'vivo", Vilho Setälä, a Finnish linguist.
- \*\*\*\* Dr Helmar Frank, director of the Institute of Cybernetics in Paderborn, Germany.

- (1) - 21 120 different meanings for the 850 words of the basic vocabulary.
- (2) - Frequency of dictionary consultation : one unknown word in a hundred.

**EAB, 201 Felixstow Road, IPSWICH IP3 9BJ**  
**Tel + fax 01473 727 221 <eab@esperanto.demon.co.uk>**

Réalisation  
Impression   
**SABAMKARO**